

ROUSAS JOHN RUSHDOOPY

SALVATION &
GODLY
RULE

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I

Salvation: Pagan and Christian

The Greek word salvation, *soteria*, means deliverance, preservation, victory, and health, and it refers to material and temporal deliverance, as well as personal, national, temporal and eternal triumph. The Biblical doctrine of salvation is so clearly one of victory, that it must be emphatically stated that *salvation is not escape*. Many pagan concepts of deliverance are really doctrines of escape. The *deus ex machina* (literally, the god from the machine) idea shows us clearly how, in the Greco-Roman world, problems were resolved into men's hopes and imagination. A god was introduced in the drama to provide a supernatural solution to a dramatic difficulty by intervening in the problem to separate the besieged person from his difficulties. A way of escape was provided. Thus, in Homer's *Iliad* (Book III), when the angry husband Menelaos meets Paris, the seducer of his wife Helen, in battle, all did not go well with Paris. At this point, "Aphrodite snatched up Paris, very easily as a goddess may, and hid him in thick darkness, and set him down in his fragrant perfumed chamber; and herself went to summon Helen." The outcome is that Paris said, "sweet desire taketh hold upon me." So saying he led the way to the couch, and the lady followed him."¹ Paris thus was raptured out of a losing battle into the rapture of Helen's lap, a good model of pagan salvation.

Escapism has been a dominant note in virtually all non-Biblical religions, and, one may add, in most politics as well. Thus, in Buddhism, the "Four Noble Truths" of Gautama Buddha were: 1) "All existence involves suffering; 2) All suffering is caused by indulging in inherently insatiable desires; 3) Therefore all suffering will cease upon the suppressing of all desires; 4) While still living, every person should live moderately." No distinction was made between

¹. Lang, Leaf, Butcher, and Myers translation.

good and evil desires; “*all* desires” were to be suppressed, and Nirvana, the total obliteration of consciousness, desire, perception, feeling, and emotion, is to be sought. Nirvana is a passionless peace which is beyond consciousness and beyond nothingness.² “The Buddhist monk aims at doing nothing at all, and may well end in complete vacancy of mind and character.” Commenting on a poem which sets forth the Buddhist monastic goal, Parker called it “a poetic glorification of laziness.”³

The escapism can be from man’s inner problems and the inner tension created by sin and guilt. St. Paul’s declaration that “he is a Jew (i.e., a covenant man) which is one inwardly” (Rom. 2:29), was countered by Mohammed, who asserted, “He is a Muslim who is one outwardly.” The essential duties or “five pillars of Islam” are pure externalism: 1) the regular repetition of the creed; 2) repetition of prescribed prayers five times daily and at three stated times; 3) the duty of almsgiving; 4) observance of the Feast of Ramadan, which called for strict fasting in daylight hours and eating and drinking during the rest of the day; and 5) pilgrimage to Mecca.

Blackman has called the Egyptian doctrine a conception of “posthumous happiness.”⁴ This is an accurate description, because the Egyptian conception is not one of salvation but rather of *an earned retirement or reward*. The gods of paganism may be able in some myths to provide an escape, but they cannot provide victory or salvation because they do not have an absolute and sovereign control over all things. Thus, an Egyptian love-spell from about 1100 B.C. indicates that the gods could be threatened by a lover if he did not get his desire:

Hail to thee, O Re-Harakhte, Father of the Gods!
Hail to you, O ye seven Hathors,
Who are adorned with strings of red thread!
Hail to you, ye Gods, Lords of heaven and earth!

² Paul E. Kritzmman, *The God of the Bible and Other Gods* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1943), 68-71.

³ J. W. Parker, *The Idea of Salvation In the World's Religions* (London: Macmillan, 1935), 190.

⁴ Aylward M. Blackman, “Salvation (Egyptian),” in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XI, 131f.

Cause so-and-so (fem.), born of so-and-so, to come after me
 Like an ox after grass,
 Like a mother after her children,
 Like a drover after his herd!
 If you do not make her come after me
 I shall set fire to Busiris-city and burn up Osiris!⁵

How limited the Egyptian idea of the gods was appears also in *The Book of the Dead*, in which Osiris Nu declared, "I am he who cometh for advancing, whose name is unknown. I am Yesterday."⁶ Osiris is thus the evolving force of Yesterday, far from self-conscious enough to know his own name or nature; Osiris is thus as much a product as a producer, and as much an effect as a cause.

The problem confronting paganism is thus apparent: only a fully self-conscious, self-existent, sovereign, and creating God can save man, because only He can fully control, govern, and determine all things. Gods who are themselves determined cannot save man, because they themselves are often in need of being saved. In the cyclical outlook of paganism, the gods themselves are born out of chaos and must ultimately return to chaos with all things else. Such gods cannot save man, for in their universe no salvation is possible; all they can offer is a limited degree of temporary escape, a *deus ex machina* answer which briefly placed Paris in Helen's lap. Soon thereafter, Paris was wounded by a poisoned arrow, and the nymph Oenone, whom he had married as a youth and deserted for Helen, was the only one able to heal him; she refused, and Paris died.

Only in Scripture do we meet the God who is able to save; Genesis 1:1 declares, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." As the only creator and absolute sovereign over all things, God is able to determine all things, and He does; and only He has the power to save man in the full and true sense of the

⁵. Cited from the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, xxvii (1941), 131, by Margaret A. Murray, *The Splendour That Was Egypt* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1961), 217.

⁶. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1960), 609.

word. Where the doctrine of creation is weakened, the doctrine of salvation is also weakened.

As a result, in paganism the quest is less for salvation than for escape, or, as in Hinduism, for *mukti*, or *release*. For the Hindu, release means “emancipation from bondage to matter with all that this involves of pain and penalty, and entrance into a haven of rest and peace for ever untroubled by the afflictions and sorrows that attend upon all earthly conditions.”⁷

The ancient Iranian religion of Mazdaism could offer no salvation, because it held to an ultimate dualism, the equal ultimacy of the good god and the bad god. Ahura Mazda could not save man; he himself was involved in continual battle with Angra Mainyu, the spirit of evil. Man had to work his own deliverance. As Casartelli noted, “the Mazdean doctrine is that each man works out his own salvation, though under the guidance of divine revelation and with the powerful spiritual aid of Ahura Mazda, his hierarchy of spirits, and of the teachings and examples of Zarathushtra and his followers.”⁸ A world, however, in which a man must save himself because the gods cannot do so is also a world in which his own works can be reduced to meaninglessness by a turning of history. Pessimism and disintegration thus haunt all doctrines of self-salvation.

It is thus wrong to speak of pagan doctrines of salvation; salvation is a Biblical concept. The word for salvation (*najah*) is only used once in the Koran:

The idea which the term *najah* conveys to the Muslim mind is that of escape from future punishment in hell. *Khalas*, which means ‘deliverance,’ is also used in the same sense. Thus it is not so much escape from the power of sin in this life as an escape from its punishment hereafter that is implied in the term “salvation.”⁹

⁷ A. S. Geden, “Salvation (Hindu),” Hastings, *op. cit.*, 135.

⁸ L. C. Casartelli, “Salvation (Iranian),” in *ibid.*, 137.

⁹ Edward Sell, “Salvation (Muslim),” in *ibid.*, 149.

Thus, the Islamic conception of salvation “is entirely legalistic; it is not a moral change in the heart now, leading a man to have power over sin to repress it, but a release in the next world from the punishment of hell, in virtue of certain good acts done in this life.”¹⁰ What constitutes these good acts we have already seen in our discussion of the “five pillars of Islam.”

Among the Teutonic pagans, salvation was essentially an escape from external evil powers; it meant victory over evil forces, but this victory was an external battle, not a change in man’s relationship to God.

To the ancient Teutons the idea of salvation applied in the first place to getting rid of those things which to him were absolutely evil. It also meant preservation from such destruction, danger, and calamity as he expected to meet. Salvation thus meant delivery from evil spirits and from anything which they might bring about. Of evil spirits there were a great number and many kinds, such as dwarfs, giants, dragons, and kobolds. Then there were the witches and wizards, the sorcerers and the enchanters, with all their arts and incantations used for the destruction of man.¹¹

These pagan concepts thus cannot offer salvation, not only because they have no God nor universe in which full and assured victory is possible, but also because they have a defective view of man and sin. In paganism, man seeks an escape from his problems, or a retirement into sensual bliss from the world’s work and responsibility. By failing to recognize his rebellion against the sovereign God as his essential problem as well as his sin, pagan man wants not salvation but escape. To admit the real problem, his sin, is to admit that there is no way of escape, only the way of salvation through God’s regenerating grace.

Moreover, the failure of paganism to offer salvation is not accidental. It is a part of the pagan refusal to understand; it is a willful rejection of the truth of God. Lenski has translated Romans 1:18 thus:

^{10.} *Ibid.*

^{11.} S. G. Youngert, “Salvation (Teutonic),” in *ibid.*, 149.

For there is revealed God's wrath from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what is known regarding God is manifest in them, for God manifested it to them. For the things unseen regarding him, by being perceived from the world's creation on by means of the things made, are fully seen, both his everlasting power and divinity, so that they are without excuse.¹²

The sinner *suppresses*, holds down, the truth of God because of his unrighteousness. Instead of salvation, he seeks escape, or retirement. At best, he calls it a problem to be solved which he insists that he is capable of solving. The problem is disguised in order to avert the answer. Thus, the requirement laid upon Christian apologetics is not only to set forth the doctrine of salvation, but also to so define it as to eliminate the pagan concepts which masquerade as salvation.

This the apostles did as they confronted the world of their day. Ramsay pointed out some years ago how common references to salvation were on Greek tombstones of the era:

It is remarkable that the idea of "salvation" should be so closely connected with the making of the grave. Respect to the dead is a prayer for the whole family and its permanence and prosperity. The dead has gone to be a god with the gods; the tomb is his temple; and the worship of this new god is inaugurated with the grave and epitaph, which are the discharge of a vow to secure his blessing for the entire household.¹³

Moreover, "To the pagans salvation was safety, health, prosperity."¹⁴ The word "salvation" was important to the mystery religions, but it did not involve the idea of moral renewal, although the hunger for fulness of life was there. "In paganism the association of their 'Salvation' with the idea of rebirth, or of death

¹² R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1945), 89.

¹³ Sir W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, Fourth edition (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1920), 190.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

and a future life, was invariable.”¹⁵ The means to this end were pathetic ones:

Among the pagans, then, the term “Salvation” was largely material in its connotation, and salvation was gained by ritual and ceremony. There were three chief departments, so to say, of salvation among the pagans: the salvation gained by religious duties and vows and prayers, the salvation sought by magic rites, and the Imperial salvation. As in every other department of life, so here, the policy of the Empire enters to dominate and to guide the thoughts and acts and even the prayers and wishes of all its subjects.¹⁶

Salvation was personal in the mystery religions, but in every cult, the basic background of salvation was political. Religion in paganism was subordinate to, and an aspect of, political order. As a result, the supervision of the state was held to be necessary and inescapable, and to deny this necessary supervision and recognition by the state, as the Christians did, was treason. Imperial salvation meant cradle-to-grave security on the imperial estates, and men regarded this loss of freedom in exchange for security as “salvation.” Serfdom in its origins was this imperial salvation of Rome. As Ramsay summarized it, “The ‘Salvation’ of Jesus and of Paul was freedom: the ‘Salvation’ of the imperial system was serfdom.”¹⁷

The early church refused to trust in man and in man’s way for salvation. When persecuted for refusing to swear by the genius of the emperor, the Christians reminded the Romans that they took seriously such verses as 1 Timothy 2:2, the command to pray “for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” As Tertullian wrote,

32. There is also another and a greater necessity for our offering prayer in behalf of the emperors, nay, for the complete stability of the empire, and for Roman interests in general. For we know that a mighty shock impending

¹⁵. *Ibid.*, 175f.

¹⁶. *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁷. *Ibid.*, 198.

over the whole earth — in fact, the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes — is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman empire. We have no desire, then, to be overtaken by these dire events; and in praying that their coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome's duration. More than this, though we decline to swear by the *genii* of the Caesars, we swear by their safety, which is worth far more than all your *genii*. Are you ignorant that these *genii* are called "*Daemones*," and thence the diminutive name "*Daemonia*" is applied to them? We respect in the emperors the ordinance of God, who has set them over the nations. We know that there is that in them which God has willed; and to what God has willed we desire all safety, and we count an oath by it a great oath. But as for daemons, that is, your *genii*, we have been in the habit of exorcising them, not swearing by them, and thereby conferring on them divine honour.

33. But why dwell longer on the reverence and sacred respect of Christians to the emperor, whom we cannot but look up to as called by our Lord to his office? So that on valid grounds I might say Caesar is more ours than yours, for our God has appointed him. Therefore, as having this propriety in him, I do more than you for his welfare, not merely because I ask it of Him who can give it, or because I ask it as one who deserves to get it, but also because, in keeping the majesty of Caesar within due limits, and putting it under the Most High, and making it less than divine, I commend him the more to the favour of Deity, to whom I make him alone inferior. But I place him in subjection to one I regard as more glorious than himself. Never will I call the emperor God, and that either because it is not in me to be guilty of falsehood; or that I dare not turn him into ridicule; or that not even himself will desire to have that high name applied to him. If he is but a man, it is his interest as man to give God His higher place. Let him think it enough to bear the name of emperor. That, too, is a great name of God's giving. To call him God, is to rob him of his title. If he is not a man, emperor he cannot be. Even when, amid the honours of a triumph, he sits on that lofty chariot, he is reminded that he is only human. A voice at his back keeps whispering in his ear, "Look behind thee; remember thou art but a man." And it only

adds to his greatness that he needs such a reminiscence, lest he should think himself divine.¹⁸

Tertullian's comments are of great interest on several counts. *First*, it is clear that 2 Thessalonians 2:2-6 was interpreted by the early church to mean that the Roman Empire was the hindering power against the man of sin and his lawless, anarchic sway. Thus, however great the persecution of Rome, Rome was to be preferred to this alternative. *Second*, the trust of the Christians could never be in the emperor's genius, in the emperor as a divine leader, but only as a man ruling over men under God. *Third*, salvation thus is not political and is entirely supernatural. As a result, the Christian hope is not in imperial salvation but in Christ's salvation, not in salvation as security under an emperor's cradle-to-grave care, but in Christ's redemption from the power of sin and death. The redeemed man is renewed in Christ and made a new force in history, so that Christ, working in His saints, is actively recapturing and restoring all men and nations to His kingdom.

As we have seen, the pagan concept of salvation (if the word can be so used) was essentially escapism, a retirement from life, or a search for security. These limited hopes reflected the essential pessimism of paganism. St. Paul cited an ancient pagan proverb expressing this cynicism: "let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32). Isaiah had cited this centuries before (22:13; cf. 56:12). The constant refrain of pagan wisdom was the misery of man; hence, the sensible course for many was to grasp at the pleasures at hand, because death and the end of all things may come tomorrow. As against this, the Biblical emphasis is on joy, on what Ramsay termed "the happy lot of man." St. Paul spoke of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8), and declared, of the believer's future, that God "has raised us up together (with Christ), and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6-7). In

¹⁸. Tertullian, "Apologeticus," in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. XI (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872), 111f.

the face of all present problems, St. Paul's happy word is, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). The joyful prospect proclaimed by St. Paul is summarized by Ramsay:

Not merely do we receive from Christ. We are the riches of Christ. To that great honour have we been exalted by the grace of God. The assembly of the saints, the whole body of Christians, the Universal and Catholic Church, constitutes the inheritance of Christ. The purpose of God from the creation has been to create and complete this structure as the kingdom of God, "the wealth of the glory of Christ's inheritance among the saints."¹⁹

Men who have the assurance of salvation are confident and triumphant men.

When St. Paul declared, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1: 16), he meant that, because salvation is entirely the work of the sovereign and omnipotent God, the proclamation of that good news could cause him neither shame nor embarrassment. His gospel was not the uncertain and possible work of an impotent or struggling god, but the absolute and certain work of the eternal, triune, and omnipotent Maker of heaven and earth. To preach such a certainty would bring Paul no shame or embarrassment: God's saving power is sure.

¹⁹ Sir W. M. Ramsay, *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914), 219.

III

Salvation Versus Insurance

James Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. XII) devotes sixty pages to worship in various religions. The series of essays on worship are learned and informative, but in a real sense futile, in that there is no common definition of worship possible. The writers struggled as a result to find in a variety of religions something which is largely alien to them, in that the word *worship* has for us a Biblical context, whereas what is called *worship* in these other religions has often little relationship to anything we would recognize as such.

Christian worship is an organized *corporate* act grounded in *personal* as well as *corporate* faith. It involves more than ritual, important as ritual is: it is *instructional* and *educational*, in that the Scriptures are read and expounded. It involves corporate singing in praise to God and the glorification of God's sovereign power and purpose. In all these things, Christian worship is radically different from pagan "worship."

There is a reason for this difference, and this difference is rooted in a key fact that makes pagan temple practices no more than secondarily or incidentally worship at their best. Christian worship *celebrates salvation and victory*; if it fails to do this, it is not worship. In pagan temples there is no celebration of either personal or corporate salvation. Instead, there is a transaction which is in essence the purchase of *insurance*.

Blackman wrote of ancient Egyptian temple rites that

The whole object of official worship, as represented in the temple reliefs, was to obtain the favour of the divinities for Pharaoh. In return for the offerings which he presents to them they promise him victory, gladness, life, stability, health, good fortune, abundance, millions of years, the duration of Re, an eternity of jubilees, etc. The very temples of the gods were erected by the king that he might

receive in return the “duration of heaven,” “hundreds of thousands of years,” and that he might “be granted eternity as king.” Thus the designation of every ritual act, “giving (var. doing) this or that to (for) his father (var. mother) N.N.,” is followed by the words “in order that he may make an ‘Endowed-with-life’ like Re forever,” the “Endowed-with-life” being of course the king himself.¹

We have already seen how an Egyptian lover threatened the god, if his love charm failed to work. The reason for such attitudes in paganism was that the function of the temple was essentially to provide insurance, and the insuring agent was a god or spirit.

Because the god or spirit had supernatural powers, he was feared, and it was good business to stay in the good favor of such a force. Before embarking on a voyage, undertaking a task, or on facing a personal or family crisis, the pagan sought to buy protection by going to the temple or altar and offering a sacrifice. The gods functioned somewhat like an old-fashioned Italian Mafia, usually honoring loyalties, but essentially self-centered and ruthless. Their favor had to be bought at a price. However, if the god or spirit failed, then obviously he was either unwilling or unable to provide protection. In either case, he was either an enemy or a cheat, and reprisals could be taken against the god.

Very obviously, this pagan belief has infiltrated the church. The spare-tire concept of God, as Otto Piper pointed out some years ago, is very prevalent. A spare-tire is not normally used; in fact, it is highly desirable if it is never necessary to use it. However, common sense requires that a man carry a spare-tire and always avoid being without one. For many people, God is a spare-tire, not normally to be used and an annoyance if required, but a good thing to have handy in case of trouble.

Such an attitude confuses faith in God with a belief in the value of fire insurance. Countless numbers of church members, for example, believe that a Great Tribulation lies

¹ A. M. Blackman, “Worship (Egyptian)” in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XII, 780.

ahead. Many others, conservatives and liberals, have been persuaded by the press and by current events that grim days lie ahead. Such books as Lindsey's horror story capitalize on this fact.² The result is that many people become ostensible believers who are in reality buying an insurance policy against disaster or tribulation, an insurance which promises to rapture them out of any such dire event. (One popular preacher assures his listeners that, because of the supposedly imminent rapture, they may never die!)

But salvation is not insurance against problems, troubles, or tribulation. The apostles and the saints of the early church were certainly not spared fearful persecutions and executions. The Reformation era saw many burned and beheaded for their faith. The nineteenth century saw many natives in Africa and Asia slain for their stand for Christ. In the twentieth century, the Turks as well as the Marxists have slain millions of Christians. Salvation did not mean an insurance policy for them.

Nothing is more dishonest than the common "witness" at testimonial meetings which says, "The Lord saved me and took away all my troubles." Salvation increases our responsibilities because it makes us responsible men, and it thereby increases our troubles. Salvation does not remove us from troubles, tribulation, or problems. Rather, it thrusts us into them, and, at the same time, gives us the assurance of victory in Jesus Christ. We may lose a battle now and then, but we shall win the war. Moreover, every lost battle also adds up to victory, for "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

The religious quest for insurance is pagan. Where the desire for insurance governs a church or a theology, we have paganism revived. Salvation in Scripture is neither a promise of escape, nor an insurance guaranteeing immunity against

² Hal Lindsey, with C. C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1970).

tribulation. It is rather the assurance of victory in the warfare of life.

A clear indictment of the desire to withdraw appears in the account of the transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). Moses and Elijah appear as representatives of the Law and the Prophets, conversing with Jesus on his decease or exodus at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). Peter, James, and John were thus made witnesses to the fact that the whole purpose of God's revelation and redemption was to be fulfilled or put into force in Christ's atoning death and resurrection. This decease or *exodus* (the word used in the Greek text) was the departure or exodus from the slavery of Egypt, of sin, into the redemption and new creation of God. The cross represented both the death sentence on the fallen world and the release of its captives to Christ, the destroyer of sin and death. The new creation is the goal of the Law and the Prophets, and they were forerunners and evidences of that new creation.

Mark tells us that the disciples were exceedingly or "sore afraid" (Mark. 9:6). The vista opened up by the declaration of the true exodus, the crucifixion and resurrection, was a shocking and frightening one. They wanted the Kingdom of God to come in by Christ's proclamation and miraculous power. The prospect in view for Christ, and then for the disciples thereafter, was a terrifying one. They had been dreaming of positions of power in the kingdom (Matt. 18:1-5; Mark. 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-49). Now it was apparent that something else was in store for them first, a world-battle against the powers of darkness in the name of Christ.

Their preference thus was not to go forward into that battle-born history, but to stand still in terms of the supernatural experience of the moment. Peter "said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17:4). Their hope was to continue at least for a time to dwell on the revelation of the moment. For them, revelation was to be used to arrest history, not to further it.

God, then, answered them out of the overshadowing cloud (a symbol of glory and judgment), saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5). Calvin said of this declaration:

When he enjoins us to *hear him*, he appoints him to be the supreme and only teacher of his Church. It was his design to distinguish Christ from all the rest, as we truly and strictly infer from those words, that by nature he was *God's only Son*. In like manner, we learn that he alone is *beloved* by the Father and that he alone is appointed to be our Teacher, that in him all authority may dwell.

Hear him. I mentioned a little ago, that these words were intended to draw the attention of the Church to Christ as the only Teacher, that on his mouth alone it may depend.... In short, Christ is as truly heard at the present day in the Law and in the Prophets as in his Gospel; so that in him dwells the authority of a *Master*, which he claims for himself alone, saying *One is your Master, even Christ*, (Matth. xxiii, 8). But his authority is not fully acknowledged unless all the tongues of men are silent. If we would submit to his doctrine, all that has been invented by men must be thrown down and destroyed.³

The intention of Peter in calling for three tabernacles was a pious one in part; it was a desire to commemorate a great revelation-event by an act of honor and piety. *Piety* is thus a very common substitute for true religion and an impediment to salvation. The piety of Peter, James, and John was designed to forestall Christ's death and resurrection and the subsequent responsibility of the apostles' to confront a hostile world with the gospel. Thus piety was to replace conflict, but, in so doing, it would have denied salvation.

This attitude has been all too common in the church. To forestall the conflicts over faith and doctrine which might tear the church apart and cleanse it, the pious ones plead for a pious withdrawal instead, as though salvation means withdrawal

³. John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, vol. II, William Pringle, translator (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1957), 314f.

rather than victory. Such piety, moreover, makes a great show of spirituality and reverence, and it presents itself as superior to the “trouble-makers” who want a godly confrontation.

True piety or growth in sanctification is a work of God’s grace, whereby those whom God has chosen before the foundation of the world, are, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, renewed in their whole man after the image of God, so that now, in obedience to the law-word of God, they put His word into force in every area of life, serving God in joy and in thanksgiving. It is the application of Christ’s victory, of His saving power, to every area of life in terms of His word.

Thus, where the pagan wants insurance against trouble and problems, the redeemed man wants victory over all troubles and problems. The victory of the Christian begins with Christ’s redemptive power in his own life, and he then applies that victory to every sphere of life.

One school of pietists speaks much of “Victorious Living.” By this, unfortunately, they mean a neoplatonic flight from the responsibilities of life. In modern Protestantism, it was John Wesley who propagated the idea of “entire instantaneous sanctification.” More recent champions of “the Victorious Life” have been Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, long-time editor of *The Sunday School Times*, Hannah Whittall Smith, author of *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*, James H. McConkey and his *The Threifold Secret of the Holy Spirit*, W. E. Boardman, A. T. Pierson, A. B. Simpson, and others. Their opinions are marked by the spiritual pretension of a higher way, “The Second Blessing,” and so on. These pietists preach faith and pious human effort as the solution to sin; i.e., instead of recognizing God’s grace as the remedy for sin, they see faith (as man’s effort) as the remedy for sin. People are thus urged to have more faith, pray more, indulge in more acts of pious withdrawal from the world, and so on, and thus, by their efforts, acquire faith — power against sin. It is, as Warfield pointed out, a Pelagianism which substitutes man’s faith for Pelagius’ works; it formally affirms God’s saving power in justification, while

insisting on “Christ plus my receiving” as the “hope for victory” against sin.⁴

W. H. Griffith Thomas, in his interpretation of Romans 7, gives us the fallacies of “Victorious Life” theology. As Warfield has shown,

That chapter depicts for us the process of the eradication of the old nature. Dr. Thomas reads it statically and sees in it merely a “deadly warfare between the two natures”; which, he affirms, “does not represent the normal Christian life of sanctification.” He even permits himself to say, “There is no Divine grace in that chapter; only man’s nature struggling to be good and holy by the law.” What is really in the chapter is Divine grace warring against, and not merely counteracting but eradicating, the natural evil or sin. To Paul the presence of the conflict there depicted is the guarantee of victory. The three things we must insist on if we would share Paul’s views are: first, that to grace always belongs the initiative — it is grace that works the change: secondly, that to grace always belongs the victory — grace is infinite power: and thirdly, that the working of grace is by process, and therefore reveals itself at any given point of observation as conflict. In so far as Dr. Thomas’s representation obscures any one of these things it falls away from the teaching of the New Testament.⁵

Wherever man separates himself from God and the grace of God, there he also tries to rival God and to be more than man. Not surprisingly, not only do the “Victorious Life” people seek to be holier than God in His word requires, but also to equal God. Thus, in *Every-Day Religion* (1893), Hannah Whittall Smith

makes Mark xi. 22 mean: “We are commanded to have the same sort of faith that God has. Romans iv. 17 describes,” she says, “the sort of faith God has”: He creates things by merely calling them as though they were. “How much of this creative power of faith we his children share, I am not prepared to say,” she modestly adds. “But,” she continues, “that we are called to share far more of it than we have ever

⁴ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Perfectionism*, vol. II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 608, 577.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 583f.

yet laid hold of, I feel very sure.” All this from a simple objective genitive! One would like to see them try their system of interpretation on Col. ii. 12.⁶

In the name of God, such pietists have advanced a blatant humanism in which God is not the sovereign lord and savior, but simply another greater resource available to man. Thus, Dr. A. T. Pierson, in his book on *The Keswick Movement*, “speaks of God as a reservoir of grace on which we draw, and even permits to himself such an objectionable phrase as ‘Holy Ghost power,’ — which, we are informed, is at our disposal.” The implications of such blasphemy are plainly stated by Warfield:

God stands always helplessly by until man calls Him into action by opening a channel into which His energies may flow. It sounds dreadfully like turning on the steam or the electricity. This representation is employed not only with reference to the great matters of salvation and sanctification in which God’s operations are “secured” (or released) by our faith, but also with reference to every blessing bestowed by Him. We are not only constantly exhorted to “claim” blessings, but the enjoyment of these blessings is with wearying iteration suspended on our “claiming” them. It is expressly declared that God cannot bless us in any way until we open the way for His action by an act of our own will. Everywhere and always the initiative belongs to man; everywhere and always God’s action is suspended upon man’s will. We wish to make no concealment of the distress with which this mode of representation afflicts us. When Erasmus even distantly approached it and spoke of “securing” the grace of God by “some little thing” retained to human powers, Luther told him flatly that he was out-pelagianizing Pelagius. Man

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, footnote 598f.; citation from H. W. Smith, *Every-Day Religion*, 153. All that Mark 11:22 says is this: “And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.” Romans 4:17 reads “As it *is* written, ‘I have made thee a father of many nations,’ before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Clearly, the text gives no ground for Mrs. Smith’s ideas, and she has read her thoughts into Scripture. Warfield’s challenge with respect to Col. 2:12 is to the point: “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Let such try to equal God by raising the dead!

does not “secure” the grace of God: the grace of God “secures” the activities of man — in every sphere and in every detail, of these activities. It is nothing less than degrading to God to suppose Him thus subject to the control of man and unable to move except as man permits Him to do so, or to produce any effects except as He is turned into the channels of their working at man’s option.⁷

The pagan view of spirits and gods was that they were a resource man could use to provide insurance against troubles. With this utilitarian view of the gods, there still went some reverential fear of them. In the modern pietistic “Victorious Life” and other Pelagian movements, such as Campus Crusade and the Jesus Movement, even this reverential fear is often lacking, and God is merely the great resource which man can tap if he will. In such a perspective, man is sovereign, and God the resource and insurance agency serving and glorifying man, so that the whole world is turned upside down, and God made man’s servant and instrument. Man has become his own god and savior, and God’s function is to act as the insurance agency so that man may prosper.

There can only be divine salvation where there is a sovereign and omnipotent God. The salvation of the sovereign and triune God is of necessity victorious because it is wholly determined by Himself. As Nebuchadnezzar finally recognized with respect to God,

And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Dan. 4:35)

Only such a God can be truly worshipped, and only such a God can truly save man.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 609f.

III

Salvation and Judgment

The word *salvation* in the Old Testament means safety, ease, and deliverance (*yeshuah, yesha, moshaoth*); the verb *to save* means to live, to preserve life, to give safety, preserve, or to deliver (*chayah, yeshua, yasha, malat, natsal, shamar*). In Psalm 68:20, “salvation” or “deliverance” comes from a stem meaning “to be broad, spacious,” so that salvation also means enlargement. According to Brown,

The root idea in salvation is *deliverance*. In every case some danger or evil is presupposed, in rescue from which salvation consists. Since in primitive times one of the greatest dangers to be feared is defeat in battle, salvation is often used in OT in the sense of “victory” (e.g. Ex. 15:2, I S. 11:13 RV “deliverance,” 19:5 RV “victory,” Ps. 20:5 RVm “victory”), and successful warriors are called “saviours” (e.g. Jg. 3:9, 15, Neh. 9:27). But this is only one modification of a much broader usage.¹

The word *salvation* came to be increasingly associated with a savior or messiah, always retaining its basic idea of deliverance and victory.

In the New Testament, the Greek words *soteria* (salvation) and *sozein* (to save) have as their basic meaning deliverance, bodily health, preservation, victory, and help. As Barclay has observed, “Salvation in the NT is ‘total salvation.’ It saves a man, body and soul.”² It thus has many aspects: it includes salvation from physical illness (Matt. 9:21; Luke 8:36, where the verb is *sozein*); salvation from danger (Matt. 8:25; 14:30); salvation from life’s infection (Acts 2:40); from “lostness” (Matt. 18:11; Luke 19:10); from sin (Matt. 1:21); from wrath (Rom. 5:9); it is moreover eschatological, and it means in its

¹ W. Adams Brown, “Salvation, Saviour,” in James Hastings, editor, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. IV (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1919), 358.

² William Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook* (New York: Harper, n.d.), 119.

fullness the enthronement of Christ (Rom. 13:11; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 1:5; Rev. 12:10).³

In the Bible, salvation is inseparable from judgment. As Ferries pointed out,

The truth that God will come to the world for judgment is part of the burden of OT prophecy. The rule of God, partially realized over Israel in the days of the prophets, is destined to be made perfect, and it is to extend over all the nations of the earth. This consummation will necessitate a “day of the Lord,” i.e., a judgment of the faithless in the chosen nation and of the heathen (Is. 2:12, Joel 1:15, 2:1 etc.); but Israel will be saved and enjoy the blessings of a new and everlasting covenant (Is. 61:8, Jer. 31:31ff. etc.).⁴

In every instance, salvation involved judgment; in fact, it must be said that salvation and judgment are different aspects of the same event. An exception to this identification is that, while this is true for the people of God, it is not true for the reprobate. For them, judgment comes with only one face, reprobation. Sinners, prior to their conversion, also find judgment to be without a redeeming aspect.

Scripture, however, gives us numerous examples of the coincidence of judgment and salvation in the history of God’s covenant race. The more notable examples can be cited briefly. The Flood was God’s judgment on the antediluvial world, and a very radical and total judgment. It was at the same time the salvation of Noah and his family from a corrupt world that was steadily destroying all righteousness and law. Similarly, the ten plagues on Egypt, and the Red Sea crossing, give us dramatic evidence of the coincidence of salvation and judgment. Only by judging and extensively destroying Egypt was Israel freed from its bondage to that power. Every step in the judgment was a step in the deliverance of Israel. Even the first three plagues, which struck Goshen (or Israel) and Egypt alike, served to bring home the power of God to Israel. The tenth plague required Israel to accept God’s judgment on all sin

³ *Ibid.*, 119-121.

⁴ G. Ferries, “Judgment,” in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. II, 821.

and to seek the protective covering of the blood of the passover sacrifice (Ex. 12:3-13). Judgment would only pass over those who recognized the sovereign power of God as their only redeemer, who accepted the judgment of God on all unrighteousness and sought the covering of the vicarious judgment and death-sentence God provided. At the Red Sea, God delivered Israel and destroyed the Egyptian army. The Song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-19) celebrated this judgment as salvation, as the opening lines make clear:

1. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
2. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.
3. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.
4. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.
5. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.
6. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

God in His majesty rises up to deliver His people and to destroy His enemies. This event, and the Song of Moses, are used as types and symbols of God's salvation of His people and His judgment on their foes. As Keil and Delitzsch noted,

As the fact of Israel's deliverance from the power of its oppressors is of everlasting importance to the Church of the Lord in its conflict with the ungodly powers of the world, in which the Lord continually overthrows the enemies of His kingdom, as He overthrew Pharaoh and his horsemen in the depths of the sea: so Moses' song at the Red Sea furnishes the Church of the Lord with the materials for its songs of praise in all the great conflicts which it has to sustain, during its onward course, with the powers of the world. Hence not only does the keynote of this song resound through all Israel's songs, in praise of the glorious work of Jehovah for the good of His people (see

especially Isa. xii.), but the song of Moses the servant of God will also be sung, along with the song of the Lamb, by the conquerors who stand upon the “sea of glass,” and have gained the victory over the beast and his image (Rev. xv. 3).⁵

The entrance of Israel into Canaan, an aspect of their salvation-victory, meant the destruction of the Canaanites whom they displaced. As instruments of God’s judgment, their salvation was not complete, because their judgment on Canaan was incomplete. To the extent that they compromised and evaded their responsibility, to that extent their victory was limited, and the enemy remained in their midst as a snare and a corrupting force.

The supreme example of the coincidence of judgment and salvation is the cross of Christ. St. Paul, in Romans 5:6-21, makes this abundantly clear. We are reconciled to God, i.e., His wrath and judgment against us are removed, by Christ’s atoning blood; Christ saves us by being judged for us. As Hodge noted of Romans 5:10, “‘Being justified by the death of his Son,’ evidently corresponds to the phrase, ‘Being justified by his blood.’” To be reconciled means to appease anger or remove the ground of displeasure (Heb. 2:17). “It is the appropriate business of a priest to propitiate God, and not to reform men.”⁶ Christ removes God’s wrath, and God regenerates us by His sovereign grace. “Redemption is not by truth or moral influence, but by blood vs. 9, 10,”⁷ i.e., by judgment.

No one who refuses to accept the judgment of God upon himself as a sinner and as a member of Adam’s fallen race can become a member of Christ’s new humanity of restored, regenerate men. Truly to accept the one involves accepting the other. This means that evangelistic groups which downgrade man’s fallen and helpless estate cannot truly accept Christ as savior. For them Christ opens the door of salvation, and indeed *must* open the door, for all who by their own act of sovereign will and faith

⁵. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, The Pentateuch*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949), 50.

⁶. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Armstrong, 1893), 217f.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 220.

choose God. Such judgment as they make on themselves is thus not God's judgment, for they assert their ability to repent and to "choose Christ." It is then they who reconcile a passive God to themselves, whereas in Scripture the sovereign God and Jesus Christ do all the work of reconciliation.

If judgment be denied, then salvation is also denied, because no victory is possible without the judgment and overthrow of the enemies of God and His people. Where men deny judgment, they do it in the name of *peace*. Peace is offered as a higher goal than judgment, and a surer way to salvation. The proponents of world, racial, social, and religious peace call for a suspension of judgment as the way of salvation.

The English word *peace* comes from the Latin *pax*, a word in Latin akin to *pacere*, to make an agreement, and *pangere*, to fasten. It is also related to the word *pay* (also from the Latin *pax*), and means to satisfy, or requite. The New Testament word for peace (*eirene*) means harmony, freedom from molestation, order, and quietness, whereas the Hebrew *shalom* signifies wholeness. All of these meanings aptly describe the goal of humanistic peace-lovers.

How can they have this peace without judgment? And what kind of peace is it? Nietzsche expressed the nature of this dream of peace very aptly: it is *beyond good and evil*. If no judgment is permitted, then good and evil must coexist in harmony and without warring against one another. For good and evil to achieve this kind of harmony means that they must deny their reality in favor of a higher factor, unity in peace. Nietzsche had to begin by condemning the "Will to Truth." A lie, he held, has as much value as the truth and is often more useful. "There is no such thing as moral phenomena, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena."⁸ Moreover, "What is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil."⁹ Peace thus requires the transcending of good and evil; not even love, however, can be called "good," nor "peace," for we must be beyond the idea of good and evil. (Nietzsche could not avoid seeing women as evil, as he called for

⁸. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil, The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 80.

⁹. *Ibid.*, 88.

the world to go beyond good and evil.) In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche held that the idea of good and evil was an unnatural addition (essentially Hebraic and Christian) to man's world, and a disturber of man's life and peace. The Jew was for Nietzsche the symbol of that tradition, and therefore rightly held by Rome to be guilty of "hatred of the whole human race."¹⁰ Abolish good and evil, and man will be free.

Later, however, Nietzsche saw his program of life beyond good and evil as a disaster, and he wrote on "Why I am a Fatality" in *Ecce Homo*, declaring, "I am the voice of truth." His "truth" was the denial of all existing truths in the name of the superman who lives beyond good and evil. It is "The *Transvaluation of all Values*: this is my formula for mankind's act of highest self-recognition, which in me has become flesh and genius.... Thus, I am necessarily a Man of Destiny." Nietzsche's truth would act as an earthquake on all society.

The concept "politics" is thus raised bodily into the realm of spiritual warfare. All the mighty forms of the old society are blown into space — for they all rest on falsehood: there will be wars, whose like have never been seen on earth before. Politics on a grand scale will date from me.¹¹

All definitions of good and evil were for Nietzsche restraints on life and expressions of a hatred of life. "Here is a *definition of morality*: Morality is the idiosyncrasy of decadents, actuated by a desire *to avenge themselves successfully upon life*. The issue is "*Dionysus versus Christ*."¹² But what is Dionysus?

It was *against* morality, therefore, that my instinct, an instinct defending life, turned in this provocative book, inventing for itself a fundamental counter-dogma and counter-evaluation of life, one purely artistic and *anti-Christian*. What should I call it? As a philologist and man of words I baptized it, not without some impertinence, — for who could be sure of the proper name

¹⁰ Nietzsche, First Essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, in *ibid.*, 36.

¹¹ Nietzsche, "Why I am a Fatality," *Ecce Homo*, in *ibid.*, 133f.

¹² *Ibid.*, 142d, 145.

of the Antichrist? — with the name of a Greek god: I called it *Dionysian*.¹³

Nietzsche's Dionysus, while ostensibly defending life, is pure negation. Ostensibly defending life, he called for total war. Championing man, Nietzsche called for the death of man and the birth of superman. Nietzsche's view of the world beyond good and evil is one of total hatred and total war, a world in which there is neither peace nor salvation. Where God's judgment is denied, peace and salvation are impossible. Not surprisingly, Warner has found in Nietzsche a major example of the will to defeat and the urge to mass destruction. Warner found in Nietzsche a desire for the annihilation of all who live, and the development of a philosophy designed to justify this mass destruction. The hatred of life was paramount in Nietzsche, but he projected his own hatred on all his opponents. In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche said, "nihilism is... the belief that everything deserves to perish." Nihilism "is the conviction that life is absurd in the light of the highest values already discovered." Of himself Nietzsche said, "I have been a Nihilist from top to toe." As Warner summed it up,

And therefore, if the syllogism is applicable to the products of Nietzschean thought, the philosopher has said this: *I believe life is absurd; I believe everything deserves to perish; I seek to destroy all life, to lead the living to suicide.*¹⁴

This concept of life as absurd is basic also to existentialism. Ostensibly, it too offers the more abundant life to man. Dostoyevsky once observed, "If God did not exist, everything would be possible."

And Sartre claims that this exactly is the starting point for Existentialism: everything is permitted. And so it is man who is the creator of all values; for by choosing certain values for himself, by implication he chooses them for all others also. Man is now God, because he creates himself — he makes his own essence, and he also decides what values

¹³ Nietzsche, "An Attempt at Self-Criticism," in *ibid.*, 156.

¹⁴ Samuel J. Warner, *The Urge to Mass Destruction* (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1957), 33f.

will be placed upon his life and his actions and even upon the life and the actions of all others. It is no wonder that anguish comes to haunt him in this work, for he must make his decisions alone without reference to heaven or to any stable norms; and he knows that he alone bears the entire responsibility for his decisions. He has not chosen to play God, and yet no matter what he does he cannot escape his role. In the face of these brutal facts the Existentialists can but speak of abandonment and despair.¹⁵

The existentialist *chooses* to deny God, and he then whimpers at the implications of his choice. Instead of gaining peace and salvation by his choice, he gains an empty universe; life has become *absurd*. There is thus no intrinsic value to life. Life is irrational and meaningless and hence absurd; the only thing that can be said about existence is that it *exists*. The only thing that can be said about life is simply that it is. For the existentialist, man lives beyond good and evil, and beyond the God of Scripture, as his own god, *but in this meaningless world it also is meaningless for man to be a god*. Existentialism is coherent atheism: it is man's attempt to become god in the place of God. Man, for the existentialist, is not a creature of God, but "is *self-creative*."¹⁶ As one existentialist, Malraux, first saw, the death of God involves the death of man: "For you absolute reality has been God, then man. But *man is dead*, after God."¹⁷ The salvation of existentialism, like that of Nietzsche, is mass murder and suicide. Not only is it meaningless in a meaningless and absurd life to be a god, it is also meaningless to be alive. No reason or value exists; it is meaningless to die, but it is also meaningless to live.

A world without judgment is a world without values and hence without meaning. To deny judgment is to deny value and meaning. *Without judgment, there can be no cultural progress*, and the only valid form of judgment is that which is grounded in the word of God. The general revelation of God

¹⁵ Walter Odajnyk, *Marxism and Existentialism* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1965), 13.

¹⁶ Everett W. Knight, *Literature Considered As Philosophy, The French Example* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 125.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

to mankind enabled some cultures to progress to a point, until the relativism inherent in man's original sin, his desire to be his own god (Gen. 3:5), subverted judgment in his society. With relativism came stagnation and deterioration.

Moreover, judgment and salvation cannot be separated from one another. Those theologies which hold to judgment, while having a limited view of salvation, as witness premillennial and amillennial theologies, cut the vital nerve of both doctrines. Only as man has a total concept of salvation, of victory in time and eternity, can he apply a total concept of judgment to every sphere of life. Judgment is of necessity total wherever it is held that every sphere of life must be brought into captivity to Christ, because every sphere must manifest His salvation as an aspect of His new creation. A doctrine of salvation which calls for man's redemption, and limits that redemption to his soul now and his body in the general resurrection, is defective. The redeemed man will of necessity, because it is basic to his life, work to bring redemption to every sphere and area of life as an aspect of his creation mandate. The redeemed man's warfare against the powers of evil is not "after the flesh," i.e., does not rely on human resources, but relies rather on the supernatural power of God. *Everything* that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, St. Paul tells us, shall be cast down.¹⁸ In the words of Arthur Way's rendering of 2 Corinthians 10:3-5,

Very human as I am, I do not fight with merely human weapons. No, the weapons with which I war are not weapons of mere flesh and blood, but, in the strength of God, they are mighty enough to raze all strong-holds of our foes. I can batter down bulwarks of human reason, I can scale every crag-fortress that towers up bidding defiance to the true knowledge of God. I can make each rebel purpose my prisoner-of-war, and bow it into submission to Messiah.¹⁹

¹⁸. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 232-236.

¹⁹. Arthur S. Way, translator, *The Letters of St. Paul* (London: Macmillan, 1935), 81.

IV

Salvation and Sovereignty

The Biblical doctrine of God is that He is eternal (Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17), immutable (James 1:17; Mal. 3:6), incomprehensible (Ps. 145:3), almighty (Gen. 17:1), free (Ps. 115:3), and, among other things, absolute (Ex. 3:14). God also from all eternity decreed all things that come to pass (Isa. 45:6-7; Eph. 1:5-6, 11; John 19:11; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 15:18; Prov. 16:33; Rom. 9:11, 13, 15-16, 18, 22-23; Prov. 16:4; etc.) by His sovereign will and for His own purpose.

The Greek concept that some idea or universal is above God, or governs God, is alien to the Bible. The idea that the good, the true, and the beautiful have an ultimacy governing God is impossible for Scripture, because the reverse is true: the good is what God decrees and does; the idea of the good does not govern God, but is instead governed by God and His being. In brief, God is sovereign: there is nothing by which He can be judged, because He is the principle of all judgment. Nothing governs or determines God except Himself, because God is absolutely free, self-existing, and self-determinative.

When asked by Moses to name (or define) Himself, God refused to do so, saying, "I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:14). God cannot be truly defined, because He is Himself the principle of all definition. All things are truly known only in terms of Him and His sovereign purpose and decree. All the ostensible definitions of God are simply partial catalogues of His attributes. No definition can circumscribe God.

In a sense we can say that God is the only true existentialist, in that He is self-existent, and He is to be understood only in terms of Himself and without reference to anything outside of Himself. He alone has aseity or self-existence. Neither His essence nor His existence are derivative, and, whereas

existentialism refuses to believe in any system or purpose in the universe because it is as yet external to man, for God there can be no other system or purpose dominating or controlling the universe, because there is nothing external to His decree, counsel, and government. He alone is Lord and sovereign.

Because God alone is *sovereign Lord*, God alone can truly save man, because God alone decrees, ordains, and governs all things absolutely. In Isaiah 45, God declares,

21. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me: a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me.

22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else.

23. 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.

In vv. 14-25, the nations are told that “they must be subdued, but only in order to be blessed and saved, which is declared to have been the divine purpose, and revealed as such from the beginning.”¹ In these three verses (21-23), the nations are reminded that only God is ultimate and sovereign, and there is none else who is absolute Lord save God, and none able to save but God Himself. Moreover, God declares Himself “a just God and a Saviour.” As Plumptre noted, “Stress is laid on the union of the two attributes which in human actions are often thought incompatible.”² God asserts the ultimacy in Himself of all things, here specifically of both justice or judgment and salvation. The absolute judge is also the only savior, and the nations cannot sue for either at any other court or agency.

All things have their origin in Him. “The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil” (Prov. 16:4). “Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the

¹ Joseph Addison Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1953), 177.

² E. H. Plumptre, “Isaiah,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 536.

nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together” (Zech. 10:4). Thus, nothing can be truly understood unless we begin with the fact of God’s sovereignty as revealed in His infallible word. Where men take as their starting-point some aspect of creation, they quickly drift into heresies. One Reformed pastor declared that his starting-point was the total depravity of man, and hence the need of a Savior. The defects of this position are readily apparent. Man was not always fallen: he was once in the state of innocence. Many men are now in the state of grace, and far more in the state of glory. Even more, by beginning with the condition of man, his position has increasingly become Arminian in practice, man-centered and concerned with man’s needs rather than God’s glory.

Moreover, to begin with any aspect of creation is quickly to face impossible antinomies and contradictions, tensions which offer no hope of resolution. Thus, many scientists, by their analysis of the behavior of the physical universe, or of the nature of energy, end in a strict and naturalistic determinism. They not only can make no place for freedom, but also they find themselves sometimes unwilling to speak of man’s mind and consciousness. Some call consciousness an *epiphenomenon*; others avoid the term consciousness altogether.

Still others, insistent on affirming historic humanism, are staunch in affirming the freedom of man, and, with existentialism, we have a radical assertion of this freedom. Sartre will not even accept the concept of an unconscious aspect of man lest man’s freedom be surrendered to the underworld of nature. Modern science and humanism, both born of an earlier humanism, are now in contradiction to one another, however much at one in their hostility to God. Both affirm a valid aspect of human experience. Both the simple, naive experience of man and the scientific analysis of creation point to an order and necessity which seems to indicate determinism. Although some thinkers, because man’s knowledge of the universe is not total, temper their description of that necessity by calling it a probability concept,

they still operate in the laboratory and in life on the premise of a necessary and determined order. However, naive experience also confirms man's freedom. Man's decisions, moral and intellectual, are often reached after much uncertainty, indecision, inner agony, and torment, as well as a major hesitancy that points to the reality of the free choice made. They indicate moreover the frequent burden man feels at having this freedom. Naive experience thus confirms both determinism and freedom. Similarly, scientific evidences are commonly cited to vindicate both determinism and indeterminism. On the human level, there is no reconciling these mutually exclusive facts.

Very early Greek philosophy faced the same contradiction. Heraclitus (c. 536-470 B.C.) saw the mutability of all things:

It is not possible to step twice in the same river. (*It is impossible to touch the same mortal substance twice, but through the rapidity of change*) they scatter and again combine (*or rather, not even "again" or "later," but the combination and separation are simultaneous*) and approach and separate.³

All things change and are changed, so that mutability is the basic fact about reality. In contrast, Parmenides of Elea (c. 475 B.C.) insisted on the one basic unchanging substance behind all changes. Heraclitus had seen the random, changing character of reality: "The fairest universe is but a dust-heap piled up at random." For Heraclitus, all things flow: "Those who step into the same river have different waters flowing ever upon them." For Parmenides, there is one unchanging being which is also thought and also matter: "For it is the same thing to think and to be." Again, "It is all the same thing to me from what point I begin, for I shall return again to this same point." Moreover, "Being has no coming-into-being and no destruction, for it is whole of limb, without motion, and without end.... How could Being perish? How could it come into being?"⁴ In effect, there is no change. Heraclitus

³. Phrases of Heraclitus quoted in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; summaries of contexts, and words inserted in italics, provided to give meaning by Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), 31.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 25, 33, 42, 43.

and Parmenides thus came to radically different conclusions by stressing varying aspects of experience. They amply demonstrated the inability of human experience and reason to comprehend the nature of reality or to reconcile its apparent paradoxes. The consequence of such an approach is a reduction of reality at the very least to only one aspect of its appearance and thus to render it an absurdity.

Where we begin with the sovereign God and His infallible word, these problems disappear. Just as the problem of *the one and the many* is reconciled in the equal ultimacy of particularity and plurality in the trinity,⁵ so the problem of absolute predestination and of freedom is reconciled in God. Predestination is not determinism, which permits no will nor is personal, but is personal, particular, and universal, and also permits freedom. In God there is “no variableness nor shadow of turning” (James 1: 17). God says, “I am the LORD, I change not” (Mal. 3:6). The unvarying, immutable nature of God is clearly set forth in Scripture. However, God is not a prisoner of some outside law or of His nature: He is absolutely free: “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased” (Ps. 115:3). The immutability and freedom of God are absolute and primary; the predestination and freedom of man are secondary and are aspects of God’s creation. The freedom of man is the freedom of a creature, not the freedom of God; it is very real as a secondary freedom and cannot be reduced to an illusion without at the same time making mind, will, and consciousness in man illusions also. The counsel and determined purposes of man are no less real for being a secondary factor.

This distinction is an important one, and it clarifies the problem with respect to salvation. Because God from all eternity freely and unchangeably has ordained whatsoever comes to pass, for this very reason man has a secondary and real part in his salvation. As the *Westminster Confession* stated it,

⁵. See R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1971).

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own *will*, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the *will* of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.⁶

The secondary freedom of man rests only in the absolute freedom of God. As Shaw noted,

It may be further observed, that, although God has unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass, yet this does not take away the contingency of second causes, either in themselves or as to us. Nothing can be more contingent than the decision of the lot; “the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” Prov. xvi. 33.⁷

Existentialism, however, requires an absolute and primary freedom for man. To say this means that man claims to be his own god, a fact which Sartre affirmed:

The best way to conceive of the fundamental project of human reality is to say that man is the being whose project is to be God.... God, value and supreme end of transcendence, represents the permanent limit in terms of which man makes known to himself what he is. To be man means to reach toward being God. Or if you prefer, man fundamentally is the desire to be God.⁸

Because, for Sartre, there is no God, man “is condemned to be free,” i.e., absolute freedom is his responsibility as the intelligent being in an absurd and irrational universe. Since there is for him no God and no absolute predestinating and eternal counsel of God, man is free and must provide that counsel. “In other words, there is no determinism, man is free, man is freedom.”⁹

⁶ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapt. III, sect. 1.

⁷ Robert Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1846), 62.

⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), 63.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

Dostoyevsky said, "If God didn't exist, everything would be possible." That is the very starting point of existentialism. Indeed, everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to. He can't start making excuses for himself.¹⁰

Man thus begins with his bare existence, without essence and without an eternal counsel and law of God. "Man makes himself. He isn't ready made at the start. In choosing his ethics, he makes himself, and force of circumstances is such that he can not abstain from choosing one." Sartre eliminates God as the predestinating power, but "force of circumstances," a blind power, now enters the picture to push man into making himself. For Sartre, this absolute freedom is "the basis of all values." It is personal, individual, and anarchistic, in that every man is his own god, but necessity and survival require this freedom to be social, to limit itself. "And in wanting freedom we discover that it depends entirely on the freedom of others, and that the freedom of others depends on ours."¹¹ In Sartre's *No Exit*, Garcin declares, "Hell is — other people!" In a world of many gods, another claimant to be god must be a devil to the man who affirms himself as god. Lehan called attention to the contradiction in Sartre, who wants an antisocial and a social goal, two mutually exclusive ends, although his philosophy is essentially antisocial:

Existential choice and freedom are constructed along asocial lines; existential commitment, on the other hand, is a principle of social involvement. The hero is thus torn between the instinct to live outside society and the guilt which follows such a choice. These two positions are mutually exclusive — and yet to see them both in existential philosophy is only to place Sartre's *No Exit* next to his *What is Literature?*¹²

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 43, 45-46.

¹² Richard Lehan, "Existentialism in Recent American Fiction: The Demonic Quest," in Joseph J. Waldmeir, editor, *Recent American Fiction, Some Critical Views* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), 78.

Sartre is thus concerned about the social and personal salvation of men as he defines it, and yet logically only concerned with his own freedom. Since he has “discarded God the Father, there has to be someone to invent values.” This means that, because “life has no meaning *a priori*,” it is therefore “up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing else but the meaning that you choose.” Sartre wants an existential humanism, but not “the self-enclosed humanism of Comte, and, let it be said, of fascism.” Man must transcend himself, not in the sense that God is transcendent, “but in seeking outside of himself a goal which is just this liberation, just this particular fulfilment.”¹³ Briefly, this means social involvement as man’s salvation. He is free because there is no God, but he is liberated from this freedom by turning it into social involvement! It is thus a surrender of freedom to society rather than to God; more than that, it is a surrender of being:

We can understand after these remarks that the abstract, ontological “desire to be” is unable to represent the fundamental, *human* structure of the individual; it cannot be an obstacle to his freedom. Freedom in fact... is strictly identified with nihilation. The only being which can be called free is the being which nihilates its being. Moreover we know that nihilation is *lack of being* and can not be otherwise. Freedom is precisely the being which makes itself a lack of being.¹⁴

As previously noted, Andre Malraux saw that the death of God involves the death of man.¹⁵ The death of God is the death of man, which also means the death of man’s society. In a famous passage, Sartre’s pessimism appears clearly:

Every human reality is a passion in that it projects losing itself so as to found being and by the same stroke to constitute the In-itself which escapes contingency by being its own foundation, the *Ens causa sui*, which religions call God. Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order

¹³ Sartre, *op. cit.*, 49, 51.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵ Everett W. Knight, *Literature Considered As Philosophy, The French Example* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 182.

that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion.¹⁶

Thus, when man proclaims the death of God and man's freedom from God, the meaning of all things, including freedom and salvation, disappears, and man himself announces his own futility and death.

Because the universe is one of absolute law and meaning, being the handiwork of the absolute, predestinating God, man's life has meaning, but a derivative rather than self-creating meaning. Because God has absolute freedom, man, created in His image, has a secondary and creaturely freedom. In a world of pure chance and of no meaning, freedom has no meaning either. The absolute freedom of God is the absolute self-determination of God. The relative and secondary freedom of man is also his contingent self-determination.

Thus, from start to finish, the initiative and the determination in man's salvation is God's absolute and predestinating purpose. Romans 9 makes it clear that this sovereign decree precedes our existence, and, indeed, all creation (Eph. 1:4, 9, 11). Moreover, as the *Westminster Confession* declares,

All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.¹⁷

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness, An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 615.

¹⁷ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapt. X, sect. 1.

Only because God is sovereign is man's life and salvation even possible. The Greco-Roman world in the days of the early church affirmed the absolute freedom of man from a divine predestination, and also the ultimacy of chance. However, just as Sartre introduced "the force of circumstances," so the thinkers of that day introduced and developed the force of circumstances, of the stars, fate, and other aspects of man's environment, so that man's freedom was destroyed, and man became the determined product of a meaningless environment and passive before the world, his maker. The Christians, on the other hand, affirmed predestination and freed man from his environment, so that, instead of being a product of his environment, man became lord over it and a free man under God.¹⁸

Not even Sartre holds that man's existence is self-created; it is man's essence and nature which existential man seeks to create out of his own being and "the force of circumstances." Man's existence is a product, for Sartre, of the absurd universe, which again effects him by "the force of circumstances" and the practical necessity for life in community. As a result, man's existence and his essence are products of the universe and of society, so that man is, despite his rebellion, essentially passive before them. He is reduced to "a futile passion."

For orthodox Christianity, man's existence and essence are the sovereign work of the triune God, not of nature or the universe, so that, while man is passive in relationship to God, he is active in his relationship to the world around him and towards society. In that area, as a creature made in God's image, man exercises his freedom under God. In knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, the redeemed man exercises dominion over all things, confident in the total meaning which undergirds all things and which assures him that his "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58), because he works in a

¹⁸. See Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture, A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944); and R. J. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1968).

universe of total meaning. This totality of meaning comes from the triune God: it is personal. In the person of Christ, it preserves him from falling and assures him of the unfailing government of “the only wise God our Saviour.” In the joyful ascription of St. Jude, the believer has the certainty of total meaning, total salvation, and the fulness of victory and joy:

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24-25)

A God who saves must be sovereign, personal, omniscient, and omnipotent. He must be the self-existent one, “He Who Is.” Neither man nor society can legitimately make such a claim, and neither can play the role of savior. When, however, existentialism leads men and societies to do precisely that, they will claim the powers of God over the world. They will insist on probing the mind of man totally, in treating him as entirely subject to re-creation, and they will insist on subjecting him totally to their determination. The God of Scripture is beyond man and this world, not on their level. The gods of existentialism are emerging out of the world, and therefore in competition with the world. To make good their claims to be gods over men, they must obliterate other men, their rival claimants to godhood. Skinner thus will not allow man to be man. He declares that “Careless references to purpose are still to be found in both physics and biology, but good practice has no place for them; yet almost everyone attributes human behavior to intentions, purposes, aims, and goals.”¹⁹ All men are for Skinner simply products of their environment and are governed by a blind determinism. All men are held to be on a disaster course because of over-population, abuse of the environment, and so on. How can Skinner extricate himself and his associates from this

¹⁹. B.F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 8.

blind determinism and then determine that determining world? As one reviewer noted,

It would take a *deus ex machina* to remove anyone from that apparatus, as Mr. Skinner has constructed it — his argument certainly doesn't.²⁰

This is indeed the case. Skinner, after denying man everything which Christendom has seen as essential to his humanity, must suddenly transform himself, a denatured man, into a *deus ex machina*, a god who is able to save. The salvation he promises is, however, one of total slavery to the mind-conditioners: it allows no secondary causality or freedom but only a mindless, purposeless obedience to the will of his new gods. Salvation by anyone other than the sovereign, personal, omniscient, and omnipotent God is not salvation, but rather total slavery and control.

It must be acknowledged, however, that men like Skinner, Marx, Stalin, and others have been very much in the right in seeing the link between sovereignty and salvation. As a prelude to their plans of salvation, they insist on total sovereignty by an elite group whose plans constitute a new decree of predestination by the new gods. Sovereignty and salvation *cannot* be separated. The pertinent question must therefore always be raised with respect to all would-be saviors: to whom does their plan of salvation give sovereignty, and what is the nature of their plan or decree of predestination?

The sad fact is that not only is this question not asked, but the false ministers and priests of Christ are also busy denying God's sovereignty and His decree of predestination. Practically, this means that they are denying salvation by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

But sovereignty denied does not disappear. It is simply transferred to another source. To deny the God of Scripture is implicitly to affirm other gods.

²⁰ Peter A. Johnson, "Books...", *Stanford Observer*, February 1972, 8.

V

Salvation and Dominion

John Wyclif, in his analysis of *dominion*, did some of the most important thinking in the history of the church and of Christendom. He used the term *dominion* (or lordship) in the full meaning of the term in his day, in the double sense of *authority* and *ownership*. God, he declared, is the universal Lord or *dominus*, having absolute dominion over all things. All men, as God's creatures, hold all things as a feudal grant from God, as a *beneficium*. Every *beneficium* implies and requires a corresponding *service*. Wicked men who are in revolt against God, and who fail to render their due service not only to God but also to their fellow men, both those above and below them, therefore have no *rightful* possession of anything.

The wicked thus have *power*, but not *dominion*. The righteous man has *dominion*, although not always power. All the same, it must be held that "Every righteous man is lord over the whole sensible world."¹ Without pursuing this concept to the same conclusions that Wyclif did, we can agree with his concept of dominion, and also his rejection of revolution. As Wyclif stated the case in a famous aphorism, "God must obey the Devil"; i.e., even as Christ obeyed Pilate, so the people of God must obey tyrants, because their way to dominion *and* power is not by revolution.

The way to dominion is by the grace of God unto salvation by saving faith, which is a gift of God, and the knowledge of Scripture. Wyclif's name for the Bible was "God's law." Dominion requires a knowledge of God's law; without such knowledge, no dominion is possible. To disregard the laws of God is to forfeit dominion. As a result, Wyclif translated the Bible, holding that "Scripture alone is of absolute authority," and declared of that English Bible, "This Bible is for the

¹. *De. Civ. Dom.* i. chs. 7, 14.

government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” By their knowledge of Scripture, God’s law, the redeemed people of God, His elect, would know their rightful dominion and begin to exercise it, reordering all things in terms of the word of God.²

Wyclif’s appeal to feudalism in his concept of dominion was not unscriptural; the feudal concept of dominion and beneficium was not unlike the Biblical doctrine of the covenant. The relationship of the covenant concept to feudalism deserves study. Moreover, the feudal concept of beneficium had a profound effect in shaping the idea of a social compact or contract. The American Declaration of Independence is a feudal document, dissolving a feudal relationship. Because George III, the feudal king over the several states, had violated the charters which governed his relationship to those states, the obligation of the states to George III was therefore declared dissolved. Justification for that dissolution was grounded not only on a feudal concept of law and lordship, but also on a theological principle which rendered a *lawful* resistance a legitimate and necessary step. This argument had been developed in *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1579), which John Adams held to be one of the most influential books in America on the eve of the War of Independence.

An analysis of the Biblical doctrine of *dominion* undergirds Wyclif’s insight and position. The word *dominion* first appears in Genesis 1:26, 28. A number of words are translated as dominion. In Genesis 1:26, 28, it is the Hebrew *radah*, to rule, tread down (cf. 1 Kings 4:24; Neh. 9:28; Ps. 49:14). Leupold cites as the meaning of *radah*, “to trample down” or “to master,” and it means here “dominion over the earth” in every area of life.³

² On Wyclif, see H. B. Workman, “Wyclif,” in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, vol. XII, 812-823; Gotthard Lechler, *John Wyclif and His English Precursors*, 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, 1878); G. M. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe* (London: Longmans Green, 1900); H. B. Workman, *John Wyclif*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926); John Wickliffe, *Writings* (London: Religious Tract Society, n.d.); John de Wycliffe, *Tracts and Treatises* (London: Blackburn and Pardon, 1845); etc.

The New Testament Greek word for dominion is *kratos*; “*kratos*, force, strength, might, more especially manifested power, is derived from a root *kra-*, to perfect, to complete: ‘creator’ is probably connected.”⁴

Man was created by God and given a mandate or command to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over it. This meant ruling, trampling down or possessing and mastering every aspect of this world, religiously, scientifically, agriculturally, and in every other way. Man was created in God’s image to develop God’s creation, the earth, by perfecting or completing it under God.

By his rebellion (Genesis 3), man set himself outside God’s law: he sought for power independently of God and His law-word. Man sought authority and ownership outside of, and in defiance to, God. As a result, man was dispossessed of Eden as a sign of his dispossession of the earth; the earth would be in contradiction to him as long as he remained outside of God’s government and law (Gen. 3:15-19). This dispossession was furthered by the Flood, which destroyed the privileged conditions of life and longevity and left a reduced existence for man. Only with redemption is man restored to dominion under God and by means of His law.

The Fall had radical implications for man’s dominion. It affected dominion with respect to *authority*. According to Iverach,

Authority and obedience are correlative terms, supremacy being implied on the part of authority, and dependence on the part of those who have to obey. Authority has the right and the power to say the last word, and to give a decision from which there is no appeal.⁵

³. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1942), 91.

⁴. W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. I (New York: Revell, 1966), 332.

⁵. James Iverach, “Authority,” in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. II, 249.

Only God has absolute authority, and only God can require absolute obedience. Where God's authority is acknowledged, all other legitimate authorities are obeyed as a part of man's obedience to God and His order. However, where God's authority is denied, the logic of that denial, when developed in all its implications, undercuts all other authorities. Indeed, the reprobate rebel at the very idea of authority. Authority in their minds is associated with ignorance, repression, and tyranny. Instead, they appeal to "reason." Arthur Balfour, for example, contrasted authority to "Reason." Authority, he held, was incapable of coping with reason and argument, because authority only knows coercion, whereas reason analyzes and understands. Iverach, while agreeing to a degree with Balfour, held that reason itself has a kind of authority. "All thinking must assume the law of non-contradiction, as all fruitful thinking must recognize the validity of the laws of logic." The axioms of reason "are authoritative in the ordinary meaning of the term."⁶ Thus, a Greek concept of logic and rationality, the would-be autonomous rationality of apostate man, is given final authority. Authority has thus been transferred to man, as well as sovereignty.

Since God is denied primary and ultimate authority in favor of man, authority is accordingly transferred either to anarchistic man or to collective man, in the form of the state. The state thus becomes for most men the source of authority. But what constitutes legitimate authority in the state? According to Iverach, "Those in authority must do service, and must justify their action on the ground of recognized worth or good achieved; or even on the lower ground of utility.... According to Aristotle it (the State) must be an institution in which goodness, virtue, and justice are produced in the citizens."⁷ In Aristotle's words,

Whereas, those who care for good government take into consideration virtue and vice in states. Whence it may be further inferred that virtue must be the care of a state which is truly so called, and not merely enjoys the name:

⁶. *Ibid.*, 249-250.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 251.

for without this end the community becomes a mere alliance which differs only in place from alliances of which the members live apart; and the law is only a convention, "a surety to one another of justice," as the sophist Lycophron says, and has no real power to make the citizens good and just.⁸

But what is held to be "good and just" varies from culture to culture; moreover, where reason is the final authority, very logically, as Plato held, the philosopher-kings are alone competent to exercise authority *and* to say whether their authority is "good and just." Moreover, Aristotle did not require the state and its rulers to be just, but that they make the citizens "just" in terms of their preconceived definition. Not surprisingly, these ideas have long been a fountainhead of tyranny, and men have long been sacrificed at the altar of ideas, the ideas of their elite rulers. Those who denounce God's authority as the ground of coercion and tyranny always end up with a social order which, in the name of reason, institutes the most drastic tyranny and coercion men can force upon society.

Iverach wrote,

Briefly, it may be said that the State is an ethical institution, and while material force is needed, yet the exercise of that force is conditioned by the fact that it must always be exercised for the good of the community, and in the interests of the higher values. Authority and loyalty must go hand in hand in every State which is worthy of the name.⁹

The state is indeed "an ethical institution," and, we must add, a religious institution since law is a religious matter, and authority, also. But if the state does not depend on God's sovereign authority and word, then the state is grounded in some way on man's authority and word, however much it may be disguised as "Right Reason," "Nature," "Natural Law," or any other term. There is, then, little appeal beyond the state to God's law, unless it is that sorry appeal from one set of philosopher-kings and their ideas to another set of such

⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, Jowett translation (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 142f.

⁹ Iverach, *op. cit.*, 252.

tyrants. “The good of the community” is then what elite thinkers say it is, not what God’s word declares. After God’s absolute authority is bypassed in the name of “reason,” the absolute and final authority of reason is affirmed, and we are piously informed that “Authority and loyalty must go hand in hand in every State which is worthy of the name.” Thus, the real objection of such men to the authority of God is simply that they themselves are not god. Their claims are simply a development of their original sin, their desire to be as god, determining for themselves what constitutes good and evil (Gen. 3:5). By denying God, they deny the supreme court of appeal beyond and against themselves, and they seek thereby to bind men absolutely to themselves, or to the projections of themselves, which they call “Right Reason,” “Natural Law,” and like terms.

Turning now to the other aspect of dominion, *ownership*, it is interesting to note the definition of *owner* in the Second Edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary*: “One who owns; a proprietor; one who has the legal or rightful title, whether the possessor or not.” *Ownership* is defined as “State, relation, or fact of being an owner; lawful claim or title; property; proprietorship; dominion. All ownership is by purchase or descent.” Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*, from which the definition of *owner* is taken in the Second Edition (1929, 1960), defines *ownership* more specifically as “Property; exclusive right of possession; legal or just claim or title. The *ownership* of the estate is in A; the possession is in B.” Clearly, these definitions reflect a moral problem: there is often a distinction between rightful title and actual and legal possession. True ownership is by valid purchase or by descent; it should give exclusive right of possession, but in a fallen world, ownership is not always possession. Wyclif drew his conclusions from this difference between moral and physical fact.

Calvin, in commenting on Genesis 1:26, “And let them have dominion,” stressed the fact of ownership under God:

The use of the plural number intimates that this authority was not given to Adam only, but to all his posterity as well as to him. And hence we infer what was the end for which all things were created; namely, that none of the conveniences and necessities of life might be wanting to man. In the very name of creation the paternal solicitude of God for man is conspicuous, because he furnished the world with all things needful, and even with an immense profusion of wealth, before he formed man. Thus man was rich before he was born. But if God had such care for us before we existed, he will by no means leave us destitute for food and of other necessities of life, now that we are placed in the world. Yet, that he often keeps his hand as if closed is to be imputed to our sins.¹⁰

Calvin stated it well: “man was rich before he was born,” because God endowed him with *dominion*, with *authority* and *ownership*. By his sin, man forfeited his dominion and was dispossessed. Sinful men, however, claim God’s realm as their own. Christ having reestablished man’s dominion by His victory over sin and death, and by His perfect keeping of God’s law, is now dispossessing the false heirs by a continuing judgment or plague against these modern pharaohs and their hosts.¹¹ He is working to restore ownership to the covenant people of God, who are called to live in terms of God’s law and to exercise dominion, authority and ownership, over the earth.

This Biblical perspective on ownership is clearly not that of the modern world. Thus, the *Dictionary of Sociology* gives us a very different picture of ownership:

Ownership. Socially established, recognized, and enforceable command over any object, involving the right to use, destroy, or transfer. Such rights may be complete or partial, exclusive or shared, but are always socially conferred and socially limited. The relationship of ownership is closely connected with the institution of property.¹²

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, called Genesis*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946), 96.

¹¹ See R. J. Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1971), 147-155, 167, 229f.

¹² Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Dictionary of Sociology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 211.

Ownership in this perspective is conditional upon the consent of society. If men favor state ownership or communism, then communism is legitimate and supposedly morally right. If men favor private ownership, then private ownership is legitimate. The conservative who does not ground his defense of private property on Scripture, and few do, is thus in essential agreement with the communist that man is the source of law. If he insists that men should not steal, he cannot ground it in more than his wishes and social convention. The communist and the thief can then appeal to their wishes and a long tradition of legalized theft by men and civil governments as their vindication. An intelligent inmate of a state prison once told this writer that God did not exist; morality is a myth; evolution is the fact about man and the world, and therefore all laws and moral codes are social conventions. All men, he held, are out to get what they can from others in any way they can, and only fear and timidity restrain them to a degree. Successful men in industry, in civil government, and in other areas as well, are only successful thieves who have not yet been caught. The only argument a conservative humanist could offer him was a utilitarian one, namely, that someone had to work productively, or there would be nothing to steal. The thief, however, favored productive work; he had often engaged in it, he saw nothing incompatible between work and stealing. His world had room for everything except the sovereign God and His absolute law. The thief's opinion of all public and private property was not unlike the communist definition: *property is theft*.

The humanist alternatives are thus very meager. Property and ownership rest in social convention and can be established or taken away at the discretion of society, or else property is theft. The difference is not very great. When the state, by majority opinion or without it, introduces property and inheritance taxes, it may do so legally, but not righteously, because God's law does not permit either.¹³ Such taxes, in terms

¹³ See R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1974).

of civil law, are legal; in terms of God's law, they are lawless, and they are theft.

True ownership, like authority, is an aspect of dominion, and it can only exist in obedience to God. Salvation, which is an act of God's sovereign grace, reestablishes man in terms of his inheritance, the calling to exercise dominion. Dominion is thus the calling of the redeemed man; it is the practical implication of his salvation. As we have seen, the New Testament word, *kratos*, *dominion*, probably comes from the root *kra-*, to perfect or to complete. Dominion is salvation thus come to maturity or completion. The promise of the Saviour in Genesis 3:15 declares that He shall "bruise" the head of the serpent. As Leupold pointed out, *bruise*, *shuph*, here means *crush*.¹⁴ Every tool and agency of Satan is meant by the serpent; the crushing of the head means the destruction of their ability to function.

This is confirmed by St. Paul in Romans 16:20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." The word *bruise* is here the Greek *suntribo*, to break and to shatter. James Moffatt rendered the sentence thus: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." This is very plainly a promise of victory and dominion. This statement of St. Paul is, as Hodge noted, "not a prayer, but a consolatory declaration that Satan should be trodden underfoot." Moreover,

As Satan is constantly represented as "working in the children of disobedience," the evil done by them is sometimes referred to him as the instigator, and sometimes to the immediate agents who are his willing instruments.¹⁵

Practically, this means that the promise of the Savior, the seed of the woman, is not only a promise of salvation but also of dominion. It means that the enemies of God shall be crushed when the people of God obey God's law and exercise dominion in terms

¹⁴ Leupold, *op. cit.*, 166.

¹⁵ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Revised edition (New York: Armstrong, 1873), 710.

of it. It means that the promises of Psalm 149 are not poetry, but a declaration of the victorious dominion of the saints of God.

The way to the restoration of dominion is not by revolution. As our Lord declared to Simon Peter, "...all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). Those who seek reconstruction by means of blood and violence shall reap a harvest of the same. There must be rather the grace of God unto salvation, followed by the restoration of dominion through the law of God. As men keep the law, they shall reap the dominion which the law establishes (Deut. 28:1-4).

VI

Assurance

Salvation cannot be confused with insurance, but it is inseparable from *assurance*. Three Greek words are used in the New Testament which give us the meaning of assurance. *Pistis*, faith, “has the secondary meaning of assurance or guarantee, e.g., Acts 17:31.” Moreover, “by raising Christ from the dead, God has given ‘assurance’ that the world will be judged by Him... cp. 1 Tim. 5:12 where ‘faith’ means ‘pledge.’” *Plerophoria* is

a fulness, abundance, also means full assurance, entire confidence; lit. a “fullcarrying” (*pleros*, full, *phero*, to carry). Some explain it as full fruitfulness.... In I Thess. 1:5 it describes the willingness and freedom of spirit enjoyed by those who brought the Gospel to Thessalonica; in Col. 2:2, the freedom of mind and confidence resulting from an understanding in Christ; in Heb. 6:11 (A. V., “full assurance,” R. V., “fulness”), the engrossing effect of the expectation of the fulfilment of God’s promises; in Heb. 10:22, the character of the faith by which we are to draw near to God.

Hupostasis, lit., a standing under, support, (*hupo*, under, *histemi*, to stand) hence, an “assurance,” is so rendered in Heb. 11:1, R. V. for A. V. “substance.”¹

It may here signify a title-deed, as giving a guarantee, or reality. Salvation is not only the redemption of man from sin and death into the victory of God, but is also the *assurance* of personal salvation. This assurance is, according to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, “the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God.”² The Larger Catechism declares,

¹ W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. I (New York: Revell, 1966), 84f.

² *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapt. XVIII, “Assurance of Grace and Salvation,” 11.

Q. 80 Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?

A. Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

According to St. Paul, the Holy Spirit makes the sons of God conscious of their adoption into the household of faith, and the Holy Spirit within them cries out to God as their Father. In Romans 8:14-17, St. Paul declared:

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17. And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The grounds of assurance are plainly stated. *First*, the redeemed, the sons of God, are led by the Spirit of God. This is not imitation, nor does it require perfection. It means simply that all such men are governed by God. By their rebirth, the redeemed are born into the new humanity of Jesus Christ, and they submit to His authority and government. *Second*, the redeemed serve God, not in a spirit of bondage or slavery, but in the Spirit of adoption, like children. The language of our heart is the language of our citizenship, and if we are members of Christ's Kingdom, the hopes of our heart are governed by covenant goals. *Third*, we as sinners still are far from perfect or mature in our faith, and this often discourages us. However,

the Holy Spirit testifies within us to the reality of our salvation. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). *Fourth*, this assurance is not only of our sonship, but also that we are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. Our union with Christ is an assurance not only of our inheritance in and with Him, but also of our suffering for His sake, our participation in the battle against the false heirs who lay claim to the world. "The union of believers with Christ, in suffering as well as glory, is what he and his apostles taught them to expect."³

This assurance rests on the outward witness of Christ's death and resurrection, and the inward witness of our hearts, and both aspects receive their confirmation from the witness of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. As Nicol noted, "The prayer of St. Paul and his friends for the Colossian Christians is that they may stand perfect and 'fully assured' in everything willed by God (Col. 4:12)."⁴ The word in the King James version is rendered "complete," an aspect of its meaning, as is "fully assured."

The Christian doctrine of assurance is regarded with belligerent hostility by many. Why, it is held, should anyone hold in anything but contempt an assurance which is, as far as any outsider can tell, purely subjective? The Christian declares that he knows himself to be saved. What validity can such private knowledge have? Without resorting to a doctrine of empirical proof, we can say that such an assurance is not merely private knowledge. Our Lord made it clear that the redeemed bear good fruit: they reveal themselves by their entire lives (Matt. 7:15-19), "wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). The basic fallacy in the objection to the doctrine of assurance lies elsewhere. Humanism requires a common ground between men which comes from man. For one man to have an assurance (and, ultimately, a predestination to

³ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Armstrong, 1893), 421.

⁴ Thomas Nicol, "Assurance," in James Hastings, editor, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 108.

glory) from God which is withheld from other men, is regarded by the humanist as offensive to the highest degree. If God is good to any man, it is held that He must be good to all. If any man has an eminence over other men, it is an eminence he has gained by his own effort, or has had conferred on him by other men. Man must be the principle of differentiation, and man himself must make the difference, if any differences exist. In a Biblical perspective, the common ground between men is their common creation by God in His image, and it is totally subject to Him. Therefore, all men have all things in common metaphysically, but epistemologically, the unbeliever has nothing in common with the Christian. The Christian begins with the sovereign God and His eternal decree, whereas the unbeliever begins with chance as ultimate and brute factuality. Thus, in principle, the two have nothing in common; in reality, the unbeliever thinks with premises borrowed from theism, because otherwise no knowledge would be possible on his premises. As Van Til has noted,

But all this does not in the least reduce the fact that as far as the principle of the natural man is concerned, it is absolutely, or utterly, not partly, opposed to God. That principle is Satanic. It is exclusively hostile to God. If it could it would destroy the work and plan of God. So far then as men self-consciously work from this principle they have no notion in common with the believer. Their epistemology is informed by their ethical hostility to God.

But in the course of history the natural man is not fully self-conscious of his own position. The prodigal cannot altogether stifle his father's voice. There is a conflict of notions within him. But he himself is not fully and self-consciously aware of this conflict within him. He has within him the knowledge of God by virtue of his creation in the image of God. But this idea of God is suppressed by his false principle, the principle of autonomy. This principle of autonomy is, in turn, suppressed by the restraining power of God's common grace. Thus the ideas with which he daily works do not proceed consistently either from the one principle or from the other.⁵

⁵ Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 189f.

Man wants to establish the common ground between men out of man's would-be autonomous consciousness and without reference to God. This means that he wants to establish the ground rules for communication between men, and between man and whatever God exists. If a doctrine of assurance is to be allowed, it must be as an assurance open to all men as men, whether covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers, so that all men can experiment with God's assurance of grace, test and prove it to see if it is to their liking, and then accept or reject it at their discretion. Not only salvation, but also the assurance of salvation must be man's decision and choice; only options open to all men at their will are thus tolerated.

Again, the doctrine of assurance is ridiculed as an aspect of the Christian's "quest for certainty," to use John Dewey's term. The quest for certainty is not limited to the Christian. Dewey's hostility was limited to the Christian quest for certainty, and to those philosophies he disagreed with. His own philosophy began with certain presuppositions and ostensible certainties, and, secure in his own humanistic assurances, he ridiculed all others. It did not occur to Dewey that his own humanism required an amazing act of blind faith and rested at every point on religious (but anti-Christian) presuppositions.

Unless men deny all possibility of knowledge, and at the same time renounce life itself (for to deny the possibility of knowledge is to hold to an assurance of no possible knowledge), they will begin with some starting point, some assured truth or condition, in order to think at all. The doctrine of assurance in humanism is the supposed autonomy of man. It is in terms of this "assurance" that the humanist attacks the Christian doctrine. Autonomy is his religious principle and presupposition.

But the doctrine of assurance is inseparable from the doctrine of salvation. As a result, the humanist finds his assurance a very shaky and dubious one. Salvation is for him independence from God and being his own god, his own source of ultimate authority, law, and determination. Because

he is a creature of God and has the inescapable witness of God in every fiber of his being (Rom. 1:18-21), he cannot rest in his claims to salvation and assurance.

Instead of salvation and assurance, the humanist has a more basic concern, elementary justification, trying to justify his existence. This can be done by insisting, in existentialist fashion, on the irrelevance of all judgments and standards; life is the only criterion for life, it is held. It is sufficient that life is. Salvation is then a do-it-yourself project whereby a man defines himself or shapes his own nature or essence as a part of becoming his own god and creature. The end result of this even for Sartre is “a futile passion.” Salvation and assurance elude such a man.

More commonly, even among existentialists, the humanist seeks to gain assurance by giving his life a social reference, by doing something for humanity. This appeal to humanity is very dear to the humanistic heart. Even a prostitute, who declares herself a homosexual, admits to a craving for incest, describes an act of bestiality, participates also in perversities including sodomy, tries to assure herself and her readers that she renders a social service by giving happiness to many people. Because she took men at the request of a psychiatrist, for “therapy,” she credited herself with working a cure, but her concept of health leaves much to be desired!⁶ This example of humanistic assurance is not out of place, in that it illustrates how deeply rooted the appeal to humanity is in our time. Almost anything can be justified in the name of humanity. This appeal fails to give assurance, however. Miss Hollander, for all her assurances of her usefulness to humanity, still echoes a Latin proverb, *The world wants to be cheated, so cheat*. The idealistic reformer as well as the pragmatic politician both appeal to humanity as their assurance that their labor is not in vain for man, and at the same time damn humanity for its waywardness and ingratitude. There is no sound or valid assurance in a false faith. As Isaiah declared, “Cease ye from

⁶ Xaviera Hollander, with Robin Moore and Ivonne Dunleavy, *The Happy Hooker* (New York: Dell, 1972).

man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22).

A valid assurance must rest on valid foundations. In essence, there are two possibilities. *First*, man has a valid assurance of salvation because Scripture is indeed true, and the sovereign and triune God of Scripture, faithful to His word, not only redeems man but also fulfills all His promises, so that we can rest assured that God is true to Himself and His word.

Second, the other possibility is that man is his own god, and able to save himself. This is the belief of existentialism and of modern science. It holds to a new concept of "futurism," and Dennis Gabor has stated it thus: "The future cannot be predicted, but futures can be invented. It was man's ability to invent which has made society what it is."⁷ The goal is to make the future finally, and the future as present, totally man's product, so that man's predestination will totally govern man.⁸ That man as a secondary cause has thus a secondary role in developing the future is clearly true. The goal, however, of thinkers and planners since the Enlightenment is a primary and total creative power over the present and the future. Such a power would indeed give man assurance that he is his own savior, and that he can be or is saved, but such a power is beyond possibility.

Assurance, however, must have both a present and future validity, and at this point it fails even the true believers among humanists. The humanistic planner can envision a future paradise on earth, and he can believe that scientific socialism can establish that ideal order, but he cannot give himself any assurance concerning the present: he may be dead long before that conquest of war, death, poverty, and disease arrives. All he can then offer himself for the present is "the courage to be," which means essentially "to grin and bear it" that you are indeed not a god when you have insisted that you are.

⁷. Cited from Dennis Gabor, *Inventing the Future* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 207, by John McHale, *The Future of the Future* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), 276.

⁸. For examples of such thinking, see R. J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1967).

Paul Tillich thus held that “there is nothing ‘beyond religious socialism.’”⁹ His heaven and paradise were thus very simply described. That dream world, however, was not in sight in his lifetime. He had thus no heaven to await him at death, nor a present savior and comforter, but only a distant goal. Moreover, having reduced historic Biblical faith to myth and relativistic teachings, where did Tillich gain his ostensible assurance? Tillich did hold to some absolutes:

These absolutes were: the structure of the mind that makes sense impressions possible, and the logical and semantic structures of the mind; the universals that make language possible; the categories and polarities that make understanding of reality possible. Others were the unconditional character of the moral imperative, regardless of its contents, and the principle of justice — acknowledgment of every person as a person. Finally, there was *agape*, love, which contains and transcends justice and unites the absolute and the relative by adapting itself to every concrete situation.¹⁰

The moral imperative is “unconditionally valid” when it most fully expresses “our own true or essential being.” To act against the “command from our true being” is to “violate ourselves. If the moral command (whatever its content is) comes from any other source than our true being, if it is imposed on us from outside, if it comes from authorities of any kind, it is not an unconditional command for us. Then we can and must resist it, because it denies our own dignity as persons.”¹¹ Thus far, the Marquis de Sade would be in happy agreement with Tillich. Fixed “moral contents” like the Ten Commandments are all relative and are false absolutes.¹² But de Sade wants the right to murder, and Tillich holds that every person is an absolute. Tillich’s world thus gives us a clash of absolutes, as surely as does the world of de Sade, and neither has any assurance that this position has any

⁹ Paul Tillich, *My Search For Absolutes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 124f.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹² *Ibid.*, 97ff.

validity other than his say-so. However, since each is his own ultimate and god, this is apparently sufficient.

Tillich holds that, with respect to an understanding of the absolute, "What commands us is our own essential nature, our unique and eternally significant true being. It speaks to us and demands of us that we do not waste and destroy it."¹³ This is the supposedly reasoned conclusion of a modern philosopher who found the concept of the infallible word of God, a word revelation with propositional truth, unreasonable. Is his position pure reason? Is it simply rationality at work, or does it constitute rather a private revelation? While more intellectual a presentation, it is not radically different from the many private revelations of disordered minds who earnestly profess a great assurance because, supposedly, they have a special revelation concerning reality, and concerning spaceships and visitors from other worlds. The world of Tillich's absolutes is another world and a closed world, a private domain, a world of his own making, an apostate dream of autonomy. The visible universe is the handiwork of the sovereign and triune God. To deny God is ultimately to deny man and the world; it leaves man nothing but a meaningless world of brute factuality, and man as a lonely and empty island in an ocean of nothingness. Not only is the Christian assurance firmly grounded in God and His universe, but the lack of that assurance reduces a man to emptiness and poverty; man becomes no more than a ghost, trying to haunt a nonexistent house.

¹³. *Ibid.*, 97.

VII

Political Saviors

In describing the events of Palm Sunday, St. Matthew wrote:

4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying,
5. Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass (Matt. 21:4-5).

This formula, “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,” appears in nearly the same words twelve times in Matthew’s Gospel, three times in Mark, six times in Luke, and eight times in John. It is also common in Acts and the Epistles. Even more common is an expression declaring that it was thus written by a prophet: such references are almost too numerous to cite.

In this case, the citation refers to Zechariah 9:9-10; although verse 10 is not cited, it is clearly in mind, and the joyful reaction of the people made it clear that they saw the self-conscious fulfilment of the prophecy as a declaration of peace, victory, and dominion:

9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.
10. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Whatever else this and all other citations of the fulfilment of prophecy have to say, they do make it clear that history moves in terms of God’s plan and is predestined by Him. What He has declared, He brings to pass. Not only do the writers rejoice in every fulfilment of prophecy, but they also clearly rejoice in the fact

that, *whatever God has promised and declared, that He will perform.* Predestination by God is implicit or explicit in all of Scripture.

Predestination by man, however, is implicit and explicit in humanism, scientific socialism, and in every doctrine of political salvation. Man seeks to supplant God's eternal decree with his own total plan. The scientific socialist state is man's predestination of man and his world.

The Triumphal Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem is directly related to this humanistic hope and in contradiction to it.

The world of Christ's day was well aware of the Biblical faith and hope which, from Judea, was extensively taught and propagated by Judean missionaries. In 61 B.C., Cicero had rejected it as a "barbarian superstition." Biblical faith all the same appealed to many who were "longing to believe that one day wickedness would be abolished, the arrogant would be punished, and a higher justice would be established."¹

In paganism, such a hope was normally essentially a political hope. Religion was primarily concerned, in its cultic form, with insurance against problems. Positive action towards justice and salvation was basically political. Only as the political hope in the form of the Roman Empire began to fade into cynicism did pagan cults offer salvation, and even then it was identified with security rather than victory.

Rome, as it developed from a City-State to an empire, presented itself as "the City of Justice, belonging to all humanity." This Greater Rome was man's vehicle of salvation. Cicero hailed Octavian as a savior. "In him we place our hopes of liberty; from him we have already received salvation (Philippics, V, vxiii, 49)." Cicero spoke of Rome as "the light of the world, the guardian of all nations (Philippics, IV, vi, 14)."²

Roman politicians saw their regimes as new eras, opening up salvation for a needy world. Julius Caesar, like others, instituted calendar changes and reform as *pontifex maximus* to

¹ Lidia Storoni Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought, From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970), 76f.

² *Ibid.*, 97, 120, 129.

indicate that time now had a new meaning. His assassins believed equally as much that their political assassination would renew the past and the present.

Almost as if they wanted to re-establish the ancient course of events, the conspirators chose March 15 — the feast of Anna Perenna, which had been New Year's Day in the old calendar — to murder the man who had subverted the very sequence of the days.³

Whether with Caesar, Brutus, or their predecessors and successors, salvation meant the power of the state and its sword. Salvation meant coercion.

The nature of political salvation has not changed since then. Whether in Marxist socialist states, Fabian socialist orders, or in the democracies, political salvation means coercion. The state has a plan, and man and society must submit to the predestined Procrustean pattern. Procrustes, the Greek robber of legend, amputated or stretched the limbs of his captives to fit a certain bed and thereby destroyed them. His victims were unwilling victims, but the modern citizens, believing in political salvation, demand a Procrustean bed for society and only complain when it is they who are stretched out upon it.

The predestination and salvation offered by humanism and socialism is coercive and destructive. The dream is of a great and noble leader on a white horse leading men into a new paradise, and, age after age, men have raised-up to power their own murderers and cheered their parades to murderous power.

The Triumphal Entry had all this in mind and parodied it. Israel itself had succumbed to the political hope. The expectation of a world empire ruled by a Jewish messiah was present among the disciples themselves. The contrast between a conqueror riding on a white charger and an ass with its colt trotting along cannot be more marked. The one gives us a picture of power and might, the ability to compel and to destroy. The other is a picture, as Zechariah 9:9 makes clear, of

³. *Ibid.*, 121.

one who is “lowly” or humble, with no apparent coercive power.

This difference is deliberate. The predestination of the state is brutal and coercive; it is on man’s level, in man’s time, and a pressure on man himself. The predestination of God is from all eternity, before time began; it does no violence to us, because we are what God created us to be, and all that He ordains is in conformity to our being because we are what He ordained us to be.

The use of the ass marked a renunciation of political power as the way of salvation. After Solomon came to the throne,

horses became the distinctive riding beast of the nobility (I Kings 10:25, 28-29; II Kings 9:18-19, etc.). From this time onward the use of asses was characteristic of persons without rank. If the Messiah appears riding thus He must be of a humble rank and station.⁴

The crowds who hailed Jesus saw the prophecy fulfilled, but they insisted on seeing it in terms of their political hopes. They did this because the prophecy spoke of *dominion*. In Leupold’s translation, “And He shall speak peace to the nations; and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”⁵ Thus, however humble the Messiah’s appearing and entry, He would still exercise world dominion.

The question, of course, is simply this: what does dominion mean? For the world, dominion is in essence the ability to exercise power and force over persons and things. What men mean by *dominion* is apparent in the connotation the word *domination* has. The expectation thus was that the appearance of the Messiah meant the domination of the world by a Jewish monarch. Jesus, recognizing their false hope, wept over the city, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!” (Luke 19:42). As Stauffer wrote,

⁴. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1956), 175.

⁵. *Ibid.*, 163.

Many of them waved palms, thus making plain the political meaning of their demonstration. For the palm was the key emblem of Palestine in national heraldry and in the international emblematic language of the day. Palm trees and palm leaves are to be found on the Palestinian coins of the early Maccabees, the Hasmonaeans, the Herodians, the procurators, and the partisans; they are found also on Flavian coins celebrating victories and, above all, on the coins celebrating the advent of Hadrian. On these last coins we see Judea kneeling or sacrificing, surrounded by children bearing palms and marching in solemn procession to meet the approaching Emperor. This is how we must understand the palms of Palm Sunday: Jerusalem was celebrating the epiphany of her messianic king. Even the children crying Hosannah are included in this description of the coming of a king.⁶

The dominion which Christ came to establish was not political, although it would have political repercussions and effect as men came under Christ's dominion. Humanism speaks of man's goodness, but, practically, it moves in terms of man's depravity, because its plan for paradise is to coerce men into goodness as the state defines it. In effect, man is compelled, if he resists, to choose between the state's definition of goodness or to be an outcast, or even to be executed. Political dominion and coercion are the humanistic means of coping with man's sin. In such an order, the state exercises dominion over man, so that it is not man who exercises dominion, but man who is dominated by a ruling elite.

In Christ's Kingdom, dominion is restored to man, who lost it by his fall, by man's regeneration through Jesus Christ. Christ by his resurrection destroyed the dominion of death (Rom. 6:9). Therefore, "sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14). Man is freed into dominion. The state exercises dominion over man by means of coercive power: the gun and the bayonet are its compelling and persuading power. Christ the King leads His joint-heirs into dominion by His grace.

⁶ Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 110.

Christ marched into Jerusalem in humble manner, in a parody of statist might. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." He is declared "just, and having salvation." He will "cut off" or eliminate the "battle bow" and the chariot, the weapons of war, and "the horse," the symbol of the proud conqueror, will give way to His peace. Micah, as well as Isaiah, spoke of this peace:

And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Micah 4:3).

9. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

10. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots:

11. And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds:

12. And I will cut off witchcraft out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers:

13. Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands (Micah 5:9-13).

Christ, too, eliminates that which opposes His Kingdom, not by coercion but by the judgment of history, by means of that great shaking of the things which are, so that the things which cannot be shaken may alone remain (Heb. 12:27). His word to the nations is *peace*. But "war will cease on earth only when wickedness ceases, and wickedness will cease only when Christ's universal empire begins."⁷

Christ's Kingdom comes by grace, and it restores man, whereas political salvation suppresses. Rome sought to be the City of Justice and became a city which even its emperors abandoned for other havens. But of Christ Zechariah says, "He is just." His law gives men the means to liberty, dominion, and

⁷. Thomas V. Moore, *The Book of Zechariah* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 151.

prosperity, and He, as the just ruler, is faithful to His word (Deut. 28).

The crowd which on Palm Sunday hailed Jesus as the Messianic King, the Great King coming "in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 21:9), cried out savagely, before the week was over, "Crucify Him" (Mark 15:12-14). Their attitude had not greatly changed in those few days and was in essence the same. Their expectation of Jesus was an empire which would kill their enemies, in particular, Rome and its legions, its rulers, and tax collectors. When they thought of deliverance and salvation, they thought of death, death for their enemies, and death for those of their own race whom they hated. Again and again in the history of political saviors and salvation, deliverance has meant a blood bath, a reign of terror, concentration camps, and endless bloodshed. If hopes of political salvation are offered by the left, they mean death for capitalists, reactionaries, Christians, counter-revolutionaries, Ethiopians, Jews, or whomever they are opposed to. If hopes of political salvation are offered by the rightists or conservatives, again it means war and death, death for communists and for all who fit their definition of traitors. Political salvation means the elimination of an element in the life of the state, and it is a program of social regeneration by means of death, the death of all offending individuals, followed by the rigorous regimentation of the life of all the rest.

Biblical salvation means the elimination of sin and, finally, death by the atoning and regenerating work of Jesus Christ, and it is a gospel of individual and finally universal regeneration through His sovereign creating and re-creating power. It offers grace to the guilty through Christ's vicarious sacrifice and it sets forth God's law as the way of sanctification, so that society can flourish and prosper under God.

God having created man in His image, man, even in his sin, inescapably bears the stamp of God and moves in terms of godly categories which are perverted to man's lawless ends. Man is a law creature: because he is a man, he must have law, direction, in his life. However much he hates God, fallen man

still echoes God's law. As a result, when fallen, sinful man faces the wrongs wrought by sin, everything within him cries out against it. The demand for justice was no less present in Rome, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and elsewhere than it is today. The cry for justice is as old as man. As God's creature, man cries out against injustice, and his being longs for a just order even as the plant seeks the sun.

All through the ages, as man has confronted the havoc wrought by sin, he cries out in passion, "Someone must pay for this!" This is the cry of the law, vengeance, restitution. It cannot be evaded. Men may talk about eliminating judgment and restitution, but such an era is usually most ruthless about inflicting it. When fallen man begins to demand that "Someone must pay for this!," it means that sin is followed by unremitting death. The Fall is all the more enforced by man himself. His activities become sadistic and masochistic. Being himself guilty, he passes the death sentence on himself with masochistic, suicidal actions and impulses. Indignant at the guilt of all other men, he turns on them sadistically, savagely, and murderously, laying upon them his guilt and also his wrath at the omnipresent evil he sees. The law becomes death, and a means of atonement and justification. Society and history become a long story of death-dealing as the way of salvation, so that, the greater man's edifices, the greater his ruins. His hopes like his structures crumble as his salvation-death overtakes them all. Revolutionists have again and again seen that their reigns of terror will sooner or later overtake them, but they have no other way of salvation, and they pursue death until it destroys them.

The death of man cannot justify, redeem, atone, or regenerate. Jesus Christ, as man's only Redeemer, parodied the death march of world conquerors in His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The city rejected Him and looked to their own power to inflict death as the way of salvation. The Jewish-Roman War resulted (Luke 19:41-44), the greatest disaster of history (Matt. 24:21). As a result, Jesus, after having been whipped almost to death, and after a long night of agony,⁸ could still declare, on His way to the cross, to the weeping women,

28. Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

29. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the paps which never gave suck.

30. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? (Luke 23:28-31).

Salvation is not death, but every attempt at political salvation means death on a wholesale basis, massive, brutal death. Because Jesus Christ came to offer life, in fulfilment of prophecy He denied and parodied political salvation. Political saviors, He declared, are false men, murderers, thieves, and robbers. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

The Kingdom of God comes, not by theft and murder, not by political saviors, but by the grace of God unto salvation, and by obedience to His law. The ass was the symbol, not only of a humble status, but of work. Not conquest but work, not coercion but patient labor in the Lord, establishes man's dominion under God.

⁸ See C. Truman Davis, M.D., "The Crucifixion of Jesus, The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View," *Arizona Medicine* (March 1965): 183-187.

VIII

The Certain Word

Salvation is the saving grace of God manifested through Jesus Christ, whose atoning and vicarious death satisfied the absolute and perfect justice of God. For God's grace to be manifested, His justice had to be satisfied, because sin requires death. God had declared to man that disobedience to His word would lead to death (Gen. 2:17), but man chose to doubt that word. Not only man's subsequent history, but also the vicarious death of Christ, emphasize that God's word is an assured or certain word, and that sin is inescapably linked to death. Not only does God's absolute word require death for sin, but it also makes salvation possible and certain.

To understand this, let us begin by examining the June 24, 1969, entry in Rabbi Martin Siegel's diary:

Several months ago, I talked to a couple who were feuding over whether to have a \$15,000 bar mitzvah for their son. The father said he couldn't afford it and didn't want it. The mother said she wanted it whether the father could afford it or not. I urged her to have a small modest affair.

"That *will* take courage, Rabbi," she said, "but I'll try."

She called me today to tell me that she had decided on a gala \$15,000 spectacular.

"You'll drive your husband to bankruptcy," I said.

"But at least we'll be able to face our neighbors," she replied.

The library in the community has been running a film called *The Answer*, which is about a riddle and one man's attempt to solve it. The riddle embodies all the problems of mankind and its solution, we find out in the end, is no less than the Ten Commandments.

Tonight I was invited to speak after the film. I told the group that I didn't believe in abstract universals like the Ten Commandments.

The librarian was very upset.¹

What Rabbi Siegel failed to see was that there was a connection between his denial of the Ten Commandments and the mother's attitude. If men are not governed by God, they will be governed by men, and the opinions of men. Man's life is never lived without an assured and certain word, a principle of action and a guarantee of salvation. For all too many, this Word is the opinion of men. In a situation not unlike that of Rabbi Siegel, and the mother's expensive bar mitzvah, a woman justified a similar extravagance because it had "helped" her husband and daughter. Her *justification* was existential: what can my action do for me here and now? *Salvation* for her was not a divine transaction, but any means of deliverance from evil and ruin. For her, moreover, evil and ruin meant any endangering of her totally humanistic and societal hopes for herself, her daughter, and her husband.

Salvation is a passion of man, but not necessarily a holy passion. As many men want deliverance from the necessity of righteousness, as there are who look to be delivered from sin and evil. The cry is for deliverance, for redemption, release, and preservation, but very often into goals which are themselves evil and reprobate. The intense reaction of men to Christ is, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). Man wants salvation from the certain word of God unto the open word of man, to man's uncertain word. The sin of man was his acceptance of the creature's word as against the word of God. The declaration of the serpent was, "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1). The salvation of man was declared to be the lack of any absolute and certain word of God. The world was held to be one of open possibilities, a universe in which man could make and unmake reality at his will. Men shall be their own gods, deciding what is good and evil as they choose, and in terms of their needs at the moment and in their situation (Gen. 3:5). If the world were so, then there would be *no word above and over man to judge man*. Men resent an infallible and certain word over and above them which judges them. For sinful

¹ Mel Ziegler, editor, *Amen: The Diary of Rabbi Martin Siegel* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1972), 176.

men, the cut-off point of the tolerable world is themselves. Thus, a report of the attitudes of male, homosexual prostitutes describes them as “true existentialists,” living only in terms of the moment. Moreover,

Most seemed to feel that it was not terribly different from any other job. Some made the point that everybody “hustles” and that everybody has a price. The difference, they say, is wholly in degree.²

The rise of occultism and Satanism is closely tied to this. These prostitutes rationalize their way of life, *first*, by denying that any higher way or law exists. If there be no God, then anything and everything is permissible. Man is bound by no law, and prostitution is then as “honorable” a profession as medicine. At the same time, all things are equally “base,” since now there is no criterion whereby anything can be called truly and objectively good or evil. The possibility of judgment is thus negated. *Second*, because the sense of guilt will not disappear, the means of justification used by these prostitutes is to say that “everybody ‘hustles’ and that everybody has a price.” All things being reduced to the same level by the denial of an absolute standard, all things are declared to be equally tainted. The thief declares that all men are thieves, the liar insists that all men are liars, and the prostitute says that “everybody ‘hustles.’” There is in this perspective no reality or truth above us: “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14), only a reality below us, and this means occultism and Satanism.

Although there is much in occultism which frightens its followers, there is also much in it that delights them. Guilty men are defeated men and are defeatists. They have, as Warner and Reik and others have shown, a masochistic urge to self-punishment, defeat, and mass destruction.³ Whereas occultism and Satanism masquerade as cults of power and victory, their essence is a cosmic defeatism. The universe is a perverse, meaningless, and twisted place, a world of darkness and of devious power. Man’s only hope

² Peggy Holter, “Prostitutes Talk,” *Los Angeles News Advocate*, vol. 2, no. 10, 15 March - 31 March 1972, 9.

³ See R. J. Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1970), 1-63.

in such a cosmos is a fleeting victory over others, an advantage really rather than a victory, and man's final end is darkness, death or the shadows. Men who deny God have denied themselves victory, and, for them, it is comforting to believe that the universe ultimately denies victory and climaxes in death, with man dead, the sun cold and gone, and the universe run down. God is then replaced in their vision by the prince of defeat, Satan.

Eliphas Levi (Alphonse Louis Constant), an occultist, has said of Satan that

According to the Kabalists, the true name of Satan is that of Jehovah reversed, for Satan is not a black god but the negation of Deity. He is the personification of atheism and idolatry. The devil is not a personality for initiates but a force created with a good object, though it can be applied to evil: it is really the instrument of liberty.⁴

For such a perspective, God is Satan, and Satan, instead of being a person, is a force, a negation of God, "the instrument of liberty." Liberation means freedom from God. Levi's quest is for the "secret of omnipotence."⁵ Moreover,

The secret of the occult sciences is that of Nature herself; it is the secret of the generation of angels and worlds; it is that of God's own omnipotence. "Ye shall be as the Elohim, knowing good and evil." So testified the serpent of Genesis, and so did the Tree of Knowledge become the Tree of Death. For six thousand years the martyrs of science have toiled and perished at the foot of this Tree, so that it may become once more the Tree of Life.

That Absolute which is sought by the foolish and found only by the wise is the truth, the reality and the reason of universal equilibrium. Such equilibrium is the harmony which proceeds from the analogy of opposites. Humanity has sought so far to balance itself as if on one leg — now on one and now again on the other — Blind believers and skeptics are on a par with each other, and both are equally remote from eternal salvation...

⁴. Eliphas Levi, *The History of Magic*, E. A. Waite translation (London: Rider and Company, 1963), 161.

⁵. *Ibid.*, 360.

Light is the equilibrium between shadow and brightness. Motion is the equilibrium between inertia and activity. Authority is the equilibrium between liberty and power. Wisdom is equilibrium in thought; virtue is equilibrium in the affections; beauty is equilibrium in form.... Whatsoever is true is beautiful; all that is beautiful should be true. Heaven and hell are the equilibrium of moral life; good and evil are the equilibrium of liberty.⁶

Omnipotence is the goal, and it is attained by “equilibrium.” Practically, what this equilibrium means is the reduction of all things to an equality. Good and evil, placed in equilibrium, free man from both good and evil, in that they are now equally important, equally true, and equally meaningless. Both the believer and the skeptic give way to the man who is beyond both: he is too busy realizing his own supposed omnipotence to be troubled by belief or doubt concerning the universe, especially since nothing in that universe (or beyond it) is now an object of belief, since man is his own ultimate. But man is his own ultimate in a meaningless universe, with nothing save the quest for power and omnipotence to replace the loss of God’s certain world. Levi affirmed all “truths” and thereby denied them all, because none for him had any objective value, but only a utility for man in his ascent to power.

In a world beyond good and evil, a world without God, man must forsake the quest for meaning because he lives in a meaningless universe. He must also forsake any desire for godly dominion, since he recognizes no God who bestows it and who establishes the terms of authority and ownership. Instead, his quest is for *power*, and the result is occultism and demonism. According to Levi, “It is by conformity with the rules of eternal power that man may unite himself to the creative energy and become creator and preserver in his turn.”⁷ Since this “creative energy” in a godless universe is below, in the primeval energy of evolution, man must then look below, to the primitive, magical, demonic, and the immoral for power and energy.

⁶. *Ibid.*, 358-360.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 34.

When God's certain, infallible, and perfect word is denied, man has no word left to give meaning to life, and no word whereby he is commissioned to exercise dominion. As a result, man seeks *salvation in power*. Against the hovering demons of darkness and death, he has no protection except a fleeting assertion of power. Thus, every age of unbelief is also an era of power-politics, tyranny, and brutal death. Man seeks to substitute power for meaning and dominion, and his use of power is murderous. Levi called for the seizure of "creative energy," but the energy exercised by man the magician turns life into death.

As a result, in humanism, *words* which speak of a realm of meaning, give way to *power* and the results of the exercise of humanistic power, death. The more consistently humanistic the state, the greater its contempt, as witness the Soviet Empire and Red China, for words, the greater its reliance on lies and on terroristic power.

As against this, Jesus Christ declared, in foretelling the fall of Jerusalem and the history of the Christian era to the end of history, that

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).

This is a most remarkable sentence. The deliberate idiots who insist on seeing Jesus as one who never claimed to be God choose to disregard such statements. Lenski's comment on the force of this declaration is telling:

The statement that "the heaven and the earth shall pass away, but my words shall in no wise pass away" loses much of its force when it is regarded as an assurance of the fact that the contemporaneous generation of Jews will not have disappeared before all things foretold by Jesus shall have reached an end. The statement gains in force when the prophecy of v. 34 is properly understood. This verse is only one of Jesus' words. Jesus does not restrict his statement to his present discourse and to the many statements it includes. He does not say, "These my words," but all-inclusively, "my words shall in no wise pass away." ...Despite their apparent durability the physical heaven and earth "shall pass away"...

But the words of Jesus will never undergo even the slightest change either in meaning or in form.⁸

Let us examine the implications of this statement. Its implications concerning the person of Jesus are very great, as well as with respect to His word. *First*, Jesus very clearly declared that His word is the fundamental and creative word. All things are made by Him (John 1:3), and they exist only as long as He decrees their existence. As a result, *all things else* can pass away, but His word shall not pass away. Jesus Christ is the Word Who speaks the creative word which brings all things into being: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3).

Second, not only did Jesus Christ as the second person of the Trinity create all things, but He also predestined all things from eternity. As a result, He speaks in Matthew 24 and in all His word as the sovereign and predestinating Lord of all things. Not a sparrow falls unplanned in this universe, where the very hairs of our head are all numbered (Matt. 10:29-30). Because this is a fallen world, it is often a grim battlefield, a place of grief and trouble. It is, however, also a world of victory and salvation, where God's predestined purposes absolutely govern and decree all things. The world is never out of control for the triune God but controlled to the minutest and most far-reaching detail. It is a world therefore of total meaning because it is a world of total government.

Third, Jesus Christ, in declaring that His words shall not pass away, was speaking, among other things, about the future. That future is absolutely determined by Him. Nothing can alter His decree. All things have meaning and reward in relationship to Himself and His purpose. As a result, He could declare,

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no way lose his reward (Matt. 10:42).

"Ye have done it unto me," Jesus said (Matt. 25:37,40). So small a favor done to us is easily forgotten, but, God being total in His

⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), 953f.

government, nothing is unimportant in His world, and, as a result, total government means total reward. A cup of cold water gains a reward, even if it is given only in the name of a disciple of Christ. In Matthew 10:41-42, three groups are distinguished: prophets, righteous men, and little ones or ordinary disciples. "But there is no distinction as regards the *reward*, which, as Chrysostom said, is eternal life. *A cup of cold water* is a proverbial expression for a minor service."⁹ Chrysostom's view of the nature of the reward need not be accepted, but the fact of a full reward is very evident.

Clearly, the word of Christ is the word of true power because it is the word of dominion. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). His word is clearly *the saving word*. Throughout His ministry, He declared men to be saved in terms of their relationship to Him. Even in the agony of the cross, His word to the thief had total assurance of an absolute government and authority, and the thief had the assurance of paradise that very day (Luke 23:39-43). There was no doubt in the mind of the dying Jesus of the certainty of His word.

Salvation is only possible in a universe in which our God and Saviour speaks an unchanging and certain word. Salvation is not possible against a background of brute factuality. Only against a framework of total meaning and the total authority of our Saviour can salvation have any significance. Only He who pronounces a word which will not pass away, and whose every word has total authority, can be man's lord and savior.

⁹. Sherman E. Johnson, "Matthew," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VII (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 377.

IX

Paradise and Salvation

The memory of Paradise is common to many cultures all over the world. Men have long dreamed of a return to a blissful order in a perfect world, a state of pastoral innocence and unbroken peace. This is no less a factor in the modern world, and, in fact, all the more powerful in that it is now a political hope. Rousseau sparked a modern form of the dream, a state of nature attained by a new politics. The Marxist hope is for a stateless world in which men attain perfection by means of the abolition of the instruments and forms of oppression. In the democracies, politicians plan for a world without war, poverty, disease, or death.

The means of returning to, or advancing to, paradise have been various. An important expression of *a way, first*, can be found in Horace, in Epode 16 (as translated by Arthur S. Way):

Scourges of civil dissension now lash us, the new generation,
And Rome by her own strength is falling ruin-banned,
For whose overthrowing prevailed not her neighbors, the
Marsian nation...

Rome her unnatural sons blood-tainted to ruin are bringing:

Wild beasts again for lairs shall choose the soil of Rome:
Aliens triumphant shall trample her ashes; with hoof-strokes
ringing

The horsemen of our foes shall spurn the ancient home...
Let this be our counsel of counsels: — as when, after dread
oath taken,

The people of Phocaea left their Asian home,
Fled from their lands, from the hearths of their fathers, their
temples, forsaken

For boars to dwell therein, for ravening wolves to roam:
Let us go, whither fortune may guide, whither over the surges
the finger

Of wild South-west or West wind beckons us away.
Thus are ye minded? Hath any aught better to counsel? Why
linger

To haste aboard the ship in this the accepted day?...
Us Ocean awaiteth, the girdler of earth: let us seek, on-sailing,

The fields of Paradise, the Islands of the Blest,
 Where yearly the soil without tillage the harvest unfailing,
 Where blossoms aye the vine by pruner's knife undressed...
 There to the pails unbidden the milch-goats come in the
 gloaming:

For love the heifer comes full-uddered to the byre.
 They fear not at even the growl of the bear round the
 sheepfold roaming;

Nor the earth with viper-nests swells up in hillocks dire...
 For still the King of Heaven there tempers sun and rain...

The way to 'scape wherefrom my prophet-lips have told.¹

The occasion for this desire to flee was either the civil war (31 B.C.) or the threat of a Parthian attack (40-30 B.C.). Horace spoke as a would-be prophet. His message had a double summons and content, apart from his despair over Rome. *First*, he assumed that, somewhere, *an unfallen, untainted world remained*, a world not contaminated by man. There animals lived in peace, and the bear and the lamb were in peace. Cows and goats there came unbidden to the pail to give their milk. It was described as "the fields of Paradise, the Islands of the Blest," but still available to man by ship. *Second*, Horace assumed that man could make a new beginning by escaping to this new world, to Paradise. *Salvation for Horace was thus not a new man but a new beginning for man*. In this Paradise, where vines need no pruning nor soil tillage to yield a full harvest, man himself will need nothing to prosper and to be free. Mazzolani comments on this hope,

Among the cultivated classes, the same yearning for peace and justice coincide with the certainty, derived from the Neo-Pythagorean and Stoic creeds, that a return to a state of pastoral innocence would follow the end of the Cycle of Ages.²

In this cyclical view of history, the world has its springtime and decay, and all this irrespective of any absolute moral law. A springtime realm may survive here and there, but it, too, like all

¹ George F. Whicher, editor, *Selected Poems of Horace* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1947), 25-27.

² Lidia Storoni Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought, From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970), 154.

things else, is subject to the same cycle, which forever begins and ends. This belief in the continuing existence somewhere of a land where innocence prevailed and where man could make a new beginning persisted among humanists through the centuries. It was an important aspect of the attitude of many towards the discovery of the Americas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. America was the surviving Garden of Eden, the natural Paradise of humanist dreams, and the Indians were seen as the unfallen and innocent children of nature. This view of the Indians still survives among followers of “the new left” and among some anthropologists.

In such a perspective as manifested by Horace and his modern counterparts, *salvation is escape from an evil environment to a good one*. In the good environment, man will develop his physical and mental abilities in all directions. With a “polytechnical education,” man will be able to perform every kind of task, scientific, educational, agricultural, or otherwise, with equal ease.³ This is the Marxist dream of Paradise.

The belief is very simply that, if the old environment be cast off, the new will blossom and flourish. Thus, it is held that, if all the old restrictions of Biblical sexual morality are abandoned, a world of super-sex will suddenly begin to flourish. Magazines like *Playboy* are dedicated to bringing in that new world of super-sex, wherein man is to find salvation by being delivered from the evil environment of God’s law.

These popular ideas are directly the reverse of the Biblical doctrine that *a new beginning is only possible where there is a new man*. As long as the fallen man remains, the old results remain, with sin and death governing man’s history. It is the new man who creates a new environment, so that there can be no Paradise without a new man.

That new world, however, requires not only a new man but God’s law. The word *paradise* is instructive at this point. It comes from the Old Persian *pairīdāeza*, akin to the Greek *peri*, around, and *teichos*, a wall.⁴ Some have held it to be from the Armenian *pardez*,

³. Dr. F. N. Lee, *Communist Eschatology, A Christian-Philosophical Analysis of the Post-Capitalist Views of Marx, Engels and Lenin*, vol. II (Bloemfontein, South Africa: 1972), 441ff.

garden. "Among the Persians the term meant a royal park, the enclosed pleasure-ground of king or of nobles, richly wooded, well watered, and amply stocked with game."⁵ The word thus tells us something about Paradise, and the Biblical usage confirms the original meaning of the word. *First*, Paradise is a restricted place, designed only for the aristocracy of grace, those whom the King of Kings calls in His sovereign grace to be His people. In the Garden of Eden, we have a restricted place, and a quick ban on man's entrance or return to it after his fall. In the vision of Revelation 21 and 22, the new Paradise of God is a walled garden-city and all ungodly men are strictly barred from it. It contains all things desirable within its walls, and its choicest gift is life itself, eternal life, untainted by sin and unclouded by death. Thus, Paradise is not only restricted to an aristocracy of grace, but also the place where all that is desirable to the saints is to be found.

Second, in Revelation 21 and 22, Paradise is clearly a walled area. Entrance is impossible to the reprobate. Faith and obedience, grace and the law, are essential to the life of the elect.

14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie (Rev. 22:14-15).

As Terry noted, "all that was lost in Eden shall be restored to heavenly places in Christ, and man, redeemed and filled with the Spirit, shall again have power over the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."⁶ Scott's comment, too, was very good:

Those who "do the commandments of God," as delivered to sinners in the gospel, by repentance, faith in Christ, attendance on the means of grace, and renewed unreserved obedience

⁴ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. III (New York: Revell, 1966), 158.

⁵ S. D. F. Salmond, "Paradise," in James Hastings, editor, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. III (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 669.

⁶ Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Revised edition (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1890), 273.

from evangelical motives, are “blessed”; and they have “a right,” or privilege, derived from grace, to “the Tree of life,” or all the blessings of salvation by Christ, and admission into heaven; that they may there have fellowship with God and his holy angels, for ever and ever. But without the city, even “in the lake of fire,” (for there is no middle place, or condition, so much as intimated,) “are dogs,” selfish, greedy, fierce, and sensual persons, or apostates, with others of a like hateful character....⁷

The fence or wall around Paradise is the law-word of God. It is that wall of law which establishes, demarcates, and creates Paradise. Without the law, there can be no Paradise.

Paradise has reference both to the original Garden of Eden and to the reconstructed world of redeemed man on the one hand, and to heaven on the other (Luke 23:43). In either case, it is the wall which establishes it. The wall is “great and high” (Rev. 21:12). The original Paradise was governed by God’s law, and man’s violation thereof led to his expulsion. The law is basic to the historical and heavenly Paradise, in that it is the realm of God’s law-people, His covenant race. A godly law-order provides safety because it works to punish lawlessness and to protect and advance the law-abiding.

The prophet Ezekiel spoke of Eden as “the garden of God” (Ezek. 28:13), so that we must recognize that Paradise is not only man’s destined home, but it is also the dwelling-place of God. Salvation is thus in part restoration into communion with God in His own place.

The descriptions of Paradise, the New Jerusalem, the new creation, the reconstructed, restored earth, are various. The figures at times are set in contradiction to one another to convey in full force a normally paradoxical meaning. Paradise, Revelation makes clear, is walled, but Isaiah 60:10-14 gives us a remarkable vision of its walls:

10. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

⁷ Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, with Explanatory Notes*, vol. VI (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1830), 789.

11. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually: they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

12. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

13. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

14. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

The chastening hand of God has as its goal the preparation of His covenant people for world rule. Their very enemies shall build-up their walls: all the wealth of the reprobate nations, and all their accomplishments, will be used by the people of God to establish God's law-order. Even now, the walls of Paradise are being built by the ungodly. Whatever worthwhile gains they make we must view as our ultimate possession. All nations must serve God or perish: "yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." All danger shall be removed, and the earth shall flourish with beauty. All men and nations will recognize the priority and authority of the Kingdom of God. "None are excluded from her pale but those who exclude themselves and thereby perish."⁸ Revelation 21:24-27 echoes this passage:

24. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

⁸ Joseph Addison Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1953), 379.

This is both a vision of the future of the earth in history and beyond the end of history. God's Kingdom is glorious in time and in eternity. It is a glorious and wealthy realm, and its wealth is gained by fighting God's battles. Victory brings the wealth of the world into the hands of God's people:

And Judah shall fight at Jerusalem: and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance (Zech. 14:14).

The riches and the possessions of the world shall become the inheritance of the people of God. Their enemies shall be destroyed, and their "sons," according to Isaiah 60:14, "shall come bending unto thee." E. H. Plumptre saw in these words "an expression of the law of inherited retribution, which entered so largely into the Hebrew's thought of the moral government of the world."⁹ All things are governed by the providence of God, who destroys one and sets up another. In these days when statist schools are destroying themselves, when socialized medicine is destroying an honored profession and legalized abortion is turning many doctors into murderers, when cynicism concerning church and state and much else is destroying these institutions, we must recognize the hand of God in these things. He is throwing down a reprobate order and preparing the way for His own Kingdom and authority. The full accomplishment of this prophecy of Isaiah will occur with the Second Coming, but, before that, there shall be a large measure of fulfilment.

Calvin wrote of Isaiah 60:11, "And thy gates shall be open continually," that

The ordinary exposition of this verse is incorrect. The Prophet is generally supposed to mean that the Church will be perfectly safe under the Lord's protection and guardianship; for "open gates" indicate that danger is far off. But I think that the Prophet himself explains it; namely, that the gates shall be open, that riches may be brought into the city from every quarter. And as burdens are usually carried in the daytime, "The day," he says, "will not be enough, so vast shall be the

⁹ E. H. Plumptre, "Isaiah," in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 563.

crowd of those who bring into it precious treasures, and therefore the carrying will be so constant that it will be necessary to keep the gates open night and day.”¹⁰

Calvin's point is a good one, although he limits the meaning by restricting the reference to the Church rather than to the Kingdom of God. Moreover, while he is clearly correct in saying that the open gates refer to the unending stream of wealth poured into the Kingdom, the factor of safety is also implied. This is clearly stated in Zechariah 2:1-5, where Jerusalem, or the Kingdom of God, is spoken of as an unwallled city, or, rather, “inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.”

How, asks the skeptic, can such a godly order be achieved when so much of the world seems to be all the more ungodly every day? One third of the world is in Communist hands, and the rest is in varying degrees socialistic and ungodly. Efforts to counteract this seem to be destined to fail, and, indeed, every major effort has led to a costly failure.

The failures are not surprising and are indeed inescapable. The efforts have been *political*, and their essential nature has been like Horace's hope. For these political efforts, salvation is not a new man, but a new beginning for man, not a change in man but a change in his politics. Conservatism has thus been guilty of the same antichristian faith as its enemies, an environmentalist faith. Had the conservatives succeeded in gaining political power at any time after World War II, they could not have altered the moral and religious collapse which is the prime cause of all the evils they rail against. They themselves would then be the lords of a collapsing world. The moral confusion would be all the worse, in that the decline would take place under the auspices of a supposed restoration.

The “triumph” of the left has been a brutal but hollow one. Socialism has demonstrated its ability to destroy, but not to create.

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956), 288.

Being itself immoral, it creates an immoral people, or, rather, it is first created by an immoral people who are then confirmed and increased in their immorality by the socialist state.

An amusing example of this is reported from Communist East Germany:

Communist East Germany is facing this growing problem: Thousands of tenants in state-owned housing are skipping their rent payments. News media hammer at “immoral” and “unsocialistic” behavior of those who ignore the Government landlord, spend rent money on vacations and consumer goods.

Back-rent bill, according to official estimates, totals 3 million dollars. Since state subsidies hold rents to a trivial \$10 or \$20 a month, the problem thus covers many thousands of tenants.

Solution? Evictions won't do. Anyone moved from an apartment by the East German Government is legally entitled to another — same size and quality.

Financial penalties for rent defaults? None so far. That could change, some critics maintain. Meanwhile, the staff of one district housing office in East Berlin spends 45 percent of its time dunning deadbeats. Rent dodgers also upset economic planners by diverting housing funds to other purchases.¹¹

This is simply one minor example of the kinds of problems which plague socialist states. The problems the U.S. faces in dealing with welfare cases are small by comparison to the problems the Marxist nations face in dealing with workers, on whom production depends. A socialist state has as its basic premise *theft*, stealing from some to give to others. It comes into existence because theft as a principle governs the people, and they remake the state in their own image. (East Germany was previously under a National Socialist regime which the people voted into power; it now has by conquest an international socialist regime.) A state based on theft will only aggravate theft in the life of the people. Theft is a way of life in every socialist state, whether Chinese, Russian, English, French, American, or anything else. Where theft is a way of life, as

¹¹. “Business Around the World,” *U.S. News & World Report*, vol. LXXII, no. 15, 10 April 1972, 70.

it is with us today, no politics of nostalgia can restore men to a good society. The hard realities of politics rest on the moral order of the people. Without that moral order, every politics becomes a *politics of disintegration*.

The road to recovery lies through Jesus Christ and His sovereign law-word. A sick and decaying age is no contest for the power of God unto salvation as revealed through His covenant people. The prophecies of Scripture concerning the nature and glory of God's reign are not exaggerations, nor are they hopeless dreams. They describe an aspect of the salvation of our God. The earth, made sick by man's fall, is to be healed by man's restoration:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (2 Chron. 7:14).

Meanwhile, those who, after Horace, want a new environment for man to make a new beginning, therein are looking to space. Somewhere, they hope, there is a new planet to be colonized, an untouched paradise where man can make a new beginning unpolluted by the ideas of God, sin, good, and evil. There scientific man will become the new Adam, according to this dream, in a world without a serpent. But man remains, and with him remains the handiwork and testimony of God. As a result, a new version of this old dream is emerging, a call for a new and artificial man, the handiwork of man, a machine, and therefore without a conscience or an inner witness to God. To escape from God, the new humanists call for the death of man!

X

Sacrifice

The English word *sacrifice* comes from the Latin *sacrificium*, *sacere*, holy, and *facere*, to make, so that the English word in its original Latin form meant *to make holy*. The Hebrew words used in the Old Testament have a much less noble meaning. They mean a slaughtered animal; one word, *chag*, means a festival (Ex. 23:18; Ps. 118:27; Isa. 29:1), another (*minchah*) means an offering or present (1 Kings 18:29, 36; Ezra 9:4-5; Ps. 141:2), another a fire offering (*ishsheb*) (Lev. 10:13; Num. 15:13; 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 19, 24; 29:13, 36; Josh. 13:14), and still another (*todah*) a thank offering (Jer. 17:26; 33:11). Most occurrences of the word have reference to a killing or slaughter. The New Testament words (*thusia*, *thuo*) are also concerned with a killing and a victim. The sacrifice is a victim, and to sacrifice is to kill. The Biblical words thus have an inescapable *bluntness* as well as an ugliness. The Latin word gives us an exalted idea; the Biblical words smack of blood and an innocent victim. Biblical sacrifice is related to a harsh reality, sin, the consequence of which is death.

This makes sacrifice an unpleasant fact and an unhappy reminder to many of certain consequences of history and of judgment and its consequences. As a result, hostility to sacrifice arose even in ancient times. Thus, Buddha was strongly opposed to all sacrifice. He saw it as a futile effort, as well as cruelty to the animals involved; moreover, it was a religious exercise which he felt lacked spirituality. Buddhists thus worked very early to abolish all sacrifice. King Asoka ruled that "No animal may be slaughtered for sacrifice." The idea that men could gain innocence by killing was ridiculed by the Buddhists.¹ Innocence or holiness was to be gained, for the Buddhist, by man's work, by forsaking the material world and renouncing life and the world as illusions. The holy man worked to extirpate all passion and illusion and sought to escape

¹ C. A. F. Rhys Davids, "Sacrifice (Buddhist)," in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XI, 7f.

from life into nirvana. The “sacrifice” of the Buddhist was thus a surrender of a part of life in order to gain an escape from karma, the burden and penalty of sin and guilt.

Not surprisingly, the Buddhist perspective is again popular in the twentieth century, not only because of its radical relativism and its denial of meaning to any supernatural order, but also because of its concept of sacrifice as surrender. Salvation for the twentieth century humanist involves the sacrifice or surrender of certain aspects of our life for the common good. By means of confiscatory taxation, men are deprived of their wealth in order to save those segments of society in need of salvation. The net result of all such redistribution is always the impoverishment of all society and the destruction of productivity. It is an illusion of the humanistic mind that production is a result of sacrifice and work, whereas it is in fact a product of capitalization and work. Sacrifice in the sense of giving up or surrendering something is neither Biblical nor efficacious unto salvation. The common idea of sacrifice is now, however, precisely that: it is giving up something, and it is believed that this act of giving up somehow ennoble the one who does it, as well as adding to the general good.

As a result, the foolish clergy try to prompt sacrifice in this sense among the laity. People are asked, “What have you given up in Lent?”, “How much have you sacrificed for the Lord?”, and so on, all of which smacks more of blasphemy than it does of sound doctrine. God *requires* tithes of us, and He expects gifts above and beyond that. God, who made us and redeemed us, asks us to keep His law-word. To act as though something we do is a magnanimous surrender of something on our part to God is Phariseeism. Our Lord taught the contrary: “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

When the Bible talks about sacrifice, it talks about a killing, an execution, and the cause of that execution is sin. Thus, the sentence on *all* sin is death (Gen. 2:17). Death is the common lot of all of us as sons of Adam. Since all men born of Adam are already destined to die, the death of none of them can be accounted a sacrifice in

the Biblical sense. The death of men is a consequence of the Fall, and a just consequence. Biblical sacrifice has reference to the killing of an unblemished animal, a clean animal, “a male without blemish” (Lev. 1:3, 10).

As Ginsburg noted, “To offer a defective sacrifice was an insult and a deception.”² Defective sacrifices are described as an offense to God and grounds for a curse in the burden of the prophet Malachi:

13. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.

14. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen (Mal. 1:13-14).

This sacrifice the believer had to bring “of his own voluntary will,” but strictly in terms of God’s prescription and way (Lev. 1:3). “And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him” (Lev. 1:4). The believer thus identified himself with the sacrificial animal, which was then killed. According to Leviticus 17:11,

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

“The blood is the life” (Deut. 12:23). The comment of Micklem has an element of truth, although the reference to death is also present in sacrifice, very clearly:

When it is said that we are saved “by the blood of Christ,” this does not mean by his death so much as by his life. In the old sacrifices the slaying of the victim was only incidental to the ritual of the blood which was subsequently applied to the altar and sometimes to the worshiper: “For the blood is the life” (Deut. 12:23). In the case of the victim it is the life that has passed through death. The “blood of Christ” is the life that

² C. D. Ginsburg, “Leviticus,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 343.

has passed through death. We are said to be saved, then, by the life of the Crucified, by the life of him who died for us.³

Micklem is right to this extent, that in Scripture “blood and life are used interchangeably.”⁴ Moreover,

As the blood of the victim is identical with its life, and represents the soul of the animal, hence God has appointed it as a substitute for the sinner’s life. Thus the life of the sacrifice atones for the life of the offerer. Hence the remark of the Apostle, “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22).⁵

Reference was made earlier to the believer’s identification with the sacrificial animal. This was not an identity of being, of course. Moreover, the difference between the believer and the sacrifice was a very great one. The man who came to the door of the tabernacle, to God’s governmental seat, came as a sinner needing God’s salvation. The sacrificial animal, in contrast, was without blemish, signifying and symbolizing Jesus Christ, the sinless one. Neither man nor anything which to any accurate degree represented man’s nature could provide atonement. It required a sinless substitute.

Jesus Christ, as this substitute, was both sinless, having kept the law perfectly, and also our representative. He assumed death for us and destroyed the power of sin and death. In His atoning death, Jesus Christ died, was killed, in atonement for our sins. The sacrifice of Christ was His *death* for our redemption.

In His sacrifice, Christ manifested His office as prophet. St. Paul tells us that Christ, “before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession” (1 Tim. 6:13). As prophet, Christ witnessed to His royal power before Pilate, declaring that He was indeed King, but that His Kingdom was not derived from this world but was of divine origin and power (John 18:36-37). At every step, Christ spoke and acted as the great Prophet, revealing the will of God for our salvation. He manifested the true knowledge of salvation in His

³. Nathaniel Micklem, “Leviticus,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. II (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 13.

⁴. Ginsburg, *op. cit.*, 414.

⁵. *Ibid.*

sacrifice, whereby He set forth the enormity of sin, the necessity of justice, and the magnificence of God's saving grace.

Moreover, in His sacrifice, Jesus Christ revealed Himself as King. "His dying on the cross was a being exalted above the earth and a victory over His enemies (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32 and 34), for it was the most perfect obedience to the commandment of the Father (John 14:31)."⁶ As King, Christ subdues us to Himself, rules and defends us, and restrains and conquers all His enemies as the one who has conquered sin and death and reestablished in His person the new humanity of the second or last Adam. His sacrifice marks the beginning of the restoration of all things: it is paradise regained, the first step in the new creation of God, because His sacrifice was a killing of the principle of sin in His people. He who was nailed to the cross nailed our death sentence to that cross, and also our death in sin and the uncircumcision of our fallen human nature; He made us alive, quickened us "together with him, having forgiven... all trespasses" (Col. 2:13-14). Christ's sacrifice was thus an act of Kingship whereby He declared Himself to be the King of the new creation and alone able to deliver, defend, and prosper His people. As King, He attacked our great enemies, sin and death, and overcame them.

It is, however, supremely as our great high priest that Christ manifested Himself on the cross. As priest, He offered the sacrifice, Himself, "of his own voluntary will" (Lev. 1:3), as a sacrifice freely given to the Father in atonement for our sins.

Atonement requires sacrifice, death, and shedding of blood. Life was created by God to serve His sovereign purpose, and sinful life must be destroyed as surely as cancer must be removed from the body. It was required that the animal sacrifice be brought to the house of God, its blood poured out in death and then sprinkled about the altar by the priest (Ex. 29:15ff.). The blood was also placed on the persons of the priests, according to Exodus 29:19-21:

19. And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

⁶ Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956), 349.

20. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

21. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

The offerer had to identify himself with the victim; even so, Christ as our high priest identified Himself with us, and as Himself the sinless substitute for our offenses, accepted death for us. Then, as George Rawlinson noted,

The blood was regarded as the life (Gen. ix. 4). The life consecrated to God and accepted by Him was given back by Him to His ministers, that it might consecrate them wholly to His service, and so fit them for it. Placed upon the tip of the right ear, it reminded them that their ears were to be ever open and attentive to the whispers of the Divine voice; placed on the thumb of the right hand, it taught them that they should take in hand nothing but what was sanctified; placed upon the great toe of the right foot, it was a warning that they were to walk thenceforth in the paths of holiness.⁷

This is very true, and yet it constitutes a limited and therefore false witness. It speaks of a *negative sanctification*, as so much of the Church's teaching has done. Rather, a most *positive sanctification* is indicated by this deliverance from death and ordination into life by the blood of the sacrifice. Their hands, ears, feet, garments, and persons are now positively under the power of the new life. The blood had been first placed upon the horns of the altar (Ex. 29:12), the symbols of God's power. Fugitives clung to the horns of the altar as the symbols of God's virtue and strength (1 Kings 1:50; 2:28). The strength of God is now associated with the sacrificial blood. Those under the blood are out from under the curse and are now the people of God's power, glory, and Kingdom. They are now *the people of the blood and the law*. The promise made to redeemed

⁷ George Rawlinson, "Exodus," in Ellicott, *op. cit.*, 299.

Israel is the promise magnified by the blood of Christ to His covenant race, the new humanity:

24. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness of Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

25. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you (Deut. 11:24-25).

This is no three-monkey doctrine of hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil, no Hindu or Buddhist doctrine of sanctification, but rather a summons to possess the earth in the name and power of God. Waller pointed out that “upon all the land” may be read “upon all the earth that ye shall tread upon.”⁸ This promise is repeated in Joshua 1:3-5.

But this promise is not automatic in its fulfilment. It will not do to say that God has not given us these things. There is a requirement, above and beyond the basic requirement of the blood and the law: “Thus it appears that what Israel would conquer, the sole of his feet must tread.”⁹ The kingdoms of this world, its arts, sciences, commerce, wealth, and all things, must be occupied in the name of the King and in His power. In this respect, Micklem is right: the blood signifies life. The blood is our release from the power of sin and death into true knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion. Not only must the head of Satan be crushed under our feet (Rom. 16:20), but *all things* must also be placed under our feet, and us at Christ’s feet. God declares, “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). Isaiah 60:14 declares that “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of

⁸ C. H. Waller, “Deuteronomy,” in Ellicott, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. II, 38.

⁹ C. H. Waller, “Joshua,” in *ibid.*, 107.

the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” Because these things were truly believed by both Israel and then the Christians, Rome greatly feared the spread of Biblical faith. It was the word of power and of conquest.

Every area of life must be occupied in the name of the King. To assume that a “calling” is only to the ministry of the word is fallacious. Sacrifice not only sanctified or set apart to a holy use Aaron and his sons, the priests, and all the utensils of the service, but also all the congregation of Israel (Ex. 29:43-46). They were now doing the Lord’s work in all their callings.

Sacrifice or death thus opened the door to life, not a narrow or circumscribed life, not merely an ecclesiastical vocation, but the whole of life as the full and proper realm for the people of God. Sacrifice in the Biblical sense is not a giving up of something or a surrender of an aspect of our lives, but it is the gift of God unto salvation: it is the fullness of life.

XI

Perfection and Salvation

Edna St. Vincent Millay began her poem “Moriturus” with these telling words,

If I could have
Two things in one:
The peace of the grave,
And the light of the sun;

and then added,

If I might be
Insensate matter
With sensate me

Sitting within,
Harking and prying,
I might begin
To dicker with dying.

Here, in a few words, we have an important aspect of humanism, the attempt to get the best of all possible worlds without the responsibilities of any. The desire is to be dead to all that might hurt us, but alive to all that we can enjoy; to have all the fullness of life and meaning which God has ordained, but without God; to have both “the peace of the grave, and the light of the sun.” The humanist wants life to be an endless smorgasbord table, on which all the gods of humanism’s past and present, as well as the God of Scripture, serve up their finest offerings for man to pick and choose at, world without end, forever. In this humanistic sense, *perfection* is the sum total of everything man can desire, together with the total absence of all responsibility, accountability, and all problems. Humanistic man wants to be able to act as pragmatically, amorally, and irresponsibly as possible, and yet see his idealistic professions realized because he so demands it. A world, however, in which one wants to enjoy both “the peace of the grave, and the

light of the sun” is a world of insanity and is doomed to the slave’s cell and the grave.

There is another aspect of humanistic *perfectionism* which requires notice, and that is the expectation of flawless, sinless behavior in other people. This expectation goes hand in hand with a bitter cynicism about man. Humanistic idealism is inseparable from a cynicism about man and a willingness on the basis of this cynicism to take advantage of man. “Why shouldn’t I cheat on my wife?” a man once observed, adding, “Once you find out what women are like, you either cheat on them or become their patsy.” He went on to say that, if he could find the perfect woman, “believe me, I wouldn’t act this way.”

A major problem in modern marriage is this expectation of perfection. People in love are usually oblivious to the faults of the loved one. Marriage is a quick indoctrination course in the sins, faults, and imperfections of the person we have married. What does not come as quickly to us as it does to others is a knowledge of our own sins and failings. We find our own sins and frailties tolerable in a way that we do not find those of others.

Humanistic perfectionism leads, as we have noted, to an unrealistic demand for “the peace of the grave, and the light of the sun.” Practically, it means the politics of disintegration as the means to regeneration. Thus, the most cynical politics in American history has prevailed from Woodrow Wilson on. It has marked the entrance of the United States into the world of power politics and imperialism. At the same time, this politics has had as its earnest facade the thesis of American innocence. Wilson’s goal was to “make the world safe for democracy.” F. D. Roosevelt wanted the worldwide reign of the “four freedoms.” The appeal of J. F. Kennedy was his ability to combine this facade of innocence and its dream of perfection with a radically immoral and pragmatic politics. His successors have not been able to maintain the same air of idealism and innocence and have suffered for it, although in practice they have been more effective politicians. As Gutman noted,

The reason no one really likes Nixon in a heartfelt way is that most of us like to feel innocent even though obviously we aren't, and when you look at him you know he's not innocent. None of the others were innocent either, not Lyndon, J.F.K., nor Ike nor Truman (Truman was a loyal soldier in one of the most corrupt machines ever to operate in American politics), nor even Bobby with that wild shock of hair — but they all, except maybe Lyndon, were able to maintain the dream that America was innocent. With Nixon that dream is hard to maintain.¹

This dream is common to all nations, if not, in many cases, with respect to their politicians, at least with respect to their countries. It is not new; it was common to Roman humanism as well as to its modern form. This is more than loyalty to one's own country. Decatur held to this older form of loyalty in declaring, "My country, right or wrong, but my country." This older loyalty admitted to serious sins and faults in one's country but required loyalty all the same; now, the belief in innocence is basic to this loyalty. This is common on the national and on the personal level. Thus, a woman was deeply offended and hurt because her husband, whom she admitted was very much in love with her, still was openly aware of her faults; her feeling was that love should blind him to such things, or, somehow, erase them.

Why has this amazing concept of perfection, the dream of realizing "the peace of the grave, and the light of the sun," of playing the "game" of power politics and seeing hell instead of paradise result, of following the fantasies of sexual promiscuity as a means to the bliss of godly marital union, of expecting perfection while practicing sin, come to be a way of life?

The answer lies in the nature of humanism. Because its god is man, humanism must expect perfection from man. But it is the nature of all false gods to expect of others what they themselves are not. If I am my own god, then I shall regard myself as the standard; I shall expect all other people to meet my standards without feeling that I must myself conform to them. As a humanistic man, I will require the law of others, but I will submit to no man's law. The

¹. Walter K. Gutman, "Money," *Penthouse*, vol. III, no. 9, May 1972, 32.

result is a breakdown of human relations wherever humanism prevails. All men have impossible expectations and demands of all other men, and all refuse to accept their own shortcomings, sins, and frailties. We then judge all people, not in terms of God's law, but in terms of our pretended law. We do not ask, are they obedient to God's law, and do they, within the limitations of their nature and abilities, strive faithfully to be a servant of God? Instead, we ask, are they tactful, respectful of us, good in terms of our social standards, while we indulge ourselves in those frailties we ourselves possess. For us to be tactless is to be plain-spoken and honest; in others, it is bad manners. For us to keep house carelessly is to put first things first and to concentrate on our children or our work, but in others this means sloppiness. The Bible does not ask us to be blind to the faults of others, but to be forbearing and kind. In humanism, which infects us all, we are neither forbearing nor patient with the faults of others, but only with our own. Thus, when my wife once remarked that she loved me dearly, and was ready to put up with my faults, I responded that I was ready to meet her halfway on that: I was ready to live with my faults also, a statement made in jest but with more than a little truth to it.

Humanism leads us to demand perfection in other people without demanding it of ourselves, because we see ourselves as our own ultimate, our standard and our god. Thus, an English girl justified her cynicism concerning men as a consequence of "an early *affair*," declaring, "He promised me everything, and like a fool I believed it. I came down so hard I could never forget it. I won't ever quite trust a man in the same way again."² This girl did not raise the question about her own nature; in entering a non-marital relationship, she was no better than the man in question, and, had she chosen to break it rather than he, in preference for something "better," he would have indulged in a like self-pity to rationalize his sin. The humanist continually sees reality in terms of a myth of the moral man, himself, as against immoral society, all others.

² "Super Starr," in *ibid*, 78f.

John Greenleaf Whittier, by way of contrast, gives us a vivid if brief account, in "Snowbound," of the Calvinistic doctor who expected others to meet a standard because he himself first met that standard of godly conduct:

We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound;
 And, following where the teamsters led,
 The wise old Doctor went his round,
 Just pausing at our door to say,
 In the brief autocratic way
 Of one who, prompt at Duty's call
 Was free to urge her claim on all,
 That some poor neighbor sick abed
 At night our mother's aid would need.

As against the humanistic ideal of perfection, it is important to understand the Biblical doctrine. Perfection in Scripture is not sinlessness, but rather uprightness, sincerity, and maturity of faith and obedience. In Genesis 17:1, we find Abraham confronted by God, who declares, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect"; the marginal reading gives "upright, sincere," for "perfect." The "Almighty God" is in Hebrew *El Shaddai*, meaning "strong so as to overpower."³ The meaning of this designation, is, as Calvin noted, that God thereby declared

that he had sufficient power for Abram's protection: because our faith can only stand firmly, while we are certainly persuaded that the defence of God is alone sufficient for us, and can sincerely despise everything in the world which is opposed to our salvation. God, therefore, does not boast of that power which lies concealed within himself; but of that which he manifests towards his children; and he does so, in order that Abram might hence derive materials for confidence. Thus, in these words, a promise is included.⁴

Without the sovereign, all-powerful, and all-perfect God, our faith becomes illusion. Humanistic man cannot play god and require

³ R. Payne Smith, "Genesis," in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan), n.d.), 70.

⁴ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, called Genesis*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948), 443.

others to meet his ideal of perfection without becoming both a fool and a tyrant. The sovereign creator God can require of us that we meet a standard which has been written into our total being. In commenting on the commandment, “walk before me, and be thou perfect,” Calvin said,

In making the covenant, God stipulates for obedience, on the part of his servant. Yet He does not in vain prefix the declaration that he is ‘the Almighty God,’ and is furnished with power to help his own people: because it was necessary that Abram should be recalled from all other means of help, that he might entirely devote himself to God alone. For no one will ever betake himself to God, but he who keeps created things in their proper place, and looks up to God alone. Where, indeed, the power of God has been once acknowledged, it ought so to transport us with admiration, and our minds ought so to be filled with reverence for him, that nothing should hinder us from worshipping him. Moreover, because the eyes of God look for faith and truth in the heart, Abram is commanded to aim at integrity. For the Hebrews call him a man of *perfections*, who is not of a deceitful or double mind, but sincerely cultivates rectitude. In short, the integrity here mentioned is opposed to hypocrisy. And surely, when we have to deal with God, no place for dissimulation remains. Now, from these words, we learn for what end God gathers together for himself a church; namely, that they whom he has called may be holy. The foundation, indeed, of the divine calling, is a gratuitous promise; but it follows immediately after, that they whom he has chosen as a peculiar people to himself, should devote themselves to the righteousness of God. For on this condition, he adopts children as his own that he may, in return, obtain the place and the honour of a Father. And as he himself cannot lie, so he rightly demands mutual fidelity from his own children. Wherefore, let us know, that God manifests himself to the faithful, in order that they may live as in his sight; and may make him the arbiter not only of their works, but of their thoughts. Whence also we infer, that there is no other method of living piously and justly, than that of depending upon God.⁵

⁵ *Ibid.*, 443f.

A God-centered perfectionism is a relationship between the individual and God in terms of His grace and law; it is growth in obedience, integrity, and maturity. It is first of all a standard whereby we see ourselves in terms of God's law-word, and then a standard for assessing others. Whittier's Calvinistic doctor first of all met "Duty's call" under difficult circumstances, snowbound weather, and then felt "free to urge her claim on all" by commanding help for a sick neighbor. Humanistic perfectionism is not God-oriented; instead, it is a unilateral demand we make of other people and then condemn them for failing to meet it. Humanistic perfectionism leads to a fragmenting society and to loneliness in a crowded place, whereas Whittier's Calvinistic doctor bound man to man in terms of God's requirements.

Humanistic perfectionism leads to a flight from man and a horror for people and personal relationships. It has again and again led to casual, impersonal sexuality on a promiscuous basis as a substitute for "getting hurt" by other people. Not surprisingly, the English girl cited previously, who found herself unable to "trust a man" again because her illicit relationship failed her, is now "a specialist in Regency inlaid tables."⁶ Quite commonly, in a humanistic age, a love of impersonal, inanimate, and sometimes mechanical perfection replaces human relationships. Humanists give a love and passion to fine craftsmanship, rare works of art, choice wines and foods, and finely tooled machines, which goes beyond normal appreciation. It represents a humanizing of impersonal things, and an over-valuation of their perfection, because man has been written off as an object of love. Humanistic perfection turns against man, because man fails to meet its hopes.

St. Paul, in contrast, counselled "the elect of God" to clothe themselves in

12. ...bowels (or heart) of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering;

13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

⁶ "Super Starr," *Penthouse*, May 1972, 20.

14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:12-14).

In the last sentence, “above all” can be better translated, “over all.” St. Paul here spoke against a humanistic perfectionism common to his day, Gnosticism. Barry ably commented on this:

The phrase is remarkable, apparently suggested by the claim to perfection, set up by the Gnostic teachers. They sought such perfection in knowledge peculiar to the few; St. Paul in the love which is possible to all. For as he elsewhere urges (I Cor. viii. 1), “Knowledge puffs up, charity builds up”; knowledge gains a fancied perfection, charity a real perfection.⁷

The Gnostic perfection was sought in knowledge, and it was a ground for despising “the common herd.” Humanism seeks perfection in a variety of areas because it is in flight from man; the worship of man leads to the contempt of man.

This humanistic perfectionism leads to both a radical intolerance and a radical tolerance for man. When a humanist sets up his own requirements as the standard for mankind, he is doomed to disappointment, because man was created, not to conform to man’s purpose and calling, but to God’s sovereign decree. As a result, the humanist despises man and is intolerant of other people, because they do not meet his fiat word; men are then regarded by him as reprobate, worthless, and hopeless. Having now no expectation of anything from other men, he can tolerate them as fools and knaves. Thus, while a missionary to the American Indians some years ago, I found that one federal officer regarded the Indians with total contempt and intolerance: they were no better than animals, he insisted, and his language became pornographic as he described their life and character. At the same time, he was able to gain a very wide and popular following among the Indians as a friendly and indulgent official and to associate with all on a very congenial basis. The reason was that, while he despised and hated them as men, he could like and indulge them as animals, and, many of them, as pets. Because they were not for him human

⁷ Alfred Barry, “Colossians,” in Ellicott, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VI-II, 114.

beings in the same sense that he was, he could be radically tolerant of their ways, and he was loved by all. Only when confronted by the Biblical doctrine of man did his savage hatred and intolerance come to the fore. (After one encounter with me on the subject, he avoided me, maintaining that the only way to do his work was on his basis, not on mine.)

Humanistic tolerance, which asks us to accept all men without reference to any law of God, and without any Biblical principal of separation, is grounded in a radical contempt for man. To expect men to meet the standards of God's infallible word is to treat them as creatures made in the image of God, now fallen, but capable by the grace of God of exercising knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion under God. To expect men to meet God's standards means also that we ourselves seek to meet them, with humility and meekness, and in our common effort, we view one another with godly forbearance, and forgiveness, and with the love and charity which is "the bond of perfectness."

A pagan perfectionism, however, when imported into Christianity, cuts the vital nerve of the creation mandate. It leads men to reject this world in favor of a perfect order, a sinless, static state. It becomes thus antinomian and denies the validity of God's law as the instrument of establishing God's kingly government over the earth, or else it postpones the law to a millennial order. Instead of work, man's calling under God, it stresses withdrawal from the world into a quietistic waiting on God. Instead of seeing time as an opportunity, it views time as something to be waited out in expectation of eternity. A mature faith is thus replaced with a perpetual childishness, and an irrelevance to history. But to be irrelevant to history is to deny salvation.

XII

Causality

A cause is that power or agent which produces any thing or event. The idea of a cause implies a purpose, goal, or end, so that it has reference to persons and to God. The concept of causality has been replaced in relativistic, positivistic, and naturalistic circles with the probability-concept for precisely this reason, namely, that it points to an ultimately personal first cause, God. In a world without God, events are the product of chance, not of purpose; they therefore are without cause. The framework and ground of causality is both personal and theistic.

In a universe of chance, causality cannot exist. *First*, there will be no universe, a unified order of law, where chance prevails. *Second*, where chance prevails, no history is possible. A cause is a sequence of meaningful, purposive events, and every cause is set in the context of a universe of interlocking causes and events, so that no cause and no effect stands in isolation. Nothing can thus be explained in terms of a simplistic approach. As Custance has noted,

In physiology, for example, we dissect the body, *or* we experiment with it only as an electro-chemical machine and our findings confirm the effectiveness of our tools of research and our own methodology by giving us the only kind of information we were looking for. But as Paul Weiss, recognizing this aspect of the inherent limitation of the scientific method, observed:

“Maybe our concept of our nervous system is equally inadequate and insufficient, because so long as you use only electrical instruments, you get electrical answers; if you use chemical detectors, you get chemical answers; and if you determine numerical and geometrical values, you get numerical and geometrical answers. So perhaps we have not yet found the particular kind of instrument that tells us the next unknown.”¹

¹ Arthur C. Custance, *Scientific Determinism and Divine Intervention* (Brockway, Ontario: Doorway Papers No. 44, 1972), 4f.

It was this simplistic view of causes which led to confusion in medicine some years ago with respect to ulcers. It was “proven” that ulcers had a chemical cause; later, of course, a psychological cause was also discovered, and there is no reason to believe that all is now known with respect to ulcers. The simplistic view is a product of a syncretism of theistic causation with chance variation. In a world of brute factuality, nothing is tied to anything else by an overall cause or purpose, or by any inherent natural unity. In such a world as envisioned by Newtonian science, a collision of two entities resulted in something. A single collision produced a result, it was held, and thus a bastard and simplistic concept of causality resulted from this belief. Causality was seen as mechanical, because, under a deistic viewpoint, God as the first cause remained somewhere in the remote past. The personal aspect was thus drained out of events by this mechanistic perspective, and, later, when God was dropped as a necessary hypothesis, causality gave way to the probability-concept. Purpose was thus replaced by chance.

However, as John Wilson has observed, from a Christian perspective, the older view of *causality* is also untenable, not because causality does not exist, but because it is too complex for any simplistic usage. Causes are so multiple in the natural world, that events are more readily described than traced to their causes.

Turning now from the problem of causes as the scientist must work with them, let us examine causality in its broadest implications. How shall we view the world around us, and in terms of what kind of perspective of causality? Clearly, as Christians, we regard God as the ultimate and absolute cause of all things, but in what sense do we mean this?

Towards this end, let us examine the events described in 2 Kings 18, 19, and Isaiah 36, 37. King Hezekiah’s reformation of Judah (2 Kings 18:1-8) was apparently lacking in any depth or popular support. According to Ellison,

There is no mention or commendation of this reformation in either Isaiah or Micah. The reason is that, as these prophets show, it was purely external, and even at the court there was

no real trust in Jehovah, as was shown by Judah's alliance with Egypt and lack of moral reformation (Is. xxviii, 7—xxxi, 9). *He rebelled against the king of Assyria* (7). The result was disastrous, and there is no indication that Isaiah approved.²

When Assyria moved against Judah, the national resistance collapsed, and many joined the enemy to fight against their own people or to be used by them elsewhere, or else had left the country. Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) referred to this in an account of his conquests:

As to Hezekiah the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth-) ramps, and battering-rams brought (thus) near (to the walls) (combined with) the attack by foot soldiers, (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered (them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate. His towns which I had plundered, I took away from his country and gave them (over) to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza. Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased the tribute and the *katru* — presents (due) to me (as his) overlord which I imposed (later) upon him beyond the former tribute, to be delivered annually. Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship had overwhelmed and whose irregular and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal residence, in order to strengthen (it), had deserted him, did send me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones, antimony, large cuts of red stone, couches (inlaid) with ivory, *nimedu-chairs* (inlaid) with ivory, elephant-hides, ebony-wood, box-wood (and) all kinds of valuable treasures, his (own) daughters, concubines, male and

² H. L. Ellison, "II Kings," in F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan, *The New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1953), 328.

female musicians. In order to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance as a slave he sent his (personal) messenger.³

This was a brutal invasion and taxation, and it was a divine judgment. Judah had placed its hope in an Egyptian alliance rather than in God (Isa. 30:1-7). The Biblical position with regard to alliances is that alliances are religious acts. An alliance means “an understanding between Jehovah and the gods of the country involved” as well as between the citizens of both countries.⁴ An alliance means that a common cause and a common faith motivates the allies. (The hostility of the United States in its earlier years to “entangling alliances” had this religious overtone.) In antiquity, the religious aspect of alliances was always an open and avowed fact. Judah trusted in Egypt, and Egypt proved faithless. Sennacherib, despite the tribute, decided to level and destroy Jerusalem. Only when all human help had failed did Hezekiah turn to the prophet Isaiah and the Lord (Isa. 37:1-5). God declared through Isaiah that Sennacherib would be defeated by His hand, and would return to his land to be slain there (Isa. 37:6-7). We are then told of the results:

35. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

36. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

37. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adram-melech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhadden his son reigned in his stead. (2 Kings 19:35-37)

Clearly, God’s judgment against Sennacherib is here depicted. Just as clearly, however, the preceding events are a judgment on Judah. Thus, every step of this history, “natural” and “supernatural,” is an act of God. Moreover, every aspect of history

³. James B. Pritchard, editor, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 288.

⁴. Ellison, *op. cit.*, 335.

is an aspect of God's foreknowledge and predestination (Acts 15:18, Romans 9, etc.). God's role cannot therefore be limited to the miraculous in history: it includes His absolute government of the sparrow's fall and every hair on each man's head (Matt. 10:29-30).

We have noted the retreat of the idea of causality to a mechanistic concept, and then to a probability hypothesis. Let us now examine the origins of the idea of causality. The history of the causality concept is inseparable from the dialectical nature of non-Christian thought. In the ancient world, as witness Greece, reality was seen as two rival substances or realms, spirit, form, ideas, or light, versus matter, particulars, or darkness. These two realms, in non-Biblical thought, could be viewed in three ways with respect to their relationship: *first*, they could be held as both incompatible and yet necessary to one another, and thus held in dialectical tension, as in Western thought; *second*, their incompatibility could be stressed to the point of an ultimate and irreconcilable difference, with a resultant *dualism*, as in Aryan or Iranian thought; *third*, one or another could be held to be an illusion, with *monism* resulting, as in Eastern thought, the Greek Cynics, or the Western mystics. For the Western mystics and Eastern thought (and Mary Baker Eddy), matter is an illusion; for the Cynics, the world of spirit was an illusion.

The nature of men's thinking on these two realms governed their views of causality. The dialectical background meant that two diverse realms existed. As Dooyeweerd has pointed out, the Greek dialectic was ideas and matter, the medieval dialectic, grace and nature, and the modern dialectic, freedom and nature. The modern form develops an implication of the previous forms of the dialectic, namely, that the mental or spiritual realm is the world of freedom from the blind, mechanical causality of the world of nature. This is not to say that causality is absent in these perspectives from the realm of man's mind or spirit. The causality of the realm of ideas or freedom is self-caused and self-determined. It is the realm of man's autonomous mind and man's own decree of predestination. The *philosopher-kings* of Plato, therefore, were the predestinating power over society and nature because in them this

power of self-determination had been realized. Modern socialistic concepts of predestination and social planning rest on the same premise of man's autonomous mind and its self-caused, self-determinative nature. In the existentialists, this is self-consciously held. Thus, Sartre declared, "my freedom is a choice of being God and all my acts, all my projects translate this choice and reflect it in a thousand and one ways, for there is an infinity of ways of being and of ways of having." To avoid the influence of the world of matter on the autonomous mind, Sartre rejected the concept of the unconscious. In order to be free, man must create his own essence without any influence from the world of God or the world of matter. Sartre's goal was to "get rid of that dualism which in the existent opposes interior to exterior." It was the world of essence, of a predetermined nature, that Sartre wanted to eliminate. Man must be free to create his own essence, i.e., issue his own decree of predestination and become his own cause without any outside interference. It is important for him to be able to say, for better or for worse, that "The world is human."⁵

Long before Sartre, Oriental thought reached a similar conclusion, with disastrous consequences. This was the doctrine of *karma*. The material world was held to be in some sense either illusory or an illusion, and the wise man would withdraw from it or write it off. This left the world of the mind, in process of disentangling itself from the world of matter or illusion, and able now to concentrate on its self-caused nature. Freedom was *from* the material world, and thus essentially negative; there was no freedom *from* self-causality except in nirvana, or death, an end to the cycle of transmigration or reincarnation. In its developed form, in Buddhism, little remains of man's private world of mind except a relentless causality which must be escaped. A man is a self-enclosed universe of causality, inheriting nothing from anyone else nor passing on anything to another. Every man is his own cause and effect. As Poussin observed,

⁵. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), xlv, 50, 218, 599.

This doctrine might be called the essential element, not only of all moral theories in India, but also of popular belief. If a person is born deformed or unhealthy, it must be — so people say — because of sins committed in his former life. It is in Buddhism, however, that the doctrine of *karma* reaches its climax and assumes a unique character. Elsewhere it meets with correctives; there are counteractions to human acts; but in Buddhism it may be said that *karma* explains everything, or ought to.

Other Indian philosophies admit the existence of a self-existent soul or an ego. In Buddhist philosophy the ego is merely a collection of various elements constantly renewed, which are combined into a pseudo-personality only as the result of action.⁶

The conclusion of Oriental thought was similar to Sartre's, that "Man is a useless passion."⁷

In the Western philosophical tradition, a blind, impersonal (and later mechanical) causality was held to be present in the world of "nature." This purely physical, usually inanimate, and impersonal world was governed by a cause and effect relationship which was a necessity but was neither logical nor coercive, since logic and coercion belong to the personal realm. ("The necessity in these cases is neither that of logical implication nor that of coercion.")⁸ This causality became mechanistic, as we have noted, and then gave way to a probability-concept. In the world of mind or freedom, we have seen the impasse which results from either Oriental or existentialist emphases on man's self-caused and autonomous nature. The dialectical premise leads in every case to a collapse of culture and society in the face of the problems of causality and the relationship of the one and the many.

The Bible is hostile to dialecticism, dualism, and monism. Mind or spirit and matter are alike God's creation. The distinction is not between mind and matter but between the uncreated Being of

⁶ L. De La Valle Poussin, "Karma," in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. VII, 676.

⁷ Sartre, *op. cit.*, 615.

⁸ Morris T. Keeton, "Causality," in Dagobert D. Runes, editor, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 15th edition, revised (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 47.

God, and the created being of the universe. God's law and causality is total and operative everywhere, and it is everywhere personal. In the case of Sennacherib, the judgment is both material and spiritual, and the deliverance of Jerusalem is both material and spiritual. There is no separation between the two realms, nor two kinds of causality. The whole universe is one law sphere under one God. However dimly we grasp aspects of that law here and there, it is both real, total, and unified.

Before considering further implications of God's sovereignty, let us turn to a text cited by Custance as of central importance, Genesis 2:1-3:

1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Custance then comments:

The meaning *seems* clear enough. But is it? Why would God "rest"? Because he was weary? Surely not! The words must have some other meaning than merely to reflect our own weariness at the end of a week of intense activity. Indeed, the Hebrew word rendered "rest" is not bound at all to any idea of fatigue. It means rather "to disengage," "to terminate active involvement in" or simply as the New English Bible has it here, "to cease from." God did not stop work because He was tired but because He had finished what He was preparing.⁹

In summoning man to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:26-28), God was making man His agent and vicegerent in the exercise of causality in the world, summoning him from simple beginnings to continue to an unimagined scope of authority. Man, however, chose to reject this calling for an imagined self-caused destiny as his own god (Gen. 3:5), and the result was the fall and a break from the divine sabbath.

⁹ Custance, *op. cit.*, 3.

When Jesus healed the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, He did so on the sabbath (John 5:1, 9-10, 16). When charged with sabbath-breaking, "Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). Turning again to Custance for a decisive comment, he points out that

The word "hitherto" is found in the original Greek as two words which together mean "up to the present moment," i.e., "until now." I think it means a little bit more than simply that the Father had been working now and then throughout history. I suggest that the Lord really intended by His action (healing on the Sabbath day) and by His explanation, that from the moment Adam fell and the disruptive effect of sin was introduced into the Natural Order, God has been actively engaged continuously throughout history, constantly at work in a way which, if man had not fallen, He would not have needed to be. The cessation from work which followed immediately upon the completion of the six days of Genesis would have continued to this day. As a consequence, the pattern of six days of work followed by rest, which was based upon God's original programme and was appointed as a guide for human behaviors thereafter, had broken down so that redemptive activity had to be carried on whether it was a working day or a rest day, whether it was a week day or a Sabbath. It seems to me very evident that the healing miracles of the Lord were often deliberately structured to show that the repair necessary to organisms which might otherwise have operated mechanistically and faultlessly, was necessitated because of the disruptive effects of the Fall, of the presence of sin in life. Hence the Lord could repair the damage equally well by saying either "Be healed," or "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:3-12).¹⁰

It is not our concern here to argue with the deistic implications of the use of the word "mechanistically" by Custance. The point is that the work man was to do was forsaken by man. God thus had a work of restoration and regeneration to do, in order to reestablish man in the sabbath rest of God, and in the exercise of dominion which accompanies that rest. The work of creation has been

¹⁰. *Ibid.*, 27.

resumed, in the form of regeneration and restitution, and Jesus Christ came into history to further this work.

Because God's creative act was total in its scope, in that "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3), His causality is total. God's work of regeneration thus has a total scope: all creation is involved in it, either looking to God's deliverance, for which it yearns with expectant longing (Rom. 8:19-22), or else reserved for His judgment. Every fact is a created and predestined fact in terms of God's purpose. The meaning of His causality will fully unfold with its realization and fulfilment, i.e., when it is fully in force. This means that God is not merely a remote first cause, as in Deism, but a very present cause. The reality of secondary causes is not denied by affirming that simultaneously with them God is always active; rather, the reality of causality is affirmed. It does not become a mechanistic thing which quickly breaks down for lack of mind, meaning, or direction. Every fact is a personal fact in a personal universe, created by a personal God, and every cause has its ultimate and always immediate frame of reference in that triune God and His decree. The facts, the causes and effects, of Sennacherib's invasion are grim facts. Perhaps they are for some more grim because they are ordained by God. However, apart from God, they become meaningless and senseless. Under God, every fact has reference to a total plan of creation and regeneration, to a master plan of salvation which affects all things, either to judge or to deliver, or both. God is as close to every secondary cause, and as operative, today as in Isaiah's day, and His goal remains the same, the regeneration of all things in Christ, and the judgment of the things which are, so that the things which cannot be shaken may alone remain (Heb. 12:22-29).

XIII

The Sabbath

On the seventh day, according to Genesis 2:1-3, God *rested* from the work of creation, i.e., He disengaged Himself from it and ceased or desisted from further creative work. This does not mean that God ceased working thereafter, or did not work again until the Fall made re-creation a necessary work. As Ellicott noted, with respect to John 5:17 and Genesis 2:2-3, “The rest on the seventh day was the completion of the works of creation. It was not, it could not be, a cessation in divine work, or in the flow of divine energy. That knew no day nor night, nor summer nor winter, nor Sabbath, nor Jubilee.”¹ God is never weary and never needs rest in the human sense, as Isaiah 40:28 makes clear, and as Psalm 121:3-4 implies.

Although creation was completed in six days, we are told that “on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Gen. 2:2). The actual completion was on the sixth day; the formal finishing was on the seventh day, and Leupold finds tenable the rendering, “He declared finished.”²

In Genesis 2:3, we are told, “And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” The comment of Keil and Delitzsch is very well stated:

The divine act of blessing was a real communication of powers of salvation, grace and peace; and sanctifying was not merely declaring holy, but “communicating the attribute of holiness, placing in a living relation to God, the Holy One, raising to a participation in the pure clear light of the holiness of God,”.... The blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day had regard, no

¹ C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VI (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 418.

² H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1942), 102.

doubt, to the Sabbath, which Israel as the people of God was afterwards to keep; but we are not to suppose that the theocratic Sabbath was instituted here, or that the institution of that Sabbath was transferred to the history of the creation. On the contrary, the Sabbath of the Israelites had a deeper meaning, founded in the nature and development of the created world, not Israel only, but for all mankind, or rather for the whole creation. As the whole earthly creation is subject to the changes of time and the law of temporal motion and development: so all creatures not only stand in need of definite recurring periods of rest, for further development, but they also look forward to a time when all restlessness shall give place to the blessed rest of the perfect consummation. To this rest the resting of God points forward; and to this rest, this divine *sabbatismos* (Heb. iv. 9), shall the whole world, especially man, the head of the earthly creation, eventually come. For this God ended His work by blessing and sanctifying the day when the whole creation was complete.³

The purpose of the Sabbath from the first was eschatological; it was a sign of the end, not only of creation but also of re-creation. The Sabbath in history took its pattern from the creation week of Genesis, but its time and date on the calendar from the day of salvation. Thus, in the Old Testament, the Sabbath celebrated and commemorated the passover, Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Since Christ, the Sabbath is dated from the day of resurrection. In both cases, it is future-oriented, looking forward to the great restoration of all things.

The Sabbath thus was, and is, the rest of the people of God, their disengagement from the battle of restoration and re-creation to celebrate the dominion given to them by their redeeming God.

With this in mind, let us briefly turn to the tampering with the calendar by the Marxist revolutionists in Russia in 1918. Local revolutionary leaders began calendar changes before the central government was able to consolidate its powers and institute them. The Christian calendar was abolished, and the changes of the French Revolution were imitated. In September, 1929, the central government decided to try to abolish Christianity by abolishing the

³ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949), 68f.

Sabbath. A five-day week was decreed, and factories were kept working continuously, day and night. Workers were divided into five colors or labor calendars. At any given time of the day or night, four color groups would be working and the fifth resting. Unless a man and wife were in the same labor calendar or color, they could not enjoy a common day of rest. Both family ties and religious worship were thus disrupted. In 1932, the color system was dropped, the work-week lengthened to six days, and a common day of rest readmitted. More calendar changes came in 1936.

Whereas the year of 365 days remains divided into twelve months, two parallel weeks have been introduced, one of seven, and the other of six days. Labour, industry and rest are to be regulated by the shorter, government and international intercourse by the longer. The rest days of the labour week fall on the sixth, twelfth, eighteenth, twenty-fourth and thirtieth day of each month, with March 1, taking the place of the fifth rest day of February.⁴

The purpose of the Marxist calendar, like all its actions, is revolutionary. It aims at the dissolution of the family and of Christianity. It pretends to give liberty for both, but in reality it legislates them into insignificance and irrelevance. The true holy days of the Soviet Union are such days as May Day, Lenin's Day, and so on, occasions which point to the Marxist plan of salvation. The Christian plan of salvation is expressly superseded by the Soviet calendar. Moreover, Rosenstock-Huessy raised some very major points in his comments on this new calendar:

How far is the Russian Labour Calendar the practice of Western Man already? How far is it not? With the Russians work is made into a public function of the people united, leisure is a private business. Formally, this calendar contradicts our tradition in which each individual is toiling, bent on his work, during the week, and comes into the common fellowship on Sundays only. However, the Russian shift in family and religious tradition, its making work into a public function, and rest into a private one, crystallized a movement that was in progress throughout the industrial world. For even

⁴ Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Out of Revolution, The Autobiography of Western Man* (New York: William Morrow, 1938), 121f.

in Anglo-Saxon countries, the common day of rest was slowly losing its importance for more and more millions of people. Maids, waiters, clerks in drugstores, people working in the pleasure industries, taxi drivers, telephone operators, are required to take off, not Sunday, but some other day picked at random, to allow production to continue more or less undiminished. And in this change in calendar, this abolition of "Sunday" for parts of the population, is implicit an emphasis upon the community of labour. The difference between the practice (not the theory) of Western Man and that of the Russian Labour Calendar is one of degree. Leisure is becoming more and more a private affair, production is coming to the front as a common destiny. In America, some great manufacturing plants have rejected the twelve-month calendar and apply a thirteen-month calendar, each month containing twenty-eight days. This thirteenth-month calendar enables a plant to check more conveniently the amount of production per month. It glorifies production and goods that are produced; it no longer cares for the holidays of the whole community. It stands halfway, then, between a calendar which united people for worship only, and a calendar which unites the people who are working in shifts together.⁵

Another comment on the Russian calendar by Rosenstock-Huessy is also of major importance: "History is dissolved into economics," and "a system of repetitive character" replaces it.⁶ The Sabbath belongs to history and to progress, the calendar of Marxist work belongs to a non-historical ant-hill. Every Sabbath is a contemplation of past, present, and future victories in Christ. The calendar of continuous work marks an ant-hill in which the sacrament is work. The medieval church felt that it was necessary to have the church with its sacraments open at all times. The perpetually open church provided escape from a sinful world. The Reformation resulted in a closed church during most of the working week. Christian vocation meant going forth as priests under God to conquer the earth in Christ's name, and the church doors were opened on the Sabbath to celebrate that conquest.

⁵. *Ibid.*, 122f.

⁶. *Ibid.*, 123.

Not surprisingly, the sciences flourished most in Protestant countries, and especially under Puritanism. Work was almost made sacramental; man's calling to work, to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth, while not a *means* of grace, was clearly seen as a *product* of grace and as *under* grace.

A problem arose as the Industrial Revolution produced around-the-clock industrial operations; the Enlightenment meanwhile had produced a generation and more of humanists to whom the Sabbath had lost its original meaning. The churches meanwhile had become pietistic, so that they were unable intellectually to meet the challenge to the Sabbath. Work was producing a tremendous technological instrument for man's exercise of dominion. True, this dominion was assuming in some quarters the pretensions of the tempter and fallen Adam rather than of Christ, an attempt to be as gods and to exercise autonomous dominion rather than developing dominion under God.

The potential for the Sabbath in technology was, and is, very great. Whatever furthers man's dominion under God will further the Sabbath. The heightened productivity of the Industrial Revolution, while at some points requiring continuous operation, was richer in its potential for furthering both man's work and man's rest. A theology and sociology of the Sabbath was desperately needed, and yet lacking at a time when a tremendous union between the Sabbath and technology could have been effected. The need and the lack both remain.

What followed was the decay of the Sabbath as an anachronism in the mind of modern man. Rest came to mean idle leisure and play, not the celebration of dominion in a relaxed disengagement from work. However, it was not only the Sabbath which decayed, but work also, because the two are inseparably linked. Churchmen to whom the Sabbath means the bare bones of church attendance, no work, and no play, were in no position to understand the amazing potentialities for the Sabbath in the Industrial Revolution. *Their pietism had turned the Sabbath into a retreat from the world and its work rather than a celebration of man's conquest of it in Christ.* Pietism was more glad to escape from work one day in seven than to celebrate the victory inherent in work under God in Christ. For Pietism, the

Industrial Revolution was, and still is, a disaster. Pietism's retreat from the world was far greater than that of the Medieval Church, which was not lacking in men of conquest.

Wanting the mainspring of the Sabbath, the sons of the Industrial Revolution began to regard work as a curse, which it is to Adam's fallen sons. The twentieth century ecological movement is a rebellion against the Industrial Revolution by its children. Its adherents turn to childish arts and crafts, purely decorative in nature, as the answer to the machine, and communes return to primitive production with a hoe because mechanization is somehow demonic. Even this primitive work is limited, and the state and nature are somehow expected to feed these people while they rhapsodize over "culture." In the Marxist countries, production is made possible by the whip and the gun, and even then is below pre-Marxist levels. Without the Sabbath and its eschatological emphasis, without the fact of victory, work becomes drudgery and a curse.

The purpose of God's Sabbath rest was that man should now work. As Francis Nigel Lee has written,

With the creation of man on the sixth day as the crown and lord of creation, God had finished creating. Now God rests from creation. He rests in man, the masterpiece of His creation. In man God sabbathed from creation, in order "to make it," to fashion it. And God appoints man His masterpiece to make it for Him. He delegates His exclusive right to make things to man as His deputy, as His image. God shows to man the created earth, and it is as if He says: "Subdue it. I have created the world to make it. To make it through you. I have made you, now you must make the earth. I shall rest on this sabbath of creation week until the end of history. And I shall watch how you develop and subdue the earth and make it for Me; watch how you proceed with the development of culture — and hold you accountable on My eighth day, on the Day of the Lord at the end of history."⁷

When man denies God, he denies the ultimacy of a transcendent, supernatural power, and must therefore assert something in and of

⁷ F. N. Lee, *Culture*, (Cape May, New Jersey: n.d.), 4.

this world as the new source of power. Man, then, asserts that he himself is that new power. This leaves man with a serious problem, however, the machine. Under God, man uses the machine as a tool; God is ultimate power and predestination, whereas man, created in God's image, exercises a delegated power. Man's power, however, is firmly grounded in the sovereign purpose of God, and all things under man, the earth, animals (God's creations), machines and other creations of man, are instrumental to man's purposes under God. When man claims the powers of God for himself, those powers concentrate in instruments of power, the state and scientific technology. The machine can operate continuously, but man cannot. God ordained a Sabbath for all His creation; man's creation, the machine, needs no Sabbath and takes no Sabbath unless man so orders it. The machine as continuous power becomes thus a power which appalls modern man. Although technology is one of the great results of the creation mandate and rich in its rewards of liberation for man, man views his own creation with distrust, even as he depends on it, almost seeming to expect the machines and computers to develop minds and revolt against man even as man revolted against his creator, God. Some science fiction writers, as well as experts in cybernetics, have actually talked or written of a revolt and takeover by the computers. Especially as computers are used to establish data banks with their accumulating files on all citizens, men feel oppressed and haunted by the machine. Miller's comment is telling:

Some people feel emasculated when private information about them is disclosed or exchanged even though the data are accurate and they do not suffer any career or social damage. Correctly or incorrectly, they think in terms of having been embarrassed or demeaned by having been denuded of something that hitherto was theirs alone....

This concern for the record will be reinforced by the popular conception of the computer as the unforgetting and unforgiving watchdog of society's information managers. As one observer has remarked, "the possibility of the fresh start is becoming increasingly difficult. The Christian notion of redemption is incomprehensible to the computer."⁸

In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, the social engineers were called "The Predestinators." In the new world of automation, men see the computer as the new predestinator. The Sabbath is gone, and man cannot find true rest, because salvation is gone. The new power, the computer, does not forget, nor does it blot out our sins and transgressions. Forgiveness of sins does not exist in the impersonal power of the computer. In 1897, the idea of sabotage was born when French workers (*sabot*, wooden shoe) began to war against employers, capitalism, and the machine. The ecology movement of the 1960s and 70s has become a more intense form of sabotage and is motivated by this hatred of the machine. Salvation is seen as a return to primitivism, to the hoe and the primitive tool. Ecologically oriented communes have had a short life, however, because there is either too little rest from work because of the primitive tools, or too little results because of an unwillingness to work. In brief, salvation, Sabbath, and work are all lacking, because they are essentially interrelated; the absence of one undermines the others.

As we have seen, the denial of God as the ultimate power has led to the threat of the computer and the technological, scientific socialist state as the new power. The rise to power of the machine and the State has meant the death of humanism, or, more accurately, its suicide. Rookmaaker, in commenting on Cubism in art, observed:

The aims of the cubists, their quests for a new expression of art, were in the final analysis the making of a new worldview, one that broke away from the age-old humanism of western society. The personal was lost, for there was no longer a personal God. Man, animals, plants, things, they are all basically the same. So there should be no basic difference in the way they are depicted.⁹

The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), and the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath; man is not able to find rest apart from the

⁸. Arthur R. Miller, *The Assault on Privacy* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1971), 64-65. The citation is from Packard, "Don't Tell It to the Computer," *New York Times Magazine*, no. 6, 8 January, 1967, 44, 89.

⁹. H. R. Rookmaaker, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 114.

principle of rest. Denying the personality of God, man ends up denying the personality of man as a valid concept. The personal is despised and discounted. To deny the Sabbath, and that the Sabbath was made for man to rest and enjoy his lordship in Christ, is to remove the future from man's life. The Sabbath truly observed speaks of victories gained and a world to be conquered. It gives a future orientation to the calendar. It points not only to man's victory on earth, but also to the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. The Sabbath thus always gives a perspective to life which lifts man, not only out of the routine of work, but also out of a bondage to the past and present. His mind is pointed to the great Sabbath of God. In the words of an Isaac Watts hymn of 1719,

This is the day the Lord hath made;
He calls the hours his own,
Let heav'n rejoice, let earth be glad,
And praise surround the throne.

Today he rose and left the dead,
And Satan's empire fell;
Today the saints his triumphs spread,
And all his wonders tell.

Hosanna to th' annointed King,
To David's holy Son!
Help us, O Lord; descend and bring
Salvation from the throne.

This joyful celebration is only possible when the Sabbath has the eschatology of victory, as Watts did. Without that association of the Sabbath with work, salvation, and victory, it becomes a day of boredom and another step in a life without a significant future. Commenting on the modern calendar and its orientation to the world of the machine, Rosenstock-Huessy said:

The new solar calendar trains man to think of the future not as something new, but as something that can be calculated in advance. Future, in this world of economy and technique, is the prolongation of the past. If former civilizations had dared to think of the future as an annex to what we know about the past, a special grammatical form for the future would probably

never have been invented. Real future, in its proper meaning, implies a change in quality, a surprise and a promise. To live in the future means to be indifferent to present hardships.

In America the future was such a deity because it meant an unknown life. The solar calendar of commerce is pedantic. A witty banker in Berlin effectively made fun of it in the following story. He had a conference with the president of the largest German electric company, and after two hours they saw that they would have to meet again. The industrialist was rather self-important, and explained how terribly busy he was. Every day was completely booked up. Practically every hour was taken by meetings, consultations, committees and business trips. It was now January, and not before April the 16th could he find a free day in his appointment book. Yes, the 16th of April would suit him, would it suit the banker too? Bored by this pompousness, the banker said calmly, "I'm sorry. On the 16th of April I have a funeral."

The abolition of the real future is the price we pay for overloading our calendar as though the days to come were as much our own as those of the past. He who treats the future as his private property never gets the full benefit of its character of regeneration.¹⁰

The Sabbath says that we have a future; it says, moreover, that this future is not a private affair, or an economic calendar, as with Rosenstock-Huessy's president of an electric company. The future is a cosmic affair and it is only as we recognize with each Sabbath that our private lives are part of a cosmic goal and victory that we have a true future.

Rosenstock-Huessy raised the necessary question:

The framework of an industrialized world leaves the cog in the machine in the precincts or antechamber of real life, in a pre-arranged world without a future. The question arises: where is he going to find his future?¹¹

It is not industrialization, however, which is responsible for this "world without a future"; it is man. The future cannot be found by

¹⁰ Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Multiformity of Man* (Norwich, Vermont: Beachhead, 1949), 20f.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

trying to escape from industrialization, but only by a return to the God who created time and all things else, and who commissioned man to exercise dominion through righteousness, work, and knowledge, and to celebrate that dominion in the Sabbath.

Men, like the German industrialist in Rosenstock-Huessy's story, have made the machine and then sought to remake themselves in the image of the machine, their own creature. The result has been a failure. They have worshipped the power of the machine and have sought to imitate it in their own lives. Failing this, they have turned against technology in many quarters.

The Sabbath, meanwhile, has been turned into a monkish retreat by Pietistic Protestantism. The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter XXI, viii, "Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day," concludes by permitting, on the Sabbath, "the duties of necessity and mercy." In terms of this, strict Sabbatarian farmers do not hesitate to milk their cows. Because of arrested and frozen thinking, no thought is given to the fact that it is not only cattle which require continuous care but also some machines. Generators and much else require continuous operation. As technology advances, the areas of manpower needed for continuous operation lessen. *It is essential that man honor, not only the Sabbath, but also the work which the Sabbath celebrates.* This pietism has not done: it honors the claims of the cow, because the cow existed in its eighteenth century world, but it does not honor the generator and steel mill, which have come since then.

Work must be respected and honored for rest therefrom to be honored. The decline of any sense of priesthood in work has reduced the Sabbath from a celebration to a retreat. Men will be "always abounding in the work of the Lord" when they know that their "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). They will also then rest with satisfaction, pride, and thanksgiving.

XIV

Idleness and Revolution

According to Proverbs 19:15, “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” The comment of Deane and Taylor-Taswell is very revealing of the implications of this text:

Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; “causes deep sleep to fall upon a man”.... The word for “sleep” (*tardemah*) is that used for the supernatural sleep of Adam when Eve was formed (Gen. ii. 21), and implies profound insensibility. Aquila and Symmachus render it, *ekstasis*, “trance.” Slothfulness enervates a man, renders him as useless for labour as if he were actually asleep in his bed; it also enfeebles the mind, corrupts the higher faculties, converts a rational being into a witless animal. *Otium est vivi hominis sepultura*, “Idleness is a living man’s tomb.” *An idle soul shall suffer hunger...* The LXX... here renders ... “Cowardice holdeth fast the effeminate, and the soul of the idle shall hunger.”¹

The meaning thus is clear: man was created in God’s image to exercise dominion by means of work, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and to subdue the earth under God. When man not only forsakes God but also forsakes his calling and becomes a slothful, idle creature, the result is a radical deformation of man. The judgment of God then casts man into a deep sleep, an indifference and judicial blindness to reality which destroys him. The Septuagint version makes clear a further meaning of the original: idleness makes man effeminate; it is a renunciation of manhood.

No civilization has yet existed which has not despised or condemned idleness, and yet in every culture many men, including those who condemn idleness, dream of attaining it. Why this schizophrenic perspective? Hatred of the so-called idle rich, who, while real, exist more often in men’s imagination than in reality, is as old as mankind; but that hatred has as often been prompted by

¹ W. J. Deane and S. T. Taylor-Taswell, “Proverbs,” in Spence and Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary* (New York: Randolph, n.d.), 368.

envy not only of the wealth of the rich, but also of their ability to be idle. Men see something unmanly and unbecoming in idleness, and yet they long for it. The root of this confusion lies in man's faulty dream of the Sabbath. "The Sabbath was made for man" (Luke 6:5). The Sabbath was made for man in the sense that it not only had a theocratic purpose, but an anthropocentric one as well. Man's nature calls for a Sabbath, for a triumphant rest in, and from, his labors. Man requires the opportunity to rejoice in and celebrate his work under God; the Sabbath is an occasion for happy confidence in the fact that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Christ is Lord of the Sabbath not only as very God but also as very man, as the one who brings us as His members into a Kingdom where total success is inescapable, in that all things work together for good in God for those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). Everything in man's being calls for God's Sabbath, for triumphant rest and celebration.

For the ungodly, this hope poses a problem. Being under the curse because of the Fall, work for them is also under the curse (Gen. 3:17-19), as are all man's activities and efforts outside of God. For them, since work is a curse (as are all things), and since in work, man's daily lot, the frustration of the curse comes into continual focus, *escape* from work into idleness becomes the humanist's Sabbath hope. Modern man thus has turned his back on God's Sabbath in favor of idleness, which he prefers to call *leisure*. He deludes himself into believing that leisure is somehow creative, whereas what he means by leisure activity is usually not only not creative activity, but also not even play: it is idleness. The word he applies to this idleness, *leisure*, is very revealing: it comes from the Old French *leisir*, be permitted, which in turn comes from the Latin *licet*, it is lawful. In effect, man is saying that God's Sabbath is no longer needed and that man's flight from work (and dominion) into idleness is legal and allowable.

One of the many differences between the Sabbath and modern leisure of idleness is that the Sabbath requires a community rejoicing in God's salvation and government, whereas leisure is inevitably solitary. A man in his leisure time may go to a baseball game with 40,000 people, but he goes and comes as an isolated

person; he enters into no community with all those other men present. A man who goes to worship God with thirty people, or who reads Scripture and rests with his family, does so as an individual in community or corporate life. He is able to be in community with people on the Sabbath because he has been at work under God. Those who gather together on the Sabbath without having seen each other during the week, have still been a community at work together for the glory of God.

Isolation in "rest" (in leisure activity) goes hand-in-hand with isolation in all things else; society has then given way to atomistic mass man. Mass man has nothing in common with those crowding around him except proximity, he is "the lonely crowd," alone even when group-oriented, because the foundations of community, life under God and in His calling, are lacking. Mass man is alone in a crowd and trusts no one.

A medieval thinker, John of Segovia, held that authority in all its forms depends upon credibility and trust, upon a fundamental faith which unites men. Where men are united in their faith in God, they are more ready to trust one another and to live peaceably together. He held, he said, "that no state could exist without the mutual trust of men in each other, in those matters which are not seen... and human society is unable to exist, unless mutual trust is present."² Without committing ourselves to every aspect of Segovia's thought, we can agree that it is an established religious authority, a godly authority, which makes for a social climate of peace, trust, and growth. It is not necessary for men to be humanists, believing in man's supposed goodness, to have a climate of mutual trust. On the contrary, humanism, by putting its trust in man rather than in God's authority, erodes society and authority and leads to distrust and trouble between man and man.

Guilt, moreover, reinforces isolation, in that the guilty man is marked by, *first*, a flight from men, in that he is anxious to escape detection. This isolation is psychological; the guilty man may be part of a crowd; he may talk or confess compulsively, but he still

² Anthony Black, *Monarchy and Community, Political Ideas in the Later Conciliar Controversy, 1430-1450* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 30.

remains isolated and lonely. Guilt before God not only isolates a man from God, but also from other men. *Second*, guilt paralyzes the ability of man to work effectively, so that it aggravates his discontent with life, himself, and all things. *Third*, there is, as we have seen, no forgiveness of sins with a computer; data banks relentlessly compile a man's records. Was he treated for venereal disease, or for drug addiction, at a military hospital? It is, then, a part of his data bank file, and there is no grace to wipe out that record, or his inner guilt over his past, apart from God.

Sabbath and paradise are related ideas; man seeks, then, in his flight, his Sabbath and paradise in idleness. In its modern, evolutionary form, primitive man supposedly had this paradise in the days before religion gave him guilt. As one Italian writer on folklore, Giuseppe Cocchiara, has observed, "Before being discovered, the savage was first invented." The so-called savage in turn believes that he long ago lost a primitive paradise.³ All sinners hope that this paradise will somehow become available when man is able to be idle and self-indulgent. If only men can be freed for idleness and self-indulgence, then paradise will somehow return. The return to paradise in the humanistic view means the death of history. History is the story of struggle, conflict, and progress, but there is no development towards a goal, a basic aspect of history, in the ant-hill and beehive. The ant-hill and beehive have only economics, a program of work, not history. The humanistic dream of paradise has as a major stage an ant-hill society, the reduction of society to economics. Increasingly, however, the goal is that beyond this state of economic perfection there will be a society beyond economics, a world of perfect idleness and delight. Some versions of this hope hold that automation will give birth to this work-free world; others are not as specific, as witness Henry Miller and others who expect this humanistic utopia to arrive by massive copulation rather than by economics.

All this has given humanistic man an ambivalent attitude towards history. Eliade makes some important observations on modern man's interest in history:

³. Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), 39, 43.

We need only instance one of the most specific features of our own civilization — namely, the modern man's passionate, almost abnormal interest in History. This interest is manifested in two distinct ways, which are however related: first, in what may be called a passion for historiography, the desire for an ever more complete and more exact knowledge of the past of humanity, above all of the past of our Western world; secondly, this interest in history is manifested in contemporary Western philosophy, in the tendency to define man as above all a historical being conditioned, and in the end created, by History. What is called historicism, *Historismus*, *storicismo*, as well as Marxism and certain existentialist schools — these are philosophies which, in one sense or another, ascribe fundamental importance to history, and to the historic moment.

Let us now look at this passion for history from a standpoint outside our own cultural perspective. In many religions, and even in the folklore of European peoples, we have found a belief that, at the moment of death, man remembers all his past life down to the minutest details, and that he cannot die before having remembered and relived the whole of his personal history. Upon the screen of memory, the dying man once more reviews his past. Considered from this point of view, the passion for historiography in modern culture would be a sign portending his imminent death....

It is in trying to estimate this anguish in the face of Death — that is, in trying to place it and evaluate it in a perspective other than our own — that the comparative approach begins to be instructive. Anguish before Nothingness and Death seems to be a specifically modern phenomenon. In all the other, non-European cultures, that is, in the other religions, Death is never felt as an absolute end or as Nothingness: it is regarded rather as a rite of passage to another mode of being; and for that reason always referred to in relation to the symbolisms and the rituals of initiation, rebirth, or resurrection. This is not to say that the non-European does not know the experience of anguish before Death; the emotion is experienced, of course, but not as something absurd or futile; on the contrary, it is accorded the highest value, as an experience indispensable to the attainment of a new level of being. Death is the Great Initiation. But in the modern world Death is emptied of its

religious meaning; that is why it is assimilated to Nothingness; and before Nothingness modern man is paralyzed.⁴

We can dissent from this brilliant analysis by citing the views of ultimate nothingness in Far-Eastern philosophies and religions. In these faiths, life itself is regarded as meaningless, and death is as a result an escape and a relief from karma. Western thought still retains a Biblical love of life, and, as a result, death is a threat to it. History, however, is seen by the humanists as a brief and recent episode in a cosmic blindness. History is studied for a clue to provide meaning or escape, and history is also resented, because, from a humanistic perspective, it culminates in certain death and a cosmic silence. There is thus an intense concern about history and a desire to end history and institute an anti-historical and revolutionary regime which prevents life from moving and disappearing, which arrests time into a paradise of idleness.

Because history means conflict and struggle towards a goal, it means freedom to pursue or to renounce that goal; it means good and evil, rewards and punishment. This, however, is not to the taste of those who forsake manhood for idleness. They do not want freedom: they want the perfection of a sinner's paradise, where there is no judgment, no consequences, no work, and no death, only idleness in which to experience pleasures.

A psychologist, Dr. John H. Pflaum, gives us his version of this utopia in his *Delightism*. He declares that "The world is coming to a beginning," a new genesis, the age of delight. It will involve the group enjoyment of sensuality. He provides us with many aphorisms (a thousand alone in the back of his book) to summarize the wisdom of this new age: "Good is feeling good.... Sex has become safer than Ping-Pong.... Pornography inspires delight.... The way you smell is as important as what you think." He prescribes "orgy therapy" and fun as a cure for man's ills and as a means to reaching the age of delightism.⁵

⁴ *Ibid.*, 233-236.

⁵ John H. Pflaum, *Delightism* (Prentice-Hall), from a review by Richard Armour, "The organization of Mankind," *Los Angeles Times Calendar*, 14 May 1972, 50. Not surprisingly, the same number of the *Calendar* has on p. 48 a review of A. Alvarez, *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide* (Random House); suicide and self-indulgent "delightism" are alike common aspects of a humanistic world.

Because the world of delightism, post-historical man, utopia, or whatever else humanists choose to call it, lacks any sense of history, it is out of touch with reality. It belongs to the realm of fantasy and dreams; it is the world of idle imagination.

Such a state of mind is also revolutionary. The revolutionist is intensely absorbed in history: he rages against its meaning and direction, its problems and tensions, and he studies history with a passionate rage. At the same time, he wants to destroy history; he is insistent that the world of purpose and consequence can be wiped out and nullified and replaced by a revolutionary regime which is dedicated to the dream of paradise as idleness.

Thus both idleness and the dream or hope of idleness put man out of touch with the world of reality and imbue him with a revolutionary hostility against it.

Revolutionary movements are uniformly hostile to religion and are dedicated especially to militant hostility against Biblical revelation. There is a necessary reason for this: Revelation is the communication to man of God's will and purpose, and it is set down in the enscriptured word. This revelation not only declares God's sovereign claims on man but also charts the purpose of God for man in history. Man is to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth under God by means of God's law-word. For man to do this means that man must believe that God is, "and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

The revolutionist, however, begins by denying God and God's declared meaning of history. The meaning and the rewards are of, by, and for man. Revolution is the communication and attempted imposition by man of man's own determined meaning on the world and time. It seeks to arrest history by means of revolution and impose man's will on a seemingly blind and meaningless flux. The revolutionist denies God and is at war with God. The alternative to God is logically a blind and meaningless flux or change, and the revolutionist is in turn at war against that. Against God and Chaos, he asserts man and man's world. He seeks like God to possess *aseity*, self-being, to be the only lord and creator and to be self-existent. Very quickly his grandiose world of aseity

becomes delightism, idleness, and suicide. As Christ, speaking as Wisdom, declared long ago, "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36).

The implication, moreover, of the Septuagint version of Proverbs 19:15 is correct: there is a deeply rooted cowardice and flight from life in idleness; it is an unwillingness to accept life because it has problems. This unwillingness has its roots in the refusal to accept the basic problem, man's sin. When man refuses to accept the fact of his sin, he thereby precludes salvation from that sin.

By his sin, man was cast out of paradise and separated from God's Sabbath, because he had denied the work God had called him to perform. With the calling of a chosen people, the Sabbath was reintroduced into history together with the law and the establishment of a plan of dominion.

Man's dreams of a paradise of idleness are futile efforts to reenter Eden which in reality become a storming of the gates of hell, where man indeed has idleness, and isolation as well.

A seventeenth century English broadside ballad, "An Invitation to Lubberland," satirized the dreams of paradise held by the idle:

There's nothing there but holy days,
with music out of measure;
Who can forbear to speak the praise
of such a land of pleasure?
There you may lead a lazy life,
free from all kinds of labour,
And he that is without a wife
may borrow of his neighbour.⁶

The point is well made. The idle are parasites, and, in a real paradise, the human parasites have no place. Moreover, Levin is correct in stating that "The Edenic impulse... has been at odds with the Utopian impetus." Eden as a social goal in American life has led to work; the Utopian impulse is a flight from work into parasitism. Levin cited also Thoreau's distaste for the book of a German

⁶ Harry Levin, "Paradises, Heavenly and Earthly," in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. XXIX, no. 4 (August 1966): 310.

technocrat, J. A. Etzler's *The Paradise Within Reach of All Men*, because it offered salvation and paradise by means of labor-saving devices. Thoreau, very much the Puritan at this point, commented:

This is Paradise to be Regained, and that old and stern decree at length reversed. Man shall no more earn his living by the sweat of his brow. All labor shall be reduced to "a short turn of some crank," and "taking the finished articles away." But there is a crank, — oh, how hard to be turned! Could there not be a crank upon a crank, — an infinitely small crank? — we would fain inquire. No, alas! not. But there is a certain dim energy in every man, but sparingly employed as yet, which may be called the crank within, quite indispensable to all work. Would that we might get our hands on its handle! In fact, no work can be shirked. It may be postponed indefinitely, but not infinitely. Nor can any really important work be made easier by cooperation or machinery.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 323.

The Intellect as Savior

In 1921, an interesting and anonymous commentary on the world scene was titled, *The Glass of Fashion*. The English author, in a preface to Americans, observed that, "With you, as with us, the fashion of daily life is set by those who have sacrificed to a false science, almost without thought, the one great secret of joy, namely, faith in a creative purpose, faith in man's immortality." The reason for the deepening world crisis and decay the writer ascribed to Darwinian and evolutionary thought.

The mob believes in Darwinian evolution, believes that the universe is an accident, life is an accident, and beauty is an accident. It has made up its mind on hearsay, and incorporated into its moods, without realisation of the logical consequences, a theory of existence which is as false as it is destructive. And this mob, composed of all classes, carries the destinies of the human race.¹

Commenting later on the reversal of standards, the author noted that in pagan antiquity, "Philosophy sought to elevate the moral character by improving the intellect; Christianity *reversed the order*."²

Clearly, this is a discerning comment. It must be recognized, *first*, that the implicit dualism of pagan thought made possible a separation of mind and body, so that the intellect could be isolated from the total life of man. Greek philosophers, like Socrates, could discourse on justice, virtue, and truth while involved in homosexuality. This schizophrenic position was possible because of the isolation of the intellect from man's material, historical, and moral life. The redemption of the material world was held to be possible only by means of the application of reason to the problems of man. The intellect of man was thus man's hope of salvation.

¹ *The Glass of Fashion, Some Social Reflections, by A Gentleman with a Duster* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), viii, x.

² *Ibid.*, 174.

Second, pagan philosophy, Greek and Roman in particular, held that a man's decisions are governed by his reason, so that, to appeal to reason was to appeal to the decisive agency of government in man. Man was held to be a rational animal whose approach to life is governed by reason. To enlighten a man's reason is therefore to provide him with the tools for coping with his problems.

The Bible directly contradicts this thesis again and again. Man is seen as a religious creature, created in the image of God. Man reacts to events, not primarily in terms of reason, but essentially in terms of his relationship to God.

The prophet Jeremiah gives us dramatic evidences of this. His witness to Jerusalem and Judah was so clearly not only of God, but also compelling to the mind, that there can be little doubt that on logical grounds alone his prophecies should have persuaded men, if men could be persuaded by reason. The reaction of King Jehoiakim to Jeremiah's prophesy was to hear it and to burn it contemptuously (Jer. 36:20-32). The same was true with the last king of Judah, Zedekiah (Jer. 37-39). Zedekiah recognized the truth of Jeremiah's declarations, but he decided against Jeremiah's counsel, which offered hope, in favor of total ruin and shame, because he lacked the moral courage to stand in terms of the truth and to confess that he had been wrong (Jer. 38:19). Zedekiah's decision was not logical; it was not governed by rational considerations but by his moral character. The failure of his intellect was grounded in the failure of his moral character.

Third, moral character is itself a product of something else, of a religious commitment or faith. As much as man's mind is shaped by his character, so much is his character a product of his faith. The religious presuppositions which govern a man do govern him indeed, in that his mind and character are alike expressions of that basic faith, which is the heart of a man's life.

This in itself, however, is not enough. The religious presupposition may be false, and it may thereby create a whole chain of deadly consequences. Thus, with the Enlightenment, man came to believe in the natural goodness of man, particularly the natural goodness of non-Christian man. To attain that desired end

meant peeling off the layers of Christian faith and culture from Western man to penetrate to the essential and pure man. For example, Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640-1689) gave us very early, in *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* (1688), a portrait of this imagined natural man as the natives of Surinam in the West Indies. According to her,

And these people represented to me an absolute idea of the first state of innocence, before man knew how to sin. And 'tis most evident and plain that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive, and virtuous mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the world than all the inventions of man. Religion would here but destroy that tranquillity they possess by ignorance; and laws would but teach 'em to know offense, of which now they have no notion.... They have a native justice, which knows no fraud; and they understand no vice, or cunning, but when they are taught by the *white* men. They have plurality of wives; which, when they grow old, serve those that succeed 'em, who are young, but with a servitude easy and respected; and unless they take slaves in war, they have no other attendants.³

The goal for Western man, because of the false premise which Aphra Behn illustrates, became a studied primitivism, a renunciation of Christian civilization in a quest for the supposed innocence of natural man. Innocence thus meant, not a purgation of sin and guilt through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, but a purgation of Christianity and a return to an imagined primitivism. Innocence was to be gained by ridding one's self of the Christian, middle class work-ethic in favor of a morality of immorality, living beyond good and evil. Innocence meant sinning with contempt for morality; thus middle class sexual morality and immorality has been despised for its consciousness of sin, whereas revolutionary humanism tries to fornicate on the principle that it is both good and a mark of liberation. In Africa in 1965, women in Zambia greeted the revolutionary guerrillas with shouts of "Free love for

³. Cecil A. Moore, editor, *Restoration Literature, Poetry and Prose, 1660-1700*, First edition (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1947), 409. Behn, like Rousseau, was anti-Christian, of dubious moral character, and ready to call evils virtue provided that Christians did not practice them.

the freedom fighters.”⁴ The guerrillas were supposedly beyond good and evil, and innocence covered their actions.

Primitivism is today used to justify a multitude of sins in sexual relations, art, politics, religion, and literature. It is a pseudo-innocence and purity which is only believable because a prior act of faith has determined that it must be so. Clearly, it is not enough to say that religious presuppositions must govern character, because the wrong presupposition can lead to a deformed character.

It must be held then, *fourth*, that the religious presupposition must be true. With the Westminster Divines, we must hold

That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness; according to our Saviour’s rule, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” And that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man’s opinions are. On the contrary, they are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth, or to embrace it.⁵

If truth does not undergird man’s character and mind, then he is not only self-deceived, but his ostensibly noble professions are also a mask for evil. The illusion of humanism is that, because it wants a world of peace, justice, and prosperity, its desire constitutes virtue, and necessary accomplishment will follow. On June 1, 1938, a vice president of the French Chamber of Deputies delivered an address before a distinguished audience which included Frederic and Mme. Joliot-Curie, Louis Cazamian, Arthur Honegger, Fernard Leger, Le Corbusier, and many, many other men and women of note. The speaker declared,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have just sketched before you the broad outlines of a human society which tomorrow will be a world-wide reality.

⁴ Harold Soref and Ian Greig, *The Puppeteers* (London: Tandem Books, 1965), 76.

⁵ *Westminster Standards: The Form of Government*, Chapt. 1, sect. IV.

These profound transformations will be written into fact—
No, man will not be eternally opposed to himself.
No, man will not be eternally forced to waste his energy in
class struggles and war.
No, man will not see poverty eternally rising out of abundance.
No, man will not be eternally a wolf for man.
Whatever is said, whatever is done, nothing will halt the march
of history.
Nothing will prevent, finally, the establishment of a society of
harmony of work and progress, a society born of science....
If we all desire it, and we all must desire it, the country of
Descartes will remain the country of reason triumphant.⁶

The speaker, Jacques Duclos, was a Communist, as were most of his listeners. He was by no means ignorant of “the crimes of Stalin,” nor were his listeners. For them, the “noble” goal justified the means of Russia, just as in their own private lives they were ready to declare themselves just and noble men because they believed in “a society born of science” and in “reason triumphant.”

This self-delusion is not limited to Marxists; it marks humanists of every stripe, and it is most easily discerned in politicians. Columnist Jim Bishop, commenting on President John F. Kennedy, called attention to the discrepancy between the handsome, idealistic young President and “the cursing, merciless politician behind the scenes.” Moreover, “People who were not willing to help further the ambitions of the Kennedys for nothing were criminally motivated” in the eyes of the Kennedys. Thus, Kennedy, despite “a greatness within him,” Bishop concludes, “in spite of the fact that I admired him personally, I still think of him as more of a gutter politician than a lofty statesman.”⁷ Bishop to the contrary, Kennedy was no more than “a gutter politician,” and the same is true of other recent political leaders. Nobly phrased and high sounding intellectual concepts cannot efface the fact of sin. No more than the computer can forgive sins and regenerate man, can the mind of man make a new man out of the old.

⁶ Jacques Duclos, *Communism, Science and Culture* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), 43f., 46.

⁷ Jim Bishop, “Kennedy in Retrospect,” *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, 4 May 1972, A-14.

It is, however, the belief of many that intelligence can remake man and the world. John Dewey, in *The Quest for Certainty*, contrasted the Christian belief in regeneration and change by God's grace and the redeemed man's activity with change by means of intelligence in action. He clearly favored "the method of changing the world through action" by man's intelligence as against "the method of changing the self in emotion and idea."⁸ This is essentially the position of humanistic man: by adopting intelligence as his guide to action, he plans to remake the world. This belief has deep roots in the Thomistic and Arminian belief that, while man's appetites and will are fallen, his reason remains undamaged by sin and is still able to function intelligently and accurately. In terms of this faith, there is hope for social reconstruction, whether a man be Christian or not, wherever reason is applied to the problems of society and man. Against this heresy, John Calvin was eloquent in opposition, and it is consistent Calvinism which alone offers effective opposition to it. Socialism in all its forms is simply the political application of the belief that man's salvation lies in the application of intelligence to man's problems.

To believe in the immunity of reason to the effects of the Fall is to insist on its sufficiency as man's guide and savior. Such a belief runs directly counter to Biblical faith. It is an assertion that paradise can be regained by means of reason, by man's intelligence. Pre-Christian religions, humanistic in all cases, in varying forms asserted man's sufficiency, holding that man's wisdom could remake the world and man. Since then, humanism in philosophy, politics, education, and religion has propagated this same faith. According to Rosenheim, this belief in the ability of man, and the possibility of reconciling Christianity with classical philosophy (as with Arius), was a threat to the Christian empire. This was the reason why Justinian, determined not to allow even the declining Academy of Athens to perpetuate this false and subversive hope, closed the Academy in A. D. 529:

⁸ Joseph Ratner, editor, *Intelligence in the Modern World* (New York: Modern Library, 1939), 275.

By royal decree the *teaching of philosophy* — *that is to say*, every attempt to connect the Mystery of Golgotha in any way with the wisdom taught in the pre-Christian Mysteries and schools of thinking as did the Gnostics, the Manichaeans, the Sabaeans and the Neo-Platonists, henceforth was strictly prohibited in the entire realm of Roman jurisdiction.⁹

In the twentieth century, the essence of the faith of man is his trust that reason or intelligence, divorced from the inhibitions of Biblical faith and morality, can liberate man and lead him into a “brave new world.” Intelligence for these humanists means viewing the world without the framework of religious and moral values. According to Skinner,

But those who observe cultures do not see ideas or values. They see how people live, how they raise their children, how they gather or cultivate food, what kinds of dwellings they live in, what they wear, what games they play, how they treat each other, how they govern themselves, and so on.¹⁰

Against Skinner, it can be argued with assurance that all these things he speaks of are expressions of “ideas or values.” Skinner and others are convinced that the answer to man’s problems lies in the scientific use of intelligence by a small elite group which is alone capable of using reason scientifically and intelligently. The trust in the intellect as savior thus becomes a trust in some men as saviors, self-appointed saviors who feel that their use of intelligence is alone valid because it is systematically hostile to the God of Scripture. Trust in man’s intellect thus leads to a radical elitism. In the name of man and democracy, the people are to be ruled by an intellectual elite whose word is to be accepted as from God. The Saint-Simonist socialists held that “only the ‘small number’ of those who devote their lives to the investigation of social sciences will be able to analyze the dogma scientifically,” and the masses will have to accept it as they accepted religious doctrines

⁹ Richard Rosenheim, *The Eternal Drama* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 85.

¹⁰ B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 127.

in the past.¹¹ The reason of the elite thus becomes a new revelation from a new god.

As against this, the Christian has a sure foundation. Jesus Christ declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). He is the truth in whom all truth subsists. He is the ground of true character and true reason, the only “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).

¹¹. J. L. Talmon, *Political Messianism, The Romantic Phase* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 86.

XVI

Salvation by Love and Hate

To speak of salvation by love *and* hate will be offensive to those who proclaim themselves the people of love, “love children,” “friends of man,” or any other term to set forth their belief in redemption by love. It is, however, necessary in all honesty to couple the terms *love* and *hate*. If we love truth, we will hate a lie; if we love righteousness, we will hate evil. If we love “mankind,” we will hate all those whom we believe to be enemies of mankind; our humanism will make us militant in our hatred of orthodox Christianity. Precisely because of their intense dedication to love, the “love people” have been the most dedicated and passionate haters of the 1960s and 1970s.

Moreover, hate in the thinking of the champions of love is not only a therapeutic catharsis but also a mark of the redeemed. During the 1950s, it was a sign of election to the heaven of liberalism to hate Senator Joseph McCarthy; since then, various other symbols of election have been affirmed, i.e., hatred for Senator Barry Goldwater, for the war in Vietnam and the cause of South Vietnam, for South Africa, for President Richard M. Nixon, Governor George Wallace, and so on. Similarly, conservatives have had their objects of hate, and each particular conservative group can sometimes be identified in terms of their enemies, the people they love to hate.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with hate, nor anything necessarily right with love. Hate is wrong, if we hate righteousness, and love is wrong, if we love evil. However, the contrary is not necessarily true. It is not necessarily right to love righteousness, nor necessarily right to hate evil, in that both can be a means of phariseeism. Our Lord made this clear in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican:

10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Luke 18:10-14).

This parable is very commonly turned into a caricature by misinterpretations of the Pharisee and his prayer. As a result, Jewish scholars have been active in correcting the record and insisting on the importance and character of the Pharisees.¹ Moreover, Christ's parable is very fair to the Pharisees. *First*, there is no hint that the Pharisee is lying; Christ presents him at face value. The man is a moral person who fasts religiously and tithes very conscientiously. He is a man of very high standards and dedicated faith. *Second*, there is no evidence that this Pharisee was merely doing these things simply out of a sense of necessity and duty. While all the details of pharisaic legislation often became a "burden" and a "yoke" (Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1), they were also seen as a privilege and a pleasure because of the moral stability and the freedom that they gave. Every good thing in life has its burdensome aspects as well as its joys. The ability to sing beautifully, or to play the violin with mastery, alike involve many hours of often wearisome practice as well as the pleasures of performance. Rabbi Klausner gives us a telling statement of the Jewish attitude towards all the Sabbath regulations of old, and of orthodox Judaism today:

To be sure, whoever reads all the Sabbath laws in the Mishnah or Tosephta can easily come to the point of despair because of the multiplicity of restrictions in them. Yet it is well known that the Jews *enjoyed* the Sabbath and were not *pained* by it; also today there is no more common expression among the Jews

¹ See Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, 2 vols, Third edition, revised (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962).

— even among the simplest of them — than the phrase “enjoyment of the Sabbath.” This is the case to such an extent that Ahad Ha-Am, one of the most liberal minded of Jews, yet with all his liberalism a defender of historic Judaism, could express the following sentiment: “To a greater extent than Israel has kept the Sabbath has the Sabbath kept Israel.”²

We can agree fully with this without touching the meaning of the parable. *Sociologically*, the Pharisee was right; sociologically, he represented a far higher standard and was accurate in his self-portrayal; sociologically, the Sabbath did keep Israel, so that Israel’s keeping of the Sabbath had more than a religious significance.

The point remains, however, that God was not pleased with either the Pharisee or with Israel’s Sabbath-keeping, but His displeasure did not thereby condemn as such tithing, morality, or Sabbath-keeping. Finkelstein’s defense of the Pharisees is humanistic, and the subtitle of *The Pharisees* is “The Sociological Background of Their Faith.” The sociological importance of the law cannot be denied: it is of God’s ordination. The primary reference of the law, however, is to God, and, in God, then to man. Phariseeism saw the value of the law to man, and it made that paramount.

Because the Pharisee in the parable saw himself and the publican sociologically and humanistically, he could see himself quite logically as superior, and the publican as inferior; he was therefore grateful and content. The publican, however, saw himself in terms of the sovereign God and His requirements, and he therefore had a relationship to God that the Pharisee lacked. The publican came for grace and salvation, not for sociological justification but theistic justification, which he received.

By turning to the twentieth century scene, we can understand both Phariseeism gone to seed and the belief in salvation by love and hate more clearly. Sweden has carried further than any other country the socialization of man after the manner of Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, as Huntford demonstrates. It has taught

² Joseph Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (New York: Macmillan, 1943), 500.

its people to love the collective and to hate individualism. It has unified the people in their love for and contentment with Sweden by depicting the United States as the wicked and evil monster of the world. A ritual of hate and protest is thus regularly encouraged. Huntford states that

Swedish conscience is, in fact, catharsis through ritual hate. It is akin to the “two minute hate” of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Indeed, during the Vietnam war, the popular Swedish dislike of President Johnson had something of the grotesque fury against Goldstein in Orwell’s novel. “I feel so emancipated,” a Swedish housewife once said in a newspaper interview after a particularly violent demonstration before the American embassy in Stockholm³

This is phariseeism which would have put the Pharisees to shame. It is, however, a logical development of the humanistic and sociological frame of reference. Something less than God is made the center and the standard, in this case the Swedish socialist state. The enemy and sin are then defined, not in terms of God, but in terms of the new standard. Justification, then, comes in doing the will of the new god and hating the enemies of that god. The Swedish housewife, in taking part in a planned demonstration against the United States, was affirming her love of the Swedish socialistic state and her hatred of the United States. As a result, she felt “emancipated,” freed and clean: she had experienced briefly an emotional justification.

In this, she was very little different from many people all over the world who find their justification in similar ritual hatred. “Mental health” always improves in a popular war, and suicide declines, because people find a pseudo-salvation in love of country and in a hatred for the enemy.

For socialists, a good man loves socialism and hates capitalism. For conservatives, a good man hates communism and loves capitalism. For the “liberal,” “populist,” and champion of “democracy,” the good man loves “the people” and hates all “special interests.” The “good man” in all three definitions may be

³. Roland Huntford, *The New Totalitarians* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), 341.

dishonest, sexually immoral, and a liar, but he is on the right side and is therefore in the camp of the redeemed, despite his faults, whereas the hated enemy may be honest, chaste, and a man of his word, but he is still a bad man because the standard of love and hate so orders it.

The Pharisees, at least, had a more moral judgment. Their standard, however, even where most faithful to Scripture in the outward sense, still used God's law for its humanistic and sociological value. The criterion present in both Pharisees and non-Pharisees was clearly stated by Caiaphas, the high priest, who brought the disputing factions to unity by bringing their ultimate standard into focus: "it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:50). At this point, the Pharisees and the Swedish housewife meet. Those who shouted to Pilate against Jesus, "Crucify him, crucify him" (Luke 23:21), may well have gone home feeling "emancipated" for their eloquent witness for the peace and freedom of Israel.

Some champions of love will protest that we have not touched on their position, which calls for a more erotic and physical exercise of love. Brown believed that man must be regenerated, i.e., he must become a child again. According to Freud, "childhood remains man's indestructible goal." The child is the man of the future. "Wisdom directs us to childhood — not only to the immortal wishes of childhood for the substance of things hoped for, but also to the failure of childhood for the cause of our disease." Moreover, "Culture originates in the denial of life and the body,"⁴ so that a return to life means a denial of culture and an affirmation of the body. The death of culture was predicted by Henry Miller, the death of the city, the nation state, the machine, and much else; and in its place, the occult and the erotic will find full expression in man.⁵ Brown felt that "Utopian speculations, such as these of Henry Miller, must come back into fashion," if man is to solve his problems.⁶

⁴ Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death, The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (New York: Random House, 1959), 32, 110, 297.

⁵ Henry Miller, *Sunday After the War* (New York: New Directions, 1944), 154f.

Henry Miller, the champion of sexual love, is eloquent in his hatred. On the second page of *Tropic of Cancer*, he declared,

This then? This is not a book. This is libel, slander, defamation of character. This is not a book in the ordinary sense of the word. No, this is a prolonged insult, a gob of spit in the face of Art, a kick in the pants to God, Man, Destiny, Time, Love, Beauty.... what you will. I am going to sing for you, a little off key perhaps, but I will sing. I will sing while you croak, I will dance over your dirty corpse.⁷

Miller looks for the rebirth of man through a moral erotic love. He calls for the ruthless destruction of all the past, of religion, morality, and culture, to make way for freed man.⁸ Like Walt Whitman, he looks for a world where man will be free to eat, drink, "love," or copulate as placidly as the animals.

Is this possible? Can man attain this state of undiluted love (whether interpreted sexually or not), and have the moral unconcern he desires? As long as man sees himself and his love as ultimate and determinative, so long will he also be consumed with hate, unremitting hate. The reason is a simple one: when man makes himself ultimate, he has no Sabbath. When man claims to be ultimate, he cannot disengage himself from the world and partake of Sabbath rest. His world is then his handiwork supposedly, and it becomes his burden.

However, when man bows before the sovereign God as ultimate, as Lord and Creator, man then can sabbath. He can disengage himself from the world and from men, knowing that it does not depend on him. It is not man's love or hate, man's work or supervision, or man's planning and government which ultimately govern and determine reality. Man has his place in the government of things *under* God. It is God's love and hate which are unceasing and also determinative.

The humanist thus has an intensity to his love and hate: he cannot disengage himself and rest. Everything depends upon him. Moreover, because man as a false god can never dominate and

⁶ Brown, *op. cit.*, 305.

⁷ Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 254ff.

control the world, he will therefore always divide it into two realms, one to love and one to hate, in order to have an enemy to blame for his failures. If Henry Miller's dream world were realized, mankind would be only the more unrestrained and savage in tearing at itself by designating a new segment as the enemy.

A true Sabbath can only exist in a world created by the God of Scripture, for only then can man disengage himself from the world in the happy confidence that its government is absolutely secure. Where faith in the sovereignty of God and in His victory in time and in eternity is lacking or is defective, the Sabbath among Christians shrivels into a monastic withdrawal and retreat from the world. Among the ungodly, it disappears. Not surprisingly, Aldous Huxley, who saw the direction of humanistic civilization, proposed some years ago a new kind of Sabbath, the drug experience.

The drug experience is closely tied to humanism, to "a new faith" whose essential belief is that "God is Man."⁹ Charles Baudelaire, in his drug experience, felt, "I am a God!"¹⁰ Thus, under drugs, although the fears and the doubts can often run riot, the hope of the humanist to be his own god also finds expression. At the same time, the drug experience removes the man from the world he claims to be god over, and as a result he finds it a substitute for the Sabbath, a disengagement from the world. A "bad trip" means that, instead of disengagement, conflict took possession of the man.

The lack of a Sabbath haunts the humanist. Sometimes the results are ludicrous. Rousseau said, of the place where he first met Madame de Warens, "Often have I moistened it with my tears and covered it with kisses. Why cannot I enclose with gold the happy spot, and render it the object of universal veneration? Whoever wishes to honor monuments of human salvation would only approach it on their knees."¹¹ What had meaning for Rousseau was of necessity "universal," because man is ultimate and is his own universal. Therefore, all men must venerate as a monument of

⁹ William Braden, *The Private Sea, LSD and the Search for God* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), 17.

¹⁰ David Ebin, editor, *The Drug Experience* (New York: The Orion Press, 1961), 37.

¹¹ Whit Burnett, editor, *The Scarlet Treasury of Great Confessions* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1958), 62.

human salvation a fact of purely personal and erotic significance to Rousseau. The Romantic movement was thus given to universalizing private lusts into cosmic facts. All the same, the Romantics, however much dedicated to “eternal love,” were notable for the short duration of their loves. We are told of Liszt and Lola Montez, that “In Dresden, she got Liszt, the great lover of the age, and so wore him out that one night he locked her in a hotel room and fled, leaving a substantial sum to pay for the furniture he knew she would break.”¹² Whether the reasons have been physical or emotional exhaustion, human relations of all kinds have suffered at the hands of humanism, in that no disengagement short of a break is possible where the Sabbath is lacking. The Sabbath disengagement prevents us from expecting too much of ourselves, or others, or of the world. The Sabbath, by requiring our disengagement, compels us to recognize that only God is sovereign and absolute, and therefore to expect too great a hope from man and the world is to demand of them what they cannot give. Under God and within the framework of the Sabbath, we and others, and the world around us, can be rich in joy and fruition, but only as we see all these things under God.

In the modern era, humanism has turned to one area of life after another with messianic hopes therein, only to be disillusioned. One writer described his sexual activities with a woman he called “L” in these terms:

With L. the battle was joined; she wanted normal sexual relations as something morally desirable as well as romantically wonderful; but she was incapable of being satisfied, by the many men also who preceded me. Sexually she liked toughs; she regarded like many of her class and background orgasm as the fruit of affectionate violence-, she later developed overt masochism. She had wonderful intellectual conceptions of sexual apotheosis, the despair of her lovers. She was reduced to becoming the impotent pilgrim of the orgasm, and an extraordinary example of

¹² Brad Darrach, “Beautiful and Be Damned,” a review of Ishbel Ross, *The Uncrowned Queen*, in *Time*, vol. 99, no. 20, 15 May 1972, 86.

socio-experiential retribution against “over-
spiritualization.”¹³

To deny the Sabbath, *and* the Lord of the Sabbath, is to over-value some aspect of human experience or person and to demand some kind of apotheosis of man's choosing. The denial or neglect of the Sabbath is the over-valuation of man and man's activities. It gives to man's love and hate an importance they do not merit, a decisiveness they cannot have, and a burden they cannot carry. The Sabbath is the festival of the redeemed: on that day he can rejoice, not only in the happy results of what he does (1 Cor. 15:58), but also in the final determination of all things by the sovereign and omnipotent God.

¹³. Burnett, *op. cit.*, 264, from the memoirs of Philip O'Connor.

XVII

Buddhist Salvation

The Buddhist plan of salvation, or, more accurately, escape, is self-consciously or unconsciously a present factor in the mind of Western man. It is of importance, therefore, that it be analyzed and understood. Its essential faith is this: "All existence involves suffering; suffering is caused by desire, especially the desire for continuance of existence; the suppression of desire therefore will lead to the extinction of suffering."¹ In brief, the will to live must be suppressed so that man can be delivered. The *evil* for Buddhism is not sin: it is suffering, and because suffering arises from the desire to live, the will to live must be suppressed.

It is important to know that Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was a prince, born to luxury. He lived in a civilization of considerable wealth and ease. Both his culture and Gautama the man held a pessimistic view of life, regarded the world as illusory or an illusion, and life as a burden to be escaped rather than as a gift to be enjoyed. Moreover, the most prominent fact in the life of Gautama Buddha was his overwhelming sense of self-pity because life involved the possibility of suffering. The idea that suffering and deprivation can exist at all was for him intolerable; life and God had to be renounced for permitting or ordaining even a single cry of pain.

Since the time of Rousseau, this same impulse has been very strong in Western man. A telling example of this is Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who wrestled against this impulse to self-pity in himself and gives us some ugly portraits of its implications in his novels. This self-pity leads to an existential fury against suffering which is murderous.

In Ivan Karamazov, Dostoyevsky vividly portrayed this intense self-pity and absorption with suffering. Ivan cites case after case of

¹ C. A. F. Rhys Davids, "Buddha," in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. II, 882.

monstrous examples of evil, especially against helpless children, in order to indict God and life. Ivan declares,

Listen! I took the case of children only to make my case clearer. Of the other tears of humanity with which the earth is soaked from its crust to its centre, I will say nothing. I have narrowed my subject on purpose. I am a bug, and I recognise in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is. Men are themselves to blame, I suppose; they were given paradise, they wanted freedom, and stole fire from heaven, though they knew they would become unhappy, so there is no need to pity them. With my pitiful, earthly, Euclidian understanding, all I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty; that cause follows effect, simply and directly; that everything flows and finds its level — but that's only Euclidian nonsense, I know that, and I can't consent to live by it. What comfort is it to me that there are none guilty and that cause follows effect simply and directly, and that I know it — I must have justice, or I will destroy myself. And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth, and that I could see myself...²

In brief, the universe must meet Ivan's standard, because Ivan's autonomous mind reserves the right to pass the ultimate judgment on all things. There should be no suffering in Ivan's world, especially no suffering by any innocent person or child:

What do I care for a hell for oppressors? What good can hell do, since those children have already been tortured? And what becomes of harmony, if there is hell?... I don't want the mother to embrace the oppressor who threw her son to the dogs! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she will, let her forgive the torturer for the immeasurable suffering of her mother's heart. But the sufferings of her tortured child she has no right to forgive; she dare not forgive the torturer, even if the child were to forgive him! And if that is so, if they dare not forgive, what becomes of harmony? Is there in the whole world a being who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? I don't want harmony. From love for humanity I don't want it. I would rather be left with the unavenged suffering. I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering

² Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), 252f.

and unsatisfied indignation, *even if I were wrong*. Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it's beyond our means to pay so much to enter on it. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I must respectfully return Him the ticket.³

Ivan wants ultimately a universe of harmony, but only if there is total harmony all the way. He wants justice, but not hell. He wants no forgiveness of sins, because he refuses to allow sin and suffering to exist in the world, and, *because* it exists, it is beyond forgiveness. Ivan's one real consideration is not the "love of humanity" he professes, but, behind the cloak of humility, a love of himself and an intense self-pity because he must suffer any indignity, evil, or just recompense. No man should ever experience suffering or frustration, and, because these things exist, Ivan rejects God and turns in his "ticket" to heaven. It is a part of Ivan's inability to accept reality that he imagines that he has a "ticket" to turn in. Ivan Karamazov is very much an expression of apostate Western man's humanistic mentality, and he is very much a Buddhist.

Turning again to Buddhism, let us examine the implications of *Srimekundan*, "The Holy Drama of Tibet," a religious "Passion" play of Buddhism. The Great King and Queen of Nepal rule over a vast realm with sixty kings subject to their power. The King has 500 wives and 1500 "other comforters." To the King a marvellous child is born, Srimekundan, who grows up to manifest remarkable wisdom and gives evidence of becoming a Boddhisattva, a future Buddha, one on the way to perfect knowledge. Srimekundan vows one day that he will "*never... refuse the wish of any living creature*."⁴ This, of course, is really the kind of world that Ivan Karamazov was demanding from God.

The consequences of Srimekundan's decision are devastating. His father's enemy asks for the surrender of an enchanted jewel which fulfils all wishes and desires. He is asked for his last morsel

³. *Ibid.*, 254.

⁴. Richard Rosenheim, *The Eternal Drama* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 36.

of food and gives it. He is asked for his children, and he surrenders them (apparently without regard for their wishes), and he is asked for his eyes and submits to being blinded.

Srimekundan goes through untold hardships of self-denial for many years as he struggles to become “the Blameless One who never asks anything for himself.” After eleven years in the desert, he is tempted to return to Nepal. He answers,

If you wish to return, return.
 I will remain until the hour strikes twelve.
 Thus I have sworn.
 I have to drink the chalice to the dregs.
 I have no fear of death.
 What is composed of parts will not endure.
 I shall not give away what I have wrought from countless incarnations.
 Were I to listen to the smallest selfish wish just now,
 The fruit of all I have endured,
 My righteous coming back to God would be at once forfeited.

The Great Adversary repents and returns the stolen jewel, and the Brahman who is used to gain the jewel from Srimekundan kneels before him, now a blessed Boddhisattva, saying,

You are the reborn Buddha — blessed be he yesterday, today and in eternity!
 You are the Way, that leads all creatures on the eight-fold pathway of redemption!
 You are the Light, that fills the world!
 You are the Chariot, that carries man from life to life!
 You are the Sword, that shall destroy the six transitional stages of existence and becoming!
 O Thou, whose is the Power and the Glory and the Kingdom,
 I worship Thee!⁵

Srimekundan, then, gets back everything he lost, his eyes, children, and his princely rights, and he is then transported to Nirvana.

This religious play tells us, in a religion without God, what man demands that God should be, one who “never refuses the wish of any living creature,” one who rights every wrong precisely as man

⁵ *Ibid.*, 37f.

would have it, and one “who never asks anything for himself” but is a God entirely concerned with gratifying man. This is a consummate humanism and an intense self-pity which demands that the whole of creation to be reordered in such a way that man is never hurt or offended.

God must be remade in the image of man. This was, of course, a basic impetus of the Romantic movement, of Rousseau and the sentimental religion of pity he fostered. This belief was clearly stated in one of William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence*, “The Divine Image”:

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, turk, or jew;
Where Mercy, Love, & Pity dwell
There God *is* dwelling too.

Here is no sovereign God, but a god made after man’s imagination, in terms of man’s self-pity and his self-pitying sense of need. Biblical terminology is invoked for an anti-Biblical conclusion.

Now as in Buddha’s day, humanism begins by declaring that man shall be his own god, and ends in self-pity and a fear of life.

The God of Scripture, however, makes it clear that not only is He the maker of heaven and earth and all things therein, but He also fully ordains all the terms and conditions of life. In Zechariah 10:1-5, God declares why the Jews were suffering so grievously (v. 2). They had forsaken God for false gods, and as a result were in serious trouble. They were asked to pray to God, who controls nature totally, and He promised to send them rains to relieve their drought (v. 1). God made clear His anger against the false shepherds of His people, and His principle of judgment is summarized thus by Moore: "They who are first in crime, will be first in punishment."⁶ God promises to deliver His repentant people, with leaders from their own midst, and to destroy their enemies (v. 5). This deliverance, as well as the judgment, is entirely from God and His anointed, out of whom come all their leaders, their oppressors, and their deliverance. The ultimate and absolute determination of all things is in the hand of God. Man is responsible, and God is sovereign. The mystery of predestination is a great one, but the alternatives are monstrosities. When man retreats from that sovereign God in self-pity, he retreats from life and reality. Buddha's way has meant the centuries-old bondage of Asia and its inability to live with reality. It has meant the suicidal retreat of self-pity and the inability to function for lack of direction. A world in which no living creature is ever refused anything is a world of anarchy and ruin. Those who hunger for such a world are asking for death.

⁶. Thomas V. Moore, *A Commentary on Zechariah* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 160.

XVIII

Degradation

In Genesis 3:1-5, we have, very plainly stated, Satan's plan of salvation. Its essence is basically this: man can become his own god, independent from God the creator, and man can decide for himself what constitutes good and evil. God the creator is trying to prevent his creatures, men and angels, from realizing that they possess God's powers and can strike out on their own and create their own world of law and also live forever in spite of what God has declared. This program has not changed. As against God, man sets himself up as his own god. Philip Blair Jones has commented on this, pointing out that

Cant and equivocation aside, the world's battle is being fought between two armies. On the one side is the Religion of Humanity; on the other is Christianity in its splendor, Calvinism.

“He who believes in God without reserve, and is determined that God shall be God to him, in all this thinking, feeling, willing — in the entire compass of his life activities; intellectual, moral, spiritual — throughout all his individual, social, religious relations — is, by force of that strictest of all logic which presides over the outworking of principles into thought and life, by the very necessity of the case, a Calvinist.”

So spoke Dr. B. B. Warfield in 1909 at Princeton Seminary for the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Calvin.

Substitute the words “man” for “God” and “humanist” for “Calvinist” in the above quote and the followers of Humanity's Religion are contrasted with their opponents.¹

Moreover, as against God's law, man proclaims his freedom from law, and his right to make his own law. Basic to the satanic faith is

¹. Philip Blair Jones, “Christ and His Pretender,” *Westminster Chapel* (Houston, Texas), 22 May 1972.

the denial of any validity to God's law; the only valid law is that which a man makes for himself, the law of his desires and wishes.

Again, "Ye shall not surely die" is still Satan's plan. Men are certain that, with sufficient scientific advance, death will be overcome and God's decree nullified. All that man needs is enough time, and he shall rival and surpass the God of Scripture.

Very clearly also, Satan insisted that God was a liar, selfishly and jealously guarding His Godhood to prevent anyone else from realizing their own divinity. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?... Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (or, as God) knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:1, 4-5).

This same point is again made by Satan to God with respect to Job:

9. Doth Job fear God for nought?

10. Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. (Job 1:9-11)

Satan's indictment of Job is really an indirect indictment of God. *First*, Satan is indicating that God is wrong about Job (Job 1:8) and Job's character. Satan clearly professes to have greater insight into reality than does God. Implicit in Satan's contempt for Job is a greater contempt for God. *Second*, Satan's charge is that Job, like every other man, is only concerned with self-interest. There is no morality or righteousness in Job's stand, according to Satan; having been richly blessed by God, Job is simply being pragmatic and selfish in worshipping God, because that honor accorded to God serves Job's self-interest. Remove protection and blessing from Job, Satan declares, and "he will curse thee to thy face." Satan, of course, proves to be radically wrong: Job, while *perplexed* at the calamities which befall him, still retains his faith and trust in God: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). It was the

false idea of God and God's justice held by his friends that Job protested against.

Third, what Satan says about Job he is really saying about God, in whose image man is made. Satan confuses aseity, self-being, with egoism and selfishness. In speaking to Eve, he had plainly accused God of lying to man to prevent man from becoming a god. God was supposedly jealously and selfishly guarding divinity and life as though He alone had an unrestricted right to them. For Satan, Job was selfish and egocentric, and God was as well. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 2:4-5). Satan was here projecting his own views on to God and to Job. For Satan, the goal was and is to be his own god, his own universe, and his own determiner of good and evil, and this is his program for all men. Let all "do their own thing" without any interference from God.

To prove his point about God, it was necessary for Satan to degrade Job, to prove that Job was only capable of raw self-interest, and to prove thereby that God was wrong both about Job and about His own being. For the same reason, Satan was the accuser of Joshua, trying to make of that high priest's sins an evidence of apostasy and a common cause with Satan (Zech. 3:1-5). Similarly, the temptation of our Lord by Satan was consistently an appeal to self-interest, power, and prestige; surely, Jesus would succumb to so masterly an appeal to His self-interest!

It is clear that many theologians have been radically wrong in their interpretation of Satan (and, accordingly, of God) by failing to see the meaning of his appearance in Job. Consider these absurd and blasphemous comments of E. S. P. Heavenor concerning Satan in Job 1:6-12:

We are not to look for any "full-dress" doctrine of Satan as depicted in orthodox theology. He does not appear as a fallen angel but has regular access to heaven (i. 6, ii. 1). The name *Satan* (6) is preceded by the definite article and is rendered by "the adversary" in Moffatt. Prof N. H. Snaith summarizes his role by saying: "He is God's Inspector-of-man on earth and man's adversary in heaven." He is a divine agent whose duty is

to give the closest attention to human virtue and vice. He appears as the supreme cynic of the heavenly court.²

The purpose of Satan's actions against Job was to degrade Job to Satan's level, to reduce Job to a person whose only and entire motive was self-interest and egoism. All the calamities visited upon Job had no other purpose than to force Job to reveal that he was really no more different from Satan than any of Satan's cohorts. Their purpose was to demonstrate that both Job and God operated purely in terms of self-interest, each his own world and law, only conceding to others what self-interest dictated. Job, Satan wanted to prove, did not serve God for nought: he expected the rewards and paid God in worship and praise. God in turn blessed Job in order to have the satisfaction of Job's bowing and scraping, whereas Satan's plan is honest freedom for every man to be his own self-centered world and law.

Satan's purpose, then, is to prove his point by degrading a saint of God before God and man, to demonstrate that what God and His servants regard with horror is the reality of things and simply to be accepted and enjoyed.

Jacques Barzun gives us a vivid example of this delight in degrading. Wordsworth's serious and moralistic life and poetry are an offense to most humanistic scholars, and, judging by their classroom comments, many find such evidences of character an offense in any great literary figure. When it was discovered in the twentieth century that Wordsworth had an illicit relationship in his youth which led to an illegitimate daughter, a Harvard scholar, according to Barzun, received the news with the comment, "It makes him seem like one of us."³ The thesis is, let us all be bastards together; why pretend to something more than a man bent on getting all he can, in contempt of God and man?

Politicians thus appeal in moralistic terms to the mob that they often despise, for the people want nobility and morality to cloak their naked self-interest. Privately, they commonly express

² E. S. P. Heavenor, "Job," in F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan, editors, *The New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1953), 388f.

³ Jacques Barzun, *The House of Intellect* (New York: Harper, 1959), 43.

cynicism concerning moral absolutes. Man's basic motive is held to be, "What's in it for me?" This certainly is largely true of fallen man, who has adopted Satan's hypothesis. It is still a deformation of man's true nature and a burden upon it. Sin is a disease, a moral disease, a cancer in man which dooms him to death. It is not the nature of his original being, but a cancerous growth within it.

Barzun calls attention also to this aspect of the novel, a product of the modern world and usually very humanistic: from its earliest years, says Barzun, the novel "has persistently made war on two things — our culture and the heroic."⁴ Education has also been at war with our Christian culture and against excellence. Increasingly, in the twentieth century, teaching has been aimed at producing a mind cynical of the past and its great men, a mind sitting always in a judgment seat as a god over all else. Barzun, in pointing to the fact that, in our society, "the notion of excellence" is fading, observes,

This is surely the result of spurring the critical spirit while leaving it undirected, of "thinking for oneself" without encountering the objections of a better thinker. I once had occasion to tell a group of graduate students that any of them would be lucky to achieve the fifth or sixth rank among historians. The remark was prompted by their dissatisfaction with all they knew: Gibbon was a bore, Macaulay a stuffed shirt, Hegel and Michelet were fools, Carlyle and Buckle frauds — this from students who could not write ten pages of readable and properly documented narrative. Pointing out that even second and third-rate men, such as Milman, Bancroft, or Grote, were the superiors of these students' own instructors, who were by definition superior to the students themselves, was a sobering thought quite foreign to their experience.⁵

Our concern, however, is more directly with the undiluted urge to degrade. It is well known that perverts are usually intensely concerned with involving others in their offenses, both by seduction and by a reinterpretation of the actions of others. Thus, some reputed scholars have held that everyone has homosexual impulses and phases; others make similar claims in terms of their

⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 126n.

own predilections. One man, a lecher and an atheist, spoke proudly of his honesty: all men, he held, are secretly lechers, and all men in their hearts know that God is a myth, and only he was honest enough to admit to both. Thus, all men are, according to him, as bad as he is, so that there is nothing wrong with his position, since it is normal. Moreover, by his “honesty,” he had given himself a position of eminence over all others! This is, in essence, self-righteousness. *Self-righteousness is an assertion that righteousness is self-derived and that it is man's own accomplishment in terms of his own standards.* This means that self-righteousness involves a prior claim to be one's own arbiter over right and wrong. The temptation of Satan (Gen. 3:5) was thus the essence of self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is thus at war against God's righteousness and is an indictment of God's law in favor of man's own do-it-yourself law. It will seek to degrade man by proving to man that God's law is not possible of attainment, that it is in reality a frustration and a limitation of man, and that man must recognize that total egoism (such as Max Stirner advocated) is the true and healthy way of life.

Klossowski has pointed out that, for the Marquis de Sade, God was a necessity to justify his evil: “To the extent that God can be viewed as the original guilty party who attacked man before man could attack him, to that extent man has acquired the right and the strength to attack his neighbor.” For Sade, the source of all evil was God, and evil is a freedom to be one's own god and to cut the restrictions on man's development imposed by God. The goal of Sadean man is “the exaltation of the ego to its height.”⁶ The aseity of God requires for the satanist the aseity of man; man must be his own god, dependent completely on his own will, his own potentiality, and his own desires. For man to bow to any will or law outside of himself is to sin against his own being. God, it is thus held, is the great egoist, and therefore man can be no different. Whether it be Job, or a girl or boy next door or a man or woman seeking to obey God's law, they must be proven to be hypocrites: “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life” (Job

⁶ Pierre Klossowski, “Nature as Destructive Principle,” in Austryn Wainhouse and Richard Seaver, editors, *The Marquis de Sade: The 120 Days of Sodom and other Writings* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 67, 86.

2:4). They must be degraded in terms of their moral goals, or else they and that moral law stand as an indictment of these satanists. There is an intensity to Satan's remarks about Job: the man was an offense to Satan, because Job's God was an offense to Satan. His goal was to make Job curse God to His face, to throw over God's law and righteousness, and to manifest an open and unbridled egoism. There is more than testing of Job in Satan's mind: there is hatred.

Men who fail to recognize such hatred may well share it.

XIX

Judgment

In 2 Chronicles 36, we have a brief but vivid account of the collapse of Judea and its destruction by the armies of Egypt and then Babylon. With less caution than a blindfolded man in a strange place, staggering wildly because doubly blinded by drunkenness, the Southern Kingdom blundered to destruction. Governed by the will to death which marks the sinner, Judea unerringly did the wrong thing in each crisis and invited its own death. The Chronicler gives us a blunt commentary on the disaster:

11. Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

12. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD.

13. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

14. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15. And the LORD God of their fathers sent them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

16. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

17. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew the young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

18. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon.

19. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.

21. To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. (2 Chron. 36:11-21)

In analyzing this account, certain things can be noted. *First*, the reign of Zedekiah is described as “evil in the sight of the LORD.” Commentators and historians usually speak of Zedekiah as a good but weak man. Zedekiah, referred to as a “brother” or kinsman of Jehoiachin, was the son of Josiah, the brother of Jehoiakim, and the uncle of Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3:15; 2 Kings 24:17). He was thus closer to the godly standards of King Josiah. Ball wrote of Zedekiah, that “Zedekiah was not personally unfavorable to the prophet Jeremiah, and consulted him more than once; but he was too weak and timorous to stand by the prophetic counsel, in defiance of his princes who were intriguing with Egypt.”¹ Ball was right in his account, which makes all the more important God’s verdict. In God’s sight, weakness and cowardice are *evil*. Zedekiah’s evil is contrasted to the word of God from the mouth of Jeremiah, and we are told that Zedekiah refused to humble himself “before Jeremiah.” For a king to admit sin and bow before the word of a prophet of relatively humble origin did require humility, but that humility would be to God and His word. As against this, Zedekiah, in his evil pride, pitted his own wishes and word. The weakness of Zedekiah sprang from evil.

Second, Zedekiah, in swearing loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar, swore by God. We are told that “Nebuchadnezzar made him swear by God,” but this involved no coercion. It was the necessary condition to accepting the kingship. Nebuchadnezzar quite logically wanted a prince who would not ally himself rebelliously

¹ C. J. Ball, “II Chronicles,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. III (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 452.

with Egypt. Zedekiah accepted those terms and then was faithless to them. As Ball noted,

When Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah vassal-king of Judah, he would naturally make him swear fealty to himself by the God of his fathers. The fact is not specially recorded in Kings; but the prophet Ezekiel makes it the point of a prophecy against the king and his grandees (Ezek. xvii. 11-21; comp. especially verse 17 "mine oath that he hath despised").²

The importance of this oath in God's sight is very clearly brought out by Gardiner in his commentary on Ezekiel 17:15 and 19:

The faithlessness of Zedekiah and his court to his own sworn covenant was an act, in addition to all his other wickedness, especially abominable to God. The sanctity of an oath had always been most strongly insisted upon in Israelitish history. It must be remembered that even when, as in the case of the Gibeonites (Josh. ix.), the oath had been obtained by fraud, and centuries had passed since it was given, God yet sorely punished the land for its violation (2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2) and in this case the king had been more than once Divinely warned through the prophet Jeremiah of the danger of his treachery....

Zedekiah's oath and covenant to Nebuchadnezzar are called the Lord's, because made in the Lord's name, and also because He had commanded them. Rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar was, therefore,³ under the circumstances, apostasy from the Lord Himself.³

The implications of this are very important. Oaths and vows confront us in many areas of life, in marriage, civil government, and in the church. The meaning clearly is that in every case our oath and vow are, first of all, to God, and, second, to the persons and institutions involved. Social order is primarily of God's ordination and purpose, however much it is to man's advantage. Every violation of an oath made in terms of that order is thus apostasy from God Himself. Zedekiah is thus arraigned as an apostate both by Ezekiel and the Chronicler. This apostasy was

² *Ibid.*

³ F. Gardiner, "Ezekiel," in Ellicott, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. V, 248f.

also manifested in the pollution of the temple “after all the abominations of the heathen.”

Third, we are told that God warned His people repeatedly, “because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place.” The mercy of God and His concern is thus not only extended towards people, but towards His temple, and, as is later apparent, towards the earth itself. Because the people “despised his words” and abused God’s prophets and messengers, God’s anger “arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” As Ball points out, the Hebrew word for *remedy* is literally *healing*. “God is said to *heal*, when he averts calamity” (2 Chron. 30:20).⁴ Here again we see how closely interrelated health, deliverance, victory, and salvation are. At this point, there was neither any health in the people, nor healing for them, so that “the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” The sickness of sin precipitated the wrath of God. “There was no remedy” for their sin when God’s anger arose, because their *only* remedy at any point was the favor and grace of God. No other remedy exists. Their contempt of God was thus their contempt of their only remedy or salvation. The consequence was the destruction of the kingdom, the people, and the temple.

Fourth, the captivity was of seventy years duration in fulfilment of Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer. 25:9-12; 29:10), during which time the land “enjoyed her sabbaths.” The Hebrew word for *enjoyed* can be rendered “made good” or “discharged,” as a debt.

The meaning is that during the long years of the exile, the land would enjoy that rest of which it had been defrauded by the neglect of the law concerning the sabbatical years (Lev. xxv. 1-7). The following words, “as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath” (literally, *all the days of the desolation she rested*) are taken from Lev. xxvi. 34, 35.⁵

A strict reckoning would mean that the law of the sabbath of the land was not observed for 490 years (seventy times seven), or ever since the institution of the monarchy in Israel (490 + 588 = 1,078 B.C.). The reckoning of the seventy years is from the fourth year

⁴ Ball, *op. cit.*, 453.

⁵ *Ibid.*

of Jehoiakim, when Jeremiah declared the judgment (Jer. 25:1, 12), to the first year of Cyrus, and the return under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C., from 606-536 B.C. There may have been local and individual observances, but, as a national legal requirement, the law was apparently neglected from the beginning of the monarchy.

The goal of the captivity was thus the restoration of the land, and, after judgment, of the people of the land. Thus, the catastrophe of the Fall of Jerusalem was both a culminating judgment in the history of Judah to that date, and also the restoration or redemption of the land. The judgment itself, and the captivity which ensued, were important steps in the redemption of Judah. Here again we have the coincidence and necessary interrelationship of judgment and salvation. God's redemptive purpose has the land in view as well as the people of the land. The high estate of man under God, celebrated in Psalm 8, does not in the least obscure God's concern for the land and its creatures.

Let us now examine the relationship of the oath to the redemption of the land. When the covenant was first made, all Israel vowed before the Lord, saying, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). When Moses renewed the covenant with the younger generation before the entry into Canaan, not only was the law restated, but the oath of allegiance also invoked curses and blessings (Deut. 27, 28). This oath was not set aside by Christ's covenant but rather assumed. The choice of twelve disciples for the twelve tribes of Israel, and the insistence at every point of continuity with the old covenant, make it clear that, instead of setting aside the covenant and its law, the purpose of Christ was to put it into force (Matt. 5:17-19).

Because the goal of salvation is total, judgment is also total. The resurrection of the body, the new creation, and the total regeneration of all things requires that judgment be total also, so that only that which is totally redeemed inherits the Kingdom of God. The extent of a judgment is thus an indication of the extent of the restoration in view, unless no remnant remains to be restored.

In this case, the number seventy represented both a literal span of time in captivity, actually fulfilled, and also a symbol of fulness. “Symbolically the number, as the multiple of seven and ten, represents the highest measure of completeness (comp. Matt. xviii. 22).”⁶ The Fall of Jerusalem under Zedekiah was thus a sign pointing to Jerusalem’s greater fall in the Jewish-Roman War of A.D. 66-70. It meant that the setting aside of the old Israel for the new was under way. The Chronicler points to this in the conclusion of his history:

22. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

23. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up. (2 Chron. 36:22-23)

1 Chronicles 1:1 reads, “Adam, Sheth, Enosh.” The Chronicler began his history with the first man and concluded with a world empire serving God. The Fall is thus in process of being undone even as the consequences of the Fall unfold in history. Otto Zockler commented on this very ably, stating that

It is of no small consequence that the Old Testament Chronicles, the most comprehensive work of sacred literature, closes with such universalistic views of Israel’s call of salvation to all nations, and of the future union of all in faith in Jehovah as the one and only true God. Its end thus turns to its beginning. Setting out from the first Adam, the author concludes his work with the consoling expectation of the future and not far distant, but rather, in the reconstruction of the theocracy promoted by the edict of Cyrus, already guaranteed and necessarily involved restitution of the blessed kingdom of the second Adam, the Redeemer of the world.⁷

⁶ E. H. Plumptre, “Jeremiah,” in Ellicott, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. V, 86.

⁷ John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Chronicles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 278.

The point in this rather involved statement is a very important one. The reconstruction of the temple pointed ahead to the true temple, Jesus Christ. The first Adam is supplanted by the last Adam, and the Fall of Jerusalem and its temple foreshadowed their replacement by the true Israel of God and His Son.

While the seventy years was symbolic of total judgment, the actual Fall of Jerusalem and the subsequent captivity was not a total judgment. Calvin, in commenting on Jeremiah 25:11, called attention to this aspect of mercy:

And that a time of seventy years was fixed, it was a testimony of God's paternal kindness towards his people, not indiscriminately towards the whole multitude, but towards the remnant of whom he had spoken elsewhere. Then the Prophet means, that however grievously the Jews had sinned, yet God would execute only a temporary punishment; for after seventy years, as we shall see, he would restore them to their own country and repair what they had lost, even the inhabitation of the promised land, the holy city, and the Temple.⁸

Judgment thus is not only the other side of the coin to salvation, but it is also an act of grace and mercy to the people of God. However devastating the Fall of Jerusalem was to the faithful remnant, without that fall no remnant would have remained.

⁸ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, vol. III, John Owen, translator (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 256.

XX

Change

In Hebrews 11:10, we are told that Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Few passages have been subjected to more platonistic interpretation than this, especially as it continues to declare of the saints of old, that

13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 11:13-16)

The reference here is to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob: they knew that the promises included a material realm, the Promised Land, but also much more. They died in faith, confident that God would keep His word concerning the possession of Canaan, their growth into a nation, and universal blessings through their race. They rejoiced in that fulfilment from afar, and they saw it as the counsel of God. Because they did not yet possess Canaan, they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. By their confession of their pilgrim estate, “they acknowledged that they were in a foreign land: as ‘sojourners’ that they had no permanent possession, no rights of citizenship.” They saw that their citizenship was in heaven. “The fulfilment of the promise in its highest form is set before us as social and not simply as personal. God prepared for His chosen not a home but a ‘city,’ a Divine Commonwealth.”¹

¹ B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952), 364.

The patriarchs felt no disdain for the earth and the flesh; to them it was good, and a blessing of God's ordination. They regarded with faith and joy the promises of God concerning this earth and the triumph herein of the people of the covenant. Their desire for heaven was not a contrast of heaven and earth, with earth as the illusory realm, but a complement of the one to the other. There is no hint of a platonic matter and form dialectic here, but rather of a journey from one area of God's Kingdom to another. The one is fallen and therefore beset with many problems; the other has not been affected by the Fall; their hope for the earthly arena meant in part the undoing and eradication of the Fall. The contrast is thus not between the material and the spiritual but between the fallen and the unfallen.

Furthermore, the contrast is not between the changing and the unchanging. The world's problem is not change but sin. In fact, a love of permanency is very frequently an aspect of man's sin.

It is necessary to analyze the main perspectives of religions and culture towards change in order to understand the significance of Biblical faith and salvation. *First*, a major perspective can be best described by reference to the Greek view of change. Aristotle, for example, regarded *perfection* as *self-sufficiency* and *permanence*. A city-state should be able to sell to others without needing to buy. Its constitution should be inflexible and unchanging as far as was humanly possible, and changes should aim at achieving an unchanging state. The appeal of communism to the Greek mind was largely due to the fact that it offered a "final" order in which the structure was fixed by the rulers and little left to the vagaries of individuals. For the Greeks, the purpose of law was to *fix* things into a measured permanency. The static and the immutable were regarded as higher than that which fluctuates and changes. In fact, the real is unchanging and permanent, whereas the changing is associated with the unreal. As Baker observed,

The Greeks had resolved the problem of evil into terms of permanence and change. In general, their position was that matter, which is unstable, is evil; that reason, which enjoys an Eleatic permanence, is good. Evil is not a creation of man's perverted will but merely a characteristic of matter. Following

Parmenides, they had consistently held matter in opprobrium as the very antithesis of reason, Idea, Form, conceptual reality. In Neoplatonism, an earth-fleeing philosophy, the derogation of matter had reached its apex — and it was from Neoplatonism that Augustine learned most about the perfection of pure insubstantial being, about the wickedness (that is, the nonentity) of matter. “For in Matter,” said Plotinus, “We have no mere absence of means of strength; it is utter destitution — of sense, of virtue, of beauty, of pattern, of Ideal principle, of quality. This is surely ugliness, utter disgracefulness, unredeemed evil.”

This view of matter resolves a dualism into a monism: evil, that is, matter, becomes of no consequence metaphysically because it has no existence. Anything that can rightly be said to exist exists by participating in the very source and center of being; and whatever does not has no existence. Matter, unilluminated by being, is uncreated, and its evil is of deprivation and deficiency.²

Still under the influence of neoplatonism when he wrote his *Confessions*, St. Augustine concluded, concerning things, that “as they are, they are good; therefore whatsoever is, is good.”³ Much later, Alexander Pope, in his *An Essay on Man*, held that “Whatever is, is right.” In the twentieth century, Lenny Bruce declared, “Truth is, ‘what is’.”⁴

Such a view negates progress, because reality as it exists is good and right. Nothing, then, logically requires changing. The decay and collapse of Greek civilization was not accidental: it was a product of its philosophical resistance to change and growth.

A *second* perspective which is very prominent in the modern world is a belief in change for the sake of change. Change is identified with growth, and it is therefore welcomed and courted. Every change is countered with another change to prevent permanency and to maintain the principle of change as the solvent and solution of society. The result is perpetual warfare against the

². Herschel Baker, *The Image of Man* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), 163f.

³. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. VII, ch. xii.

⁴. Lenny Bruce, “How to talk dirty and influence people,” *Playboy*, vol. XI, no. 1., January 1964, 182.

existing situation because it represents “the establishment” and hence an element of permanency and order.

However, where there is no principled change, the old proverb is clearly true, that, the more things change, the more they are the same. Where change is exalted, the result is revolution for the sake of revolution. The changes become meaningless and faddist. Society becomes like a rudderless ship: it cannot drive to a goal, but is rather driven by the winds. Instead of direction, drift governs.

The Biblical perspective is hostile to both the Greek and modern views. The essence of any philosophy which ascribes permanency and changelessness to anything or anyone other than God is to arrest history and handicap or suppress growth and development. However, precisely because man and the world are fallen, *change is a social and personal imperative*. For man to resist change means to resist growth and progress. It means that man has frozen into a virtue an aspect of the fallen order and has thereby precluded its correction.

Change, however, must be principled or else, like Greek concepts of permanency, it gives to a fallen order a stamp of approval in its sin. To say that whatever is, is good and right, is to deify the fallen world. To assume that there is a virtue in the changing forms of sin is to say that man and the world have inherent in them the ability to undo the Fall. This is, of course, the thesis of revolution.

The modern era has made revolution respectable and even noble. This has been due to its humanistic view of society, which, as Seaman pointed out, enabled revolutionists “to rally to their side men who in other centuries would have shunned them as criminals.”⁵ The most fundamental of the propositions of this new faith was “the perfectibility of man.” This was an anti-Christian and revolutionary faith, because Christianity denies that man apart from God can either regenerate or perfect himself in, or beyond, history. As Seaman has so well stated it, the revolutionaries held that

⁵ L. C. B. Seaman, *From Vienna to Versailles* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1956), 33.

The factors which alone prevented man from becoming perfect were the superstitions of the Church and the tyranny of kings, which between them condemned man to spiritual and temporal slavery. As Rousseau had put it in the explosive first sentence of the first chapter of his *Social Contract*, "Man is born free and is everywhere in chains." If the rest of Rousseau's Bible of Revolution consisted largely of verbose obscurities, the direction in which he pointed was clear enough for his like-minded contemporaries and successors. The end result of proclaiming the doctrine of human perfectibility to a generation who were simultaneously told that they were free men condemned to slavery, but that they were slaves whose liberation was at hand, was the point of view which Shelley expressed and others acted on: that the world would be a perfect place as soon as the last king had been strangled with the guts of the last priest. It was to be as easy as that.⁶

Seaman is right: they did and do believe that it is "as easy as that." Revolutionists advocate change away from Christianity as the answer to all their problems. The abolition of God and of good and evil will supposedly usher in the golden age. If it does not arrive, the answer is to execute, destroy, and change, because change will somehow lead to perfection. The belief of revolutionists, as Seaman adds, was that "social and political wrongs, whatever they were, could be put right by a communal act of violence." It was and is a faith that "through revolution man could find a short cut to a paradise on earth."⁷

This is an unprincipled faith in change, in that no principle governs change; it is a principled theory of change in that change, all by itself, becomes the principle.

In this respect, faith in change or revolution is closely connected with the theory of evolution, which, well before Darwin, found expression in Hegel and others before him. For evolution, change is a working towards a new and higher form, so that every departure from a norm is a potential step forward. Deviation or change then becomes a new normality, and, in terms of this,

⁶. *Ibid.*, 34.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 36f.

Durkheim, in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, could write “On the Normality of Crime.” The criminal was for him a social pioneer, establishing a new normality and the next step in man’s social evolution. “How many times, indeed, it is only an anticipation of future morality — a step toward what will be!” Crime, therefore, “must no longer be conceived as an evil that cannot be too much suppressed.” In fact, “If crime is not pathological at all, the object of punishment cannot be to cure it, and its true function must be sought elsewhere.” It follows then that, for sociology to be a true science of things, “the generality of phenomena must be taken as the criterion of their normality.”⁸

Evolution thus tends to deify change for its own sake. It is by faith committed to the belief that things evolve or move forward and upward. The means to this progress is change, and continual change by random selection produces the new and higher form. As a result, only by welcoming or permitting all change can the progressive change emerge. By faith, evolution holds to random experimental change as the means to progress. This means that by faith it denies devolution. Why should not change as readily lead downward as upward? There is no inherent reason why, in a universe of chance variations, change should always be beneficial. On the contrary, it is more likely that change will be destructive where chance variations occur. Evolutionists have thus denied God while retaining a strong faith in the providence of God governing all things. As a result, evolutionists are implicitly revolutionaries.

They are, moreover, to all practical intent, devolutionists in the consequences of their thinking. How long can a doctor maintain living patients if his prescriptions are made on the basis of chance selection, or the roll of dice? How long can a society based on such a faith remain alive? Will it not rather produce a society of criminals and Marquis de Sades, dedicated to the perpetual destruction of all law and order? Order remains in the modern world only insofar as

⁸ Emile Durkheim, “On the Normality of Crime,” from *The Rules of Sociological Method* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1950), 65-75. Reprinted in Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, K. D. Naegele and J. R. Pitts, editors, *Theories of Society*, vol. II (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1961), 874-875

an older religious faith still governs the minds of many peoples. Destruction has become the faith of modern man, to change by destroying.

The *third* perspective towards change is the Biblical one. Devout Christians have often been guilty of the infection of Greek philosophy and have regretted or bewailed change, whereas modernistic churchmen have shared an evolutionary faith in it. The Rev. Henry Francis Lyte, in his beautiful hymn, "Abide With Me" (1847), held to this element of platonism as a virtue, writing,

Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

Why should change and decay be a matter of inevitable grief, any more than a matter of inevitable joy? It must be held that, in a fallen world, change and decay must come in order to shake the world out of its sin. Nothing could be more horrible and evil than a fallen world which neither changes nor decays, but continues securely in its sin. The purpose of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and then later of the Flood, was to prevent man from having security in sin, in lawlessness, and the purpose of change was and is to ensure man's continual shaking and crisis. Change, therefore, cannot be condemned as such, although change in itself is meaningless, in that perpetual change can be purposeless or misguided.

For the orthodox Christian, permanence and changelessness belong to the sovereign God, who declares, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). This unchanging God gives to man His infallible word as the principle whereby men and societies must be changed. Regeneration is the work of sovereign grace, and only the regenerate man can make effectual changes. Changes are made by the redeemed man in terms of the law of God, to bring man and society ever into closer conformity to God's standard.

Thus, the Christian must affirm permanence and changelessness, but never with respect to the creation or any aspect thereof. He must affirm change, but never with respect to God and His word. There can never be growth and progress without changes which are governed by the law-word of God. The Christian will thus

conserve that which is godly and conforms to the law of God, working always to reform it in terms of that word. He will uproot whatever is not of God, not by revolution but by reconstruction.

The Christian thus cannot in principle require changelessness from the social order. He is not a reactionary. For him past and present represent in varying degrees the situation of a fallen world. His standard is the word of God and the reconstruction of all things in terms of it. He will thus be oriented to the future and to the new creation.

The patriarchs were men who moved forward as pilgrims and sojourners. They did not exalt the past or present, but looked forward to the promises of God concerning the possession of Canaan by their descendants, and, ultimately, to the possession of all the earth by their heirs in faith. They rejoiced that death would gather them to their fathers in God's heaven, wherein they would be beyond sin and death. Their faith made them recognize that the present orders must go, because God's order must replace them. They died in this faith, the confidence that God would in His own time accomplish these things, and, in terms of that faith, they were pilgrims and strangers, looking for that city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

The Christian, thus, is not at war with change but with sin, which wants to change all else but not itself. The Christian must welcome and work for all change which has as its principle the word of God. Without true principles, change is merely destructive. Regeneration is more than change: it is a new creation. The regenerate man can work out the meaning of salvation in his life and society only by means of principled change. A Biblical doctrine of salvation will thus be essentially tied to a belief in change in terms of God's law.

Salvation by Slavery

St. Paul, in Galatians 2:1-9, reviews certain aspects of the opposition to himself by certain “false brethren,” or, in Lenski’s translation, “pseudo-brethren.” These men presented Paul as a perverter of the faith and as one under condemnation by the apostles in Jerusalem. They were thus deliberately falsifying the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), whereby Paul stood approved. These opponents of St. Paul are commonly called Judaizers and Pharisees within the church. Much more was at stake than these names imply. Their theology called for justification by law, and St. Paul resolutely opposed their misuse of law; the law has its place as the way of sanctification, not justification. In a non-Biblical religion we would expect a non-Biblical way of salvation, but for professed Christians to offer another way of redemption has a greater offense to it. The hostility of the Pharisees had at least the merit of consistency. For one to profess Christ while denying Him is clearly a greater offense than simple hostility, in that it strikes not only at Christ but also aims at destroying His flock.

Lenski’s translation of Galatians 2:3-5 brings out Paul’s contention concerning these people bluntly:

But not even Titus, the one with me, although he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised even on account of the pseudo-brethren sneakingly brought in, such as sneakingly come in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus in order that they might completely enslave us; to whom we yielded no, not for an hour by way of the submission (they demanded) in order that the truth of the gospel might continue on for you.¹

St. Paul contrasts two conditions here, Christian liberty versus slavery. He states, moreover, that the purpose of the enemies of the

¹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1946), 74.

gospel is *complete* enslavement. This is strong language. Is it St. Paul's interpretation of the actions of his opponents, colored by his feelings and beliefs, or is it an accurate description of their intentions? All who believe in the inerrant authority of Scripture will hold that St. Paul gives us an accurate description.

The question then arises, why should anyone believe in slavery as a way of salvation? Can and do people actually believe in slavery as salvation? Clearly, the answer is, yes, in most of history, men have clung to slavery, but it must be recognized that they have rarely been honest enough to call their choice slavery.

Let us examine the matter theologically to begin with. A common question and complaint asks, why does God allow so much evil to prevail? Why does He not simply make impossible many of these enormities and horrors which are so common to man's history? To analyze the implications of these questions is to discover at once their hostility to freedom. To ask God to create a world in which man cannot sin, nor suffer for his sins, is to say that God should not create man at all but simply automatons. A creation in which there is no possibility for man to reap the whirlwind of retribution for his sins is a world in which no man exists, for man, created in the image of God, is created with the possibility of presuming that this image is the reality of godhood rather than its communicable attributes. Some will object, but God predestined man to be what he is as we know him; could He not have predestined man to be man without evil and without suffering and death? God did indeed predestine man in terms of His sovereign counsel. In terms of His foreknowledge, God knew the potentialities and possibilities of man both to sin and to obey. There are possibilities inherent in a creature who bears the image of God but is in no sense a god, but entirely a creature. From all eternity, God's predestination and foreknowledge have been operative, and "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate" (Rom. 8:29). As Hodge observed, "Believers are called in accordance with a settled plan and purpose of God." Moreover, "The predestination follows, and is grounded in the foreknowledge."² All the possibilities inherent in creation are there

² Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Revised edition (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 445, 447.

because of God's purpose; reality is what God created it to be, and no other possible reality exists. There are no possibilities outside of God. The foreknowledge, therefore, had no reference to any possibilities within man which God supposedly recognized. Calvin stated this clearly:

But the foreknowledge of God, which Paul mentions, is not a bare prescience, as some unwise persons absurdly imagine, but the adoption by which he had always distinguished his children from the reprobate. In the same sense, Peter says that the faithful had been elected to the sanctification of the Spirit according to the foreknowledge of God. Hence those, to whom I have alluded, foolishly draw the inference, — That God has elected none but those whom he foresaw would be worthy of his grace. Peter does not indeed flatter the faithful, as though every one had been elected on account of his merit; but by reminding them of the eternal counsel of God, he wholly deprives them of all worthiness. So Paul does in this passage, who repeats by another word what he had said before of God's purpose. It hence follows, that this knowledge is connected with God's good pleasure; for he foreknew nothing out of himself, in adopting those whom he was pleased to adopt; but only marked out those whom he had purposed to elect.³

To see the implications of a contrary position, let us also examine Sanday's comment on Romans 8:29. Sanday said in part:

Predestinate. — This is the term which seems most to interfere with human free-will. Foreknowledge does not interfere with free-will, because the foreknowledge, though prior in point of time, is posterior in the order of causation to the act of choice. A man does not choose a certain action because it is foreknown, but it is foreknown because he will choose it. Predestination (the word is not adequately translated) appears to involve a more rigorous necessity. All we can say is that it must not be interpreted in any sense that excludes free-will. Free-will is a postulate on which all the superstructure of morals and religion must rest.⁴

³ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948), 317f.

⁴ W. Sanday, "Romans," in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VII (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 238.

Sanday at least made his choice with his eyes open: he knew the meaning of predestination, but he made not the triune God the postulate, but the supposedly sovereign free-will of man. If God and everything in “morals and religion” are “superstructures” to free-will, then man has become ultimate and is his own god. For Sanday, the world of possibility is man’s world, which is exactly what those who cry out against God’s world, with its possibility of sin, suffering, and grief, are asking for, a world made after man’s imagination. For the orthodox Christian, the only possibilities open to man are created and foreordained possibilities, nothing more. Man’s freedom is a secondary and creaturely freedom, never the freedom of ultimacy and sovereignty.

Ultimately, the world of possibilities rests entirely on God’s good pleasure. In terms of God-given presuppositions, we can interpret and understand the implications of things, and their coherency and direction, but in their origin they rest on God’s good pleasure entirely.

Here we come to an amazing irony. Those who resent God’s sovereignty and find His world of possibilities, with its evil and suffering, untenable in terms of their hopes, are to all practical intent claiming to be their own god. They want a world made in the image of man’s imagination. This means also insisting on man’s ultimate freedom to be his own god and to establish his own universe of possibilities in terms of his own will. From such a world these men would exclude sin, suffering, and death. The only possibilities must be good ones.

Man cannot, however, become a god merely because he insists on playing god. In no way can he ever become a god; he is and always will be a creature. His attempt to play god is sin (Gen. 3:5), and sin is slavery. Not surprisingly, the sinner’s idea of salvation looks very much like slavery, because it is slavery. In seeking to be his own god, he is not only denying the true God, but also falling into slavery to sin and death. This “spirit of bondage” of slavery (Rom. 8:15) is then manifested in all his life and thought. The sinner believes in slavery, although he may call it by other names.

One socialist from a communist state expressed his belief in slavery with rare candor to Tyrmand:

“I do not want freedom,” a visitor from Eastern Europe told me in Paris. “I’m afraid of it. I feel old and tired. Freedom means choice, the possibility of estimating and the necessity to select. It also means constant effort in judging and evaluating life’s ways, attitudes, and stands. It opens the perennial question: ‘Who am I and where go I?’ which can be answered in so many ways that it gives me a headache. In Communist Eastern Europe, I’m perfectly aware of who I am and what I can or cannot do, which is the perimeter of my functions and desires. My telephone is bugged, but I know it; it’s a blessed certitude, and I’m not exposed to improper temptations of intimacy. Freedom here is a nauseous multitude of shampoos among which I have to choose. I don’t want so many! I want one under government control, very difficult to find and obtain. My needs and wishes then make sense. This we call peace of mind.”⁵

This is an honest statement of a feeling which many share, but few voice. For all too many people, salvation is slavery in some form, to a state, to a controlling spouse, group, or overlord of some sort.

Paul was thus right. His opponents had as their gospel the overthrow of “our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus in order that they might completely enslave us.” On the one hand, they were denying the sovereignty of God in salvation, and, on the other, they were enslaving men to human ordinances as their salvation. The hostile intent of these men to Christ’s liberty for His people is expressed in the words, “came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 2:4). These men were offering justification by works of the law, and, as Paul makes clear, “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16). Their goal, however, was not God’s law, however wrongly applied, nor was it their man-made ideas of law. St. Paul tells us plainly that their purpose was “that they might bring us into bondage.” (Gal. 2:4). The instrument at the time was their misinterpretation of the law. *The purpose, more important than the instrument, was enslavement.* In

⁵. Leopold Tyrmand, *Notebooks of a Dilettante* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 120f.

other eras, other instruments have been used, and are being used, but the purpose remains: enslavement. Dostoyevsky's *Grand Inquisitor* is thus a telling insight into this purpose.

Man wants to play god and yet be a slave, to claim the dignity and power of absolute freedom and yet have all the advantages and irresponsibilities of slavery. The goal is slavery, and he achieves it readily and continuously, but with no happiness. The world of possibilities is not of his making, and none of God's possibilities match man's imagination in its call for all the benefits of paradise in the precincts of hell.

Outlaw Cultures

Just before entering the promised land, Moses “called all Israel, and said unto them,”

1. Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.
2. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.
3. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. (Deut. 5:1-3)

There are some very interesting implications in this last verse. Waller undermines them by his interpretation:

Not... with our fathers, but with us. — That is, according to the usage of the Hebrew language in drawing contrasts, not *only* with our fathers (who actually heard it), but *with us also*, who were in the loins of our fathers, and for whom the covenant was intended no less than for them; and, in fact, every man who was above forty-two at the time of this discourse might actually remember the day at Sinai.¹

Wright’s comment is an assumption of not only continual contemporaneousness for the covenant, but also ritual renewal:

It would appear more likely that the words here were derived from a liturgy used in a service of covenant renewal, or at least reflect liturgical practice in which the covenant was renewed with each generation, so that the latter identified itself with the original group at Horeb. All biblical worship has as its center this element of historical memory, participation, and identification.²

F. W. J. Schroeder, in Lange, made a statement free of the dubious aspects of such an analysis while emphasizing contem-

¹ C. H. Waller, “Deuteronomy,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 22.

² G. Ernest Wright, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. II (New York: Abingdon, 1953), 363.

poraneousness: “But Moses intends to say, not the fathers, whoever they may be, but we are the people, whom it concerns, whose faith and obedience comes into view (iv. 4).”³ Thomas Scott held to a similar emphasis:

The Sinai-covenant was different from that made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for that was personal, and related mainly to spiritual blessings; this was national, and especially stated the terms, on which the possession of the promised land, and other privileges, would be continued to Israel. But this language may also mean, that the covenant made at Horeb, was as obligatory on the generation whom Moses then addressed, as on those who were immediately present, when the law was delivered, and the covenant ratified. For they were a collective body, incorporated by charter, the obligations and advantages of which descended to the successors of those to whom it was first conceded.... Thus all, favored with revelation, are bound to submit to it, equally with those to whom it was first given.⁴

All of this is true enough, but it overlooks the plain statement of Moses that “The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day” (Deut. 5:3). It is *not* continuity which is stressed but discontinuity; the original covenant at Sinai was *not* with the generation then present at Sinai. Von Rad recognizes this discontinuity while still trying to bridge it:

In view of Deut. 2. 14ff. we are surprised by the remark that this covenant was made not with an earlier generation but with those who are now alive. Even though the death of the Sinai generation had occurred meanwhile and lay outside the speaker’s view, his intention is clear enough. He wants to bring the event of the covenant-making which already belongs to the past vividly before the eyes of his contemporaries (cf. a similar procedure in Deut. 29. 13f.).⁵

³. John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 88.

⁴. Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, with Explanatory Notes*, vol. I (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1830), 532f.

⁵. Gerhard Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 55.

This does violence to the text: the covenant was not made with the generation at Sinai, but with the generation standing before Moses. How are we to understand this? The generation at Sinai was physically present when the covenant was made; now only Moses, Joshua, and Caleb survived of that older generation. If the covenant was not made with the generation which perished, with whom was it made?

To understand this, let us review a few aspects of the covenant. *First*, a covenant is a treaty between two powers or kings. In this case, the covenant is an act of grace by the sovereign God for a people with whom He makes a treaty, binding both to certain responsibilities. Treaties or covenants in antiquity were normally between equals. The fact that God made a covenant with man was, and is, an act of grace, in that the transcendent and omnipotent creator and Lord of all things bound Himself by law to man. Adam by his sin broke the covenant; God by His grace renewed it with His chosen people, and finally was obedient unto death to the terms of the covenant in the person of Jesus Christ, His only begotten son, in whom both God and man fulfilled the law of the covenant. This latter fact must be stressed. Jesus Christ, very God of very God and very man of very man, represented both parties to the covenant, and He fulfilled the legal obligations of both. The covenant was thus put into force by Christ, and hence also His affirmation that He had come, not to destroy the law of the covenant, but to fulfil it, to put it into force (Matt. 5:17-19). *Second*, treaties or covenants are a form of law and are therefore subject to all the conditions of law. Obedience to the covenant, treaty, or law means normal and open relations, whereas a violation of and contempt for a covenant means not only a severing of communications, but also warfare. Disobedience to covenant law is a form of warfare against the other party in the covenant. All men are either covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers, in that God established the covenant originally with Adam, so that all men in fallen Adam are at war with the covenant God, even as all men who are in Christ are at peace and in communion with the covenant God. *Third*, a law-breaker who assumes the guise of an honest citizen, votes, and outwardly appears to be a pillar of righteousness

in the community, is an outlaw still. Outlaws rarely go about labelling themselves outlaws; rather, they seek escape by presenting the appearance of a law-abiding citizenry. The generation of Sinai, even while the law of the covenant was being given, was busy in idolatry of a fertility-cult nature (Ex. 32). They were clearly outlaws, at war with God. The covenant and its law was thus not a pact or treaty with them, but a declaration of war against them. For the sake of their elect children, they were brought out of Egypt and preserved in the wilderness. Because of their outlaw status, they were kept out of the Promised Land and all perished in the wilderness. A covenant is a peace pact and a mutual assistance treaty: no such peace existed between God and the reprobate generation. Such privileges as they had, and they were many, for Jacob's sake, were countered by a firm judgment and sentence of death against them as outlaws.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, it was because God ordered him to go down to a people who had "corrupted themselves" with a "molten calf." God's declaration of sentence against them was death, His purpose being "to consume them" and make out of Moses alone, and his posterity, "a great nation" (Ex. 32:7-10). Moses pleaded for the promised nation to come through these reprobates, and, as a result, instead of immediate total destruction, three thousand men were killed (Ex. 32:28), and the rest perished later in the wilderness. We can assume that, if all of the outlaw generation had been slain, their children would have been reckoned as of the tribe of Moses (or of Levi) as far as a central authority was concerned.

The subsequent history of the Sinai generation underscores their reprobate nature. They complained about God's provisions for them (Num. 11), about the difficulties of taking Canaan (Num. 14), were rebellious under Korah (Num. 16), used every difficulty as a reproach against God and Moses (Num. 20-21), quickly adopted the fertility cult sexual prostitution of Moab (Num. 25:1-6), and, in many other ways, manifested their outlaw nature. With these open offenses, God furthered the purge of the outlaws begun at Sinai.

Briefly, there is no covenant, nor covenant peace and communication, where there is no covenant faith and obedience.

This is the premise of covenant life, peace, and prosperity, as Moses made clear:

32. Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess. (Deut. 5:32-33)

At this point, Von Rad is right: "The breaking of the tables was, of course, more than an act of emotional disturbance. Moses (in his office as mediator of the covenant) regards as broken the covenant which has only just been made, so that the tables handed to him have become meaningless."⁶ Clearly, an antinomian Christian is an impossibility. Just as clearly, God is at war with every outlaw, and to deny this by telling sinners that "God loves you" is to join the outlaw in his lawlessness. God is ready to love the repentant outlaw, but, as long as he remains an outlaw, unredeemed by the atoning work of Christ, he is under the wrath of God and sentence of death. An incident on Sunday, June 25, 1972, in Pontiac, Michigan, makes clear how deeply outlaw religion has infected the church:

"God loves you," the preacher said to the youth who stood on the church alter pointing a gun at his head.

"I hope so," the bandit replied as he pocketed money from collection plates in a Sunday holdup at the Christ in Christian Union Church in downtown Pontiac.

The stickup left the Rev. James Ray Nesselroad and 40 parishioners \$400 poorer.

"We weren't scared," said 64-year-old parishioner Cecil B. Tupper. "We seemed to feel that there was someone looking after us other than ourselves."

Toward the end of his sermon, the Rev. Mr. Nesselroad said, a youth in his late teens and another in his early 20s barged through a side entrance.

⁶ Von Rad, *op. cit.*, 78.

One of them pulled a pistol and fired a shot into the ceiling.

“This is a holdup, everybody stay in your seats and everybody get out your money,” one said.

One gunman stood at the entrance guarding the congregation and the other, brandishing two pistols, walked up to the pulpit and asked where the collection plates were.

The youth found money in Sunday school offering plates, then “one of them laid an Army .45 by the side of my head,” the minister said, and took his wallet.

“Then he took up a collection,” he said. “People held out their money and he walked down the center aisle taking it.”

The gunman returned to the front of the church and climbed onto the altar.

The Rev. Mr. Nesselroad said he looked the gunman in the eye and told the youth, “You know, God loves you.”

“I hope so,” the bandit replied, stuffing money in his pockets.

The minister turned to his congregation, which stood up and prayed, “Dear God, help these poor boys to realize where a life of crime will lead them.”

One parishioner said the bandit on the altar “was really shaking, he could hardly stand up when we started praying.”

While the parishioners were praying, the minister said the robber who had held him at gunpoint “jumped down and told us not to follow him. Then he joined his partner and out the door they went.”

Police are investigating, but the Rev. Mr. Nesselroad and members of the congregation said they would rather not prosecute.

“Someone forgot to show them the way to God,” said the minister.⁷

It is very clear that we have here a radical antinomianism. We also have a denial of responsibility, in that Nesselroad felt plainly that, not the thieves, but “someone” who “forgot to show them the way

⁷. “Gunman Confronts Praising Minister,” *San Gabriel Valley (California) Tribune*, 26 June 1972, A3.

to God” was responsible. If man is God’s creature, then God has given to every man an inescapable sense of responsibility, so that every irresponsible man is a sinner before God. If man is man’s creature, then some other man, as his parent, teacher, governor, molder, or maker must implant responsibility in him. The Christian cannot affirm this: he recognizes that men can prod or stimulate responsibility in themselves and others, but they cannot create it, nor are they the essential key to it. The first and basic guilt in a thief is always the thief’s. A thief is an outlaw; as such, he is at war with God and man, and God is at war with him, even if the Rev. Mr. Nesselroad is not. A thief may be reconciled to Nesselroad and his idea of god, but he still remains at war with the living God. The present prevalent practice of many evangelists of assuring every reprobate that “God loves you” merely marks them also as outlaws.

Clearly, the covenant is a covenant of salvation. Apart from this fact, the covenant and its law is a death sentence against all covenant-breakers. The world outside the covenant is an outlaw world, a world at war with God and God’s people. Its every aspect manifests an outlaw character.

To illustrate, the family outside the covenant ceases to be a covenant institution. Thus, Ray E. Baber defines the family in these terms, as a social institution:

family. The basic social institution. One or more men living with one or more women in a socially-sanctioned and more or less enduring sex relationship, with socially-recognized rights and obligations, together with their offspring. The four general forms (or types), in their order of known frequency, are: monogamy, polygyny, polyandry, group marriage.⁸

Many simple-minded and heedless parents and pastors see nothing wrong in youth being taught this kind of definition. After all, they will argue, this statement does recognize that monogamy is the most common form of family life. The definition is radically false, because, *first* of all, it fails to cite the central fact that the family is a religious institution and has always been so. Only in the decay of a

⁸ Ray E. Baber, “family,” in Henry Pratt Fairchild, editor, *Dictionary of Sociology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 114.

culture, when the religion of humanism de-emphasizes the family and its religious nature, do we find anything but a religious meaning in family life. Indeed, all too commonly, the family has had an undue and false religious emphasis, as in ancestor worship. According to Zimmerman, the major subject of great world religions has been the family. Without the religious faith, there is a “breaking-up of familism.” Adultery, divorce, and homosexuality, said Zimmerman, are not the cause but symptoms of “a basic system of negative causation — the lack of faiths and beliefs in the social system strong enough to enable the social system to continue to function.”⁹ Religion and the family are distinct, but inseparable. As Engels saw, the destruction of religion means the destruction also of the family.

Second, the family is a basic, and often *the* basic, law institution. It is a law-order which most extensively and successfully rewards and punishes its members; it protects them and also judges them, and family law has been basic to every society known to man. To define the family without reference either to religion or to law is to define an outlaw institution such as humanism envisages.

Third, with reference to “sex relationships,” the *Dictionary of Sociology* again misrepresents the facts by finding their legitimacy in social sanctions. This is a humanistic emphasis on the ultimacy of man and society as against the ultimacy of God. The sanctions for sex have been sought in all past civilizations, except in their collapse, in a supernatural order. Even in the most debased fertility cults, sexual practices have not been grounded on a social sanction but on a belief that the nature of the universe required them. In Biblical religion, sexual regulations are entirely the work of God’s law, and the goal is not conformity to social sanctions but to the righteousness of God.

Fourth, the “rights and obligations” in marriage are not “socially recognized,” but religiously grounded, as is the place and duty of the “offspring.” Here again the *Dictionary of Sociology* is not defining a social reality, but a social goal, not the history of the family, but the future family as envisaged by humanistic sociology. Its goal

⁹ Carle C. Zimmerman, *Family and Civilization* (New York: Harper, 1947), 782.

thus is to establish an outlaw family, the family as an institution outside the law and governed by personal and social tastes and predilections. The outlaw family can choose its form or type: monogamy, polygyny, polyandry, or group marriage, or any other variation it may imagine. It becomes entirely a matter of taste.

The same is true of the state where it is not a covenant institution. Turning again to the *Dictionary of Sociology* for a good example of humanism, we are given this definition:

state. That agency, aspect, or institution of society authorized and equipped to use force, i.e., to exercise coercive control. This force may be exerted in the way of control of the members of the society or against other societies. The voice of the state is the law, and its agents are those who make and enforce the laws. These agents constitute the government. State and government should be carefully differentiated; the former includes traditions, political instruments, such as constitutions and charters, and the whole set of institutions and conventions that have to do with the application of force. The latter is a group of individuals entrusted with the responsibility and equipped with the authority to carry out the purposes of the state.¹⁰

First, it is again apparent that religion is left out of this definition, this despite the fact that the state has often been (and again is) the central religious institution in a society, with its officers, rulers, and its being invested often with divine powers or authority. *Second*, the state is essentially defined as force or coercive control, and we are in fact told that it is the agency of society so authorized and equipped. This is an absurd statement. That the state has coercive power is true, but churches and temples have often had coercive power as well. Even more, historically, the family has exercised more coercive power than the state in the lives of men. Consider alone the power of the family in ancient Rome, in India, China, and Japan until recently, and in many other societies. More people have experienced physical coercion at the hands of their parents than at the hands of the state, and a more continuous coercion is exercised by the family than by any other institution. *Third*, the *Dictionary* is

¹⁰ Fairchild, *op. cit.*, 307.

gracious enough to include law in its definition of the state, but a purely humanistic idea of law. What is in view is thus not a historical definition of the state, but an ideal definition in terms of a humanistic faith. The state is freed from any law but its own and is given sanction to pursue its course as an outlaw institution, at war with God and His covenant people.

The definition of church is only slightly better:

church. (1) An outward organization of an association, or associations, of believers in a common, dogmatically set, religious ideal. (2) A building in which Christ is worshipped and Christianity taught, notably Protestant, the Roman Catholic being called also Cathedral and Chapel. (3) An institution which, through symbolic acts and/or ethical prescriptions, purposes to keep its members constantly aware of the necessity of religion and its promise — in the Christian church specifically of redemption through grace and salvation; which also administers the religious life of the community and distributes means of healing and comfort.¹¹

This supposed definition requires more criticism than we can here give to it, but a few comments must be made, in passing. *First*, until now, the word “church” has been an exclusively Biblical term, so that the non-Christian applications of the term in definitions one and three are not legitimate. *Second*, since the term “church” is a Biblical term, the Biblical definition of the Church as the Body of Christ, the family of God, and the general assembly of the first-born of God should at least be noted. *Third*, the marks of a true church, i.e. a body of worshippers, have been defined for centuries as the faithful preaching of the word of God, the faithful administration of the sacraments, and the application of Biblical discipline. Without these things, we are not talking about the church in any historical or theological sense. Instead, a purely humanistic ideal of a denatured church is given us. Such a church is simply a part of the City of Man and an outlaw institution at war with the City of God.

¹¹. Joseph H. Bunzel, “church,” in *ibid.*, 40.

The school today is also humanistically-oriented and is anti-law, anti-god, and anti-family. It is an antinomian and outlaw institution and is in intent and function revolutionary.¹²

Vocation is defined by the *Dictionary of Sociology* as "The permanent activity which guarantees one a livelihood, and membership in his particular occupational group."¹³ The word "vocation" comes from the Latin *voco*, call. Its religious reference is thus clear. Man's work is a calling from God, and man is called by God to work to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion under God. When man sinned, i.e., when he became a covenant-breaker, he hid from the voice of God as it called man in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8): man had abandoned his calling. Man the covenant-breaker thinks of work only as a guarantee of a livelihood, not as a calling from God. Not surprisingly, fallen man gives an outlaw definition of vocation.

All of this should not surprise us, since fallen man's definition of himself is lawless. Turning again to the *Dictionary of Sociology*, we are told that man is "The human species as distinguished from sub-human organisms. Homo sapiens."¹⁴ Instead of defining man in terms of the image of God, man is defined in terms of his differences from "sub-human organisms." There is neither God nor God's absolute law in this definition of man. Man is simply a higher animal. Since there is no God above man, making and defining man, there is thus no law above and over "homo sapiens." He is an outlaw to God and beyond good and evil in his own sight. An outlaw man will create only outlaw institutions and social agencies in every realm of life.

Existentialism is an outlaw philosophy, in that it wants life without the conditions of life. It wants no influence from God or man to color existence, as though existence were man's world and territory. Even existence, however, is God-given and God-created, so that existence has inherent to it all of God's terms and law. Not

¹² See R. J. Rushdoony, *Intellectual Schizophrenia* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1966) and R. J. Rushdoony, *The Messianic Character Of American Education* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1972).

¹³ Ephraim Fischhoff, "vocation," in Fairchild, *op. cit.*, 334.

¹⁴ Fairchild, *ibid.*, 182.

surprisingly, existentialism finds itself readily overwhelmed by pessimism and frustration. The nearest thing to the outlaw estate that man can achieve is hell, wherein man has no communion with God and other men, and where he lives only out of his own frustration and self-contradiction.

In this world, the outlaw, while denying God, affirms God by mimicry. It has been aptly said that Satan is the ape of God, a ridiculous imitation who seeks to duplicate God's work in terms of the creature's autonomy. As a result, while a demonic impulse towards an outlaw world, a world in revolt against God, marks the covenant-breaker, at the same time there is an urge to imitate God's world and God's law in terms of man's autonomy. There is thus an aped law, a law which seeks both to destroy God's law and also to supplant it with an imitation of it.

A very brief examination of the Ten Commandments will indicate the truth of this. The *first* commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). This is an assertion of ultimate and absolute sovereignty; God alone is Lord. As maker of heaven and earth and all things therein, He alone is absolute commander of man's being. All other allegiances are secondary and are tenable only insofar as they serve Him. The word *sovereign* probably comes (through the French) from the Latin *super*, above; it is a religious word and its political usage was also religious. Sovereignty has long been claimed by the state, but it is legitimately an attribute only of God. The Puritans in America wisely reserved its use to God and avoided ascribing sovereignty to the state. It is, however, a theological necessity for an outlaw culture to ascribe sovereignty to some aspect of the created order, to man or the state. By denying God, the humanist or atheist does not thereby deny sovereignty; he merely transfers it to some aspect of his life and experience. Sovereignty is thus made a very powerful factor in man's apostate life and an oppressive force in his social existence, because that sovereignty is no longer in the supernatural order but crowding him in the natural order.

The *second* commandment forbids the worship of graven images, and their service (Ex. 20:4-6). The outlaw culture creates numerous idols wherein, as in all idolatry, man bows down to himself and

finds that he is enslaved to other men. Democracy is one such popular idol. In a declaration of World War II, issued by seventeen prominent thinkers (whose number included G. A. Borgese, Van Wyck Brooks, Hans Kohn, Thomas Mann, Lewis Mumford, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Gaetano Salvemini), it was declared:

Universal and total democracy is the principle of liberty and life which the dignity of man opposes to the principle of slavery and spiritual death represented by totalitarian autocracy. No other system can be proposed to the dignity of man, since democracy alone combines the fundamental characteristics of law, equality, and justice.¹⁵

The freedom and dignity of man were made more basic and essential to man than anything else. Man's relationship to Christ was apparently regarded as not fundamental to the life of man, but a matter of personal preference and taste. Democracy was defined, moreover, as "rational theocracy," the apotheosis of man:

Democracy, therefore, must be redefined: no longer the conflicting concourse of uncontrolled individual impulses, but a harmony subordinated to a plan; no longer a dispersive atomism, but a purposive organism. It is not a sequence of shibboleths, a pharisaic lip-service to the disembodied slogans of freedom and justice. It is the plenitude of heart — service to a highest religion embodying the essence of all higher religions. Democracy is nothing more and nothing less than humanism in theocracy and rational theocracy in universal humanism.¹⁶

The highest religion is thus the religion of man, humanism, whose political form is the "City of Man," or democracy. Clearly, this is idolatry!

The *third* commandment forbids taking the name of the Lord in vain (Ex. 20:7). Their dream, said the framers of *The City of Man, A Declaration on World Democracy*, is "God's Kingdom on earth." The supernatural and eschatological Kingdom of God is not meant by this, nor heaven, "For any religion or doctrine cloaking injustice

¹⁵ Herbert Agar, etc., *The City of Man, A Declaration on World Democracy* (New York: The Viking Press, 1941), 27.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

and misery on earth under the promise of some transcendent bliss to come deserves the scorn of Marx, who called them ‘the opium of the people.’” The signers of this *Declaration* affirmed a Joachimite third-age idea of the Kingdom, the age of the Spirit in which all religions are one, and their goal in humanity and democracy militant and triumphant.¹⁷

The goal again is the sabbath rest of the *fourth* commandment, an order ensuring world peace, freedom, and prosperity for man. This world sabbath of man has no reference to Christ, however. The work of man towards that sabbath is, moreover, redemptive work, work as man’s salvation, because, for the City of Man, man is his own savior.

The *fifth* commandment requires man to honor his father and mother (Ex. 20:12), but, for the City of Man, the true family is *The Family of Man*. (A sentimental book of photographs by Edward Steichen entitled *The Family of Man*, has long been in print and is an eloquent witness to this new faith. Instead of family portraits, humanistic man has a marked preference for pictures of his religious family, humanity.) War is waged against the God-created family in the name of the family of man. The promise of God’s law is long life; the promise held out to humanity if it unites in the family of man is world peace and a better and longer life.

The *sixth* commandment declares that “Thou shalt not kill” (Ex. 20:13), i.e., that man has no right to take life, except as God’s word allows or requires. This is totally denied by humanists. In their outlaw culture, man takes life, or allows it, entirely in terms of humanistic presuppositions. Thus, the unborn babe is murdered by abortion, and the murderer’s life is spared by a horror for capital punishment as required by God.

The *seventh* commandment declares that “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14). For the outlaws, adultery is a matter of private decision and of no social concern, let alone theological concern. In a world beyond good and evil, adultery is seen as simply a form of sexual practice normal to man.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 34ff., 49, 58.

The *eighth* commandment forbids theft (Ex. 20:15), but the outlaw culture makes theft against God and man a basic premise, in that it exalts the needs of man above law as its guiding premise. But theft from the state is forbidden!

False witness is forbidden by the *ninth* commandment (Ex. 20:16), but the outlaw culture bears false witness concerning all things because it rejects Christ who is the truth (John 14:6).

Similarly, the *tenth* commandment (Ex. 20:17), which forbids seizure of what is rightfully our neighbor's, is set aside by every outlaw culture because no law can have authority over the will of man. Man, having claimed that which belongs to God, will not hesitate to claim that which belongs to his neighbor.

Granted that, outside of hell, no outlaw culture has ever been entirely true to its presuppositions, nor has any attained full epistemological self-consciousness, still, the attempts to establish an outlaw culture have been and are notable in their intensity and menace.

The outlaw is very readily a fanatic, because he so easily identifies himself with the new humanistic and entirely immanent sovereignty. The humanistic intellectuals, according to Massey, are the new fanatics. Since there is for them no truth beyond man, the man of intellect is the best judge of and witness to truth. "The intellectuals do not feel that they are imposing their will on the country because they believe their aim is the Perfection of the country's institutions and traditions."¹⁸ Massey gives an interesting account of the origins of the heresy of the intellectuals:

Mankind, liberated from poverty by the advent of the age of technology, saw no limit to what man might achieve. But war, depression, and other social dislocations blunted this optimism so that men began to doubt that they alone, or in combination, could be masters of their own fates. So men sought a new way. They could not turn to religion, though this had been their solace when they were so poor that the next world was the only hope. They still hoped that science and technology meant a good life for them, even if they could not

¹⁸ William A. Massey, *The New Fanatics* (New York: National Putman Letters Committee, n.d.), 3. Reprinted from *Mankind Quarterly*, December 1963).

achieve this by themselves. Here appeared the ideologies, the religions of this world. Just as the usual religions offer certainty and comfort about the next world, the ideologies offer certainty and comfort about this one. Religions depend on training, man's fears of the next world, and on faith. In a similar way the ideologies depend on indoctrination, man's need for security in this world, and on faith. Faith is important. Even though ideologies are started by men they must not appear to be mere creations of man. They must appear to have a scientific, a divine, or an ethical origin that lifts them above the foibles of mankind. Only in this way can man have faith in them.¹⁹

Massey's account is not Christian, but it is correct in seeing the religious roots of our outlaw culture. He fails to see that "the new fanatics" exceed all others because of their certainty that science validates their course of action, and because there is for them no God nor law to judge them for their transgressions. But men do want a new religion, one which justifies their outlaw status. Ever since Satan seduced mankind into playing God (Gen. 3:5), men have created new religions to incorporate their play-acting and to justify it. Cavell has commented on this quest for a new religion in twentieth century culture:

This aspect of religion as celebration and play, the Divine Comedy, Christ as the Fool of God rather than the Tragic Hero, is the theme of many of the most interesting books in theology published not only in America but elsewhere in recent years. Robert Neale's *In Praise of Play* remarks on the fact that the root of "illusion" is "*ludere*," meaning "to play," which Neale defines as the full and easy use of all our capacities as human beings — "play" in something like the sense that we speak of *the play* of water in a fountain and of ourselves as *playing* musical instruments. (The slang expressions "groove" and "grooving" perfectly express this sense of grace, of a fitting into what one is doing.)²⁰

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁰ Marcia Cavell, "Visions of A New Religion," *Saturday Review*, 19 December 1970, 13.

Such a new religion is an expression of an outlaw mind, at war with God and His law. Of necessity, it will deny any responsibility to God. Increasingly, it now also denies guilt:

The students I have spoken with generally find the idea of guilt unacceptable in every way. They deny the possibility that they may feel it without being aware that they do; they are convinced that the guilt they do feel is nothing but the projection into their consciousness of a false moral system; and they think that in a healthy society we would be guilt-free....

The young, like the rest of us, don't like to feel guilty. They need to hope. They want to love and be loved. But granted that society often extracts too much in the way of instinctual repression, and that our guilt is often excessive and misplaced, still, the insight of religion in the West that our capacity for remorse is bound up with our capacity for love seems to me an important one. For guilt, it says, is the only way we have of recognizing, with feeling, that we have hurt, or have wished to hurt, someone we love. And love itself never was easy.²¹

Cavell gives us a humanistic rationale and justification for guilt; her students give an equally humanistic condemnation of guilt. Both ignore its theological significance. Man's word is the only word in their world of ideas.

Commenting on the remarks of the murderer, Charles Manson, Cavell observed:

Manson protests that since the law is not absolute, not divine, it results in the fiction that guilt can be assigned to one individual, rather than to society as a whole. Taking up the argument, *Rolling Stone* commented:

The court must proceed as if events took place isolated from the society in which they took place, and once that fiction has been established, it is easy to find villains in individuals.... Our legal system is guilty of just what Manson claims; it is a form of theater in which real victims are found for sacrifice.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 44. Cavell is a university professor of philosophy.

The revolutionary's conviction that only societies, not individuals, are culpable blends with the claim of man's religions that in a certain sense the individual is not real and that reality is one. The moral and religious insight that man is not God and that human things are always less than perfect is turned on its head to read: No one is to blame. What begins as a plea for the individual ends as a voiding of that concept altogether, for there are no agents — the plea continues — only victims.²²

The outlaw denies God to make himself god; he denies God's law to create his own anti-law concept of law; he denies that in this he is guilty because all men are guilty. The individual is absolved from guilt only to make all individuals collectively guilty for all offenses ever committed! The outlaw culture seeks to free man from God, but it only binds him oppressively to man.

God, whose patience is great with every outlaw culture, is also finally merciful: He destroys them, thereby ending their agony and their flight from life (Prov. 8:36).

²². *Ibid.*, 43.

XXIII

Works

One of the resounding declarations of St. Paul is his affirmation concerning salvation by the grace of God through faith:

8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9. Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

Hodge has this to say concerning “works”:

The apostle says *works*, without qualification or limitation. It is not, therefore, ceremonial, as distinguished from good works; or legal, as distinguished from evangelical or gracious works; but works of all kinds as distinguished from faith, which are excluded. Salvation is in no sense, and in no degree, of works; for to him that worketh the reward is a matter of debt. But salvation is of grace and therefore not of works lest any man should boast. That the guilty should stand before God with self-complacency, and refer his salvation in any measure to his own merit, is so abhorrent to all right feeling that Paul assumes it (Rom. 4:2) as an intuitive truth, that no man can boast before God. And to all who have any proper sense of the holiness of God and of the evil of sin, it is an intuition; and therefore a gratuitous salvation, a salvation which excludes with works all ground of boasting, is the only salvation suited to the relation of guilty men before God.¹

It is very important for us to understand what *works* mean in order for us to understand fully what St. Paul says. Curiously, Biblical dictionaries and encyclopedias are on the whole silent on the subject, or else confine themselves to *good works*. But, as Scott noted, this is a different thing entirely:

The term “good works,” is never used, in the New Testament, for ritual obedience, or moral virtue as practiced by unbelievers, or for any other works than “the fruits of the Spirit.” If any one doubt this, let him consult a good

¹ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 118f.

concordance. The only text, which seems an exception, is Rom. 13:3, and that means “works good before God,” primarily, though perhaps not exclusively.²

This, then, is the *first* point which must be noted: Scripture distinguishes between *works* and *good works* (or faith with works), between things done to justify man and things done because man is justified. *Works* seek to be the cause of salvation, whereas *good works* are clearly the effect of salvation. The attempt to gain justification by works is clearly what St. Paul speaks of in Romans 9:32, Galatians 3:10, and Ephesians 2:9. The first two of these references, as well as Galatians 2:16, and 3:2, 5 describe it as *works of the law*.

Thus, a *second* aspect of works appears: it can be *works of the law*, which are attempts to use the law for justification, rather than the means of sanctification, to make it the cause rather than the effect of salvation. This is emphatically condemned. No man can claim heaven by means of morality, nor by ritual. No rite, however beautiful and however faithful to Scripture outwardly, can save man. Similarly, no meticulous obedience to the moral law of God can redeem the fallen man. St. Paul is emphatic here:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Gal. 2:16)

However, very quickly, a *third* aspect must be noted, namely, that the fallen, unregenerate man does not normally obey God’s law, nor does he recognize God’s law as binding on him. As our Lord said of the Pharisees, who, of all sinners in history, professed most to obey God’s law,

6. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.
7. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

² Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, with Explanatory Notes*, vol. VI (New York: Armstrong, 1830), 306.

8. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
 9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matt. 15:6-9)

Even when professing to obey God's law, the Pharisees were rendering it "of none effect"; Moffatt renders it thus: "So you have repealed the law of God to suit your own tradition." Thus, while even a careful obedience to God's law will not effect salvation, normally the *works* of the unregenerate involve a repeal of the law of God, according to our Lord. To emphasize this fact, even without a repeal of God's law, the unregenerate man's works are unable to save him, but the fact is that a basic aspect of his works is the repeal of God's law. Works are thus anti-God and also antinomian. The Epistle of Jude gives us a vivid account of the depravity of the reprobate, both of those outside the fold and those who have "crept in unawares" (Jude 4) into the church. These all "walk after their own ungodly lusts" (Jude 18). Thus, while it can be said that by no means all unregenerate men commit adultery, and only a few murder people, this does not make them obedient to the law of God.

Thus, we must say, *fourth*, that while *works* can be so defined as to include a seeming conformity to the law of God, *the direction of works is to repeal the law of God and to replace it with another law, man's law*. The Pharisees whom our Lord charged with repealing the law of God had replaced it with their "tradition,... the commandments of men." From the Tower of Babel on, this has been the goal of the politics of reprobation. A new kind of law governs man's works, a humanistic law. Man's salvation is seen in terms of political, intellectual, educational, religious, scientific, and other works. These areas of man's activities are seen as areas of redemptive action, as means whereby man can remake his world and save himself from the scourges of war, poverty, crime, disease, and death. Virtually every area of modern life is an area of *works*, an area of redemption in action. Man proudly assumes that his actions constitute a vital step in the conquest of all human ills, and that, with time, man shall overcome all things, entirely on his own.

Budget cuts are fought by politicians, educators, churchmen, scientists, and others as a threat to man's salvation and welfare. If indeed their work is redemptive, budget cuts are a threat to the salvation of man.

Fifth, it must be noted that all such humanistic activities are described by Scripture as *dead works*:

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. (Heb. 6:1)

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:14)

The first verse speaks of the Christian duty of progress, the requirement of growth. The first principles of the doctrine of Christ need not be endlessly repeated, nor is there need for a continual repentance from dead works, or a continual stress on the necessity of beginning with faith. Instead, growth towards mature Christian responsibility is required. More specifically, we can understand what is meant by analyzing the meaning of *dead works*, all the activities of the unregenerate man which aim at redemption. Westcott's comment is good:

From the analogy of these usages (Matt. viii. 22; Luke ix. 60; xv. 24, 32, John v. 25; Eph. v. 14) it is possible to give a precise sense to the phrase "dead works." Dead works are not vaguely sins which lead to death, but works devoid of that element which makes them truly works. They have the form but not the vital power of works. There is but one spring of life, and all which does not flow from it is "dead." All acts of a man in himself, separated from God, are "dead works" (comp. John xv. 4ff.).³

³ B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952), 144.

Political, intellectual, educational, religious, scientific, and other activities in Christ are *good works* and are necessary. We are summoned, in Moffatt's rendering of Hebrews 6:1, to "pass on then to what is mature, leaving elementary Christian doctrine behind, instead of laying the foundation over again...." Instead of dead works, now abandoned, good works are required of us and are the mark of growth and maturity.

The whole point of salvation is the restoration of man to a covenantal relationship with God as God's faithful and obedient man, serving God and exercising dominion in His name. As Hebrews 9:14 makes clear, the blood of Christ purges our conscience from dead works and releases us into the service, by good works, of the living God. Westcott commented that

The action of the blood of Christ is not to work any outward change but to communicate a vital force. It removes the defilement and the defiling power of "dead works," works which are done apart from Him who is "the life." These stain the conscience and communicate that pollution of death which outwardly "the waters of separation" was designed to remove. The Levitical ritual contemplated a death external to the man himself: here the effects of a death within him are taken away.⁴

Calvin noted, of the words "to serve the living God," that "This, we must observe, is the end of our purgation; for we are not washed by Christ, that we may plunge ourselves again into new filth, but that our purity may serve to glorify God."⁵

Sixth, it is clear, from some aspects of Phariseism, that works are done by some men to commend themselves to God. There is a belief that man can put God into his debt and therefore earn salvation by merit. It is this idea which is most commonly associated with the idea of a works religion. As we have seen, however, the idea of works has implicit in it a revolt against God. It is a do-it-yourself religion, man made, and its logic soon reveals that a man-made god is also required. As a result, while this aspect

⁴ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁵ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, John Owen translation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1947), 205.

of works must be noted, it must not be over-stressed. All men seek justification, and all men apart from Christ do in varying degrees trust in their works; it must be noted that to seek justification does not necessarily mean seeking it from God. Man the sinner seeks self-justification. Moreover, such men trust in man's work and look to man's work for salvation in implicit or explicit preference to God's work.

This means, *seventh*, that for the covenant-breaker there is an inherent efficacy in his own works, in man's works. Because for humanism man is god, the word of man is the creative word, and the acts of man are creative acts.

Eighth, works cannot be defined without a goal. The goal of *humanistic works* is the City of Man. If the goal of *good works* is not the City or Kingdom of God, then there are no works, only pious bleatings. The impotence of Christendom has been due to its failure to define its Scriptural goal. It has faced an enemy, self-consciously dedicated to building the City of Man, with only a negative gospel, a mystical escapism, and a vague idea of the goal of salvation. St. James declared, "For as the body without the spirit ('the breath of life,' according to Moffatt) is dead, so faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). There is no evading this judgment.

XXIV

Truth

The relationship of truth to salvation is a necessary one. If there is an essential coherency in reality, then the truth is not separable from assurance, judgment, perfection, salvation, and God. In a world of chance, there is no coherency; in God's world there is full coherency. For many people, chance is ultimate, and therefore for all such men there is no necessary correlation between truth and salvation. Thus Nietzsche held that a lie could be as important to man's salvation as the truth. He held that "The question is...how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps species-rearing; and we are fundamentally inclined to maintain that the falsest opinions...are the most indispensable to us."¹

An earlier era, still under the influence of Christianity, had valued truth and had widely held to a secularized version of John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The truth was to these men the hard facts of the natural world; as man came to know the reality of the natural world, he would gain power by this knowledge and also freedom. The modern university is established on this premise. Many, like Harvard, once began with a standard and seal dedicated to truth, "Veritas," in a Biblical sense, the truth as Christ, and then moved to an anti-Christian definition of truth. The new meaning of truth was set forth by Oliver Wendell Holmes in a famous sonnet which gave his anti-Christian version of "Veritas." As Williams noted, "Oblivious of the millennial effort of the historic community of scholarship which had endeavored to vindicate Christian learning and strengthen reason despite the fall through intensified obedience to the God who had exiled disobedient Adam from Paradise, Holmes wrote with impish glee:"

¹ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 4.

1643 "Veritas" 1878

Truth: So the frontlet's older legend ran,
 On the brief record's opening page displayed;
 Not yet those clear-eyed scholars were afraid
 Lest the fair fruit that wrought the woe of man
 By far Euphrates — where our sire began
 His search for truth, and, seeking, was betrayed
 Might work new treason in their forest shade,
 Doubling the curse that brought life's shortened span.
 Nurse of the future, daughter of the past,
 That stem phylactery best becomes thee now:
 Lift to the morning star thy marble brow!
 Cast thy brave truth on every warning blast!
 Stretch thy white hand to that *forbidden bough*,
 And let thine earliest symbol be thy last!²

For Holmes, the "sin" of man as Scripture declared it was in reality the beginning of "his search for truth." Truth is of necessity to be found outside of God for Holmes, and the same is true of salvation. The implication is that the great lie is God, and man's deliverance is his emancipation from God into the course proposed by Satan to Eve (Gen. 3:5).

In his poem, "The Moral Bully," Holmes attacked orthodox Christianity with intense contempt, and, in "Wind-Clouds and Star-Drifts," he declared,

This is the new world's gospel: Be ye men!

 Your prophets are a hundred unto one
 Of them of old who cried, "Thus saith the Lord";
 They told of cities that should fall in heaps,
 But yours of mightier cities that shall rise
 Where yet the lonely fishers spread their nets,
 Where hides the fox and hoots the midnight owl!
 The tree of knowledge in your garden grows
 Not single, but at every humble door;
 Its branches lend you their immortal food,
 That fills you with the sense of what ye are

² George Huntston Williams, "Theology and the Integrity of the University," in George Huntston Williams, editor, *The Harvard Divinity School, Its Place in Harvard University and in American Culture* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1954), 241f.

Look on this world of yours with opened eyes!
 Ye are as gods! Nay, makers of your gods, —
 Each day ye break an image in your shrine
 And plant a fairer image where it stood.³

Holmes thus openly espoused Satanism as the new gospel of liberty. Holmes' writings became a part of the public school curriculum and his ideas became commonplace to the academic community. Intellectual prestige and respectability meant for the new scholarship anti-Christianity.

The universe of Holmes was, however, still God's universe. His world was made up of borrowed materials, the hard realities of creation by the Biblical God. Underneath all impressions and sensations, Holmes held that a hard core of reality existed, not illusion, but a material reality. In *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, he wrote:

It is not easy, at the best, for two persons talking together to make the most of each other's thoughts, there are so many of them....

When John and Thomas, for instance, are talking together, it is natural enough that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension....

I think, I said, I can make it plain to Benjamin Franklin here, that there are at least six personalities distinctly to be recognized as taking part in that dialogue between John and Thomas.

Three Johns.

1. The real John; known only to his Maker.
2. John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him.
3. Thomas's ideal John; never the real John nor John's John, but often very unlike either.

Three Thomases.

1. The real Thomas.
2. Thomas's ideal Thomas.
3. John's ideal Thomas.

³. Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, vol. II (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1890), 330f.

Only one of the three Johns is taxed; only one can be weighed on a platform-balance; but the other two are just as important in the conversation.⁴

For Holmes, a real John and a real Thomas could exist because he still assumed, without affirming, the real creation of the real God. For Oriental thought, that world, with its Johns and Thomases, is all illusion. In terms of the philosophy of Hume, no real world nor real persons can demonstrably be proven to exist: there are only sensations of these things. For a fellow New Englander, Mary Baker Eddy, only universal mind existed; death did not exist for her, because neither matter, pain, sickness, *nor persons* existed; all were for her illusions. Mrs. Eddy was more logical than Holmes; having denied the God of Scripture, she also denied His world. The “hard realities” of Holmes crumbled in the minds of his successors, and “the real John” disappeared as a hard fact, as did all reality. To those for whom God is dead, the world itself is soon dead, and man is dead. The death of man philosophy follows on the heels of the death of God faith. In the twentieth century, America has seen the spread of Zen Buddhism and the Krishna cult in its midst, both of which reduce the world to illusion. The only noteworthy aspect of their presence is that the effect of Christianity has been so pronounced in America that it took both cults a century or more after Holmes and Emerson to appear, and then both only to a limited degree and in a watered-down form.

The academic world has struggled to hold on to *truth* as a reality, as hard fact, while indulging in the luxury of an unbelief which denies the possibility of truth and fact. The claim of the university is that knowledge is power, and that the educated and educators are the rightful rulers of the world. The university’s “doctoral” gown, as at Harvard, is “actually the ‘magisterial’ gown.”⁵ It indicates authority to rule and to judge, and it has as its origin the authority which knowledge of God’s law-word gives to the Christian man. By denying Scripture its authority, the university has become, as

⁴. Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Reprinted from the *Atlantic Monthly*, as it appeared from November 1857, to October 1858 (New York: The Merston Company, n.d.), 52f.

⁵. George Huntston Williams, “The Three Recurrent Conflicts,” in Williams, *op. cit.*, 4.

Clark Kerr saw clearly, a multiversity; it has replaced a universe of truth and law with a multiverse of possibilities in a world of chance and brute factuality. The man wearing a doctoral gown no longer has a universe of hard reality in which he is master over a sector, but a realm of nothingness in which he is a master destroyer.

The world apart from God has seen a steady deterioration and destruction of the concept of truth. The Greek philosophers were intensely concerned with preserving truth, but truth without God. For them the universe was one of form and matter, form or ideas being the realm of universals and truths. God was no more than an impersonal and technical first cause in a system which still required a first cause. The fact that universals were separated from God clearly indicated that God was meaningless in their system of thought. Aristotle held that a first cause was necessary in order to assure knowledge, since infinite causes meant that knowledge was impossible. Not only was an infinite regress anathema to knowledge, but also, Aristotle held,

Again, if the kinds of causes were infinite in *number* it would still be impossible to acquire knowledge; for it is only when we have become acquainted with the causes that we assume that we know a thing; and we cannot, in a finite time, go completely through what is additively infinite.⁶

The function of the first cause was to ensure the possibility of knowledge by giving the universe a unity of meaning and causality. Aristotle would have rejected the idea of a multiverse pragmatically, because it would have undercut knowledge and truth. For Aristotle, the universal is that which can be predicated of the many, so that a common reality can be ascribed to them. Earlier Greek thought had seen ideas or forms as the universals; ideas were the nature, form, mode, class, or species of things. For Plato, the ideas were timeless; they were the organic essence of things and were dynamic and creative archetypes of existence. Since Kant, ideas have become all the more important to philosophy, but no longer as the essence of things in a real world outside of man, but as the creative

⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Books I-IX, Hugh Tredennick translator (London: William Heinemann, 1956), 93f.

universals of the autonomous mind of man whereby the world is “known” and “made” into an aspect of man’s existence. The implicit existentialism of Greek philosophy has come to fruition. The real world of truth and knowledge has disappeared from the outer world to become an aspect of the experience of the inner world of autonomous man.

In the process of this transition, various theories of truth have been propounded. *First*, as we have noted, there is the correspondence theory of truth. According to this theory, a statement of proposition is true if there is a fact to which it corresponds. Truth is thus descriptive of a hard reality; it is a report on what is. Such a theory assumes a number of things which it finds difficult and impossible to assume as it departs from the presupposition of the God of Scripture. What assurance is there that either our sense impressions are valid reports of reality, or that our minds are valid analysts of such reports? What assurance is there that there is any truth, law, or order in the world around us, a world of brute factuality? Are not these things projections of man’s mind onto a meaningless world? How can any knowledge be possible in a world of infinite facts without an exhaustive and infinite investigation, inventory, and classification thereof? As Van Til has observed,

If one does not make human knowledge wholly dependent upon the original self-knowledge and consequent revelation of God to man, then man will have to seek knowledge within himself as the final reference point. Then he will have to seek an exhaustive understanding of reality. And then he will have to hold that if he cannot attain to such an exhaustive understanding of reality he has no true knowledge at all of anything. Either man must then know everything or he knows nothing. This is the dilemma that confronts every form of non-Christian epistemology.⁷

Another fallacy of the correspondence theory of truth is that it is valid only where we already have a knowledge of the truth. To illustrate, the proposition that two plus two equals four is only valid

⁷. Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1954), 5f.

for someone who already knows what two plus two means, and also what four means; it is a useful tool for someone who already has the basic knowledge. The more knowledge we have of mathematics, the more validity and utility it has for us. To face a difficult problem in trigonometry without a considerable knowledge of trigonometry is an exercise in futility. In brief, knowledge opens to knowledge, and truth unfolds to those who know the truth. The correspondence theory of truth breaks down for those to whom all sides of the cognitive equation are a mystery and a question mark.

A *second* theory as to the nature of truth is the coherence theory. As Baylis has defined it,

According to the coherence theory (see H. H. Joachim: *The Nature of Truth*), truth is *systematic coherence*. This is more than logical consistency. A proposition is true insofar as it is a necessary constituent of a systematically coherent whole. According to some (e.g., Brand Blanshard, *The Nature of Truth*), this whole must be such that every element in it necessitates, indeed entails, every other element. Strictly, on this view, truth, in its fullness, is a characteristic of only the one systematic coherent whole, which is the absolute. It attaches to propositions as we know them and to wholes as we know them only to a degree. A proposition has a degree of truth proportionate to the completeness of the systematic coherence of the system of entities to which it belongs.⁸

We can readily agree that truth is systematic and coherent, but the problem begins when we define what it is coherent to. Is the coherence derived from the ostensibly autonomous mind of man, acting as its own god and establishing a system conforming to this principle, or is the coherence determined by the sovereign God through His enscriptured word? In either case, we have a very different kind of consistency to deal with; both are consistent to their starting point, and both are radically at odds with each other. To hold to a coherence theory of truth is not enough: we must define what it is that establishes the coherency. If it is the supposedly autonomous mind of man that establishes the absolute,

⁸ Charles A. Baylis, "Truth," in Dagobert D. Runes, editor, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 15th edition, revised (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 321f.

and then coheres all truth to it, we must say again that truth of the cognitive equation is presupposed, and then proven on the basis of the presupposition. An act of faith is confused with logical proof.

The *third* theory of truth is the pragmatic; truth is what works. As we have seen, Nietzsche held that a lie very often works best of all. In a pragmatic or instrumental concept of truth, the truth and meaning of a proposition is its total consequences. Such a theory abandons any idea of an objective truth, or any world of good and evil other than a relative one. The problem then confronting man, as with John Dewey, is that certain goals, such as the Great Society, are called good, but, until they are realized, we cannot validly call them good or true. The cognitive equation must come up with an answer; the only proof of the validity of that answer is its usefulness, not its validity in terms of any objective standard. Thus, murder can be the truth of a situation, i.e., the true answer to it, if the consequences are helpful, or it can be a false answer if its consequences are pragmatically unsound. We cannot prejudge the act of murder until we see its consequences. There is thus no propositional truth such as "Thou shalt not kill" for the pragmatist, only an instrumental, after-the-fact judgment.

But, for the Christian, truth is propositional because God exists; He is. Reality therefore is coherent, and the cognitive equation has validity. As Van Til noted,

the argument for Christianity must therefore be that of presupposition. With Augustine it must be maintained that God's revelation is the sun from which all other light derives. The best, the only, the absolutely certain proof of the truth of Christianity is that unless its truth be presupposed there is no proof of anything. Christianity is proved as being the very foundation of the idea of proof itself.⁹

Truth thus disappears in non-Christian systems of thought, and, with it, knowledge.

Turning to the Bible, we find that truth is propositional because language itself is propositional; it is a judgment; it has subject and predicate, and it is a statement or communication of certain things.

⁹. Van Til, *op. cit.*, 224.

Language ceases to be language if it is not propositional. The poetic and symbolic use of language is possible only because of the substructure of clear-cut propositional meaning. Thus non-propositional language is a contradiction in terms, because it permits no communication with another person, nor indeed any self-knowledge. Behind words are ideas, propositions, and all thinking is propositional. At all times, the Bible communicates to us the word of God. That this word is not stated in abstract, philosophical terms does not mean that its abstract and philosophical meaning is at all diminished.

Several words are translated as truth in the Bible. In the Old Testament, the principal word comes from a verb meaning *to support, to sustain*. "The noun *a pillar* (2 Kings 18:16) illustrates clearly the significance of the root. For the ethical idea connected with it we have analogies in... *made firm, fixed*, hence morally *directed aright; steadfast*; and... *stable, true*..."¹⁰

Whereas, then, in OT "truth" is mainly thought of as a quality inherent in God or in men, especially the quality of steadfastness or fidelity, it is used commonly in NT in a more detached and larger sense for the real, that which indeed is, and which it is the proper function of the mind of man to occupy itself with and to apprehend. At the same time, this "truth" does not appeal solely to the intellect. That it may be received, the moral dispositions of men must correspond with it; and its reception will further take effect upon character. In conforming himself to it in his life lies man's only security for well-being. The associations which the word had acquired through OT usage helped to secure for the conception those elements to which this deep moral and religious significance is due.¹¹

Without agreeing with Stanton's idea that truth in the New Testament is a "more detached" term, we can assent to his observation that it has a moral and religious significance. For philosophy in the Hellenic tradition, a dialectical presupposition with dualistic implications prevails. This means that body and mind

¹⁰ V. H. Stanton, "Truth," in James Hastings, editor, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. IV (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 816.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 819.

are commonly divided, and also morality and knowledge. Such a view is untenable for a Biblical faith and philosophy. Man's knowledge is not gained in aseptic isolation from his moral and religious character. Knowledge is not neutral; the world of factuality is a world of created facts, God-created facts which witness wholly to their maker. There are no neutral facts in the universe, only God-created facts.¹² The cognitive equation is not separable from the moral and religious equation.

But this is not all. For Scripture, truth is not an abstract universal. Jesus Christ declared, "I am the way, *the truth*, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The Trinity provides us not only with the first cause, but also with absolute persons, and the ultimate particulars and the ultimate universals. Truth is, in its ultimate sense, Jesus Christ; the triune God is the living and absolute truth, the ground and pillar of all creation, the maker out of nothing of all things. Because God is the creator of all things, the truth of all things is known insofar as God is known. Godless men know a limited degree of truth because they operate on borrowed premises. They deny God and His ultimate decree in favor of a world of meaningless and brute factuality, a world of chance; then, however, as they operate scientifically, they quietly assume the universe of law which they have denied. They use theistic premises secretly, while affirming antitheistic premises openly. Such a schizophrenic position ultimately breaks down into a denial of truth and knowledge, as one of their own number has testified.¹³

St. Paul wrote, in Colossians 2:8-10,

8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

10. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

¹² See R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1971), 192-196.

¹³ Gunther S. Stent, *The Coming of the Golden Age, A View of the End of Progress* (Garden City, New York: The Natural History Press, 1969).

It is not philosophy as such which is condemned, but, in Moffatt's rendering, "a theosophy which is specious make-believe, on the lines of human tradition, corresponding to the Elemental spirits of the world and not of Christ." All truth has its source in Him by whom all things were made, "and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

Because of the integral relationship between knowledge and faith, between character and truth, salvation not only opens the doors of knowledge, but also of truth. The famous sentence used by educators concerning truth is a misquotation because it does not cite the precondition of being made free by the truth. What Jesus said was this: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

The world of the twentieth century is in revolt against Christ, and its revolt is heavily governed by a pragmatic view of truth. In John Dewey, this pragmatic view of truth has become an educational philosophy which has permeated education. For pragmatism, truth is only apparent in the results of an act. Lie and murder first, and then the truth of the act will be apparent if it works, if it accomplishes the desired end. The evaluation of the truth of an act, or a social or personal experiment, follows the act or experiment. The moral and practical consequence of this is that *action precedes thought*. The action can only be truly evaluated when all the results are in. As a result, a generation reared in terms of Dewey's "progressive education" is prone to revolutionary action without any coherent thinking: the thought must follow the act in their faith. Truth is not an absolute in terms of which all thought and action must be weighed in advance, but a consequence in terms of how it works for man.

Truth thus is not only relative to the situation, but also to the person. A lie told by John may work (and be the truth) for John, but it is a disaster and therefore not the truth for Thomas. This relativism has been summed up in a popular phrase of the 1960s: "Do your own thing." When every man has his own truth, and his own universe, then we have a multiverse and polytheism. The non-Biblical world has always drifted into a practical polytheism

because of this relativism. Every man does that which is right in his own eyes, and, in terms of himself as god and judge, calls it truth.

Facts

A conservative booklet, far superior to many, carries this title: *The Facts That Will Save America* (1963). The title is an apt one in that it expresses a faith common to most people in the modern age. It is believed that the mind of man is good and untainted by sin, or at least neutral. All that man's mind needs in order to stand for the truth is a knowledge of the facts. In any crisis, therefore, the great need is for the facts to be made known.

In order to understand what is involved in this false and dangerous opinion, let us begin by defining a few words. A fact, according to Feibleman, is an "actual occurrence. An indubitable truth of actuality. A brute event. Sym. with actual event."¹ He defines knowledge thus:

Relations known. Apprehended truth. Opposite of opinion. Certain knowledge is more than opinion, less than truth. Theory of knowledge, or epistemology, is the systematic investigation and exposition of the principles of the possibility of knowledge. In epistemology: the relation between object and subject.²

It would appear that Feibleman reflects the opinion of the modern age that *facts* are *truth*, i.e., the brute facts of the natural world are truth in and of themselves, and knowledge is our apprehension of these facts. Lenny Bruce stated the matter on everyman's level: "The religious leaders are 'what *should* be!'... Let me tell you the truth. The truth is 'what is.' If 'what is' is, you have to sleep eight, ten hours a day, that is the truth. A lie will be: People need no sleep at all. Truth is 'what is.'"³ In terms of this, the Kinsey Reports have tried to give us the truth about sex, i.e., what is, what people are

¹ James K. Feibleman, "Fact," in Dagobert D. Runes, editor, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 15th edition revised (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 107.

² Feibleman, "Knowledge," in *ibid.*, 161.

³ Lenny Bruce, "How to talk dirty and influence people," *Playboy*, vol. II, no. 1, January 1964, 182.

actually doing; there is for them no truth beyond the natural world and its facts.

There is a paradoxical sense in which the Christian can agree with this position. Truth is indeed “what is,” but the Bible makes it clear that only one fact can be so identified, God. God declared to Moses that His name is “I AM THAT I AM” (Ex. 3:14), or, *He Who Is*. Only God is self-existent; this is not true of any other fact, person, or thing in the universe. I cannot legitimately say, “I am,” because I have not honestly described or identified myself thereby. To identify myself as “I am,” is to lie, because the reality of the matter is that I am a creature, born in time, called to serve God, destined to die, and required to meet my Maker as also my Judge. I cannot be identified in terms of myself as “I am.” I am a creature, a son, a husband, father, pastor, writer, and much else, all in terms of God’s sovereign purpose. What I am depends on God’s electing and creating power and grace.

To identify the facts of creation as “brute facts” is thus to deny God’s sovereignty over the creation of all things. It means that every fact is self-contained and in effect self-created, so that it is to be known as a thing in itself, not by reference to God. How deeply this perspective has saturated the modern world is apparent in the common complaint of young and old alike that they do not want to be seen or understood in terms of their calling as son or daughter, father or mother, husband or wife, student or workman, but only in terms of themselves, what they are in and of themselves. This is an existentialist viewpoint. It is an insistence that we are all brute facts and can only be known as brute facts. Salvation becomes deliverance from all binding ties into a position of brute factuality. “Know me only as I am,” means know me existentially, as a brute fact, totally unrelated to God or man. Not surprisingly, such a perspective is suicidal, because man can only be known in terms of God, and can only exist under God and in relationship to God’s creation. To sever these ties is to deny life. To be a brute fact is to be meaningless, because man is not God, and man cannot remake himself and reality in terms of his imagination. Facts are what God made them, and the meaning of all things, including the meaning of our lives, can only be known in

terms of God. A brute fact is a thing in itself, an unrelated fact, and when man seeks to be an unrelated fact, understandable only in terms of himself, he is seeking not only meaninglessness but also total isolation. An existential fact is entirely in and of itself, so that, for Sartre, other people are the problem; they are the devil, because he is, as the brute, existential fact, god, or at least a god in process of becoming god. The cry "Know me only as I am," is a demand for brute, existential status, but, at the very same time, it is a denial of it. God is self-contained; He needs nothing and no one. The cry to be understood in terms of ourselves is an anti-existential cry, even as it demands recognition as a brute fact, because it asks for a relationship and despairs for lack of it. But a fact which needs relationship to other facts and/or persons is not a brute fact but a created and interdependent fact. Existentialists are thus deeply schizophrenic. There can be no continuity, relationship, or meaning between fact and fact in a world of brute factuality, only accidental connections. By denying God and all continuity of relationships and meanings under God, they are denying reality and are in flight from it.

Not surprisingly, insanity has been a major factor in modern thought, among philosophers and among artists and writers. These madmen include Nietzsche, Friedrich Holderlin, Donizetti, Gerard de Nerval, Robert Schumann, Nikolaus Lenau, and many others. Madness became a popular subject in the modern era because it gained a philosophical significance. Charles Nodier, the teacher of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset, held that insanity represents an upward step in the evolution of consciousness:

Lunatics...occupy the highest degree of the scale that separates our planet from its satellite, and since they communicate to this degree with a world of thought that is unknown to us, it is only natural that we do not understand them, and it is absurd to conclude that their ideas lack sense and lucidity, since they belong to an order of sensations and comprehensions which are totally inaccessible to us, with our education and habits.⁴

⁴ Freccerio V. Grunfeld, "Shockingly Mad, Madder Than Ever, Quite Mad!", *Horizon*, vol. XIV, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 77.

R. D. Laing views madness as a bid for liberty, which it indeed is, liberty from God and man, freedom to be an unrelated and brute fact, yet one which the world depends on, rather than a fact interrelated to all other facts. Alan Harrington, in his study, *Psychopaths*, points out that psychopathic traits have assumed moral value. In Maddocks' report,

One notes an appetite for absolute freedom — to do what one wants when one wants to. One registers the preference for disconnected, spontaneous living. One senses the weakening of social contract — of responsibility to any community except the community one improvises from day to day.

Harrington seems half thrilled, half horrified at the prospect of a mental Big Bang. "It's not so easy, not even good enough," he writes, "to take an overly righteous stand against the psychopath." Perhaps, he suggests, history, frantically looking for its transition to the future, can find no other solution. His not very happy conclusion: "Perhaps a mad god is better than none."

For all his old-fashioned moderation in presenting his theme, for all his sneaking admiration for the psychopath (he is, at times, a sort of fellow traveler), Harrington is finally panicked by the subject that confronts him. The comparison springs to this mind for a horde of turned-on psychopaths: Genghis Khan's Mongols. Yet Harrington also knows how fatigued, how bored the reasonable have become with their reasonableness.

And so the world teeters between a scream and a yawn.⁵

Madness has an appeal, because it offers a pseudo-world wherein man becomes a supposedly existential fact. The lure of madness, and the readiness of the modern mind to fall into it, will only increase as long as the existential mentality prevails. The illusion of humanistic conservatives is that the world is controlled by high-level conspirators with highly sophisticated and rational plans. It must be asserted, as against this, that the various conspiracies reveal instead, whenever any aspect of them is uncovered, an

⁵ Melvin Maddocks, "The Changing Nature of Man," i *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, 27 July 1972, B-4.

existential madness. This same madness prevails in politics, among the people, in youth, and in every sector of society. Especially since Darwin, man has felt unrelated to God and has been sped into his world of brute factuality and existential madness. In all of this, man has had a vivid foretaste of hell.

Psychoanalytic, psychiatric, and psychological studies are increasingly existentialist in their approach. In a 1956 study, Ludwig Binswanger wrote that

the existential research orientation in psychiatry arose from dissatisfaction with the prevailing efforts to gain scientific understanding in psychiatry.... Psychology and psychotherapy as sciences are admittedly concerned with “man,” but not at all primarily with mentally ill man, but with *man as such*. The new understanding of man, which we owe to Heidegger’s analysis of existence, has its basis in the new conception that man is no longer understood in terms of some theory — be it a mechanistic, a biologic or a psychological one.⁶

The study of “*man as such*” means man as a brute fact and an unrelated fact, a thing in itself. It becomes apparent, once we recognize this governing presupposition, why parents, teachers, pastors, and the older generation are so readily blamed for the problems of individual man. Among other reasons, very clearly, an important one is that all these persons insist on a relationship to the individual, and this is a central aspect of their sin. If they want a relationship, they can only be wrong.

Existential philosophy, we are told, “determines the worth of knowledge not in relation to truth but according to its biological value contained in the pure data of consciousness when unaffected by emotions, volitions, and social prejudices.”⁷ An existentialist psychology must therefore regard all such influences as relationships which are harmful to the individual’s freedom and development. A major influence in the development of existentialist psychology was Kierkegaard, of whom May wrote:

⁶. Cited by Rollo May, “The Origins and Significance of the Existential Movement in Psychology,” in Rollo May, Ernest Angel, and Henri F. Ellenberger, editors, *Existence, A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1958), 3.

⁷. Sigmar von Fersen, “Existential Philosophy,” in Runes, *op. cit.*, 102.

The central psychological endeavor of Kierkegaard may be summed up under the heading of the question he pursued relentlessly — how can one become an individual?⁸

Precisely. Moreover, to “become an individual” meant for Kierkegaard to become a brute fact, an unrelated fact; Kierkegaard did succeed in becoming a psychopathic fact. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard wrote,

When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focused upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of the truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth, even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true.⁹

May saw the point clearly:

It would be hard to exaggerate how revolutionary these sentences were and still are for modern culture as a whole and for psychology in particular. Here is the radical, original statement of *relational truth*. Here is the fountainhead of the emphasis in existential thought on truth as *inwardness* or, as Heidegger puts it, truth as freedom.¹⁰

Truth as inwardness or truth as freedom means that truth is severed from its objective reference in favor of an inward reference. It explains, too, why revolutionary youth can disdain to study the facts because of its existential confidence that it is truth in action. In the existentialist world of Sigmund Freud, the problem of man is that his id, ego, and superego have all been conditioned by the past and by the world around him.

The goal of existentialist psychology is to free man from his past and from society into the freedom to become himself in terms of

⁸. Rollo May, *ibid.*, 24f.

⁹. Cited by May, *ibid.*, 25.

¹⁰. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

his own being. A first goal is thus “the ‘I-am’ experience,” to use May’s term. However, “the ‘I-am’ experience is not in itself the solution to a person’s problems; it is rather the precondition to their solution.” When May uses the term “I-am,” he does so self-consciously, knowing that he is citing Exodus 3:14; he is thus making man the new “I-am” and the new ultimate fact with the power to become or to be divine.¹¹ When man accepts his being, his existence, as the ultimate fact, he also recognizes then

that *being* is a category which cannot be reduced to introjection of social and ethical norms. It is, to use Nietzsche’s phrase, “beyond good and evil.” To the extent that my sense of existence is authentic, it is precisely *not* what others have told me I should be, but is the one Archimedes point I have to stand on from which to judge what parents and other authorities demand. Indeed, *compulsive and rigid moralism arises in given persons precisely as the result of a lack of a sense of being*. Rigid moralism is a compensatory mechanism by which the individual persuades himself to take over the external sanctions because he has no fundamental assurance that his own choices have any sanction of their own.¹²

The Biblical standards of good and evil require a relationship to God and man; they are indeed rigid, because they are unchanging. May and other existentialist psychologists regard adherence to God’s law as a denial of man’s being and cowardice on the part of a man. For May, the ultimate law is a real one, but it is an inner law, the requirement to be free of God and man and to make one’s freedom ultimate. Moreover,

My sense of being is not my capacity to see the outside world, to size it up, to assess reality; it is rather my capacity to see myself as a being in the world, *to know myself as the being who can do these things*. It is in this sense a precondition for what is called “ego development.” The ego is the *subject* in the subject-object relationship; the sense of being occurs on a level prior to this dichotomy.¹³

¹¹ May, “Contributions of Existential Psychology,” in *ibid.*, 43, 43n, 44.

¹² *Ibid.*, 45.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 46.

How can man, a creature born to die, make himself the end or purpose of his being? Strangely, the fact of death is used to make “the individual existence real, *absolute*, and concrete”:

The existential analysts... hold that the confronting of death gives the most positive reality to life itself. For “death as an irrelative potentiality singles man out and, as it were, individualizes him to make him understand the potentiality of being in others (as well as in himself), when he realizes the inescapable nature of his own death.” (Werner Brock) Death is, in other words, the one fact of my life which is not relative but absolute, and my awareness of this gives my existence and what I do each hour an absolute quality.¹⁴

Paul Tillich has said that “The self-affirmation of a being is the stronger the more non-being it can take into itself.”¹⁵

At this point, the existentialists begin to play games with themselves. Their world is circumscribed by “I-am,” but suddenly they increase the world to include the outside world, possibly other things in themselves. According to May,

we cannot describe world in purely objective terms, nor is world to be limited to our subjective, imaginative participation in the structure around us, although that too is part of being-in-the-world.

*World is the structure of meaningful relationships in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates.*¹⁶

Thus we have introduced here a possibly hard and real world which exists apart from man *and* which has a design man never made, in which he merely “participates.” God, after being denied in favor of pure existence, is sneaked in the back door under the names of “world” and “design.” With an amazing lack of epistemological self-consciousness, existentialists, after beginning with the bare “I-am” of Descartes’ philosophy, reintroduce by stealth the whole of God’s world while still denying God. May does not forsake his existentialism in reintroducing the world, “For to be aware of one’s

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

world means at the same time to be designing it.”¹⁷ The world is still there, but it is in process of being absorbed into the being of man, who becomes its shaper and designer.

The origin of all this is in the Socratic counsel, “Know thyself.” Man as the key to the universe means ultimately that the universe is reduced to man, because only that which man’s “I am” can comprehend is finally possible in that world. But man’s “I am” is absurd, and the conclusion of the matter is the disintegration of man and his philosophy.

The declaration of St. John in 1 John 2:20 is a radical denial of the existentialist premise: “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” The word *know* is in Greek *oida*, which “suggests fulness of knowledge.”¹⁸ For this reason, Moffatt rendered it, “Now, you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you possess all knowledge.” When men are redeemed by Christ’s atoning work, they have the illumination of the Holy Spirit to overcome the darkness of sin, and they know in principle the meaning of all things, i.e., that they are God’s handiwork and are to be understood in terms of Him. Calvin commented,

It hence follows that men are not rightly made wise by the acumen of their own minds, but by the illumination of the Spirit; and further, that we are not otherwise made partakers of the Spirit than through Christ, who is the true sanctuary and our only high priest.¹⁹

Since God is the maker of all things, nothing can be truly known apart from Him. The Fall of Man was not only a fall from righteousness into sin, but also a fall from knowledge into ignorance and blindness. From the knowledge that God is “I AM THAT I AM,” *He Who Is*, man fell into the illusion that he himself is god, able to order the world after his imagination and to determine what constitutes good and evil in terms of his own will (Gen. 3:5). Man made himself the “I am,” the ultimate and

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁸ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. II (New York: Revell, 1966), 298.

¹⁹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959), 194.

determining fact of the universe, and then he proposed to save all creation by means of this fact, man as ultimate, man as the supreme fact. The history of fallen man is the development of the implications of this presupposition, and their ruinous consequences.

God alone is the "I AM," the brute and existential reality of the universe, deriving His eternal being from no one, needing no one, and totally self-sufficient in all His ways. God requires us to know Him as He is, not merely in terms of our need of Him. This means that we must know the ontological as well as the economical aspects of the Trinity. It means also that Arminianism is blasphemous, because it treats God as a creaturely fact rather than the sole existential fact. The saying, "God has no hands but ours to use," reduces God to a creaturely fact, a fact dependent on and requiring other facts, men, to accomplish His purposes. Not surprisingly, Arminianism (and Thomism) lead to an existentialism which makes man the new god of creation and seeks to abolish the God of Scripture.

XXVI

Evil

Before analyzing the relationship of evil to salvation, it is necessary to begin with some definitions. The original, 1828 edition of Noah Webster's dictionary gives us a summary statement:

Evil is natural or moral. Natural evil is anything which produces pain, distress, loss or calamity, or which in any way disturbs the peace, impairs the happiness, or destroys the perfection of natural beings.

Moral evil is any deviation of a moral agent from the rules of conduct prescribed to him by God, or by legitimate human authority: or it is any violation of the plain principles of justice and rectitude.

There are also *evils civil*, which effect injuriously the peace or prosperity of a city or state; and *political evils*, which injure a nation, in its public capacity.

All wickedness, all crimes, all violations of law and right are *moral evils*. Diseases are *natural evils*, but they often proceed from *moral evils*.

2. Misfortune; mischief; injury.

There shall no *evil* befall thee. Ps. xci.

A prudent man foreseeeth the *evil*, and hideth himself.
Prov. xxii.

3. Depravity; corruption of heart, or disposition to commit wickedness: Malignity.

The heart of the sons of men is full of *evil*. Eccles. ix.

4. Malady; as the *king's evil* or scrophula.

A Christian must hold that all evil is a product of the Fall, of the breach between God and man whereby the purpose and function of creation has been affected and diseased. The English word *evil* comes from the Anglo-Saxon and Gothic; it may be related to the word *over*, and its basic idea is *transgressing*.

In the *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Feibleman defines evil thus:

Negation of the extrinsic elections of things. In practice, the positive effects of such negation. The morally bad. Hostility to the welfare of anything. Absence of the good. Opposite of goodness.¹

This definition simply covers a variety of philosophical possibilities, that evil can be seen as mere negation, a lack, or an active hostility; it cannot be all of these. This definition thus highlights the inability of modern man to define and recognize evil.

According to the mythology of modern man, primitive man, being ignorant, projected a perversity onto the natural order and personified it as evil spirits and the devil. According to the Unitarian John H. Dietrich, "Ignorance gave birth to fear, and fear wed to superstition gave birth to the Devil, or rather to devils, for at this early period it was not one devil or bad god, but a thousand; for everything that seemed to possess independent power was personified and believed to be a god. And if this power was destructive, then it was an evil god or Devil." Thus, the ideas of evil and the devil were products of ignorance and impotence. Salvation came to mean deliverance from evil, the Devil, and hell. "And so the Devil, as Mr. Ingersoll suggested, has been the mainspring of theology, and hell the cornerstone of the universe. Take these two things out of Christianity, and it becomes an entirely different religion."² This is true enough, but we will return to the matter later, and on different grounds than Dietrich does.

How then are we to explain the existence of evil? A word in regard to this is necessary to round out my discussion. Evil, of course, is simply those natural processes and social activities and individual behavior which are horrible, unpleasant, and undesirable to man. This does not mean that there is any such thing as evil in the universe, it only means that there are certain things which from the standpoint of man's welfare we call evil. So modern knowledge denies not only the existence of a Devil, but any necessity for him. It denies the real existence of

¹ James K. Feibleman, "Evil," in Dagobert D. Runes, editor, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 15th edition, revised (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 101f.

² John H. Dietrich, *The Humanist Pulpit, A Second Volume of Addresses* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: The First Unitarian Society, 1928), 68, 71f.

evil; that is, it denies that evil is a real entity, a substance, either in the world about us, or as sin in man. To put the whole thing in one word, what we call evil is nothing more nor less than maladjustment. And in the time left I can only suggest what I mean by that. I have treated this subject of evil before so I need not go into detail. At the outset of this explanation notice the meaning of life. Life means simply this: A human organism, man or woman, in the midst of, surrounded by, and related to the real facts of the universe. When he is rightly related or properly adjusted to these facts, then the man finds security, health, happiness. When wrongly related or maladjusted he finds calamity, sickness, disturbance. This one principle explains evil, both physical and moral.³

None of these ideas were original with Dietrich. His value is as a faithful echo chamber to the thought of his day, which stressed evil as maladjustment and salvation as adjustment. A generation was reared to believe that adjustment was the answer to man's ills and problems. Educators talked of the well-adjusted child as the goal of education, and psychologists worked to produce a well-adjusted personality. The result has been a group-directed person. More recently, the word, also used by Dietrich, "relate," is more popular. People are asked "to relate" to certain things or movements, or the times.

Dietrich saw evil receding as knowledge and adjustment increased:

... All physical evil is maladjustment between man and his conditions. Increasing knowledge is slowly disarming these evils. In other words, we enjoy security and happiness in proportion to our knowledge of natural law and our adjustment to it.

The same is true in regard to what we call moral evil. The unfolding history of humanity reveals nothing more plainly than that there are great and universal conditions on which alone man can attain social welfare and happiness, and these conditions can be understood and formulated into laws of justice and equity and fair-dealing, which we speak of as moral laws. Within these conditions or laws is what we call goodness

³. *Ibid.*, 77.

because it contributes to man's welfare. Breaking these laws we call evil because it results in man's injury and destruction. And so without going into detail, I lay down the principle that moral evil is only moral or social maladjustment — a man's getting out of right relationship with his fellowmen or with himself. Our knowledge of the best modes of behaviour for the good of mankind is as yet very meagre, but man's interest has recently been enlisted in this direction, and I believe that we shall rapidly gain light through the new sciences of psychology and sociology and all those social sciences which devote themselves to a study of human nature and human relationships. Knowledge then is the Devil-killer and the exterminator of evil.

The Devil then is not the author of evil. It is only human maladjustment to physical and social conditions in which man is compelled to live. The Devil is a dream of the night and darkness of the past. Let him be relegated to the museum of theological curiosities, mummies, and skeletons, that the coming ages will study to find out what men were thinking of long ago.⁴

Since for Dietrich "all physical evil is maladjustment between man and his conditions," and "increasing knowledge is slowly disarming these evils," it follows for him that "security and happiness" are enjoyed "in proportion to our knowledge of natural law and our adjustment to it." It would be difficult to support that contention. Since 1928, the increase in knowledge of natural conditions has greatly accelerated, but man's security and happiness have not. There is definitely no necessary correlation between knowledge of the natural world and security and happiness.

Moreover, Dietrich's definition of moral evil is totally humanistic. "Moral evil is only moral or social maladjustment — a man's getting out of right relationship with his fellowmen or with himself." Thus, since moral evil is social maladjustment, and physical evil is "maladjustment between man and his conditions," it follows that the good is adjustment. How do you adjust to an earthquake or tornado? You can prepare for it, or build in terms of protection against it, but none of it makes an earthquake or

⁴ *Ibid.*, 78f.

tornado good. Similarly, if all of a society, or most of it, is made up of immoral men, i.e., liars, adulterers, thieves, and murderers, is it good to adjust to it? In terms of Dietrich, adjustment or conformity is good.

Since Dietrich's day, men, after working for adjustment and conformity, have decided that society itself is maladjusted, and hence to adjust to it is evil. The result has been rebellion and an insistence on the moral value of non-adjustment to society and an adjustment, both moral and physical, to nature. One result has been the ecology movement. Nature has become the norm for adjustment. But how can we assume that nature is normative? What is the criterion for assuming that anything is normative? Since knowledge disarms and abolishes evil, how can we know, short of an exhaustive knowledge of the universe, how to judge anything as normative?

The humanist, by denying the reality of evil, has also denied the reality of the good. By denying hell, he has also denied heaven. If good and evil are simply relative to man's security, health, and happiness, then they are really beyond definition, because there is no reason to assume that anything conducive to man's health is of necessity conducive to his security and happiness also. A man may be happier eating a coconut cream pie than a lettuce salad, but this does not make it conducive to his health. A man may also find more security in saving his short supply of money instead of taking a vacation which may further his health and happiness, and to assume that spending the money makes for security because it makes for happiness is absurd.

To make good and evil relative to man is to make man the ultimate standard or norm in the universe. Since man is obviously neither the creator nor governor of all things, to make good and evil relative to a created and relative fact is to falsify good and evil. Without a true definition of good and evil, there can be no possibility of salvation. For some, life is itself evil, and therefore death is good; it is deliverance and salvation. For Dietrich, Biblical faith represents superstition and hence evil; man's salvation requires deliverance from it.

This is not all. A relative idea of good and evil means a relative idea of salvation, and, in a world in which all things are relative, nothing has any validity. For some romantic poets, the supreme good, and salvation from their distress, meant the love of some woman. Very commonly, soon thereafter, salvation meant escape from the love of the same woman. Their grandiloquent world of good and evil had all the dignity of a bedroom farce.

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* (Q. 24) defines sin thus: “Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.” Because of man’s fall, the world is also fallen, to prevent man in his sin from enjoying creation in its perfection. Thus, moral and physical evil are in origin personal; they come from man’s rebellion against God and man’s attempt to be his own god, determining good and evil for himself and in relation to his desires (Gen. 3:5). The penalty for sin, the moral evil, was death, the epitome of physical evil (Gen. 2:17). Man was led into sin by another creature, Satan.

Of Satan, Hughes observed,

Nothing could be more unscientific or unphilosophical than to doubt the existence of Satan, a personal spirit of evil. To talk about a “principle of evil” is to talk meaningless rubbish, and to use sounds absolutely devoid of sense. Principle of evil indeed! Who ever heard of such a thing? Who can really imagine such a thing? All moral good and all moral evil of which we have any conception is always, and must always be, personal.⁵

In contradiction to Hughes, we can say that there is a principle of evil precisely because a personal God exists against whom men are in rebellion, and the principle, or essential character, or essence, of evil is man’s desire to be his own god, and this was Satan’s desire also. In agreement with Hughes, we must deny that any platonic or Manichean principle of evil exists.

It must then be stressed that the role of Satan must not be overemphasized. A serious and Manichean error with regard to

⁵ Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, *Ethical Christianity, A Series of Sermons* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1892), 131. Hughes was a pastor in London, England.

Satan assumes that he is omnipresent and is everywhere tempting all men into sin. Satan, however, is not God: he is a creature. His presence is a purely local one. Just as I, if I am in California, cannot be in Virginia at the same time, nor know the mind of anyone in Virginia unless they choose to write or to telephone me, so Satan too has a purely local presence. Only God is omnipresent, and to ascribe omnipresence to Satan is to become a Satanist.

Similarly, Satan lacks omniscience. He cannot know what is in my mind, or the mind of any man, except by analogy. He can assume that, because I am a creature, and, although redeemed, still subject to some of the infirmities of the fall, I will share with him some common impulses and desires. With the unregenerate, he has full rapport by analogy. However, to know exactly what our unexpressed thoughts are is beyond him.

By recognizing the local nature of Satan and all devils or fallen angels, we thereby recognize their limited power and influence. We are compelled to recognize the centrality of our own moral decision. It is a part of our sin to say that Satan led us astray when we ourselves willingly plunged into it, enticed by our own sinful nature. Very wisely, John Donne, in his poem, "The Litany" (XVII), prayed that we might be delivered "From tempting Satan to tempt us." In "Holy Sonnets," XV, Donne stated the case to God:

Reason your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy:
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

To overrate Satan means also to underrate God. It means ascribing a major share of God's power and sovereignty to Satan and thereby surrendering a part of reality to the devil. Many who do this end up by limiting salvation to the soul and surrendering the world to the devil.

St. Paul, in Romans 6:20-23, declared in Arthur S. Way's version,

When you were thus thralls to sin, you were, in relation to righteousness, free men — it had no control over your life. I ask you, then — what harvest did you reap in those days from actions at the memory of which you now blush? None — for the goal to which those things led was death! But now, you have been emancipated from sin, you have become thralls to God: you are reaping a harvest of your own — its ingathering shall be holiness: the goal shall be life, eternal life. Ah, the pittance-wage that sin doled out to you was death; but the lavish bounty of God is life eternal, involved in your union with the Messiah, with Jesus our Lord — ours!⁶

Sin, moral evil, results in physical or natural evil, the culmination of which is death. Salvation leads to sanctification, to holiness, to moral good or righteousness, which instead is productive of “life, eternal life.” It has results here and now, and it culminates in a life without either sin or death.

When Oliver Wendell Holmes defined sin as comparable to disease, “an occurrence absolutely necessary, inevitable, and as one may say, normal under certain given conditions of constitution and circumstance,” he was confident that he had abolished both the medicine man and the clergyman. He held that “Sin, like disease, is a vital process.”⁷ In reality, he abolished progress from the liberal vocabulary. In time, it became apparent that a “normal” condition was not one which man could legitimately war against. Sin was thus domesticated and made man’s normal condition in the twentieth century.

⁶ Arthur S. Way *The Letters of St. Paul*, Seventh edition (London: Macmillan, 1935), 123f.

⁷ Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, vol. II (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1890), 433.

Progress and Providence

The Enlightenment, while expressing great faith in reason, was unable to see the triumph of reason as very likely. Because of its strongly classical orientation, it shared the pagan cyclical view of history. As Gay noted, the philosophers “pictured civilization as individuals, with a distinct life cycle ending in decay and death.”¹ In the nineteenth century, the idea of progress came into its own as a secular concept. Previously, it had been a Christian doctrine. With the merging of the evangelical and pietistic movements with the Enlightenment, to produce secular, nationalistic, and naturalistic views of progress, men began to see a predestined progress in history while rejecting both God and His predestination. Oliver Wendell Holmes again gives us a naive and confident expression of the new faith:

Did you ever read what Mr. Bancroft says about Calvin in his article on Jonathan Edwards, — and mighty well said it is too, in my judgment? Let me remind you of it, whether you have read it or not. “Setting himself up over against the privileged classes, he, *with a loftier pride than theirs*, revealed the power of a yet higher order of nobility, not of a registered ancestry of fifteen generations, but one absolutely spotless in its eschutcheon, preordained in the council chamber of eternity.” I think you’ll find I have got that sentence right, word for word, and there’s a great deal more in it than many good folks who call themselves after the reformer seem to be aware of. The Pope put his foot on the neck of kings, but Calvin and his cohort crushed the whole human race under their heels in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Now, you see, the point that people don’t understand is the absolute and utter *humility* of science, in opposition to this doctrinal self-sufficiency. I don’t doubt this may sound a little paradoxical at first, but I think you will find it is all right. You remember the courtier and the monarch. — Louis the Fourteenth, wasn’t it? — never mind,

¹ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. II (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 100.

give the poor fellows that live by setting you right a chance. "What o'clock is it?" says the king. "Just whatever o'clock Your Majesty pleases." says the Courtier.²

Holmes was a naïve believer in hard facts; the world around him was made up of hard facts which were a part of a grand law order governed by determined laws. Only fools disputed that reality. "But there are people, and plenty of them, today, who will dispute facts just as clear to those who have taken pains to learn what is known about them, as that of the tide's rising. They don't like to admit these facts, because they throw doubts upon some of their cherished opinions." The "facts" Holmes referred to were the theoretical constructs of evolutionary geology, which represented a faith, not an observed and tested body of data.³ Moreover, Holmes assumed a predestination without God, and the new elect people as scientists. With full assurance and arrogance, Holmes spoke of "the absolute and utter humility of science"; Holmes himself was a man of science! If what Holmes displayed was "absolute and utter humility," perhaps we can call the attempts of scientists more recently to control men, by brain implants and by denying freedom to all men save a group of scientists who will control mankind, a hint of developing pride! No kings or priests of old showed as much arrogance and aimed at so great a power over man as have modern scientists.

A non-Christian scholar, in surveying the modern world, has noted that,

Through the corruption of progress ideology, brought on by the very attempt to live up to it, the pursuit of truth is replaced by the quest for power. Power is the chief goal of all progress-oriented societies. The reason for this lies deep in the structure of human nature. To understand the phenomenon of power, then, presupposes an inquiry into the foundations of human nature. Social scientists *qua* scientists are ambivalent as to whether there is any such thing as human nature at all. In this book I assume there is.⁴

² Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, vol. II (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1890), 262f.

³ *Ibid.*, 263-264

⁴ Lionel Rubinoff, *The Pornography of Power* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), 2.

Rubinoff thus reflects a Biblical recognition that man's nature (in its fallen estate) aims at power (to be as God). The problem thus is that man corrupts what he aims at by his lust for power. As Rubinoff introduces his problem,

I am concerned with two central ideas: progress and power, both of which have had a deep and profound influence on the course of Western history. With the idea of progress came the idea of identifying value with pragmatic and hedonistic goals, goals which can be pursued only through the exercise of power. The hedonistic dimensions of the pursuit of power are what make this phenomenon such a potentially dangerous one. But it is dangerous for still another reason. Progress posits a belief in transcendental goals which both direct and supply the sense of history.

But the irony is that the ideology of progress surreptitiously conspires to introduce the very opposite belief, namely, the relativistic notion that truth is whatever happens to satisfy the needs of the moment. And wherever these needs conflict, power is again invoked as the sole arbiter.⁵

Rubinoff has seen the problem clearly, but at no time does he consider the Biblical answer. Instead, he seeks a pseudo-transcendence through evil imagination:

I am therefore concerned, in this book, with the self-destructive potential of power as it affects man's primordial tendency to evil; and with man's inherent capacity to transcend himself through the creative use of the imagination. The main thesis of this book is that the most effective antidote for the performance of evil is the imagination of evil, and that the most viable therapy for the pathological abuse of power is, accordingly, an imaginative critique of power.⁶

By becoming pathological, we will supposedly regain health and exorcise our "primordial tendency to evil." For Rubinoff, "man is himself the source of the evil against which he is constantly struggling."⁷ This evil is inherited from man's animal past. For the

⁵. *Ibid.*

⁶. *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 193.

way of transcendence, Rubinoff looks to Nietzsche, Jean Genet, and Norman Mailer:

What is lacking in our world is not violence, terror, and death but creativity and life. Thus, Mailer concludes, if one is to make one's way back to life and restore creativity to the world, the violence and irrationality from which we now flee must somehow be passed through, and digested, instead. In short, says Mailer, the way to transcend violence is to commit it; to get it out of your system once and for all. The decision is "to encourage the psychopath in oneself"....

But how does one commit violence? Not in *fact*; for to commit it in fact is to surrender to it. To enter it through the imagination, however, is to transcend it. The existential moment is therapeutic precisely because it is imaginative.⁸

This is the gnostic principle that man as divine can give body to aspects of his being and expel them from his own being. The poet William Blake was an advocate of this principle in milder form. Just as God created all things by His sovereign act, so man supposedly by his imagination creates all the possibilities of his inner world and then chooses to abolish some possibilities which he has now supposedly transcended.

The salvation of our age, then, lies in nothing less than the speed with which the imaginative *celebration* of evil can supersede the pornographic *enjoyment* of evil through the exercise of power.⁹

Did this work for Mailer, or did not the act follow his imagination where his wife was concerned? And did not the imagined evils of the nineteenth century lead to the enacted evils of the twentieth century?

But, to present Rubinoff as clearly as possible, let us see more fully the alternatives as he presents them:

Faced with such possibilities, to be expected whenever the nature of man is violated by an excessively rationalized humanism, realists like the Grand Inquisitor and B. F. Skinner

⁸ *Ibid.*, 199f.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 201.

have argued that the only solution to the paradox of the human condition is to bring mankind under a benevolent dictatorship which will satisfy his need for security and authority while preserving the illusion of freedom; while Freud, on the other hand, favors a more open society which controls aggression by sublimating it into productive and creative activities.

Looked at in this way, the institution of a scientifically ordered system of social control, whether of the Skinnerian or Freudian variety, or else the institution of a religion of authority, as favored by the Grand Inquisitor, does indeed seem far preferable to the risk of annihilation through the pornographic pursuit of evil. But in fact these are not our only options. It is almost certain that by pretending to be angels we shall surely become devils. At the same time, however, no real victory is achieved by so arranging conditions that men are no longer permitted to pursue evil. Denying to men both the right and the opportunity to be evil is as much a negation of their humanity as pretending they are thoroughly virtuous. The possibility of real virtue exists only for a man who has the freedom to choose evil. It is only for the man who has first "lived through" (imaginatively or otherwise) the choice of evil that the real meaning of virtue is disclosed for the first time. But the first stage in the dialectic of human redemption through the imaginative encounter with evil is learning to refuse all illusions: whether it be the illusion of man as an angel led astray by wicked forces from afar, or the illusion of man wholly driven by demonic forces from within. Man exists at the center of a contradiction which can be resolved only by "living through," in imagination and understanding, all of his intrinsic possibilities. It is only, to repeat, through the imaginative transcendence of evil that the future of mankind can be secured.¹⁰

Rubinoff sees a "rationalized humanism" as responsible for our plight. By its view of man as naturally good, it has given man room and freedom to be freely evil. As one of the critics of "rational humanism," he says, "for *God's sake let us stop pretending that we are angels or we shall surely become devils!*"¹¹ At times, Rubinoff seems to

^{10.} *Ibid.*, 137f.

^{11.} *Ibid.*, 109.

say, let us pretend to be devils, by giving full expression to our evil imagination, so that we can become angels, or at least good men. Virtue, he holds, is only possible if man is free to choose evil. We can agree that responsibility is basic to man's freedom, but his freedom is the freedom of a creature, not of a god, a secondary, not a primary, freedom. Rubinoff never sees God's law as the test of man's freedom; for him, man's freedom is primary, and it must therefore be totally uninhibited in its exploration of evil. His position is that it is necessary that we sin ("imaginatively or otherwise," so that even the act is admissible for Rubinoff) in order to have the freedom to be good by exorcising evil from our nature. We cast out the evil, but where? In commenting on Genet, Rubinoff writes:

Sartre makes the point that Genet's writings are therapeutic. By infecting us with his evil, Genet delivers himself from it. Each of his books is a cathartic act of possession, a psychodrama. With each work he masters increasingly the demon that possesses him. And so, says Sartre, his years of literature are equivalent to a psychoanalytic cure.¹²

But what are the consequences of Genet "infecting" his many readers? And where is there any evidence that Genet has delivered himself from his evil? Has he not rather indulged it freely, because his indulgence has gained respectability among existentialists? Is it not more accurate to say that Genet has remained evil and has infected others with his evil?

Where in all of this has Rubinoff found any transcendence? Do we get rid of hatred by indulging hatred, and do we transcend ourselves by indulging ourselves? If Rubinoff is right, the way to transcend love is to love!

Rubinoff wants progress, but what is progress? Clark, in analyzing the contemporary meaning of progress, sees it as "the denial of providence." It is closely linked to evolutionary ideas, is held to be natural and inevitable, to be a natural law, and to be

¹² *Ibid.*, 196.

beyond the ability of man to block.¹³ A common modern proverb has been, “You can’t stop progress.”

Beard held that, while “progress” is an idea and not a natural law, the rise of scientific technology insures progress, because “technology by its intrinsic nature transcends all social forms, the whole heritage of acquired institutions and habits... it cannot be monopolized by any nation, class, period, government, or people. In catholicity it surpasses all religions.” It is thus “significant for the idea of progress.”¹⁴ But even as Beard wrote, Stalin was busy in Russia using technology to create a new barbarism, and Hitler was soon to do the same; others later followed suit. Since Beard’s day, many secular scholars, as witness Gunther Stent’s *The Coming of the Golden Age: A View of the End of Progress* (1969), have surrendered all belief in progress, because man without God is also man without either meaning or hope.

Bury defined the non-Christian view of progress thus:

This idea means that civilisation has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction. But in order to judge that we are moving in a desirable direction we should have to know precisely what the destination is. To the minds of most people the desirable outcome of human development would be a condition of society in which all the inhabitants of the planet would enjoy a perfectly happy existence. But it is impossible to be sure that civilisation is moving in the right direction to realise this aim.¹⁵

It is also impossible, without a transcendental standard, to judge what happiness or progress is. The idea of progress is simply the doctrine of providence divorced from God.

The first three articles of the *Westminster Confession’s* Chapter V, “Of Providence,” give us a summary statement of the doctrine:

I. God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the

¹³ Gordon H. Clark, *Historiography, Secular and Religious* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1971), 117ff.

¹⁴ Charles A. Beard, “Introduction” to J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress, An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), xxiii.

¹⁵ Bury, *Ibid.*, 2.

greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

II. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge, and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure.

The *Shorter Catechism* states the matter even more succinctly:

Q. II. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

St. Paul, in Romans 8:28, gives a magnificent statement of the doctrine of providence: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." There is meaning, progress, and salvation only because *God is*, and because His providence absolutely and totally encompasses and governs all things.

In a universe ruled by God, the future is assured. Every fact is a God-created fact and moves to a God-ordained purpose. Nothing is futile, nor by chance. In a universe ruled by chance, victory is only an accident, and meaning an illusion. Matthew Arnold expressed this aspect of the loss of faith in his writings, as witness these lines:

And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,

We know not, and no search will make us to know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour.¹⁶

Arnold's point was, not that the future is unknown to us, but that it is governed by a blind and meaningless *fate*. Life for him, as he wrote in "Dover Beach,"

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain.

In "The Scholar-Gypsy," Arnold saw what the loss of faith was doing to scholars like himself. Their faith being gone, their "intellectual throne" was unproductive, save of frustration and misery:

... and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt; nor clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day —

We, these faithless scholars, Arnold recognized, learn only disillusionment. Wisdom comes to be disillusionment, hopelessness, and despair.

What Arnold saw very early, Gunther Stent documented a century later. Progress as a faith failed because it was divorced from God's providence. The great secular dream of natural and inevitable salvation gave way to cynicism and the return of the old pagan belief in a cyclical view of history, of a meaningless and endless return to nothingness and death. With the decline and collapse of the idea of progress, reason also went into eclipse. An irrational universe and a meaningless life cannot long sustain a belief in the validity of reason. Moreover, as men lost faith in reason because of their growing belief in the ultimacy of chance and meaninglessness, their belief in occultism arose. Men do not

¹⁶ Matthew Arnold, *Sohrab and Rustum, With Other Poems* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), 14.

readily live with a lack of meaning: they find it easier to believe that the universe is essentially demonic than that it is barren of meaning. If they deny God, they will soon affirm the devil.

XXVIII

Providence and the End

The providence of God gives direction to history and makes progress possible because it defines the goals of history and gives it meaning. People do not normally associate the doctrine of salvation with the rescue of meaning and definition, but the fact remains that, without the defined goal of salvation, and historical and personal advance to the regeneration of all things as declared by God, history soon loses its focus and meaning. History becomes, then, to cite the offhand remark of a philosopher, “just one damned fact after another.”

The refreshing cynic, Charles Fort, demonstrated the inability of science to define or to prove in a series of studies on the dogmatism of science.

What is a straight line? A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Well, then, what is a shortest distance between two points? That is a straight line. According to the test of ages, the definition that a straight line is a straight line cannot be improved upon. I start with a logic as exacting as Euclid's....

I shall be scientific about it. Said Sir Isaac Newton — or virtually said he — “If there is no change in the direction of a moving body, the direction of a moving body is not changed.” “But,” continued he, “if something be changed, it is changed as much as it is changed.” So red worms fell from the sky, in Sweden, because from the sky, in Sweden, red worms fell. How do geologists determine the age of rocks? By the fossils in them. And how do they determine the age of the fossils? By the rocks they're in. Having started with the logic of Euclid, I go on with the wisdom of a Newton.¹

The thing to do was to accept it in its day, but Darwinism of course was never proved:

¹. Charles Fort, *Lol*, in *The Books of Charles Fort* (New York: Henry Holt, 1941), 544, 547f.

The fittest survive.

What is meant by the fittest?

Not the strongest; not the cleverest —

Weakness and stupidity everywhere survive.

There is no way of determining fitness except in that a thing does survive.

“Fitness,” then, is only another name for “survival.”

Darwinism:

That survivors survive.²

The function of God is the focus. An intense mental state is impossible unless there be something, or the illusion of something, to center upon.³

Fort’s last statement barely opens the door to the fundamental issue. Life and thought alike need a focus, a focus of meaning. Men can briefly find a focus in humanistic goals, in wealth, power, status, sex, and experiences, but these soon pall if life itself has no meaning. In the barest sense, history is movement in time, but if neither life nor movement have any meaning to man, then there is no focus for history nor any cause for movement and progress towards a goal. Guardini is right: “The end determines all that precedes it.”⁴ Where there is a faith in God’s providence directing all history towards the triumph of the covenant people in exercising dominion over all the earth, towards the regeneration of men and the inclusion of all nations into God’s covenant, and towards heaven, the resurrection of the body, and the new creation, there men will move and progress eagerly towards reconstructing all things in Christ and awaiting God’s glorious fulfilment. Both history and thought find their meaning and focus in God. It is the end which determines all that precedes it.

Without a valid end, thinking turns on itself and can define nothing. Knowledge proceeds from knowledge, not from ignorance. The child learns because a body of knowledge exists, and it exists because the world is God’s handiwork and is

² Fort, *The Book of the Damned*, in *ibid.*, 24.

³ Fort, *Wild Talents*, in *ibid.*, 1001. For a study of Fort, see Damon Knight, *Charles Fort, Prophet of the Unexplained* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970).

⁴ Romano Guardini, *The Last Things* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), 12.

undergirded by His purpose, its meaning declared by His word, and His goals predestined and declared as immutable. Without the presupposition that the universe is an established and God-given order, man cannot relate fact to fact nor fact to meaning.

A straight line as the shortest distance between two points is an assertion which presupposes a universe of law and meaning reliably known by man in the framework of trustworthy mental processes and meanings. In a world of chance, the statement is meaningless. We have no problem with the statement that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points because we come to it with a vast body of presuppositions concerning reality. Moreover, we assume that, if someone should demonstrate that the statement is not necessarily true, it will only be in terms of another and profounder insight into the nature of reality. We presuppose a universe of law and meaning in terms of which definition is possible. To define is to determine precisely, to bring out the limits or outlines of something. There can be no definition unless God is either recognized, or covertly presupposed while outwardly denied. Van Til has said,

Suppose we think of a man made of water in an infinitely extended and bottomless ocean of water. Desiring to get out of water, he makes a ladder of water. He sets this ladder upon the water and against the water and then attempts to climb out of the water. So hopeless and senseless a picture must be drawn of the natural man's methodology based as it is upon the assumption that time or chance is ultimate. On his assumption his own rationality is a products of chance. On his assumption even the laws of logic which he employs are product of chance. The rationality and purpose that he may be searching for are still bound to be products of chance.... Christian theism, which was first rejected because of its supposed authoritarian character, is the only position which gives human reason a field for successful operation and a method of true progress in knowledge.⁵

Let us return now to Fort's comments about the definition of a straight line. What Fort was pointing out was that scientists indulge

⁵. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 119.

in circular reasoning. Van Til, in affirming circular reasoning, has this to say:

It thus appears that we must take the Bible, its conception of sin, its conception of Christ, and its conception of God and all that is involved in these concepts together, or take none of them. So also it makes very little difference whether we begin with the notion of an absolute God or with the notion of an absolute Bible. The one is derived from the other. They are together involved in the Christian view of life. Hence we defend all or we defend none. Only one absolute is possible, and only one absolute can speak to us. Hence it must speak to us at different places. The Bible must be true because it alone speaks of an absolute God. And equally true is it that we believe in an absolute God because the Bible tells us of one.

And this brings up the point of circular reasoning. The charge is constantly made that if matters stand thus with Christianity, it has written its own death warrant as far as intelligent men are concerned. Who wishes to make such a simple blunder in elementary logic, as to say that we believe something to be true because it is in the Bible? Our answer to this is briefly that we prefer to reason in a circle to not reasoning at all. We hold it to be true that circular reasoning is the only reasoning that is possible to finite man. The method of implication as outlined above is circular reasoning. Or we may call it spiral reasoning. We must go round and round a thing to see more of its dimensions and to know more about it, in general, unless we are larger than that which we are investigating. Unless we are larger than God we cannot reason about him any other way, than by transcendental or circular argument. The refusal to admit the necessity of circular reasoning is itself an evident token of opposition to Christianity. Reasoning in a vicious circle is the only alternative to reasoning in a circle as discussed above.⁶

Men either reason from God to God-given and God-interpreted facts, or they reason from man to man-made interpretations of brute factuality. All reason is circular reasoning. Man, as he claims autonomy from God, assumes that he can gain an infinite, an

⁶. Cornelius Van Til, *In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969), 12.

exhaustive view of things, that he can, in brief, reason like God rather than as man. He then reasons in a vicious circle. He must then say, if he is honest, that he cannot define straight, or line, or distance, or anything else; every item in his vicious circle hangs in mid-air on nothingness and is hence meaningless. His statement conveys meaning only because both he and his hearers presuppose the God of scripture and His law-order, whether they admit this fact or not. Reasoning is by presuppositions, whether men admit them or not. Autonomous man is anxious to gain an objective and God-like ability to see the totality of things exhaustively, and thus he denies the borrowed theistic presuppositions of his thought, whereas his professed presupposition of autonomy destroys the possibility of knowledge unless exhaustive knowledge is possible.

If reality is what autonomous man claims it is, he can know nothing, unless he knows everything. If reality is simply a product of chance, then it has no meaning or direction, nor does it have something about it that can be understood. It is then subject to no law, nor amenable to any control or use, because it lacks the character of consistency.

However, if all reality, all the facts of nature and of history, are the product of God's total and predestinating plan, then all reality is already known by God, who ordains it, controls it, and predestines it, and it is potentially knowable to man truly and accurately, though not exhaustively. Reality is then knowable because it is not chance but pattern; it is governed by a purpose and person, and it is knowable to minds made in God's image. We then reason by presupposition to valid knowledge. As Van Til has pointed out,

To admit one's own presuppositions and to point out the presuppositions of others, is therefore to maintain that all reasoning is, in the nature of the case, circular reasoning. The starting-point, the method, and the conclusion are always involved in one another.⁷

Since "the starting-point, the method, and the conclusion are always involved in one another," to avoid circular reasoning from

⁷ Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, 118.

God, to God-given facts, and thence to conclusions, is to avoid reasoning at all, unless one covertly borrows the premise of God's order while denying it. To begin with nothing and go to nothing adds up to nothing. Not surprisingly, the conclusion of autonomous philosophies is a despair of the possibility of knowledge. As Van Til has said, "the world, to exist at all, must exist as a theistic world." Moreover,

The only alternative to "circular reasoning" as engaged in by Christians, no matter on what point they speak, is that of reasoning on the basis of isolated facts and isolated minds, with the result that there is no possibility of reasoning at all. Unless as sinners we have an absolutely inspired Bible, we have no absolute God interpreting reality for us, and unless we have an absolute God interpreting reality for us, there is no true interpretation at all.

This is not to deny that there is a true interpretation up to a point by those who do not self-consciously build upon the self-conscious God of Scripture as their ultimate reference point. Non-believers often speak the truth in spite of themselves. We are concerned to indicate that the absolute distinction between true and false must be maintained when a self-consciously adopted nontheistic and a self-consciously adopted theistic point of view confront one another.⁸

Guardini was thus right: "The end determines all that precedes it," in reason as well as in life. The doctrine of progress fades when it is separated from the providence of God.

Earlier, the first three sections of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter V, "Of Providence," were cited. The remainder of that chapter is relevant to our present purpose:

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so,

⁸ Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1952), 152f.

as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan: whereby it comes to pass they that harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

VII. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

As Clark has pointed out, the doctrines of predestination and providence both show God's controlling power over all things. Predestination declares the foreordination of all things by God, and it is specific and particular. Providence declares the care exercised by God over all the universe and the ordering of all things in terms of His glorious purpose. Neither doctrine can be confused with fatalism, which denies "that the universe has a purpose. Natural processes seem not to be directed to any foreseen end."⁹ Fatalism sees a mindless, purposeless regularity to things. In the popular view of fatalism, man can do nothing to avert the things

⁹. Gordon H. Clark, *What Presbyterians Believe, An Exposition of the Westminster Confession* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1956), 23.

which shall come to pass. As against this, providence and predestination teach the responsibility of man and the necessity for action by man.

Providence is a doctrine which assures us that those who believe in God through grace, and who obey God's law, have the assurance and certainty of His glorious victory. The end established by God also determines all that precedes it, in their lives and in all things around them. In terms of that end, victory in time and eternity, a new creation, and the resurrection of the body, the believer moves providentially. He is future-oriented; he knows what his destiny is, and he cannot live only in terms of the hour.

If this faith is denied, man reacts logically to death as the end. St. Paul cited the attitude common in his day: "what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32). The end logically determines all that precedes it, and, despite efforts of men to forestall the logic of the end by positing a different way thereto, the end soon casts its shadow of meaninglessness over all their lives.

The poet James Thomson (1834-1882) came to believe that

The world rolls round forever like a mill;
It grinds out death and life and good and ill;
It has no purpose, heart or mind or will.

Believing this, he consistently and logically refused to believe that life could add up to any meaning. Instead, he faced it with the conviction and

The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain;
That all is vanity and nothingness.¹⁰

Not all who shared Thomson's belief in an ultimate nothingness were as logical as he, but, sooner or later, an epistemological

¹⁰. Cited in T. M. Parrott and W. Thorp, editors, *Poetry of the Transition, 1850-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 186f.

self-consciousness set in, an awareness of what their faith implied. If “there is no light beyond the curtain,” then indeed “all is vanity and nothingness.” The history of civilizations and cultures amply demonstrates that indeed “the end determines all that precedes it.” The Biblical doctrine of salvation thus is not only an assurance of future bliss, but also of present strength, hope, and victory.

Let us eat and drink, said the cynics of the Roman Empire, *for tomorrow we die*. Earlier, the proverb had been, *let us eat, drink, and merry, for tomorrow we die*, but now even merriment was disappearing from life. The economics of this proverb was an economy geared to quick consumption without concern for the future, and this meant the erosion of tomorrow.

A similar attitude prevails in the twentieth century. In 1909, C. W. Eliot, for many years president of Harvard, said in a commemoration address: “The Religion of the Future should concern itself with the needs of the present, with public baths, play grounds, wider and cleaner streets and better buildings.”¹¹ Living for the moment means surrendering any hope for the future. It means an economy, in Roepke’s words, in which it is “a virtue to contract debts and...foolishness to save.” Moreover, “It is no accident that Keynes — and nobody is more responsible for this tendency among economists than he — has reaped fame and admiration for his equally banal and cynical observation that ‘in the long run, we are all dead.’”¹² This is a philosophy of suicide: its desired and expected end is death.

¹¹ Cited by Wilhelm Roepke, *A Humane Economy, The Social Framework of the Free Market* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960), 109.

¹² *Ibid.*, 99f., 100.

Fate

The alternative to Biblical theism is, logically, a belief in chance as ultimate. Either the sovereign and absolute God of Scripture created, ordained, and governs all things, or chance prevails. These are the logical alternatives, but until full epistemological self-consciousness comes, few men are logical. Men may profess to believe in chance, but, in some form or another, fate, necessitarianism, or determinism is introduced to avoid either the consequences of chance or the necessity of avowing God.

Dorner observed:

The idea of Fate is found only in conditions where some attempt has been made to trace all phenomena of human life, to an ultimate unity. Fate, indeed, is precisely this unity apprehended as an inevitable necessity controlling all things; it is absolutely inscrutable power to which all men are subject, and may be either personified or represented as impersonal. It is a conception which prevails wherever the mind of man is unable to frame the idea of rational necessity or of a supreme purposive will, and it survives so long as either of these, though within the field of consciousness, is imperfectly realized. Further, men tend to fall back on the idea of Fate when, at a higher level of intellectual development, they begin to doubt of a rational order, or a rational end, in the universe.¹

The doctrine of Fate is a recognition of the uniformity of nature and the unity of law which it manifests. It is an admission that the processes of nature manifest order development and necessity, which belies any idea of chance. Whether in the ancient religions of China, India, Egypt, the Teutons, Babylonians, or Greece and Rome, the idea of Fate is present. This, however, is not true of self-consistent Christian faith, for

¹ A. Dorner, "Fate, Introductory," in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. V, 771f.

Christianity repudiates on principle all belief in Fate. The Christian religion regards the Supreme Power of the world as a rational Will by which all things are made to promote the ends of the Kingdom. Here omnipotence is not arbitrary, but is one with the all-wise Will; nor is necessity blind, but rational, and like-wise identical with the all-wise Will — the Will which always acts as a moral stimulus to the freedom of man. Only when freedom and necessity are recognized as being one in the Deity is it possible for Destiny to give place to Providence; only when man realizes his freedom as that which lays upon him the obligation of self-determination in the sphere of conduct does he cease to resort to the occult arts; and only as he knows that all things can be utilized for the highest ends does he finally break with the idea of Fate. These beliefs, however, constitute in essence the Christian point of view.²

The purpose of the idea of Fate is to give man God without God, that is, the advantages of God's government and order without God Himself. Man, however, not only opens the door to a schizophrenic state of mind by adopting the idea of Fate, but he also lets in occultism, the powers of darkness and irrationality. Citing Dorner again, we find him, despite a defective theology, aware of the many implications of Fate:

As a matter of fact, the belief can be finally extirpated only by this recognition of a rational Good Will determining the natural order with reference to an end, and harmonizing therewith the law of necessary physical causality....

This brings us, however, face to face with the subjective conditions in which the belief in Fate subsists, and in which, again, its elimination is possible. So long as man feels himself simply impotent in relation to Nature, and thinks of himself as a mere atom in the universal order, he remains subject to Fate, to necessity. So long as he regards his position and lot as something given, to which he must adapt himself, he cannot rise above the notion of Fate; nor is any deliverance possible, in spite of all attempts to improve his position, so long as he is disposed to eudaemonism, and, consequently, dependent upon circumstances or upon Nature. Eudaemonism, making pleasure the end of life, strikes at the springs of moral energy;

² *Ibid.*, 774f.

it makes men the thrall of the things which promise enjoyment, and which Fate is supposed to bestow or deny. The man who, on the other hand, regards it as his task to realize a divinely ordained moral ideal will judge of all things in reference to their possible utility for that purpose. For such a one there exists no blind destiny, no arbitrary will, to paralyze his energy; for him all things are ordered by God with a view to their subserving his Divinely ordained ethical task; and just because it is God who so orders the world, all thought of an aimless destiny or any arbitrary will is done away.³

The modern term for fate and fatalism is determinism. James K. Feibleman defines it thus:

Determinism: (Lat. *de + terminus*, end). The doctrine that every fact in the universe is guided entirely by law.... The doctrine that all the facts in the physical universe, and hence also in human history, are absolutely dependent upon and conditioned by their causes. In psychology: the doctrine that the will is not free but determined by psychical or physical conditions. Syn. with fatalism, necessitarianism, destiny.⁴

The word "determinism" indicates the problem; the word means of or concerning the end; it posits a purpose or goal, as well as an ordered and rational development towards that goal. It thus assumes the mind of God while denying God. Because of the hostility to anything indicative of purpose in the universe, determinism has lost some of its earlier appeal. Naturalistic determinism posited a universe without God, but with all the order and purpose which only God could provide. To speak of a mindless purpose or goal is a contradiction in terms. Purpose and goal are products of a working, planning mind. Thus, determinism as a halfway house between God and chance ran into very serious problems which it could not resolve.

The alternative was the probability concept. Probability is another name for chance, but it is also another name for determinism. As a university student, I heard a professor explain

³. *Ibid.*, 777.

⁴. James K. Feibleman, "Determinism," in Dagobert D. Runes, editor, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 15th edition, revised (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 78.

probability thus: "It is probable that the sun will rise in the east tomorrow and set in the west, but, lacking exhaustive knowledge of all factuality, we cannot say that it is a matter of determinism that it shall do so. To say that the sun will rise in the east is potentially provable by future events, and the presumption is thus valid that it shall do so. It is, however, a matter of probability rather than a question of determinism." This answer has the merit of sidestepping or postponing a resolution of the choice between chance and God. Since exhaustive knowledge of every sunrise is impossible, and even theoretically out of the question until the end of the world, a decision is thus avoided by these mental gymnastics. This evasion of the problem does not diminish it, but rather intensifies it, since no acrobatic stance is more than briefly tenable.

Determinism offered a mindless necessity which still bore traces of an end or purpose. The probability concept aims at an even more mindless universe. Confronted with a mindless universe, man can either attempt to play god over it, or recoil in horror at the totality of mindlessness. Man does both. He acts as god, but, mind having been devalued by his own philosophical conclusions concerning the universe, man sees his own thinking as worthless and unimportant. There is an abdication of philosophy and of the mind. Man becomes a mindless god.

This was apparent as early as Charles Darwin, who both affirmed chance and denied it, who read God's design into the processes of nature while denying God and design. In a letter to W. Graham, July 3, 1881, Darwin wrote:

Nevertheless you have expressed my inward conviction, though far more vividly and clearly than I could have done, that the Universe is not the result of chance. But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?⁵

⁵ Francis Darwin, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. I (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 285.

To a considerable degree, Darwin's comment was due to his habit of sidestepping any intellectual issue which opened up the possibility of self-contradiction. There was, however, a significance in his evasion: he appealed to the absurdity of all thought in terms of man's origin. He would not have made this appeal, or allowed it, to invalidate his theory; he did use it to invalidate problems, because he recognized the force of the argument. In Darwin's world, the mind of man is as meaningless as the world is. Man's mind is an adaptation to his environment, supposedly, and only time will tell whether or not it is a sound adaptation. Beyond that, it has no validity.

This overpowering sense of meaninglessness has led to a growing mental problem. According to the psychiatrist, Dr. Viktor E. Frankl,

A cross-sectional, statistical survey of the patients and the nursing staff was conducted by my staff in the neurological department at the Vienna Poliklinik Hospital. It revealed that 55% of the persons questioned showed a more or less marked degree of existential vacuum. In other words, more than half of them had experienced a loss of the feeling that life is meaningful.

This existential vacuum manifests itself mainly in a state of boredom. Now we can understand Schopenhauer when he said that mankind was apparently doomed to vacillate eternally between two extremes of distress and boredom. In actual fact, boredom is now causing, and certainly bringing to psychiatrists, more problems to solve than is distress. And these problems are growing increasingly crucial, for progressive automation will probably lead to an enormous increase in the leisure hours of average workers. The pity of it is that many of them will not know what to do with all their newly acquired free time.

Let us think, for instance, of "Sunday neurosis," that kind of depression which afflicts people who become aware of the lack of content in their lives when the rush of the busy week is over and the void within themselves becomes manifest. Not a few cases of suicide can be traced back to this existential vacuum. Such widespread phenomena as alcoholism and juvenile delinquency are not understandable unless we

recognize the existential vacuum underlying them. This is also true of the crises of pensioners and aging people.⁶

In the older terminology, Fate was sometimes called Destiny, and by Destiny was meant inevitable necessity, fortune, or doom. Fate, Destiny, determinism, and probability all concern an impersonal and mindless dealing with man and the universe. Everything in man is contradicted by this mindless necessity. Man's goodness and works are confounded and rendered futile; man's evil can be rewarded or punished without any logic, because no logic exists in mindless necessity, which is a determination by remote, meaningless, and arbitrary forces. For this reason, Fate or Destiny is always a horror to the mind of man.

Providence and predestination, however, undergird man by manifesting that everything in the universe is under the total control of the mind of God. Not an impersonal necessity, but a personal purpose governs all things. This government is not in contradiction to, but in unity with the mind of man. The secondary causality and freedom of man are in unity with and under the jurisdiction of the primary causality and freedom of God.

Thus, St. Peter could say, in full assurance,

9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

These words recall such Old Testament passages as Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:6-7; Isaiah 43:10, 20; 44:1-2, and others, and carry their promises to a new degree. The priesthood of the Old Testament was not royal. Only in Melchizedek (Heb. 7:1, etc.) do we find the royal priesthood, not in Israel. St. Peter tells us, according to Lenski, that

⁶ Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning, An Introduction to Logotherapy* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 168-170.

we occupy so high a position that no man can be higher in this life: as a "Priesthood," a body that is made up entirely of priests, no man stands *between* us and God, and as a body of "royal" priests no man stands *over* us in our relation to God. The adjective as well as the noun reveal in a double way the *exaltation* of our position and our function, the constant *direct, immediate* contact with God.⁷

Man, we are told, is linked in a royal and priestly way to God and to the ultimate purpose which governs every atom of the universe. Man is not only vitally linked to the ultimate meaning of all things, but also, in all God's creation, man is the creature who is central to that purpose and meaning. The humanists claim to be interested in the dignity of man, whereas they are its destroyers. Both in man's obedience and apostasy there is a dignity unknown in a meaningless universe. In his obedience, man is a basic aspect of a glorious purpose which encompasses all reality. In his disobedience, man is at war with that purpose and has the dignity of a combatant, rather than the emptiness of an existential vacuum.

The word used by St. Peter, "chosen" or "elect" is *eklektos*, chosen out, selected, with the idea of grace, love, and eminence involved in the choice. Instead of a mindless fate and an implicit world of chance, the word *chosen* carries the meaning of a totally mindful, gracious, and providential concern for a person by the Supreme Person.

The word "peculiar" is in the Greek *peripoiesis*, an obtaining, an acquisition, or a possession. In 1 Peter 2:9 it means "God's own Possession."⁸

We are thus emphatically in a mindful universe.

⁷ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1945), 100.

⁸ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. III (New York: Revell, 1966), 194.



The Antithesis

A basic aspect of Christian faith is its assertion that there is an antithesis or division in the world that man must recognize and reckon with. Historically, Calvinistic circles have been those which have developed the doctrine of the antithesis, and they have located it in mankind.

The term *antithesis* is a new term for an old doctrine. Scripture makes a distinction, at the very beginning, of the antithesis between the sons of Seth, the people or sons of God, and the line of Cain, the reprobate race of men, the sons of men (Gen. 6:2). Covenant-keepers and covenant-breakers are seen throughout Scripture as two humanities with differing destinies. St. Augustine set forth this contrast in *The City of God* as between two kingdoms, the City of God versus the City of Man. The term *antithesis* came into use in the last century as a reaction to the influence of Hegel.

In Hegelian philosophy, the dialectical process characterizes reality. All being was originally one primordial being, which, as it developed or evolved, moved from its first stage, thesis, to a second stage, antithesis and thesis, wherein seeming contradiction exists. The antithesis seems to deny the thesis. But antithesis, as the second phase of the dialectical process, while apparently very different from and in contradiction to the first stage, thesis, is in fact, like the thesis, an evolving and partial truth. The third stage is the synthesis, wherein the partial truths of the thesis and antithesis are blended to form a new level of being which transcends both thesis and antithesis. The roots of this Hegelian doctrine are very old; they were well developed when Joachim of Flora developed his theory of the three ages of history, the age of the Father or of law; the age of the Son, or of grace; and the age of the Spirit, when all peoples and faiths will find unity on a new level. "Third Age" or "Third World" thinking is still very much with us. With the Enlightenment, and such thinkers as Turgot and Comte later, the

third era came to mean the age of science.¹ The Hegelians from Max Stirner, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche on, held emphatically that God was now dead and man must live beyond good and evil. Against this anti-christian faith in synthesis, Calvinists in the Netherlands began to assert the doctrine of antithesis or division.

Because the doctrine of the antithesis so clearly sets forth a basic aspect of Scripture, Neo-orthodoxy has felt it necessary to pay some kind of lip-service to the doctrine while effectively negating it. Henry Van Til gave a good summary of these efforts:

According to Existentialism, the antithesis is vertical, that is, between God and man, as creature. Man as creature is placed under the judgment of God. This is also the position of K. Barth and Paul Tillich, but Calvinists reject this construction which denies the revelation of Scripture. For the Bible tells us that God made this world good with all that is in it, that he took delight in his creatures, man included. The judgment of God, according to Scripture, is against man as sinner, for his wrath is revealed against all unrighteousness, and his punishment fell upon the human race on account of sin (Gen. 3; Rom. 1:18; 2:2; 5:12, etc.). But for Barth and the Existentialists in general, eternity stands in judgment against time, and God declares an absolute “NO” against all history; God is her judgment, her crisis.

Calvinism also rejects the idea of an eternal dualism, namely, between God and Satan, Spirit and Matter, Being and Non-Being, or between two principles, one good, the other evil. This tension in eternity is usually carried over into the created world as one existing between creation, which is good, and *das nichtige*, or the principle of evil. Even though some thinkers deny a dualism and intend to keep an ultimate principle of the Good, or God, as predominant, in effect the antithesis is no longer a biblically oriented idea but becomes a philosophic construction as in the case of Paul Tillich.²

¹ Peter Gay, in *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. II (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 109n, states that, “There is an interesting anticipation of Turgot’s stages in Roger Cote’s preface to the second edition of Newton’s *Principia*.”

² Henry R. Van Til, *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1959), 179f.

Henry Van Til's point is a very important one. To place the antithesis in eternity is to absolutize evil, Satan, or whatever else is involved in the antithesis, and to place it on an equality with God. The result is dualism. Thus, if we assert an antithesis between God and evil which is metaphysical and originates in eternity, we have elevated evil to an eternal principle which is on an equality with God. Evil, however, is ethical or moral, not metaphysical. The whole of God's creation both in time and in eternity (the creation of angelic beings) is wholly good. Evil is the revolt of the creature against the Creator and is the creature's attempt to be his own god and to define good and evil in relation to himself (Gen. 3:5). The righteousness of God, of which His law is the expression, is an aspect of His absolute and eternal being, but the moral response of the creature, whether good or evil, is on an entirely different and historical level. Thus the antithesis must be biblically oriented first of all, that is, as it is set forth in Biblical history, and it is not primarily philosophical, because it is an ethical, not a metaphysical, fact.

A metaphysical antithesis leads to dualism, to Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. A metaphysical antithesis, however, destroys the moral antithesis. If the universe is made up of two equal and opposing principles and beings, light and darkness, a good God and an evil God, love and hate, yang and yin, or any other version of the metaphysical antithesis, the result is that there is an equality not only between the two forms of being, but also between their moral attributes. Evil is then equal to God. The medieval and other Manichaeans thus did not hesitate to perform any of the actions they condemned because all actions were a matter of choice and all were equal. The preferred way might be no sexuality at all, but incest, adultery, and marital relations were all equally bad and equally good because all sex and all non-sex had an equal metaphysical and moral ultimacy. Ascetics of India and ancient China could, in terms of the same equal ultimacy concept, deny sex or choose it as their way of life.

When God created man, He immediately told man of the antithesis between obedience, the good, and disobedience, evil.

16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen. 2:16-17)

Man was thus presented with a moral choice, and also an epistemological choice, i.e., a choice as to how he would seek to know reality, in terms of obedience to God, or in terms of his own claim to an autonomous knowledge, a knowledge particularly in independence from God. Dr. Cornelius Van Til has given eloquent and telling expressing to the meaning of this:

We know that sin is an attempt on the part of man to cut himself loose from God. But this breaking loose from God could, in the nature of the case, not be metaphysical; if it were, man himself would be destroyed and God's purpose with man would be frustrated. Sin is therefore a breaking loose from God ethically and not metaphysically. Sin is the creature's enmity and rebellion against God but is not an escape from creaturehood.

When we say that sin is ethical we do not mean, however, that sin involved only the will of man and not also his intellect. Sin involved every aspect of man's personality. All of man's reactions in every relation in which God had set him were ethical and not merely intellectual; the intellect itself is ethical.

What then was the result as far as the question of knowledge is concerned of man's rebellion against God? The result was that man tried to interpret everything with which he came into contact without reference to God. The assumption of all his future interpretation was the self-sufficiency of intracosmical relationships. This does not signify that man would immediately and openly deny that there is a God. Nor does it mean that man would always and everywhere deny that God is in some sense transcendent. What he would always deny, by implication at least, would be that God is self-sufficient or self-complete. At best he would allow that God is a correlative to man. He might say that we need God to interpret man but he would at the same time say that in the same sense we need man to interpret God. He might say that the temporal cannot be interpreted without reference to the eternal but he would at the same time say that the eternal cannot be interpreted

without reference to the temporal. He might say that we need God in order to obtain unity in our experience, but he would at the same time say that God needs the historical many in order to get diversity into his experience. All these forms of correlativity amount in the end to the same thing as saying that the finite categories are self-sufficient. For that reason we can make a very simple and all comprehensive antithesis between the knowledge concept of all non-Christian philosophies and the Christian view. Scripture says that some men worship and serve the Creator; they are the Christians. All other men worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator.

Christian-theism says that there are two levels of thought, the absolute and the derivative. Christian-theism says that there are two levels of interpreters, God, who interprets absolutely and man who must be the re-interpreter of God's interpretation. Christian-theism says that human thought is therefore analogical of God's thought. In opposition to all this, non-Christian thought holds in effect that the distinction between absolute and derivative thought must be wiped out.... Thus the Christian concept of analogical thought and the non-Christian concept of univocal thought stand over against one another as diametrical opposites.

Non-Christian thought holds to the ultimacy of the created universe. It holds therefore to the ultimacy of the mind of man itself and must in consequence deny the necessity of analogical thought. It holds to the normalcy of the human mind as well as to its ultimacy. It holds to the normalcy of the human mind as it holds to the normalcy of everything else in the world.³

The antithesis is thus epistemological as well as moral. Men know things differently in terms of their religious and moral commitment. *In principle*, "the natural man has epistemologically nothing in common with the Christian." Only after the consummation of history does this principle become fully a reality, when the natural man is left wholly to himself and to his principle.⁴

It is the purpose of Satan to deny and to destroy this antithesis. In fact, he denies that it exists. It is his contention that God is

³. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 63-65.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 189, cf. 260.

concealing the truth concerning reality in order to compel man to continue in an unwarranted submission to God. All men are on a par with God as themselves potential gods, and all are able to determine for themselves what constitutes good and evil (Gen. 3:5). Man must thus rise above the antithesis and come to a synthesis. Man must recognize that the next stage of being and knowledge, as well as the next stage of ethics, is to live beyond good and evil, to recognize that good and evil are relative to man and cannot be used to divide men.

The Tower of Babel was thus man's first great act of synthesis. The structure of the tower suggested a ladder, steps reaching to heaven, degrees in the ascent of being and knowledge, whereby man transcended the limitations of his past and made synthesis between God and man (Gen. 11:1-4). The philosophy of the Tower of Babel is perpetuated in arrested form by freemasonry, with its degrees, and by every philosophy which denies the Biblical antithesis. The goal of covenant-breakers has always been to deny the antithesis and to overcome their sense of guilt at their disobedience. Thus, many attempts are made at eliminating the antithesis or division. Men speak of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, of the Family of Man, of the oneness of all men as men, and so on.

If men could be left to themselves, they would soon forget the antithesis, and they would soon lose even the memory of God's requirement of obedience and of their disobedience. Men cannot forget or overcome the antithesis, because, *first* of all, they are God's creatures and the requirement of His law and their rebellion against Him resound through every fiber of their being. Men can forget their names, become irrational and foolish, but they cannot erase the fact that every atom of their being is a God-created fact and witnesses to its Maker.

Second, God's judgment compels recognition of the antithesis. According to Genesis 3:14-15,

14. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every

beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

This judgment is both upon the creature who allowed himself to be used, and upon Satan, also a creature, who used him. Moreover, the enmity is an age-long one; after the serpent and Eve are gone, it will persist, and it is supremely an enmity between Christ, the seed of the woman, and Satan.

This is of paramount importance. The goal of Satan is to obscure and destroy the antithesis, to deny any line of division between covenant-keeper and covenant-breaker, between obedience to God and man's wilful insistence on his own autonomous way. This false peace or synthesis is impossible, however much men may seek it. In spite of themselves, enmity is written into their lives. Satan and all godless men would like to have a peace with God and man to go their own way and to practice their own moral premises without hindrance, but they cannot. Because they are God's creatures, their attempt places them at war with God *and* with themselves. Because of God's judgment, the covenant-breakers cannot live in peace with covenant-keepers: they war against them. Sin is cursed; it is, both by its moral warfare against God and by God's judgment, incapable of ever attaining its goal. These first two reasons make it clear why the ungodly cannot overcome the antithesis.

A *third* factor is the calling of the godly. As Henry Van Til noted,

The doctrine of the antithesis maintains that all who are in Christ, the second Adam, are alive unto God and are therefore called to the spiritual warfare of which the Bible speaks (Eph. 6:10ff.; Rom. 7:15-25; 1 Cor. 1:18-30; 2:6-16; 16:22; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; 6:14-18; 10:3-6). Christ is the Covenant-Keeper, the Restorer of the law, he is the root of restored humanity, for through him man is restored to God's fellowship and service, which is life.

On the other hand, that part of fallen humanity which was not restored through Christ, continues its existence in apostasy

from the living God. As a consequence, there is in this world a great opposition between the life lived in apostasy and the life lived in obedience to the covenant, a life which through Christ was restored to the fellowship of God. And, since this antithesis roots in the heart, it does not merely affect the periphery, but the whole of a man's life under the sun. Not a single aspect of life, even the seemingly most neutral, lies outside this antithesis of godliness versus godlessness.⁵

A *fourth* factor which prevents any destruction of the antithesis is precisely the fact that both the godly and the godless will, if true to their faith, work for conquest. The very unity of the human race in Adam leads men to seek a unified order, but the godly seek the Kingdom of God, and the godless, the Kingdom of Man. The clash between the two is inescapable. The doctrine of creation gives men a common origin and a common framework of purpose. In the regenerate, this means dominion over the earth under God; in the unregenerate, this means dominion over all things in defiance of God. Conquest is thus a common goal but with very differing programs, two radically different kinds of kingdoms.

While the antithesis represents a division in mankind, it is not in man, as such, or in his fact of humanity. Here again, Henry Van Til has glorified the matter:

Of course, no one contending for the comprehensiveness and pervasiveness of the antithesis (absolute antithesis) would be so foolish as to say that believers and unbelievers now have nothing in common. It has already been observed that they have a common human nature, they are image-bearers of God, and fell into sin in common, and they have the external preaching of the gospel in common, and the whole of the physical world in time and space, and the cultural mandate and urge, the terrain in which to work and the tools also in common. In short, the whole metaphysical situation is common, but the antithesis is a matter of faith, and the knowledge of faith. Antithesis is not in the object but in the subject of knowledge and faith. It is a question of allegiance. Here it is impossible to temporize. One is either for or against the Christ. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon!" To deny the absoluteness (all-pervasiveness) of the antithesis is to deny the absoluteness of the work of regeneration, which is an act of

⁵ Henry Van Til, *op. cit.*, 182f.

God through his Spirit. Absolute does not imply perfection, for the regenerate is still following after sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). But sin now dwells in the saint against his will. Neither is the unregenerate sinner perfect in wickedness; he is not absolutely but totally depraved.⁶

To be redeemed means to move from one side of the antithesis to the other, from one plan of conquest to the other, and from one kind of knowledge to a radically different kind. When our Lord declared, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34), He was setting forth the antithesis and its necessary warfare. When He declared to His disciples, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50), He was setting forth their preserving and conquering power in the world, and their peace as His people and Kingdom.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

The Harmony of Interests

The doctrine of the harmony of interests is central to the free market economy and has been ably expounded by such scholars as Ludwig Von Mises. Mises speaks of “the theorem of the harmony of the rightly understood interests of all members of the market society,” and the fact that it rests on, first, “the preservation of the social division of labor, the system that multiplies the productivity of human efforts,” and, second, “that in the market society consumers’ demand ultimately directs all production activities.”¹ The exposition by Von Mises is an excellent but strictly economic analysis. The concept of the harmony of interests goes deeper. It is a moral response to a metaphysical fact.

We can understand the religious roots of the doctrine by examining also its alternate, the theory of the conflict of interests, economically stated as “the class struggle.” Mises, in a telling paragraph, comments on the idea of an “irreconcilable conflict”:

Such is the almost universally accepted social philosophy of our age. It was not created by Marx, although it owes its popularity mainly to the writings of Marx and the Marxians. It is today endorsed not only by the Marxians, but no less by most of those parties who emphatically declare their anti-Marxism and pay lip service to free enterprise. It is the official social philosophy of Roman Catholicism as well as of Anglo-Catholicism; it is supported by many eminent champions of the various Protestant denominations and of the Orthodox Oriental Church. It is an essential part of the teachings of Italian Fascism and of German Nazism and of all varieties of interventionist doctrines. It was the ideology of the Sozialpolitik of the Hohenzollerns in Germany and the French royalists aiming at the restoration of the house of Bourbon-Orleans, of the New Deal of President Roosevelt, and of the nationalists of Asia and Latin America. The antagonisms between these parties and factions refer to

¹ Ludwig Von Mises, *Human Action, A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1949), 670.

accidental issues — such as religious dogma, constitutional institutions, foreign policy — and, first of all, to the characteristic features of the social system that is to be substituted for capitalism. But they all agree in the fundamental thesis that the very existence of the capitalist system harms the vital interests of the immense majority of workers, artisans, and small farmers, and they all ask in the name of social justice for the abolition of capitalism.²

Mises cites the documents of various religious groups which espouse and further a belief in the conflict of interests. Pope Pius XI gave it status in *Quadragesimo anno* (1931). William Temple expounded it as Archbishop of Canterbury in *Christianity and the Social Order* in 1942. Emil Brunner in *Justice and the Social Order* (1945), as a Neo-orthodox theologian, advocated the same theory, as did the Russian Orthodox thinker Nicolas-Berdyayev in *The Origins of Russian Communism* (1937). A World Council of Churches draft report of September, 1948, on “The Church and Disorder of Society” also championed this concept.³

This faith in conflict was, of course, basic to the position of Karl Marx, who hailed the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of Species* as basic to the triumph of socialism. In 1860, he wrote to Engels, on first reading Darwin, “This is the book which contains the basis in natural history of our view.” A few weeks later, Marx wrote to Lassale, “Darwin’s book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history.”⁴ With Darwin the idea of an irreconcilable and necessary class conflict had found a biological (and implicitly metaphysical) basis.

The theory of evolution has given emphatic tenability to the theory of the conflict of interests. Life is a struggle for survival, with every species of animals and plants struggling to survive at the expense of all others. The early Social Darwinists used this theory to justify a ruthless form of monopolistic private enterprise; they assumed a conflict of interests and acted as cut-throats against one another and against labor. The socialists disagreed in that they,

² *Ibid.*, 671.

³ *Ibid.*, 671n.

⁴ John N. Moore, *Evolution, Marxism, and Communism*, Creation Research Society pamphlet, 3.

while assuming the same conflict of interests as natural, deplored it and believed that the state is the necessary agency to arbitrate and resolve that conflict by continual coercion. Thus, while the “robber barons” welcomed the conflict as Darwinists confident of victory, the socialists believed in the conflict but sought victory for the proletariat by capturing the state and turning it against the “exploiters.” In both cases, Darwinism and the theory of evolution were and are basic to the dogma of the conflict of interests.

But the theory of evolution is itself an expression of a metaphysical presupposition and a religious faith which goes back through Hegel to Greek philosophy. It rests on dualistic and dialectical presuppositions. If reality is divided into two basic substances which are irreconcilable, then either the world is sharply divided into two warring aspects, or, if dialectical tension holds reality together, conflict is written into all being as a metaphysical necessity. There is war between light and darkness, mind and matter, law and love, the gods and the devils, and so on. This conflict is metaphysical; a difference in being forever separates the two realms.

For the Bible, reality is very different. God is uncreated being, all the universe and man, created being. The conflicts in the world of created being, in the universe, are not metaphysical but moral. Man has chosen to rebel against the sovereign God and to defy His law-word. Because God created all things “very good” (Gen. 1:31), this war against God is unnatural; it means a violation of man’s own being, a deformation and a torturing of himself to wage war against God. Conflict is a moral choice by man, and it is an unnatural and forced course of action. It is suicidal (Prov. 8:36: “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death”). Conflict is thus an immoral, unnatural, and suicidal choice by man.

However, if a man holds to a Manichaeian, neoplatonic, or dialectical philosophy, he will hold metaphysically to a belief that the life of the universe is a conflict of interests. Western philosophy and religion have been largely dominated by a belief in dialecticism. The Greek dialectic of form or ideas versus matter gave way to the Scholastic nature-versus-grace dialectic, an adaptation of Aristotle.

This in turn gave way to the nature-versus-freedom dialectic of the modern era. Dooyeweerd has analyzed these various dialectics.⁵ His followers, unfortunately, follow too commonly the conflict of interests theory because of the implicit dialecticism of their position. Their doctrine of common grace leads them back to a Thomistic form of natural law and a restatement of the Thomistic dialectic.

The doctrine of the conflict of interests manifests itself in every area of life, so that its implications are more than economic. One example of this theory is the idea of the war between the sexes. Supposedly men and women have goals and natures which put them in conflict with one another, so that the best one can hope for is an armed truce. An almost Manichaean hostility to the other sex guides and motivates men and women. The other sex is seen as the source of irrationality, corruption, and sin. In *The Arabian Nights*, as in other Moslem writings, women appear clearly as the source of evil and as the corrupters of men and society. Feminist writings, however, are prone to making the same conclusion about men. Where such attitudes prevail, a normal relationship between men and women is impossible. On principle, war is waged, or, at the least, suspicion prevails. Men and women work to take advantage of each other on the premise that, if they do not, they will become themselves the victims.

Another area in which the idea of the conflict of interests affects our everyday life is in the so-called *generation gap*, and the war between old and young. We are assured that adolescence is a period of biological rebellion, whereas in most societies adolescence is a time of the closest imitation of, and association with, the older generation. Our humanistic and evolutionary culture fosters rebellion. When every aspect of life is at war with every other aspect, and all creation is in a state of struggle and war, then it is natural to assume that a younger generation will assert itself at the expense of the older generation. The idea of this inevitable conflict

⁵. See H. Dooyeweerd, *Transcendental Problems of Philosophic Thought* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948); *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vols. I-IV (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955-1958); *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960).

saturates our evolutionary culture, and it is not surprising that our youth have absorbed it.

The idea of conflict extends to every area of life. It becomes the principle of action, and also of prayer. Man feels that, in praying, he is coaxing God to give man something against God's will, as though a conflict of interests exists between God and man. However, the more a man grows in faith and obedience, the greater will his harmony of interests with God become, so that prayer is increasingly the communication of a harmony of interests rather than an argument between two wills in conflict.

As already indicated, the doctrine of the harmony of interests, a doctrine unknown outside of Christendom, rests on the fact that God made all things "very good" (Gen. 1:31), in harmony with His purpose and calling. The Fall of Man was a declaration of war against God by man and an assertion that conflict between God and man is inescapable because of God's jealousy (Gen. 3:1-5), and necessary for man to prosper. The thesis of Satan was that God is jealously hostile to man, and is lying to man. God is man's oppressor and deceiver, according to Satan: "Yea, hath God said...?" (Gen. 3:1). God is a liar (Gen. 3:4), trying to prevent man from realizing his own potential divinity (Gen. 3:5). The way to success and blessings for man is by conflict with God, by a defiance of God's will. This was the satanic thesis, the conflict of interests.

After the Flood, the covenant of God with Noah, "and with your seed after you, And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; for all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth," was "an everlasting covenant" (Gen. 9:9-10, 16). It includes every man born since then, and every living creature, as well as "the earth" itself (Gen. 9:13). The rainbow was given as the sign of the covenant, a most remarkable fact. There is no evidence of rain prior to the Flood, but rather a dew (Gen. 2:5-6), and semitropical conditions from pole to pole. No doubt, for many generations, as long as the memory of the Flood was fresh, every raindrop which fell was a fresh reminder of the horror of the Flood and of God's war against man in his sin. Now the rain led to a fresh reminder of God's covenant of peace (Gen. 9:13-17). Whatever judgments which

would occur in times to come, prior to the end of the world, would be partial judgments, and their purpose would be to recall man to obedience to God. The Flood and the rainbow would be reminders that the only tenable kind of life is in harmony with God, and man's calling is to a harmony of interests with God.

A covenant is a contract, and a failure to abide by its terms (Gen. 9:1-7) was, and is, punishable by judgment, capital punishment for murder. The heart of the covenant, however, is the fact that it declares that man's way to life and prosperity, as well as the welfare and advantage of all animal life, rests on harmony with God. The nature of creation is such that man flourishes and abounds under God when he walks in harmony with God and His covenant law. The purpose of that law is not to frustrate man nor to introduce trouble into the world, but to bless and prosper man.

The universe is God's law-order. Man's prosperous and successful functioning therein requires that man's interests be in harmony with God and His law. Man, as he faces the universe, responds to it in terms of an ethical presupposition. If he believes that God, or an evolving universe, is trying to frustrate man in man's legitimate development, and if he believes that reality is basically hostile to man, then his response to the world will be in terms of a belief in the conflict of interests. His morality will be one of egoism and a dog-eat-dog philosophy. He will assume that the gains anyone makes will be at the expense of someone else. His perspective will thus be implicitly or explicitly atheistic, because he denies that any sovereign God orders all reality in terms of a holy and personal goal in which all creation will find its glorious liberty (Rom. 8:18-28). Economically, he will be an interventionist or a socialist, politically, a statist.

However, if a man believes that the sovereign God is working with absolute and predestined certainty for the glorious liberty of all creation (Rom. 8:21-22) by Christ's redemption and in His law-order, then that man will see God-ordained purpose and harmony as the dominant and growing fact in the universe. He will be neither a statist nor a socialist. He will recognize that, while conflicts exist, they are the results of moral choices, not metaphysical necessities. Basic to reality is the great variety of all

things, whereby God uses each and every person and creature in terms of His sovereign purpose to further the harmony of interests which ties all reality together.

If the doctrine of the harmony of interests is limited to economics and the market place, it perishes, because it is rootless. Only when grounded in the sovereign purpose, calling, and goal of the triune God for creation does the doctrine flourish and function in terms of its moral implications.

Political conservatism in the twentieth century, being greatly influenced by evolutionary and neo-Hegelian thought, is largely rootless and schizophrenic. A classic example of this is the John Birch Society oriented book by Gary Allen, *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* (1972), which strongly asserts the conflict of interests philosophy. Not surprisingly, the *Los Angeles Free Press*, a leftist newspaper, gave it a good review, as John Schmitz, a Birch leader and 1972 American Party Candidate for president of the United States, stated in a Free Press interview.⁶ The Marxists and the rightists have come to agree on the supposed fact that a conflict of interests is basic to our society, and that a capitalist conspiracy is at the heart of that conflict.

⁶ Earl Ofari and Ron Ridenour, "Rightist Leader John Schmitz Interviewed," *Los Angeles Free Press*, vol. 9, no. 36, issue 425, 8 September -18, 1972, 6.

Suicide

Suicide has a long and complex history in non-Christian cultures. It has been recommended by some religions,¹ regarded as heroic under certain circumstances by republican Rome,² and has been very common in some cultures, as in Japan.³ In Japan, the criminal law permitted self-execution to members of the royal family and other prominent persons except in cases of high treason. Suicide is often resorted to in Japan as the honorable way of avoiding disgrace, humiliation, or, in war, capture.

Biblical faith from the earliest days was against suicide as a form of murder, and banned by the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." In *Midrash Rabbah*, 34, the prohibition of suicide is grounded also on Genesis 9:5, "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man." "And surely your blood" was understood to include suicide.⁴

More than once, in the decline of a culture, men have viewed death as a release from the corruption of the world and as a form of salvation. In an Egyptian document, translated by J. H. Breasted, death is presented as a thing to be desired as against life, which is intolerable:

Death is before me to-day
(Like) the recovery of a sick man,
Like going forth into a garden after sickness.

Death is before me to-day
Like the odour of myrrh,
Like sitting under a sail on a windy day.

¹ H. J. Rose, "Suicide (Introductory)," in James Hastings, editor, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XII, 22.

² A. W. Mair, "Suicide (Greek and Roman)" in *ibid.*, 31.

³ Tasuku Harada, "Suicide (Japanese)," in *ibid.*, 35-37.

⁴ G. Margoliouth, "Suicide (Jewish)," in *ibid.*, 38.

Death is before me to-day
 Like the odour of lotus flowers,
 Like sitting on the shore of drunkenness.

Death is before me to-day
 Like the course of a freshet,
 Like the return of a man from the war-galley to his house.

Death is before me to-day
 Like the clearing of the sky,
 Like a man "fowling therein toward" that which he knew not.

Death is before me to-day
 As a man longs to see his house
 When he has spent years in captivity.⁵

There have been many such expressions in pagan cultures. However, there is a marked difference between such suicides and modern suicide. In pagan cultures, death offered some kind of alternative, however pale; for the modern atheist, death ends everything. Moreover, since Christianity virtually eliminated suicide for centuries in Western Europe and the Middle East, making it a relative rarity, modern suicide is a break not only with personal life but also with Christian standards and tradition. There is thus a radical character to modern suicide which sets it apart from pagan self-destruction.

Masaryk spoke of modern suicidism as a social ailment peculiar to modern civilization, to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, "in many cases misery is not the deciding factor," Masaryk held, having studied the statistics.⁶ Many who commit suicide have material resources and other advantages that quite a number of people envy.

The suicidism of the nineteenth century was preceded by a loss of the will to live in the eighteenth century. Gosse wrote, of the poet Thomas Gray (1716-1771),

He never henceforward habitually rose above this deadly dulness of the spirits. His melancholy was passive and under

⁵ George A. Barton, "Suicide (Semitic and Egyptian)," in *ibid.*, vol. XII, 39.

⁶ T. G. Masaryk, *Modern Man and Religion* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938), 21.

control, not acute and rebellious, like that of Cowper, but it was almost more enduring. It is probable that with judicious medical treatment it might have been removed, or so far relieved, as to be harmless. But it was not the habit of men in the first half of the eighteenth century to take any rational care of their health. Men who lived in the country, and did not hunt, took no exercise at all. The constitution of the generation was suffering from the mad frolics of the preceding age, and almost everybody had a touch of gout or scurvy. Nothing was more frequent than for men, in apparently robust health, to break down suddenly, at all points, in early middle life. People were not in the least surprised when men like Garth and Fenton died of mere indolence because they had become prematurely corpulent and could not be persuaded to get out of bed. Swift, Thomson, and Gray are illustrious examples of the neglect of all hygienic precaution among quiet middle-class people in the early decades of the century.⁷

The deep melancholia which possessed the men of the eighteenth century infected the most privileged classes, those most informed and most influenced by the spirit of the times. The same is true today. As Masaryk observed,

Modern psychosis is just as peculiar as modern suicidism. Statistics show that this psychosis is becoming stronger in so-called advanced countries; the principal centres of culture and civilization are also its endemic centres.... Suicidism is more intensive in cities. Why does this answer come so glibly, and what does it signify? This: that in the very centres of modern life there is more psychosis and there are more suicides.... Here scientific analysis confirms what we continually hear today from all sides — that people are becoming more nervous, more sensitive and more hypersensitive, more exasperated and more irritable, that they are more or less weak, tired, wearied, unhappy and saddened.⁸

The roots of suicidism Masaryk found in boredom, a reproachful conscience, and the loss of faith and meaning. The attitude of modern man he summed up thus:

⁷ Edmund W. Gosse, *Gray* (New York: Harper, n.d.), 13f.

⁸ Masaryk, *op. cit.*, 23f.

Is there a God? — We do not know. Is there a soul? — We do not know. Is there life after death or not? — We do not know. Is there any purpose in life? — We do not know. Why am I living? — We do not know. Am I living, do I really exist? — We do not know. What, then, do we know? Is it possible for us to know anything at all? — We do not know. And this systematic “We do not know” is called science! And people clap their hands above their heads and cry exultantly: “The progress of the human mind is incomprehensible! We no longer need even faith in God, for science has observed that water boiling in a pot lifts the lid, and that rubbed resin attracts straw....”⁹

Men are filled with restlessness and discontent; their being lacks unity. Masaryk found a connection between modern suicidism, alcoholism, and prostitution. Moreover, where Christianity is weakest, there suicidism is strongest. “The statistics of suicides vary with the spiritual and moral religious atmosphere; *ceteris paribus* suicidism is strongest wherever the old religious life is most undermined.”¹⁰ Suicidism is also linked to revolution; it is a part of a defiance of authority, a war against the past, and an attempt to dethrone God. In suicidism, man is his own god, and is thus intensely subjective. Subjectivistic man, after a certain point, “solves” his problems by suicide. Where men have faith, their rage and despair is more likely to find an objective target, in murder.

The statistics of suicide have long since made it clear that there are very few cases in which men killed themselves after having committed a murder. If we think deeply and intensively, we shall see why. A man, when he murders, is not subjective, but objective. Hence there are so few cases in which people first avenged themselves by murder and then killed themselves. Statistics show that in countries in which, relatively speaking, there are more murders (for instance in Italy), there are, comparatively, fewer suicides, and vice versa. It was only in this century that the tendency to suicide developed. That is, man became, if I may say so, subjective, having, before that, been objective.

⁹. *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰. *Ibid.*, 38.

The modern man, then, is in a peculiar manner, subjective. It may be said that he takes upon his own shoulders the whole guilt of life, he reproaches himself; but it may also be said that his suicide is as it were a delirium of subjectivity, an annihilation of objectivity, as though he were destroying the object that irritated him. This he does just through subjectivity, and modern subjectivity.¹¹

The goals of modern life are subjective: happiness for mankind. As Masaryk noted, "The modern educated man chases happiness, but catches death."¹² The "flower-children" or hippies of the 1960s have had a high suicide rate. Their parents usually gave them little or no Christian training, in the great majority of cases, and, as a subjectively oriented generation, these youth dedicated themselves to the pursuit of happiness, and found death, disillusionment, and a vast emptiness. Every man in the modern mood is a castaway on a desert island, with no hope of rescue and only a waiting for the end, an apocalyptic end to destroy a world in which every fair haven becomes a deserted island, and man "enised" in meaninglessness and despair. William Empson has expressed this mood in these words:

Shall we go all wild, boys, waste and make them lend,
Playing at the child, boys, waiting for the end?
It has all been filed, boys, history has a trend,
Each of us enised, boys, waiting for the end.

History's "trend" is to "enise" man, to isolate him from meaning and from other men. The longing thus is for an apocalyptic end or judgment. Without faith in God, there is no God to bring forth judgment, so that "history" or man must produce this judgment, end, or suicide. Fiedler's mournful conclusion is that, with the masses of men, this is impossible. Rather, "it is not Armageddon which confronts us... only a long slow decadence... there is no end."¹³ This is the new horror, that life will go on. In the words of the modern Greek poet, Constantine Cavafy, the uneasiness of modern man is due to the fact that hope is gone

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹² *Ibid.*, 34.

¹³ Leslie A. Fiedler, *Waiting for the End* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), 248f.

Because it is night and the barbarians have not come,
And some men have arrived from the frontiers and they say
that there are no barbarians any longer.¹⁴

Humanism itself is dying, and this is an important factor. The religion of modern man has failed him. As Fiedler noted,

There is a weariness in the West which undercuts the struggle between socialism and capitalism, democracy and autocracy; a weariness with humanism itself which underlies all the movements of our world, a weariness with the striving to be men. It is the end of man which the school of Burroughs foretells, not in terms of doom but of triumph.¹⁵

The religious aspect of suicidism was not more than indicated by Masaryk and thus requires further attention. The sin of man is his attempt to be his own god and to determine good and evil for himself and in terms of his own will (Gen. 3:5). Man sees his sin as the way to life (Gen. 3:4), whereas God declared that it would begin the processes of death in him, “for in the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die” (Gen. 2:17). *Sin thus is suicidal*: it begins the workings of death in all our being, in mind and body, and it works to the radical destruction of the will to live. William Hazlitt (1778-1830) recorded an interesting example of sin:

Anthony Codrus Urceus, a most learned and unfortunate Italian, born 1446, was a striking instance (says his biographer) of the miseries men bring upon themselves by setting their affections unreasonably on trifles. This learned man lived at Forli, and had an apartment in the palace. His room was so very dark, that he was forced to use a candle in the day time; and one day, going abroad without putting it out, his library was set on fire, and some papers which he had prepared for the press were burned. The instant he was informed of this ill news, he was affected even to madness. He ran furiously to the palace, and stopping at the door of his apartment, he cried aloud, “Christ Jesus! what mighty crime have I committed? whom of your followers have I ever injured, that you thus rage with inexpiable hatred against me?” Then turning himself to the image of the Virgin Mary near at hand, “Virgin” (says he)

¹⁴. *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁵. *Ibid.*, 168. The reference is to the writer, William Burroughs.

"hear what I have to say, for I speak in earnest, and with a composed spirit. If I shall happen to address you in my dying moments, I humbly entreat you not to hear me, nor receive me into heaven, for I am determined to spend all eternity in hell." Those who heard these blasphemous expressions endeavoured to comfort him, but all to no purpose; for the society of mankind being no longer supportable to him, he left the city, and retired, like a savage, to the deep solitude of a wood....

Almost every one may here read the history of his own life. There is scarcely a moment in which we are not in some degree guilty of the same kind of absurdity, which was here carried to such a singular excess.¹⁶

Urceus retired or withdrew from men as well as God, from life as well as heaven. What the fire triggered was his own basic faith, that his will was ultimate and God's function should be to overrule Urceus' own carelessness. This man wanted life and the world on his own terms, or not at all. This is the heart of suicidism.

How does the suicide justify his act in modern suicidism? Very simply, he sees evil in God, man, and the environment, and he sees himself as the man who is too good for this world to tolerate. Many of the Romantic poets and writers have given us the philosophy of suicidism. Lord Byron, a famous minor poet, is an excellent example of the romantic and masochistic pursuit of suicide in both his life and poetry. The Byronic hero is always too good for this world; he bears a burden of loneliness, because he is somehow more than common clay, and a burden of romantic guilt which is somehow God's fault. An unbridled egoism marks many of the Byronic heroes. Thus, Manfred says to the Seven Spirits,

Slaves, scoff not at my will!
To mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far-darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!

¹⁶ William Hazlitt, "Mind and Motive," in his book of essays, *Winterslow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), 82f.

Manfred (1817) is a drama of suicidism. Manfred says that “it is my fatality to live.” The comfort of Christianity is for peasants, he holds, and he rejects the counsel of Christian patience with contempt:

Patience and patience! Hence — that word was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey:
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine —
I am not of thine order.

When the Chamois Hunter tells Manfred, “My prayers shall be for thee,” Manfred answers, “I need them not, but can endure thy pity.” This is very revealing: the appeal of the romantic hero, of the suicide, is to pity, because he himself is consumed with the cancer of self-pity. The romantic hero, like Manfred, rejects both God and man:

I said, with men, and with the thoughts of men,
I held but slight communion.

Manfred’s only contact with other men is to dramatize himself before them in an appeal for pity. Manfred’s self-pity makes it impossible for him to live in the present: he lives only in the past, and in the realms of imagination:

We are the fools of time and terror: days
Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.

.....
In life there is no present.

Manfred’s suicidal self-pity is seen as evidence that “this man is of no common order,” a theme made familiar earlier by Goethe. Manfred’s sufferings separate him from the mass of men, and his self-imposed isolation from humanity, his contempt for the masses, is proof of his superiority:

I disdain’d to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader — and of wolves.
A lion is alone, and so am I.

Manfred in death rejects God by saying that he, not God, would be the cause of his death, declaring to God,

I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey
 But was my own destroyer, and will be
 My own hereafter.

The fact that Manfred then “expires” by self-will avoided the taint of suicide while affirming his god-like ability to be lord of life and death.

In *Sardanapalus: A Tragedy* (1821), Byron deliberately chose the last king of Assyria, a degenerate and effeminate monarch, and then presented him as a world-weary, life-weary man too good for this world. Sardanapalus is seen as a peace-maker who knows the futility of life and man. His sensuality and debauchery are based on this “higher wisdom”: “Eat, drink, and love; the rest’s not worth a filip.” Sardanapalus’ degeneracy is seen as proof of his greatness and sensitivity. Sardanapalus observes,

Must I consume my life — this little life —
 In guarding against all may make it less?
 It is not worth so much! It were to die
 Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
 Tracing revolt; suspecting all about me,
 Because they are near; and all who are remote,
 Because they are far. But if it should be so —
 If they should sweep me off from earth and empire,
 Why, what is earth or empire of the earth
 I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my image;
 To die is no less natural than those
 Acts of clay! ‘Tis true I have not shed
 Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
 My name became the synonyme of death —
 A terror and a trophy. But for this
 I feel no penitence; my life is love:
 If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
 Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
 Hath flow’d for me, nor hath the smallest coin
 Of Nineveh’s vast treasures e’er been lavish’d
 On objects which could cost her sons a tear;
 If then they hate me, ‘tis because I hate not:
 If they rebel, ‘tis because I oppress not.
 On, men! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
 And mow’d down like the grass, else all we reap
 Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest

Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
 Making a desert of fertility, —
 I'll think no more.

With these lines, Byron sets the development theme. Sardanapalus is a secular and godless St. Francis, a man of peace and love, too good for this world. Byron has Zames declare of Sardanapalus,

...all voices bless
 The king of peace, who holds a world in jubilee.

Sardanapalus is thus compared also to Christ by Byron! When men who appreciate his worth kneel before Sardanapalus, hailing him “the god Sardanapalus,” his reply is, “I seek but to be loved, not worshipped.” The glory of this new god is then tied to homosexuality, as Sardanapalus requests “a song of Sappho.” But, sadly, the world is not made to appreciate such greatness, and, “All are the sons of circumstance.” Those who seek pleasure rather than brutal power are made the victims of God and man. Sardanapalus, in self-pity, says,

This, too —
 And this too must I suffer — I, who never
 Inflicted purposely on human hearts
 A voluntary pang!

This debauched St. Francis releases a man before his end approaches, saying,

Let him go free. — My life's last act
 Shall not be one of wrath.

Sardanapalus, as death by suicide nears, gives a neoplatonist soliloquy in which he looks forward to his soul's departure from “the gross stains of too material being.” As he mounts the funeral pyre, Sardanapalus, the saintly victim, declares,

Adieu, Assyria!
 I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
 And better as my country than my kingdom.
 I sated thee with peace and joys; and this
 Is my reward; and now I owe thee nothing,
 Not even a grave.

Byron, as himself a guilt-ridden and suicidal man, deliberately chose as vicious an example as Sardanapalus for glorification in order to show that, unknown to the common herd, the debauched villain is really the hero. Moreover, he uses Manfred, Cain, and Sardanapalus as vehicles to express his own suicidal self-pity. In Byron's world, the function of man is to pity the suicidal hero and to confess how little they have understood his greatness. The function of God is to bring down judgment on Byron and his heroes for their sins, so that their self-pity can be justified and increased. Byron's suicidal heroes, and Byron himself, revelled in feeling misunderstood and abused; they spurned friendly understanding, because to be understood placed them within the reach of mere mortals. The perversity of suicidism is its refusal to be understood, its insistence on being a god in a completely self-centered universe. Judgment is interpreted (as in *Cain*) as the jealousy of God for a rival god. Dostoyevsky's Kirilov, in *The Possessed*, was thus logical in his suicide: its purpose was to confirm his status as a god: it was an act of salvation. The logic of unbelief concludes, finally, in the act of suicide as humanistic salvation

XXXIII

Death

When men fear death, death has great power over them. If they see death as the mockery of life and meaning, and as the reduction to absurdity of all man's hopes and plans, then death for them is the great evil rather than sin. The result is a radical inversion of the order of reality. To understand this, let us examine St. Paul's statement in Romans 5:11-13.

11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;

13. (For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law).

St. Paul here declares (in v. 11) that, being reconciled to God, we glory or rejoice in Him. In Hodge's words, "Salvation is begun on earth." Sin invaded "the world" through Adam. "Sin existed before the fall of Adam. It can only mean the world of mankind. Sin *entered* the world; it invaded the race." The penal consequence of sin was death. All the race is subject to penal evils on account of Adam. How was this possible, when as yet the law had not been given through Moses? A basic principle of law is that, where there is no law, there is no legal offense. Paul recognizes this. Until the law of Moses was given, there was, however, sin in the world. This means that there was, clearly, a law, because otherwise "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (v. 13). As Hodge noted, "If men were sinners, and were treated as such before the law of Moses, it is certain that there is some other law, for the violation of which sin was imputed to them."¹ The antinomians have long used this verse to impugn the law, whereas it confirms the law. God imputed sin to Cain, and to the entire world, outside of Noah's family, in the

¹. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Armstrong, 1893), 219, 228, 245.

judgment of the Flood. Clearly, there was not only an oral revelation already given to men, but also the fact that, because man is God's creature, the law, like God's total witness, is made known to man in every aspect of creation and in every atom of man's being (Rom. 1:18-21). Thus, in every age and place, when man has sinned, he has sinned with knowledge, and the consequence has been death and judgment.

Man, however, refuses to see his sin as sin; he may groan inwardly because of the judgment of sin, but, outwardly, sin for him is freedom, freedom from God. Thus, in the eyes of fallen man, it is not sin which is evil, but rather death. It is death, not sin, which fallen man fears, because death looms as judgment on his sin, and death puts an end to all his attempts to play god. Age and death place a limitation on his ability to commit physical sins, such as adultery, and age and death remind him of the futility of all his hopes, of his very life.

Since fallen man sees death as the great evil for himself, he also sees death as the way of salvation to rid him of his enemies. If death is the greatest evil for himself, it is surely so for his enemies also. Thus, the way to confound his enemies is to kill them, and the way to triumph is to stay alive while killing one's enemies.

In such thinking, death acquires a double meaning. It is the great and final evil where it affects one's self; it is salvation when it eliminates one's enemies. Death looms all the larger when it assumes this double role.

A very simple illustration of this will show what results. An earnest conservative admitted that, during the 1930s and the early 1940s, he believed very strongly that most of the world's problems could be eliminated, and the world made a vastly better place, if death suddenly took three men, Stalin, Hitler, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Stalin, as the communist dictator, was murdering millions of Russians and guiding the massive subversion of all other countries. Hitler was a threat of war, had revived and fanned racial hatred, and was leading Germany to barbarism. Roosevelt was seducing the United States into socialism and worldwide interventionism, and was likely to use war as a way out of the

Depression and as an opportunity to become a world leader. Without in any degree having any desire to be an assassin, this man all the same longed for the death of these men as his answer to world problems.

It was no small shock to this man to find, when all three men were dead, that the world not only did not improve, but also was far worse and yet very happy with its wayward course. He remarked, "I finally gave up hoping death would settle world affairs when it dawned on me that it would mean the death of practically all men, and maybe myself!"

Death as an answer to man's problems is an idea which has long been familiar to suicides and murderers. It has been a commonplace idea in every quarter. The short story writer, Hector Hugh Munro ("Saki"), 1870-1916, had a character in one of his stories observe, "Waldo is one of those people who would be enormously improved by death." One of George Herbert's *Outlandish Proverbs* of 1640 speaks of "waiting for dead men's shoes." Death as a means of advantage has long been prominent in men's thoughts. Add to this a belief that life is meaningless, and human life becomes trivial in the roll call of death. Laurence Sterne depicted this, as a father meditates on his son's death in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*:

Philosophy has a fine saying for every thing. — For Death it has an entire set; the misery was, they all at once rushed into my father's head....

'Tis an inevitable chance — the first statute in Magna Charta — it is an everlasting act of parliament, my dear brother, — All must die.

If my son could not have died, it had been matter of wonder, — not that he is dead.

... What is become, brother Toby, of Nineveh and Babylon, of Cizicum and Mitylenaie? The fairest towns that ever the sun rose upon, are now no more; the names only are left, and those (for many of them are wrongly spelt) are falling themselves by piece-meals to decay, and in length of time will be forgotten, and involved with every thing in a perpetual

night: the world itself, brother Toby, must — must come to an end....

... What flourishing towns now prostrate upon the earth! Alas! Alas! said I to myself, that man should disturb his soul for the loss of a child, when so much as this lies awfully buried in his presence — Remember, said I to myself again — remember thou art a man. — ²

The life of a child is nothing, when cities and civilizations in great numbers have died. Even more, when millions have been brutally killed, and have been buried and forgotten by history, their pain and meaning are alike gone, and, in this view, it is nothing if other men suffer today, if some advantage accrues to someone. People are there to be used by such a man. Principles mean nothing to the man for whom life means nothing.

It is significant that both Stalin and some of his associates had been double agents before (and, in some cases, during) the Russian Revolution. They worked for the tsarist secret police, and for the Revolution, enjoying the power and the destructive potential in their dual role. It is more than likely that, however much the cause of Marxism meant to them, the power their role gave them over other men was even more compelling. If and when the records of subversion within the Soviet Union become a matter of public record, they will no doubt demonstrate the ease with which prominent communists have played a double role in order to enhance their power over men's lives.

Stalin's daughter has recorded the fact that Beria had a long history as a double agent during the Civil War in the Caucasus.

He was a born spy and *provocateur*. He worked first for the Dashnakists (the Armenian nationalists) and then for the Reds as power swung back and forth. Once the Reds caught him in the act of treason and had him arrested. He was in prison awaiting sentence when a telegram arrived from Kirov, who was chief of all operations in the Caucasus, demanding that he be shot as a traitor. Just then, however, the fighting started up again, and he was such a small fry that nobody got around to

² Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman & Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, vol. I (London: Macmillan, 1900), 319f.

dealing with him. But all the Old Bolsheviks in the Caucasus knew of the telegram's existence — and Beria himself knew of it. Isn't it perhaps here that one should seek an explanation of Kirov's murder many years later? It was right after Kirov's murder in 1934, after all, that Beria began his climb to prominence and power.³

There is a very revealing letter from Stalin to his daughter, a tender note to "Dear Svetochka," which reads in part:

Take care of yourself. Take care of your daughter, too. The state needs people, even those who are born prematurely....

Your little Papa.⁴

This affectionate letter is all the more telling in that it reveals how deeply imbued Stalin was with an instrumental view of man: "The state needs people." When men are seen as instruments of the state, they are very readily used, because it is the function of an instrument to be used.

Samuel Foote (1720-1777) wrote in *The Minor*, "Death and dice level all distinctions." Death and dice are thus linked, implying that chance rules all, and all distinctions and meaning are wiped out by death. If after death man has no meaning, why should he have meaning before death?

Death thus represents the great evil, and the great power; it is both damnation when it strikes the godless man, and salvation, when he himself employs it. Death rather than sin is for him the greatest evil to befall a man. In terms of this faith, it is better to be Red than dead, better to be conquered alive by the worst enemy than to risk death resisting him. Where death rather than sin is the great evil, there pacificism will flourish, since man would rather risk slavery than death. Similarly, war will flourish most where death is the greater evil than sin, because death will represent a culminating power which men will as readily use as they will readily deplore.

This, then, is the dual role of death for the unregenerate, to be the greatest evil, and also to be a means of salvation, to be dreaded

³. Svetlana Alliluyeva, *Twenty Letters to a Friend* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 137f.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 199.

personally, but desired intensely for others. A thoughtless and immoral man, who had long been faithless to his wife and contemptuous of her faith and patience, was suddenly laid low by a stroke. Knowing that he would die, he screamed pornographic insults at his wife, resenting the fact that she would live and would with freedom enjoy his wealth. The dying man had one prayer, that he would become suddenly well long enough to kill her before he died. An ancient Greek verse, an inscription for the tomb of Timon, gives us the same mood:

Ask neither my name nor my country, passers-by:
My sole wish is that all of you may die.⁵

St. Paul's order is the right one: it puts the problem in perspective: by sin came death. Christ came to overthrow the power of sin, and rendered perfect obedience to the law of God, and He then overthrew the power of death in His resurrection. Man in Christ is called to obey the law of God and by means of it to establish dominion over the earth. Christ shall reign, in and through His people, and shall put all His enemies under His feet, in subjection to Himself and to His saints. Then the last or final enemy, death, shall be destroyed at the end, and the fulness of the new creation ushered in (1 Cor. 15:24-26). Prior to that time, "he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." Sin shall have been destroyed in principle by His atoning death and resurrection, and in its controlling power by the sanctification of men and nations. Death, then, as the final or remaining enemy, shall be destroyed.

⁵ Dudley Fitts, translator, *More Poems from the Palatine Anthology, In English Paraphrase*, no. 18. (Norfolk, Connecticut.: New Directions, 1941).

Hell

Some years ago, Emory Storrs observed that “When hell drops out of religion, justice drops out of politics.”¹ Justice also drops out of religion when the doctrine of hell is denied.

D. P. Walker had noted that “There is only a limited number of possible ways of eliminating eternal torment. The simplest is to deny personal immortality.... All the other ways involve universal salvation.”² Walker is right, and his alternatives are clear cut. *First*, hell as a present problem disappears whenever man holds that death ends all, and that there is no life beyond the grave. The possibility of eternal punishment is then exchanged for the certainty of death and the reduction of all life to meaninglessness. Clearly, however, many men prefer a final and everlasting negation of life to a judgment on man by a sovereign God. The appeal of everlasting death and a universal meaninglessness is preferred to the acceptance of a universe of meaning in which not man, but God is sovereign. To accept universal death as ultimate is a form of intellectual suicidism, but it is preferable for many to life on God’s terms. For such men, salvation means in essence salvation from God and His claims on men, so that heaven and hell are equally resented as evidences of that hateful dominion. For a runaway murderer, salvation is escape from the police; for the proud and angry sinner in flight from God, salvation is escape from God into an ostensibly everlasting death and meaninglessness. True, to believe in everlasting meaninglessness and death is to believe that reality moves to the negation of man, but, far more important to such a man, it means also the ostensible negation of God and His claims on man. As one man, frankly unhappy because his Puritan heritage gave him a bad conscience about God and sin, remarked, concerning his atheism and his belief in eternal death,

¹ Cited by Harry Buis, *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1957), 122.

² D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell, Seventeenth Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 67.

"It's the finish for God also!" By dying himself, Kirilov, in Dostoyevsky's *Possessed*, declared that he also "killed" God. Men proclaim the death of man as a means of effecting the death of God.

Second, hell can be turned into an extended purgatory, so that ultimate salvation is assured for all men. Ultimate and universal salvation can also be asserted by means of reincarnation, to make atonement for past sins, or by spiritualism and a belief in a universe of spirits whose primary quality is immortality rather than responsibility to a sovereign God. By whatever means hell and its meaning are evaded, the result is antinomianism. Justice and law both begin to depart from man's moral universe when the doctrine of eternal punishment is surrendered. When the doctrine of hell was dropped in certain circles of English thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the result was antinomianism. In some, reason as autonomous and ultimate gained sway; in others, experientialism led to new revelations. Those who had new truths from their god were soon confounded by others with still newer revelations from their god of love. This proved to be the fate of the Rev. Richard Roach, who found Mary Keimer spouting new revelations from the "the God of Love":

K. Consider thou O Man! I will confound thee, yea & bring thy Lofty, thoughts down; I will lay thee even with the Dust. Who are thou O man that exaltest thyself? Who art thou? *I am, I am!* How durst thou presume to speak unto me? I can this moment strike thee dead... *I am, I am, I am, I am....* and ye shall know that I have spoken: for *quickly Judgments* shall be usherd in. Then wilt thou know who has spoken, & who now does speak. 'Tis the God of Love....³

Mary Keimer held that she had been commanded to go to France (this was in 1712) and speak to the King, "who should upon his Disobedience be immediately struck dead by her mouth." Her brother, Samuel Keimer, wrote,

I have seen my sister, who is a lusty young woman, fling another Prophetess on the Floor, and under Agitations tread

³. *Ibid.*, 258.

upon her Breast, Belly, Legs etc., walking several Times backwards and forwards over her, and stamping upon her with violence. This was adjudgd to be a sign of the Fall of the *Whore of Babylon*.⁴

This is a very significant aspect of antinomianism. The God of justice is denied in the name of love, but, immediately, the people of love become champions of judgment and violence. Mary Keimer wanted to strike dead Louis XIV if he dared disobey her; she was contemptuous and ready to judge the Rev. Richard Roach, and she brutally stomped on “another Prophetess.” This is not surprising; having denied justice to God, man takes it upon himself to play god and mete out justice on his own terms. Having eliminated God’s hell from the world to come, man must provide a hell here for those who offend him. As hell has departed from man’s beliefs concerning the world to come, it has been made a reality of modern politics. By coddling criminals, waging total war, making total claims on citizens, and generally playing god, the modern state is determined to play god and create and administer hell to all who offend it.

Marx, of course, called for precisely this. One class should be labelled the oppressing class, or the devils of society, and consigned to hell on earth.⁵ Thus, Marx’s system called for a savior, “the liberating class,” a devil, “the oppressing class,” a judgment, the revolution, and hell, the enslavement and punishment of the oppressors and their allies. The communist utopia would become heaven on earth. Where hell is denied to the other world, it becomes an aspect of this world, and all men are steadily recruited as its inhabitants because of their resistance to the will of the philosopher-kings; and, because the communist heaven never arrives, the guilt for its non-realization is laid upon the people, who must make atonement for it by living in hell on earth.

To deny hell is to become antinomian in every area. Thus, John Lacy, who in the early 1700s was one of those who denied eternal

⁴ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁵ Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” in *Early Writings*, T. B. Bottomore, translator, editor (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 56.

punishment, in c. 1711 defended abandoning his wife and taking “a Prophetess to his bed” after he failed to convert his wife to his views. He held that a “Supernatural voice” threatened him “with Hell-fire and eternal destruction,” if he did not do so.⁶ Lacy thus conveniently used hell to make it a threat from his god to force him into antinomianism!

We may thus say that, when hell disappears from religion, it reappears in politics and social morality. It becomes necessary then for ultimate moral judgments and dispositions to be made on earth, because there is no other court for a final reckoning. If there is no God who can say, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay or recompense (Deut. 3:35; Ps. 99:8; Isa. 3:8; Jer. 50:15; Ezek. 24:25; Nahum 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:8; Rom. 12:19, etc.), then it is necessary for man and the state to assume this role of judgment and judge. Whenever and wherever man creates a hell on earth, he is oppressive and harsh to the extreme. In the hell created by God, men who choose to live apart from God are allowed to do so eternally, living in that total self-isolation, which is hell in its truest sense. The tyranny of man is bad enough when it is supposedly an exercise of power in the name of God; it is far, far greater when man sees himself as his own god. There is, then, no restraint on him, and his lust for power requires him to consign every man to hell who opposes him. Wurmbrand has graphically described the kind of treatment meted out by his communist oppressors:

For fourteen years of prison, our food was horribly bad. Prisoners were forced to eat their own excrements and drink urine. For much of the time, we ate cabbage and unwashed intestines.

In our cells, Christians were tied to crosses. Every day the crosses were put on the floor. Then dozens of other prisoners were obligated to fulfill their bodily necessities upon the faces and upon the bodies of the crucified ones. Then the crosses were erected for the amusement of the Communists who stood around jeering: “Look at your Christ; how beautiful He is!”⁷

⁶ Walker, *op. cit.*, 259.

⁷ Richard Wurmbrand, *The Wurmbrand Letters* (Pomona, California: Cross Publications, 1967), 40, 42.

Stafford, in describing communist torture, speaks of the sadistic motives of the communist lords and adds,

Thus the sadist is not content to debase his victim but must make him beg for further humiliation, still further outrage. The beaten are made to kiss the rod. Sexual impulse is transposed into deliberate torture for political ends.⁸

Hell is not evaded by being denied. If men hold, *first*, that death ends all, or, *second*, to a universal salvation beyond the grave, then hell is transferred to this world, intensified, and every effort made to concentrate an eternity of torment into the hour.

The *third* alternative is to accept the Biblical doctrine of hell. Hell is the destiny of the wicked (Ps. 9:17; Prov. 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; Matt. 23:15; 25:41). It is the habitation of "the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). Our Lord described it as "a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:42). The imagery is derived both from the parable He was analyzing, of tares burned so that their seed would not reseed the fields, and the word for hell, *Gebenna*, taken from the Valley of Hinnom, the Jerusalem dump, where fires continually burned the discarded rubbish. Gehenna or Hinnom was also a place of worms, in that much which was not consumed by fire was devoured by worms. Mark 9:43-44 speaks of hell as the place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." These images were recognized to be figurative through the centuries, typifying the burning of conscience and the gnawing, devouring force of memory. There are no torturers in hell, only self-willed self-torture. In a rubbish heap, or a city dump, all facts are unrelated facts; they are in a limited sense brute factuality, in that they have been separated from a context and meaning. It is the world of autonomous man realized. In a home, all facts are related facts: things are brought in, made, and placed in terms of a meaning to us, so that there is a community of things in terms of our purpose. So, too, in the Kingdom of God, all things are interrelated in terms of the total meaning and purpose of God's plan and order. Man, having denied God, denies himself because man is the

⁸ Peter Stafford, *Sexual Behavior in the Communist World* (New York: Julian Press, 1967), 89.

handiwork of God and cannot deny his Maker without denying at the same time the meaning and direction of his own life. His life then collapses into meaninglessness and, finally, into hell.

The sinner, however, sees salvation as separation from God and an attempt by man to be his own god (Gen. 3:5). Hell is thus the culminating state of sin and insanity, of apostasy and separation and non-communication from other men. Since the goal of man's original sin is for man to be his own god and universe, then hell is for the sinner his existential paradise. There is no community in hell: every man is his own god and universe. In this respect, C. S. Lewis' *Great Divorce* errs, among other things, in depicting conversations and community in hell; he is on the right track in describing the people in hell as unable to recognize that they are in hell. He is right also in declaring that "my will be done" is the essence of hell.⁹

Milton was right.... The choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." There is always something they insist on keeping, even at the price of misery. There is always something they prefer to joy — that is, to reality. Ye see it easily enough in a spoiled child that would sooner miss its play and its supper than say it was sorry and be friends. Ye call it the Sulks. But in adult life it has a hundred fine names — Achilles' wrath and Coriolanus' grandeur, Revenge and Injured Merit and Self-Respect and Tragic Greatness and Proper Pride.¹⁰

This same mood is expressed in the familiar kind of remark of people who refuse to be comforted: "Don't try to talk me out of it. If I want to be miserable, I have a right to be miserable, and nothing you say will change my mind."

To read the goals of existentialist philosophy is to find there a non-Christian description of hell as a social philosophy and goal. The isolation and futility of hell are also ably described by existentialists. Their goal is clearly hell, but they rage at God, and resent bitterly any mention of God's creation of hell. Logically, they should be highly pleased that their goal has God's *imprimatur*

⁹ C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 69.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

and design, and that heaven, which is hell to them, will drain off the offensive people of God. Logically, all this should delight them, but it does not, because it manifests a determining will other than their will and a sovereign purpose other than their purpose. *Hell is offensive to the reprobate because God thought of it first.* To be at war with God because He is God is a first premise of the reprobate mind.

To cite an illustration of this mentality, a man, secretly guilty of continuous adultery, was particularly resentful of his wife's patient, thoughtful, and efficient attention to his needs because it rubbed raw his conscience. He went home prepared to be angry because hamburger or some cheaper cut of meat was going to be served to him, a hard-working, well-deserving husband, only to find that she had so managed the budget that week that the best of steaks was theirs for dinner! His anger was only greater, now, for her supposed lack of economy. It was repeated instances of a will to find fault that alerted her to his guilty conscience. He was determined to find fault and be at war with his wife to prove her guilty, because the alternative was to admit that he was guilty.

This is man's premise as he seeks hell psychologically, philosophically, and religiously. To surrender his existential self-torture and isolation is to admit that he needs fellowship with God and community with God and His people. To admit this is to confess that he is a sinner, and that he is not a god but a fool. It means submitting to God's plan of salvation rather than to man's.

A good example of hell as a philosophical goal is Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. Man is to be his own god, living out of his own being exclusively and out of his own self-definition and self-existence. This isolation, in which other men have no real place, does leave man a "futile passion," a vain and meaningless thing in an ocean of nothingness, but, rather than being abandoned, this isolation is all the more zealously championed.

Heaven and hell thus represent two plans of salvation, and two differing concepts of paradise. The tempter's plan as proposed to Eve was for the improvement of paradise. God, he maintained, was lying to man and trying to keep man from the true paradise-life, and only by the course of independence and a

declaration of self-deity could man attain that true life and glory (Gen. 3:1-5). The course of action promised material fulfilment and mental awakening; it was “to be desired to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6).

The course of Biblical history is the development of these two rival plans of salvation, with their two rival goals. The Kingdom of God has as its goal the new creation; the Kingdom of Man has as its goal a creation which can only be described as hell. Revelation 19, in depicting the destiny of Babylon the Great, the Kingdom of Man, sees it culminating in a feast of vultures, the accompaniment of anarchy and collapse; it is the product of a situation where there is such ruin and isolation that none care for their dead. The culmination of the New Jerusalem, or the Kingdom of God, is depicted as the epitome of happy community, a marriage feast. The doctrine of hell is the recognition of another plan of salvation, and the evidence of its impossibility and collapse.

By means of hell, God grants to the reprobate their idea of paradise as the most fitting and devastating punishment they can have. Hell is the longed-for paradise of the reprobate, their goal and their dream; it is also their damnation.

As against hell, heaven and the new creation tell us of our rest and peace in Christ, as well as our joy in the fact that our “labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58) but is rather always rewarding and fruitful (Rev. 22:1-3). The paradise of God and His people is both city and garden (Rev. 21:1-22:6); it is both the perfection of community and the full self-realization of the individual. It is the end of grief, pain, and death (Rev. 21:4). The saints of God “shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:5) in a new creation which is in its every aspect promise and fulfilment. This is their life in Christ.

The Forgiveness of Sins

Without the forgiveness of sins, hell would be the basic and ultimate state of all men. The torment of the burden of sin and guilt would not only gnaw at the entrails of all men but also make them past-bound and past-oriented. The guilty man endlessly rehearses the past, telling himself, I should have done thus and so, and he makes himself impotent in coping with the present. When men are guilt-ridden, and a culture is dominated by guilty and unregenerate men, history bogs down into an impotent longing for past glory and a futile, back-biting rehearsal of past and present sins.

In some men, the outcroppings of guilt are more dramatic than in others. Lord Byron, for example, dramatized and justified his sin and guilt. Although a man tormented with guilt and “the oppression of... conscience,” Byron sought to assuage his guilt by holding that “he must be wicked — is foredoomed to evil — compelled by some irresistible power to follow this destiny, doing violence all the time to his feelings.” Byron, in fact, chose his course gladly; it was not sin he objected to but the sense of guilt which followed sin. He justified his sin and his war against God on the ground that he had been cursed with a deformed foot. Although singularly blessed in all other ways and rich in advantages, “he expressed a wish to revenge himself on Heaven for this malformation, and to consider himself justified in doing so by every kind of impiety.” Byron was an injustice collector who wanted every possible excuse to justify his resolution to “defy Heaven and earth to the last — that as he had lived, so he died — that he asked no mercy etc. — with many blasphemous expressions.”¹

Not all sinners are as demonstrative as Byron in the expression of their guilt, but, with all, it is a crippling force which results either in inaction and paralysis on the one hand, or the destructive action

¹ Malcolm Elwin, *Lord Byron's Wife* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), 270, 281, 283, 346.

of rage and hatred on the other. It does not lead to long-range and successful action.

Freud clearly recognized that, as long as all men feel the burden of guilt, men will look to religion for relief from that guilt. The basic motive in Freud's work was to undercut this power of religion by offering a scientific answer to this key problem in all psychological ailments, guilt.² If men looked to the scientist for the answer to guilt, then God and religion would become obsolete.

Grotjahn has called attention to some correspondence of Freud with Oskar Pfister on this subject.

After publication of *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), Freud wrote that he had great understanding of the words: "Your sins are forgiven you. Arise and walk." He wondered what would happen if the patient were to ask, "How do you know that my sins are forgiven?" Freud could not simply answer, "I am the Son of God. I forgive you." He would have to say, "I, Professor Sigmund Freud, forgive you your sins," which, he admitted, would not work very well.

This letter (Nov. 25, 1928) concludes with a remarkable paragraph:

I do not know whether you have guessed the secret bond between "Lay Analysis" and "Illusion." In the first one, I want to protect analysis against physicians; in the other one, against priests. I would like to hand it over to a profession which does not yet exist, a group of worldly physicians of the soul, who do not need to be physicians and who should not be allowed to be priests.³

Freud recognized the need: forgiveness of sins. He recognized that it required a God-ordained Savior to pronounce that forgiveness authoritatively. What people with psychological problems want is someone to say, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.... Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk" (Mark 2:5, 9). What they do not want is the confession of sins, and the confession of their need for Christ as their Savior. They prefer to go to a Freud rather than to Christ,

² See R. J. Rushdoony, *Freud* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968).

³ Martin Grotjahn, M.D., "Sigmund Freud and the Art of Letter Writing," in *JAMA*, vol. 200, no. 1 (3 April 1967): 122.

although both they and Freud know that the real need is for forgiveness of sins by Jesus Christ.

Lord Byron was a Freudian before Freud, in that he too sought the cure to his guilt by ascribing it to something in his past history. Byron blamed his Calvinistic nurse, his mother, his heredity, and finally God, rather than face up to the fact that he delighted in sin and only regretted the guilt-pangs and consequences of sin. He placed the guilt in the past and on others, and he became progressively incapable of living successfully in the present.

For a man to seek forgiveness of sins from Jesus Christ requires Christ's prevenient grace. It means a readiness to face the present and to live in terms of the future. Instead of seeing sin in our past, our heredity and environment, we see it essentially in ourselves here and now. *We* are the problem, not others; it is *our* love of sin, *our* desire to be our own god and to reorder reality and morality in terms of our will, which brings on us the burden of guilt and remorse.

To seek forgiveness of sins from Jesus Christ means not only dealing with our unregenerate and sinful past but also with our present and future. It is a serious error to see the forgiveness of sins, however real its relationship to our past, only in terms of that past burden of guilt. The fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer requires us always to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). This means more than the fact that we sin daily and are daily in need of grace, true though this is. The *Larger Catechism of the Westminster Standards* is to the point:

Q. 194. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition (which is, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*) acknowledging that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we nor any other creature can make the least satisfaction for that debt; we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us in his Beloved, continue his favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness;

which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences.

First of all, this makes it clear that forgiveness removes the burden of past sins through the atoning work and satisfaction of God's justice by Jesus Christ; "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:24-25). God, who made all things, remakes us by His sovereign grace, forgiving us our sins and giving us the freedom of a clear conscience.

Second, forgiveness has a present reference, in that it fills us with peace and joy and gives us increasingly the assurance of forgiveness. As St. Paul said, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). In this benediction, St. Paul twice uses the word *hope*. God, once only a God of judgment to the sinner, is now even more the God of hope who makes us to abound in hope, so that we not only have joy and peace in the present, but also have a present hope concerning a future glory. The power of the Holy Ghost underlies our peace, joy, and hope.

Third, forgiveness has a present *and* future reference, not only in the fact of hope, but also in the active imperative to forgive others their offenses: "Forgive *us our* debts, as *we* forgive *our* debtors." The word for *debtor* in the Greek is *opheiletes*, "one who owes anything to another, primarily in regard to money.... It is used metaphorically," among other things, "of those who have not yet made amends to those whom they have injured, Matt. 6:12."⁴ It is sometimes translated as "trespasses," which does justice to one side of its meaning, but "debtors" does justice to its basic reference, namely, to the jubilee. The jubilee is the year of

⁴ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. I (New York: Revell, 1966), 277f.

redemption, the time of cancellation of all debts, the repossession of forfeited lands, and the end of servitude for bond-servants (Lev. 25:8-55). Our Lord referred to debts and plainly reminded His people that they are to pray for the jubilee and to institute the jubilee here and now. When Christ forgives us our sins, we are thereby in the jubilee time in relation to Him: our debts are cancelled, our slavery to sin terminated, and the repossession of the earth as our dominion under God begun. Other men are brought into the jubilee time by God's regenerating act. Our duty is to extend to all God's people that same forgiveness, so that, as citizens of God's Kingdom and heirs of the jubilee, we do not become guilty of denying the jubilee release to those whom God has ordained thereto.

Fourth, this makes it clear that forgiveness is not only a personal act, one in which God has the initiative, and man in Christ manifests the same grace to other persons, but also a social act, in that it manifests the grounds of the jubilee society. Guilt, Freud had to say to his patients, is a psychological relic of acts of parricide, incest, and cannibalism committed by primitive man; it is merely a vestigial psychological factor which we must recognize as invalid though present and oppressive. Instead of divine forgiveness, Freud offered self-forgiveness; recognize that you are merely echoing a primitive past; understand and live with your guilt. The guilty man, already preoccupied with his guilt, is even more locked into himself, in that now he comes to believe, after Freud, that his guilt does not involve objective offenses against God and man, but simply a subjective and psychological fact. If I am guilty in relationship to my neighbor, I have at least an objective tie and responsibility to my neighbor. If, after Freud, my guilt is a vestigial psychological inheritance from primitive man, then my responsibility to my neighbor, negative though it was, is terminated and replaced with self-absorption.

Christ's forgiveness, however, alters my relationship to God and requires me to alter it in relation to men. I am to forgive as I have been forgiven. I am a part of the jubilee world, and I must extend the boundaries of that jubilee by forgiving others, exercising dominion and bringing one area after another under the sway of

Christ the King, and by repossessing men, callings, institutions, and all things for the jubilee kingdom.

The past century and a half has seen a steady and happy growth in “lay” activities by Christians. Where once the clergy alone acted, now countless Christians are assuming responsibilities and acting as God’s royal priesthood. One of the unhappy aspects of this semi-democratic movement has been the increasing freedom with which all Christians judge rather than forgive one another. In earlier generations, the amount of criticism and comment was remarkably limited. Grotjahn cited a letter of November 7, 1939, by Mrs. Martha Freud, written after the death of her husband, Sigmund Freud, in which she observed to Ludwig Binswanger,

How good, dear Dr., that you knew him when he was still in the prime of his life, for in the end he suffered terribly, so that even those who would have most liked to keep him forever had to wish for his release! And yet how terribly difficult it is to have to do without him. To continue to live without so much kindness and wisdom beside one! It is small comfort for me to know that in the fifty-three years of our married life not one angry word fell between us, and that I always sought as much as possible to remove from his path the misery of everyday life. Now my life has lost all content and meaning.⁵

This type of reserve and gentleness was once common to middle class culture. It was common, two and three generations ago in the United States, for husbands and wives never to address or refer to one another in public, and even among friends, except as Mr. and Mrs. so-and-so. This same reserve was common to private relations. One aged woman, whose years spanned approximately the time from 1860 to 1940, said that in her youth, and in her strata of society, one or two occasions for sharp words between husband and wife meant a major crisis in the marriage; in most situations, husband and wife were forbearing and patient. Granted that this type of reserve is an extreme and has its drawbacks, it must still be recognized that the increasing democratization of life has made everyone judge over everyone else. The major and overwhelming problem of church life is this conflict of persons created by a too

⁵ Grotjahn, *op. cit.*, 124.

ready criticism of one another. It is also the major reason for pastoral changes.

The fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer is thus urgently necessary. It does not ask us to overlook heresy and flagrant sin. It does ask us to be the people of grace, who, because we have been forgiven, are able to extend forgiveness to others. It does require us, as the people of the jubilee, to manifest the joy, freedom, and release of the jubilee to one another.

Effectual Calling

The doctrine of effectual calling asserts the priority of God in our redemption. We do not save ourselves: it is the work of God. Christ stated it clearly: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16). While these words are addressed to the disciples, their application is more general. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, St. Paul declared to all the Christians of the Thessalonian Church and all others generally, that “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), “before eternal ages” (2 Tim. 1:9), God chose His people. From all eternity the Holy Spirit was ordained to sanctify us, and to provide for our reception of the truth. God chose us, and His choice was timeless, i.e., it preceded time.

The initiative and the power are entirely from God. This point is very important, because, while man wants salvation, man the sinner wants it on his terms. Those terms are really the essence of original sin, to be as god, to determine not only good and evil for one’s self, but “destiny” as well (Gen. 3:5). Man not only seeks to play god in his own life, but also in the lives of others. Let us examine this lust for power in areas of obvious sin, and then in religion. As one scholar has noted, with respect to prostitution, the sale of sex is only one side of the transaction:

It is not sex the prostitute is really made to sell: it is degradation. And the buyer, the john, is not buying sexuality, but power, power over another human being, the dizzy ambition of being lord of another’s will for a stated period of time — the euphoric ability to direct and command an activity presumably least subject to coercion and unquestionably most

subject to shame and taboo. This is a very considerable impression of power to purchase for ten or fifteen dollars.¹

A prostitute noted this same fact, that, while men could pick up any number of available women in bars, they chose instead the prostitute, because it meant the purchase of irresponsible power over a woman. Sex they could have had freely: what the prostitute provided was an opportunity for power in an intimate and forbidden area and way, in sin and in violation of both the law and the personality of a woman who was now treated as a thing to be used. This prostitute commented,

There are lonely women all over New York, women sitting in bars, who would go with a guy, take him back to their place, make it with him, treat him well too — and be glad to do it. But instead men go to prostitutes on Seventh Avenue, Fifty-Seventh Street, and Broadway, because there are no strings attached to a whore. And if you're married, that's a consideration. There isn't even that much chance that she'll be clean if she's from the street. But there are no strings, absolutely no strings attached....

But what they're buying, in a way, is power. You're supposed to please them. They can tell you what to do, and you're supposed to please them, follow orders. Even in the case of masochists who like to follow orders themselves, you're still following *his* order to give him orders. Prostitution not only puts down women, but it puts down sex — it really puts down sex.²

This same prostitute preferred her life to marriage, or to being a mistress for some of her admirers, because a meaningful relationship meant a relationship of responsibility and affection which gave another person a psychological hold and power over her. In prostitution, she held,

I felt I was the boss because I could say no to the deal. I didn't want even the involvement of being a kept woman because it's control again. When you're living with someone — when I

¹ Kate Millett, "Prostitution: A Quartet for Female Voices," in Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, editors, *Women in Sexist Society, Studies in Power and Powerlessness* (New York: New American Library, 1972), 88f.

² *Ibid.*, 92, 96.

was living with someone, that's when I really felt controlled. Then you can't refuse. People I've lived with — I really felt that they had power because I couldn't say no to them. Because then I could lose them and, if I did, I would lose my whole life — lose my whole reason for living... I felt freer of men as a prostitute than I would as a wife or a mistress or a beloved.³

The prostitute can engage in her activities with “no involvement at all,” this woman held, and this made it attractive; the man was then to her “a trick” to be used and exploited.⁴

This lust for power appears in various forms. With some parents, it is a desire to have a total hold on a child. One woman, who developed mental problems, boasted that she and her daughter were “inseparable.” She added, “She wouldn't buy a pair of stockings without me.” The daughter, however, held that her mother was destroying her family life and her privacy.⁵ Pauline B. Bart noted, of her research,

The interviews dispelled any of my doubts about the validity of inferences from the hospital charts that these women were overprotective, conventional, martyrs. Even though they were patients and I was an interviewer and a stranger, one Jewish woman forced me to eat candy, saying, “Don't say no to me.” Another gave me unsolicited advice on whether I should remarry and to whom, and a third said she would make me a party when she left the hospital.⁶

This drive for power, illegitimate and radical power over others, is very much a part of a fallen world, and especially of our time. We have a Black Power movement, Gay Power (or homosexual power), Women Power, Student Power, Indian Power, and so on. These are naked and obvious expressions of the lust for power, readily identified and more easily condemned. The more serious drives for power are often religious and disguised as Christian.

³ *Ibid.*, 96, 98.

⁴ Pauline B. Bart, “Depression in Middle-Aged Women,” in Gornick and Moran, *op. cit.*, 171.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁶ *Ibid.*

These drives for power ascribe omnipotence and ultimate power to man and call it godly. At the same time, God is made powerless and is reduced to a secondary position. Karl Barth held that the Almighty is not God but the Devil, Chaos, Evil, power in itself. "God and 'power in itself' are mutually exclusive. God is the essence of the possible; but 'power in itself' is the essence of the impossible."⁷ However, it is not necessary to go to Barth to find such a demotion of God. Arminian revivalism is full of it: it places sovereignty in man's hands and allows man's vote to be decisive as to whether God can enter his life or not. The "gospel hymn," "Jesus is Calling," says, in its fourth verse,

Jesus is pleading; O list to His voice;
Hear Him today, hear Him today;
Those who believe on His name shall rejoice;
Quickly arise and away.

Calling, calling today, today,
Calling, calling today, today,
Jesus is tenderly calling today,
Is tenderly calling today.

Another hymn says, "Jesus is tenderly calling thee home, calling today, calling today," while another says, "Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, Calling for you and for me." Jesus is portrayed as holding out "promises for you and for me," if we will only "come home." Not surprisingly, such blasphemous "evangelism" is very successful. When the incarnate God is seen as begging sovereign man to accept His bribes and "come home," there is no true surrender to a sovereign God, but rather an exploitation of another resource by man the sinner. Such revivalistic additions to churches are proud, contentious, and self-righteous sinners who expect the church and pastor to submit to their will and to gratify them as they have been taught God and Christ have supposedly gratified them. The salvation peddled by Arminian hucksters is not of God. St. John said, of all true converts, who are those who believe in Christ, that they "were born, not of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). It is the act of

⁷ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 48f.

God, not of man, that saves man. Biblical salvation is not self-salvation. Chapter X, “Of Effectual Calling,” of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, declares,

I. All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested.

The only “pleading” in our salvation is not by Jesus Christ, but by man the sinner, and his pleading is itself the working of the Holy Spirit in his life. Men are effectually called by the Spirit through the word of God.

It must be added that, in this effectual calling, a distinction must be made between regeneration and conversion. There must be

regeneration before there is any disposition to conversion. Conversion is the reaction of man to regeneration.

As Hodge noted,

Regeneration is the effect produced by the Holy Ghost in effectual calling. The Holy Spirit, in the act of effectual calling, causes the soul to become regenerate by implanting a new governing principle or habit of spiritual affection and action. The soul itself, in conversion, immediately acts under the guidance of this new principle in turning from sin unto God through Christ. It is evident that the implantation of the gracious principle is different from the exercise of that principle, and that making a man willing is different from his acting willingly. This first is the act of God solely; the second is the consequent act of man, dependent upon the continued assistance of the Holy Ghost.⁸

Effectual calling is a manifestation of God's power. Just as creation was God's sovereign act, the calling into being out of nothing of all things in heaven and earth, so re-creation or regeneration is His sovereign act. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16). Here our Lord, while speaking primarily to His disciples, was speaking, as we have already seen, to all His church. All are saved by His choice and His sovereign power. Moreover, this sovereign choice which ordained our *effectual calling* also ordains our *effectual living*: we shall bring forth fruit, and our fruit shall remain. For this reason St. Paul could with full assurance declare that "ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). The sovereign power of God which calls us is now the sovereign power who effectually works within us.

There is still another clause to this sentence: "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). This must not be misunderstood. As Lenski noted, "These apostles are not to bear fruit 'in order that the Father may do whatever they ask'; nor did Jesus make his appointment 'in order

⁸ Archibald Alexander Hodge, *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1869), 236.

that' their petitions may be heard." The fact is, as Lenski added, "Jesus had appointed that the Father give them whatever they may ask him. The words are really a great promise, one that is here connected with fruit bearing, just as in 14:13 the same promise is connected with the doing of the greater works."⁹

As Ellicott noted, "Each one as a branch ever joined to Christ was to grow away from Him in the development of his own work, and was to bring forth his own fruit." In the commission of that which our Lord has chosen us to do, we are to pray in His name (John 14:13; 15:7-8). The *effectual calling* of our God means *effectual living* and *effectual prayer* when that prayer is directed in terms of our calling and our particular work for the Lord. The condition, "in my name," means "as My representatives on earth, as persons doing My work, living in My Spirit, seeking as I have sought to do the will of the Father."¹⁰ When God saves us by His sovereign grace, He does not then abandon us to our resources until the time of our entrance into heaven. Our effectual calling is followed by His effectual power in our living and praying.

⁹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1942), 1052f.

¹⁰ C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VI (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 506, 512.

XXXVII

Justification

The need for justification is an intense and basic one. Man, created in the image of God, needs to be able to stand before God, before man, and before his own conscience in innocence and confidence. The need for justification extends to more than an acquittal of charges against man. Such an acquittal man needs. Apart from it, man is doomed to self-justification in the form of sadistic and masochistic activities.¹ He will seek to lay his guilt upon others who are around him, and to punish them, in atonement for his guilt; he will savagely and zealously persecute the “guilty” sin-bearer whom he chooses, in order to demonstrate his supposed zeal for righteousness. Liberal and conservative humanists, in their reform movements, are deeply infected by a sadistic urge to justify themselves by finding guilt in their appointed sin-bearer. With others, the urge to justification is more masochistic, and self-punishing acts predominate. When a recent survey among automobile drivers asked, who is guilty, if a car across the highway, going in the opposite direction, crosses over into your lane to hit you head on, more than a handful held that they were guilty. The surveyors concluded that all too many drivers had a heavy burden of guilt and a masochistic urge to make such an answer possible. The need of the guilty for acquittal and innocence is so great that sado-masochistic activities color, in varying degrees, the activities of the unregenerate. They seek to pay the price, to make atonement for their sins and absolve their guilt, by a variety of sadistic and masochistic activities. In some, both forms of self-justification will be present. Cruelty will always mark a godless era, because “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel” (Prov. 12:10).

The need for justification extends to more than a need for innocence. It is a requirement also for confidence that one is on the

¹ See R. J. Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1970), 1-20.

right path and doing the right thing, that one is righteous and is fulfilling the creation mandate to exercise dominion and to develop the Kingdom of God on earth. Man feels a need to be in tune with the heartbeat of the universe and to move in the direction of the future. A guilty past ties him to yesterday: he cannot move freely, because the guilty man feels the bondage of the past, which, like a tether, permits him to go so far and no further. The exuberance of life and dominion is then gone.

Prior to World War I, the Armenians, in their homeland, lived under the tyranny of the Turks, with frequent massacres and confiscations. Nonetheless, despite their sometimes defective faith, they manifested an exuberance born of faith. It was a custom, in some districts, for the father, on returning home from work and being greeted by his family, to survey them and his home and declare proudly and happily, "I am a lord!"

St. Peter speaks of the godly man and wife "as being heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7). Life is not a burden of sin and guilt to the godly but a joyful grace, a privilege and a wealth.

Justification thus does more than render a man's past free from the burden of sin and guilt. It justifies his life. The dictionary defines *justify* thus: "1. To show to be just; vindicate; defend; also, to make just and right. 2. To declare guiltless or blameless; show or declare to have done justly or rightly; exonerate. 3. *Theol.* To regard and treat as righteous on the ground of Christ's mediatorial work." The third definition is called theological, but in reality all three are theological. Justification through Jesus Christ means that we are exonerated and declared guiltless. While very strictly the atoning work of Christ on the cross effects our acquittal and does not sanctify us, the separation of justification from faith, adoption, and sanctification is a logical and analytical one. In life, these things are synchronous to a great degree. Justification is the sovereign *act* of God, while sanctification is a continuing *process* during one's life on earth, but in principle our sanctification is tied up with justification, saving faith, and adoption, and sanctification manifests the power of our new life in Christ progressively extending itself into our lives and activities, as we conform ourselves to the law-word of God.

The fact of justification thus sets a man on new ground in terms of a new life.

The Last Judgment is intimately associated with justification, and also with sanctification. There are three aspects to the Last Judgment that are relevant to us here. *First* of all, it is a court and a judgment wherein, before all creation, that judgment which Christ rendered for His elect on the cross, fulfilling their punishment vicariously and acquitting them of the burden of sin and death, is rendered publicly and plainly (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; 14:10, 12; Matt. 12:36-37 etc.). The ungodly will receive their public sentence, and the people of Christ will be openly exonerated, defended, and justified in the face of all their enemies and in the presence of all the saints. *Second*, the saints receive a reward in terms of their sanctification (Rom. 9:23; Matt. 25:21; Rom. 2:5-6). The Second Coming and the Last Judgment are their vindication before the universe and their time of full reward. They are saved by faith, and rewarded according to their works. *Third*, the Second Coming and the Last Judgment are a time of revelation, when even the ungodly are compelled to see. "The Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that *know not* God, and that *obey not* the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-8). Those who *know* God, who have been justified by the atoning work of Christ, *obey* the gospel; their judgment was in Christ, and that judgment is now confirmed before all men, and their obedience rewarded. What the ungodly refused to see when it was an evangel, they now see as a sentence: St. Luke, in speaking of the fall of Jerusalem, saw it as a judgment which is a type of the Last Judgment, "And then shall they see" (Luke 21:27). Judgment is a revelation to the ungodly, but it does not justify them: it is their sentence. For the elect, their judgment in Christ is also their justification. They die in Christ and are born again in Him. The expectation of the Last Judgment is "for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity," according to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Chapter XXXIII, sec. III).

Having now shown how justification is synchronous with more than acquittal, and that it is closely linked with the Last Judgment,

it is important and urgently necessary to *isolate* the fact of justification in order to understand it more clearly. If we do not isolate the fact of justification, we run into the very dangerous error of ascribing to Christ's sovereign act aspects of man's reaction and man's psychology. Psychologically, salvation for man means more than acquittal: it means adoption, the confidence of the sons of God, and the ability to face the problems of the world in terms of the law of God and in the power of the Holy Ghost. For man, justification means transfer from a death cell to a room in the royal mansion: this is its effect. Theologically, the term *justification* means to acquit and to declare legally righteous; it has reference to a judicial fact, a juridical transaction which is strictly separate from its psychological consequences. A judicial pronouncement of sentence always affects us strongly, but the sentence and its effect are two separate facts, although inseparably linked.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter XI, "Of Justification," states the matter powerfully and clearly:

I. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone: not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

II. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

III. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them; and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and, both, freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of

free grace; that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God, might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

IV. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rose again for their justification: nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.

V. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified: and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

VI. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

Justification is, as we have seen, synchronous with regeneration and effectual calling, but it is, very strictly, the judicial act of acquittal, the legal or judicial aspect of our redemption. Clark has observed, of this legal aspect of salvation, that

The imputation of our guilt to Christ and of his righteousness to us, together with his satisfying divine justice, is disparaged and belittled as a mere legal and commercial transaction. Something repulsive is supposed to attach to a "merely legal" atonement. Would an illegal atonement be more attractive? What is really repulsive about this doctrine is its view of man as a depraved sinner and of salvation as altogether by God's grace. Sinful men hate the doctrine because it prevents them from earning heaven by their own merits. But repentant and humble sinners gladly accept God's gift.²

This strictly legal aspect is not only basic to our salvation, but also basic to the fact of a moral universe and justice. Morality is more than a matter of choice, a question of taste and lifestyle, and justice is more than social convention. They are expressions of the righteousness of God. Remove the legal aspect of salvation, and

² Gordon H. Clark, *What Presbyterians Believe, An Exposition of the Westminster Confession* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1956), 50f.

morality and justice in any objective sense disappear from the world. The legal aspect of salvation anchors salvation in the act of God and relates salvation inescapably to God and His absolute law. The consequences of a non-juridical doctrine of justification appear if we examine its implications and developments in Greek thought. Aristotle defined the highest or “final good” as self-sufficiency. This made the highest good and salvation a purely man-centered thing. For Aristotle himself, this posed a problem, because his basic orientation, while man-centered, was *politically* man-centered. As a result, Aristotle added,

By “self-sufficient” is meant not what is sufficient for oneself living the life of a solitary but includes parents, wife and children, friends and fellow-citizens in general. For man is a social animal. A self-sufficient thing, then, we take to be one which on its own footing tends to make life desirable and lacking in nothing. And we regard happiness as such a thing. Add to this that we regard it as the most desirable of all things without having it counted in with some other desirable thing. For, if such an addition were possible, clearly we should regard it as more desirable when even the smallest advantage was added to it. For the result would be an increase in the number of advantages, and the larger sum of advantages is preferable to the smaller.

Happiness then, the end to which all our conscious acts are directed, is found to be something final and self-sufficient.³

The highest or final good is thus linked firmly with happiness, a subjective emotion, and with self-sufficiency in an anthropocentric sense. At the most, a statist interpretation is possible, and, in terms of the logical direction of self-sufficiency, a purely personal interpretation of the highest or final good, and every other good, is alone possible. Justice and morality are thus not abstract universals beyond man but logically merely projections of man’s ideas. Gary Wills has spoken of “the Aristotelian idea of perfection as self-sufficiency.”⁴ In this universe of self-sufficiency, there is no place for an absolute God and His sovereign law. Justice and

³ J. A. K. Thomson, translator, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1955), 37.

⁴ Gary Wills, “Sex and the Single Priest,” *Playboy*, vol. 19, no. 7, July 1972, 195.

morality become mere conventions. Wherever justification as a legal transaction is denied, there justice and morality have been denied anything more than a humanistic and relativistic status.

The pagan hope of salvation as self-sufficiency means, practically, independence for God, man, and things. Not surprisingly, pagan ascetics took to the desert (as did churchmen influenced by Hellenism). Stoicism fostered a belief in the virtue of total independence from people and things, and Aristotle's pupil, Alexander the Great, was unhappy about his need for food, and for women, and tried to avoid any strong urge toward either.

In the modern hippie culture, the same idea prevails. Salvation is "dropping out from the rat race" of the quest for things. The goal is to be independent of family and material possessions; rags and an unkempt appearance are deliberately cultivated. To avoid the dependency that marital love establishes, sex is treated as a casual and lightly regarded matter, and anyone who has strong feelings about anything, and a deep love for anyone, has a "hang-up."

Quite logically, "the drug culture" developed in this context; Aldous Huxley, in an intense quest for pagan salvation, was a leader of this movement to find escape from people and things and bliss in independence of them by means of drugs. In the private world of every man, salvation was to be realized. Existentialism has been a clear-cut expression of pagan self-sufficiency as salvation.

The doctrine of justification makes it clear that creation is inseparably bound by God's law, so that for man to be saved requires the satisfaction of God's law. This satisfaction God the Son renders by His perfect life and atoning death as our vicarious sacrifice, our substitute who as our federal head undertook the death penalty for us. In the world of Aristotle, this aspect of vicariousness is impossible. All men are autonomous, and all men, therefore, to find their happiness and their final good must pursue self-sufficiency as a goal. Aristotle offers us the hope of statism while giving us the possibility of anarchism. No covenant is possible in Aristotle's world, nor a true vicariate and federal head for mankind, or for the church. Aristotle could be concerned with the need for a first cause in physics and metaphysics, but not an

Adam, because his world began with an atom, and it retained as its essential units only atoms. A federal head for humanity was thus out of the question for Aristotle. Despite its strongly statist drive, Greece produced only atomistic states, city-states, not a united state or empire. Its religion moved into neoplatonism, and its morality into asceticism, because self-sufficiency and atomism were its religious and social goals. The city-states imagined by Aristotle and Plato again were governed by this goal of self-sufficiency: the rest of the world, and the neighboring states, are unessential to their ideal states.

With respect to the *Westminster Confession* statement on justification, A. A. Hodge wrote:

These Sections teach the following propositions:

1st. All those and only those whom God has effectually called he also freely justifies.

2d. This justification is a purely judicial act of God as Judge, whereby he pardons all the sins of a believer, and accounts, accepts and treats him as a person righteous in the eye of the divine law.

3d. That this justifying act proceeds upon the imputation or crediting to the believer by God of the righteousness of his great Representative and Surety, Jesus Christ.

4th. That the essential and sole condition upon which this righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer is, that he exercise faith in or on Christ as his righteousness.

5th. That this faith is itself a gracious gift of God.

6th. That no other grace, neither love nor hope nor obedience, sustains the same relation to justification that faith does as its essential condition or instrument; yet this faith is never alone in the justified person, but is always, when genuine, accompanied with all other Christian graces, all of which have their root in faith.⁵

The legal action of justification is God's act. The faith which is the sole condition upon which Christ's righteousness is legally imputed

⁵ Archibald Alexander Hodge, *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1869), 245f.

to the believer is itself the gift of God and is entirely of grace. At no point is there a foothold for Aristotle's self-sufficient and autonomous man. At every point, the initiative, power, and determination with respect to salvation belong solely to God. If this sovereignty of God with respect to salvation, as of all things, is to any extent compromised, then Aristotle's autonomous man reemerges and God is denied. In pseudo-Christian theology, the goal is to gain the benefits of sovereign grace while retaining sovereign man; the result is a radical failure.

Justification is synchronous with subjective changes in man, and, while in a sense inseparable from them, is still very much a distinct fact, in that it is the purely legal aspect of salvation. Without the legal acquittal or justification of man in God's court, no salvation would be possible, nor would the God-given calling and faith be at all possible. Hodge, in discussing the second of the six propositions concerning justification, wrote:

As to its nature, this justification is a purely judicial act of God as Judge, whereby he pardons all the sins of a believer, and accounts, accepts and treats him as a person righteous in the eye of the divine law. This includes two subordinate propositions:

(1) Justification is a judicial act of God, whereby he declares us to be conformed to the demands of the law as the condition of our life; it is not an act of gracious power, making us holy or conformed to the law as a standard of moral character.... The true sense of justification stated above is (a) always used to express an act declaring a man to be square with the demands of the law, never to express an act making him holy. Gal. ii. 16; iii. 11.

(b) In Scripture, justification is always set forth as the opposite of *condemnation*. The opposite of "to sanctify" is "to pollute," but the opposite of "to justify" is "to condemn." Rom. viii. 30-34; John iii. 18.

(c) The true sense of the phrase "to justify" is clearly proved by the terms used in Scripture as equivalent to it. For example: "To impute righteousness without works"; "To forgive iniquities"; "To cover sins." Rom. iv. 6-8. "Not to impute

transgression unto them.” 2 Cor. v. 19. “Not to bring into condemnation.” John v. 24.⁶

Shaw summarized the matter clearly: “Justification is a judicial act of God, and is not a change of nature, but a change of the sinner’s state in relation to the law.” Moreover, “No man can be justified before God, in whole or in part on the ground of a personal righteousness of any kind.”⁷

Arminians maintain that faith itself, or the act of believing, is accepted as our justifying righteousness. In opposition to this our Confession teaches, that God does not justify us “by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, as our righteousness.”...Faith is not righteousness. Righteousness is the fulfilling of the law.

Neonomians allege, that though we cannot fulfil that *perfect* obedience which the law of works demanded, yet God has been graciously pleased for Christ’s sake to give us a *new law*; according to which, *sincere obedience*, or faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, are accepted as our justifying righteousness. It may be here remarked, that the Scripture nowhere gives the slightest intimation that a new and milder law has been substituted in place of the law of works originally given to man. Christ came “not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.” The Gospel was never designed to teach sinners that God will now accept of a *sincere* instead of a *perfect* obedience, but to direct them to Jesus Christ as “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” The idea of a *new law*; adapted to the present condition of human nature, reflects the greatest dishonour both upon the law and the Lawgiver; for it assumes that the Lawgiver is mutable, and that the law first given to man demanded too much.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ is the sole ground of a sinner’s justification before God. It is not his essential righteousness as God that we intend, for that is incommunicable; but his mediatory or surety- righteousness, which, according to our Confession, consists of his “obedience and satisfaction.”⁸

⁶ *Ibid.*, 246f.

⁷ Robert Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1846), 147-148.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 150f.

Justification sustains the law of God: it does not nullify it or displace it. If the law were subject to change, or replacement, then it was futile for Christ to die, if the law given to Moses has no permanently binding character. Where the law is denied, justification is eventually denied, because an antinomian religion has no need of a judicial act of God to effect salvation. Such an antinomian religion cannot make sense of the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, when it declares:

Q. 70. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which He pardoneth all their sin, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in His sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

An antinomian religion will tend to bypass or underplay the word *justify* in favor of *saved*, i.e., to look at the results rather than the only way to those results. Instead of answering, I know I am saved, because Christ died for my sins, and, apart from any good thing in me, or faith in me, by His sovereign grace pardoned my sins and redeemed me, the Arminian or antinomian will say, "I know I am saved, because I believe in Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour." The ground of salvation is made the personal choice of an autonomous man who has appropriated another resource in order to achieve his happiness or final good. With Arminianism or antinomianism, Aristotle's autonomous man reappears in a pseudo-Christian guise.

Not surprisingly, Socinians, Arminians, and antinomians reduce justification to the pardoning of sins. When pardon is separated from justification, or when the forgiveness of sins is separated from the unchanging law of God, then forgiveness is reduced to an emotional change in the forgiver, and an emotional release in the forgiven. However, as Hodge noted,

Justification is not mere pardon; it includes pardon of sin, and in addition the declaration that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the person justified, and that

consequently he has a right to all the immunities and rewards which in the covenant of life are suspended upon perfect conformity to the demands of the law.

Pardon (a) relaxes the claims of law, or waives their exaction in a given case. (b) It is an act of a sovereign in the exercise of pure prerogative. (c) It is free, resting upon considerations of mercy or of public policy. (d) It simply remits the penalty of sin; it secures neither honours nor rewards.

On the other hand, justification (a) is the act of a judge, not a sovereign. (b) It rests purely upon the state of the law and of the facts, and is impossible where there is not a perfect righteousness. (c) It pronounces the law not relaxed but fulfilled in its strictest sense. (d) It declares the person justified to be justly entitled to all the honours and advantages suspended upon perfect conformity to all the demands of law.⁹

Only because we have been vicariously justified by the atoning work of Christ, whereby the full weight of the law stands, are we personally pardoned for our sins.

While we are the elect of God from all eternity, we are only justified when we are effectually called. Antinomians hold that election means justification, so that they insist that predestination cancels justification. There is no ground for this opinion, in that it is an attempt to say that history is meaningless, if God is sovereign. Meaning for history is taken to mean primary determination by history. This is the same as saying that I cannot be a man unless I am also a god. Predestination simply says that God is sovereign, and that I am a creature, that God is the primary determiner of all things and not I. I do not thereby unman myself, but rather affirm that I am a man. Of the elect, Shaw declared,

The righteousness by which they are justified was perfected in Christ's death, and the perfection of it was declared by his resurrection, and they may be said to have been *virtually* justified when Christ was acquitted and discharged as their head and representative; nevertheless, they are not *actually* and

⁹. Hodge, *op. cit.*, 248.

formally justified until they are vitally united to Christ by faith.¹⁰

Finally, once saved, always saved. Justification is a single and final act. There is “*no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). The same justification redeemed believers before Christ as that which redeems them now. St. Paul cited the example of Abraham to illustrate how the elect of every age are justified (Rom. 4:3). Justification thus establishes our salvation in the grace of God and confirms at the same time the law of God. It does not permit that antinomianism Clark refers to as he cites the “parody” of a gospel song,

Free from the law, O blessed condition,
I can sin as I please and still have remission.¹¹

Unfortunately, this is not a parody. One famous American preacher has declared, “You can blaspheme, commit adultery, drink, smoke, tie one on, etc. and the Lord has to forgive you on the ground of grace.” This is antinomianism with a vengeance; it asserts the sovereignty of man: God “has to” do what we require. Not surprisingly, this view leads to a pragmatic concept of salvation: “what’s in it for me?” What does God have to offer as against the world? God and Satan are reduced to bidders for man’s favor, with man as sovereign, so that God is made into a tempter, trying to bribe man into salvation with enticing offers and pleadings. This is blasphemy.

¹⁰. Shaw, *op. cit.*, 158.

¹¹. Clark, *op. cit.*, 51.

XXXVIII

Adoption

The doctrine of adoption is an important aspect of our salvation. Adoption, both civil and religious, involves, *first*, an act of law, whereby the status of a person is changed from one condition to another, and, *second*, a change of family, a transfer from one family and name to another. It is thus closely connected with justification, in that it is in large measure a juridical transaction. A *third* aspect of adoption is the fact that it involves a change of worship. This was an important part of the legal aspect of adoption in Roman law. Since St. Paul specifically wrote in the Roman Empire and to subjects and citizens thereof, the Roman law of adoption was obviously in mind. Had he written of practices of adoption in contradiction to Roman law, he would have specified the differences. S. E. Johnson has said, of the relationship of the Roman law to St. Paul,

The important point is that in Roman law the adopted son became the member of the new family just as if he had been born of the blood of the adopter. He was in all respects a real son: he underwent a change of family and *potestas*, of name and domicile, and acquired all the privileges and responsibilities of sonship; and he did not participate in the worship of the old family but in the *sacra privata* of the new.¹

In the early church, the clear awareness of the heirship which civil law gave by adoption gave believers a vivid and joyful knowledge of the meaning of adoption in Christ. As Sollier pointed out,

Baptism, the laver of regeneration, became the occasion of a spontaneous expression of faith in our adopted sonship. The newly baptized were called *infantes*, irrespective of age. They assumed names which suggested the idea of adoption, such as

¹ S. E. Johnson, "Adoption," in James Hastings, editor, F. C. Grant, H. H. Rowley, revisers, *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 11.

Adeptus, Regeneratus, Renatus, Reigenitus, Theogonus, and the like. In the liturgical prayers for neophytes, some of which have survived even to our own day (e.g., the collect for Holy Saturday and the preface for Pentecost), the officiating prelate made it a sacred duty to remind them of this grace of adoption, and to call down from Heaven a like blessing on those who had not yet been so favoured.²

The Council of Trent made it clear, however, that the celebration of adoption at baptism could not separate it from justification. In fact,

The Council first identifies justification with adoption: "To become just and to be heirs according to the hope of life everlasting" is one and the same thing. It then proceeds to give the real essence of justification: "Its sole formal cause is the justice of God, not that whereby He Himself is just, but that whereby He maketh us just."³

Adoption is, like justification, entirely of God and is an act of grace. We are predestined to adoption (Eph. 1:5), and this is not because of any foreseen merit, but according to the good pleasure of God's will. Mueller thus declared,

Therefore, the adoption is an act of God's free grace and excludes all human merit; it is absolutely *sola gratia*. As believers have been redeemed purely by grace, so also they have been adopted purely by grace. Thus, God heaps grace upon grace in electing, redeeming, and adopting His elect saints.⁴

In the tradition of Calvin, adoption, while following justification, and closely connected with it, is not required by it. Adoption is of grace, not of necessity. As Beckwith held,

The only essential sonship is that of Christ primarily as the eternal Son, and secondarily as his humanity shares this prerogative through union with the divine nature. Through adoption the elect in Christ become partakers of Christ's

² J. F. Sollier, "Adoption," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. I (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 149.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ J. Theodore Mueller, "Adoption," in Carl F. H. Henry, editor, *Basic Christian Doctrines* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 222.

sonship. Adoption is grounded neither in justification nor in regeneration, but in God's free and sovereign grace alone. Through justification the legal and judicial disabilities caused by sin are removed; through regeneration the nature is changed so as to become filial. Thus a basis is laid for a distinction between the state of adoption and the spirit of adoption.⁵

The fact of adoption is again synchronous with other aspects of our redemption and yet distinct. "Adoption in a theological sense is that act of God's free grace by which, upon our being justified by faith in Christ, we are received into the family of God; and entitled to the inheritance of heaven."⁶ Salvation is an indivisible unity, even more than a man is an indivisible unity, yet even the eye of a man has its distinct aspects which cannot be confused with one another. Webb, while strictly affirming the one and indivisible natures of grace and of salvation, pointed out that not only are there various facets to salvation, but these can also be classed variously:

The items of redemption fall apart into two classes — those which are external, and those which are internal, that is, those things which being done *for* sinners affect their legal standing before God, and those things which are done in them, affect their subjective and internal moral natures. There are two changes which grace makes in the sinner's relation to God — the one change is effected by justification and the other by adoption, the one (justification) confirming him as a member of the kingdom of God, and the other (adoption) confirming him as a member of the family of God. And there are likewise and correspondingly two changes in his nature — the one effected by regeneration and the other by sanctification; the one initiatory of a new and holy life, and the other (sanctification) gradually developing what is begun in regeneration into a completeness which has nothing short of the character of God as its model and goal. In Scripture these objective elements of redemption are symbolized by blood, and these subjective factors are symbolized by water.

⁵ Clarence Augustine Beckwith, "Adoption," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1969), 48.

⁶ "Adoption," in John M'Clintock and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. I (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895), 78.

Theological science has long ago vindicated the distinction between regeneration and sanctification; it would be conducive to clearness if the distinction between justification and adoption could be as distinctly recognized.⁷

The doctrine of adoption is of no concern to liberals in the church, because they affirm the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all men as the sons of God. At this point, the liberals have a seemingly Biblical basis for their position. In Malachi 2:10, we read, “Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?” There is no ground in this text for an application to all men, because it clearly is applied to members of the covenant, to Israel, for Malachi continues, “why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?” The sins of the covenant people, the sons of God by grace, are the subject of Malachi’s concern, and the covenant people alone are spoken of.

The other relevant text is Acts 17:28-29, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” Paul’s ideas in Acts 17:28 are common to several Greek poets: Cleanthes, a Stoic philosopher (300-220 B.C.), and Aratus (c. 310-c. 240 B.C.) of Soli in Cilicia, who wrote, “Ever and in all ways we enjoy Jupiter, *for we are also his offspring.*” On other occasions also (1 Cor. 15:32, where Menander is quoted, and Epimenides of Crete, Titus 1:12), Paul cited Greek poets to reenforce a point made to a Greek-speaking cultural milieu. Paul’s point in Acts 17:28-29 is to compel what should be a self-evident conclusion, that is, that God’s own offspring should know better than to attempt to reduce God to a visible person who can be depicted by a sculptor. “Paul intends to say that the Athenians should certainly have touched and found God sufficiently, so that they would know that as the One in whom we live, move, and are, no images of gold, silver, or stone, a thing fashioned by the creature could in the least be like

⁷ Robert Alexander Webb, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1947), 22.

god.”⁸ Paul’s appeal thus is to the fact of our creation in the image of God, not to any liberal or pantheistic doctrine of sonship. He is not trying to make a point about the divinity of man, which he did not believe, but about man’s inescapable knowledge of God by virtue of man’s creation in God’s image. His point is similar to that of Romans 1:18-21. Bruce makes clear St. Paul’s meaning:

We are, then, the offspring of God, says Paul: not, of course, in the pantheistic sense intended by the Stoic poets, but in the sense of the Biblical doctrine of man, as a being created by God in His image and after His likeness. There is, indeed, a mighty difference between this relation of men to God in the old creation and that redemptive relation which men of the new creation enjoy as sons of God “through faith, in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). But Paul is dealing here with the responsibility of all men as God’s creatures to give Him the honour which is His due. And this honour is certainly not given if men envisage the divine nature in terms of plastic images. Here he echoes the perpetual Jewish polemic against image-worship which has its roots in such OT passages as Isa. 44:9ff. Even if pagan philosophers rationalize the images as mere symbols of the invisible divinity, the great bulk of the worshippers pay divine homage to the images themselves.⁹

Very early in history, the people of God were distinguished from the sons of men as the sons of God (Gen. 6:2). Israel was called God’s “first born” (Ex. 4:22).

However, while the argument of the brotherhood of all men as the sons of God is asserted to influence Christians, in reality the argument has virtually no weight among those who assert it. Instead of emphasizing divine sonship, the agnostics and atheists speak instead of alienation. They are alienated from God, man, and themselves. But this is not all. In terms of existentialism, these men feel it necessary to develop and aggravate their alienation as an act of liberation.

⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1944), 737.

⁹ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1954), 360f.

Thus, as Krutch points out, critic Susan Sontag, in reviewing Jack Smith's film, *Flaming Creatures*, which deals with group rape, on-screen masturbation, oral sensuality, and, apparently, is homosexual in nature, commented,

Flaming Creatures is outrageous and it intends to be. But it is a beautiful film... a triumphant example of an esthetic vision of the world and such a vision is perhaps always, at its core, epicene.¹⁰

Krutch asks why "an esthetic vision of the world" must perhaps always at its core be homosexual. Why must it take "the road to perdition?" Krutch then adds:

If Miss Sontag does not explain why an esthetic vision must be epicene, she does undertake to explain why modern art must be "outrageous": "Art is always the sphere of freedom. In those difficult works of art we now call avant-garde, the artist consciously exercises his freedom." This argument is obviously parallel with that favorite of the Sartrian existentialists, namely, the contentions that: (1) the unmotivated act is the only positive assertion of freedom; and (2) the best unmotivated act is one of arbitrary cruelty.¹¹

Why should the existentialist, seeking independence from God and man, find his best expression of freedom in arbitrary cruelty? There are many reasons for such a championing of cruelty as freedom, but, for our purposes, we must concern ourselves with the heart of the matter. *First*, existentialist freedom requires an independence from God and man, and arbitrary, unmotivated cruelty certainly emphasizes a radical kind of independence. *Second*, existentialist man wants to be his own god. A central aspect of the power of God is set forth in Hannah's song: "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up" (1 Sam. 2:6). Man has no power to create life; he cannot create a world out of nothing, nor can he call into being again a life that is dead. What man can do is to kill, and, as a result, existentialist

¹⁰. Joseph Wood Krutch, "Must Writers Hate the Universe?" in Ned E. Hoopes, editor, *Who Am I? Essays on the Alienated* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1971), 199.

¹¹. *Ibid.*, 200.

freedom, as it seeks an expression of power, will seek it in lawlessness, in fornication, homosexuality, cruelty, and murder. For such people, as for Susan Sontag, the beautiful vision of life is the epicene vision, man as the brutal degenerate. As against adoption, the existentialist chooses alienation and warfare.

For the Biblical view of salvation, the culminating act of grace in salvation is our adoption, with all that it implies of heirship in time and eternity. For the existentialist, the mark of existentialist “grace” or freedom is unmotivated, arbitrary cruelty, which demonstrates that one is disinherited and at best a bastard. Not surprisingly, thinkers in the existentialist tradition see themselves as disinherited, as bastards, and as enemies of God and man, whereas believers in Christ see themselves in terms of adoption.

Of adoption, William Laughton wrote,

The word *adoption* occurs only in five instances (in Scripture), Ro. viii. 15, 23; ix. 4; Ga. iv. 5; Ep. i. 5; but the subject is often referred to elsewhere, and is presented under a variety of aspects. On God’s part, adoption is represented — (1) As having its origin in his eternal counsel and purpose, Ep. i. 4-5. (2) As flowing immediately from Christ and the union of his people with him, Jn. i. 12; Ga. iii. 26; iv. 4-5. Hence the parallel between the relation of the Father to Christ and to his people, Jn. xx. 17; — Christ is their elder brother, Ro. viii. 29; they are joint-heirs with him, Ro. viii. 17. (3) As sealed by the work of the Holy Spirit, producing in them the character and disposition of children, Jn. i. 12-13; Ro. viii. 14-16; Ga. iv. 6. (4) As consummated at the resurrection, Ro. viii. 23. On the other hand, the privilege of sonship, as enjoyed by God’s peoples, include — (1) The love and favour of God in a special and pre-eminent degree, I Jn. iii. 1; Ep. v. 1; Jn. xvii. 23, 26. (2) Fatherly provision, protection, and discipline at God’s hand, Mat. vi. 31-33; x. 28, 30; He. xii. 5-8. (3) Access to God with filial confidence, Ro. viii. 15, 26-27; 1 Jn. v. 14; Mat. vi. 8-9. (4) The inheritance of future glory and blessedness, Ro. viii. 17-18; Re. xxi. 7; 1 Pe. i. 4.

Christian adoption is to be distinguished — (1) From the sonship of Adam, who is spoken of as the son of God, Lu. iii. 38, because, as the first man, he derived his being immediately from the hand of God, and was made in God’s image and

likeness; this was the sonship of creation. (2) From the sonship ascribed, in a still more limited sense, to the whole human family. They are all the offspring of God, because in him they live, and move, and have their being, Ac. xvii. 28-29. (3) From the sonship or adoption ascribed to the ancient people, Ex. iv. 22-23; Je. iii 19; Ro. ix. (4) This, as regarding the nation at large, and the earthly inheritance which they enjoyed, was only a typical adoption — the shadow, and not the substance. The true saints of God, indeed, in Old Testament times had a spiritual sonship, essentially the same as that which is enjoyed under the gospel; though, in the measure of its manifestation to them, and of their present enjoyment of it, it fell far short of the Christian privilege, Ga. iv. 1-7.¹²

The sonship of Adam (Luke 3:38) was of grace, as are all things from a sovereign God.

The emphasis on grace in adoption is very clearly brought out by Shaw:

Adoption, being a change of state is completed at once, and is equally the privilege of all that truly believe in Christ. Gal. iii. 26, 28. Some of the children of God may excel others in gifts and gracious qualities; but the filial relation to God is the same in all. This high privilege entirely flows from the free and sovereign grace of God... "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." I John iii. 1.1.¹³

The privileges of this adoption are best summarized by Shaw. They are, *first*, that the adopted ones obtain a new name. They "are called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD hath named" (Isa. 62:2); they are now "My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18). *Second*,

They receive the spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6. The Spirit implants in them the disposition of children, and transforms them into the image of God's dear Son. He witnesses with their spirits that they are the sons of God; he

¹² William Laughton, "Adoption," in Patrick Fairbairn, editor, *Fairbairn's Imperial Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1957), 106f.

¹³ Robert Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1846), 161f.

seals them to the day of redemption, and is the earnest of their inheritance until the day of redemption of the purchased possession. Rom. viii. 16; Eph. i. 13-14.¹⁴

Third, adoption gives access to the throne of grace with boldness, so that prayers are heard (1 John 5:14). *Fourth*, the adopted ones are the objects of God's fatherly compassion (Ps. 103:13). *Fifth*, they enjoy the Father's protection (Ps. 34:7; Heb. 1:14). *Sixth*, they are provided for by their heavenly Father, by His providential favors (Matt. 6:30-34; Ps. 34:9-10) and by His word (Phil 4:9). *Seventh*, this parental care includes correction and chastisement (Heb. 12:6; Ps. 89:30-34; Ps. 94:12; Ps. 119:67, 71; Job 5:17). *Eighth*, adoption means eternal security in the state of sonship, so that the adopted cannot totally and finally depart from the Father (Jer. 32:40). *Ninth*, adoption means heirship in all the promise of God (Heb. 6:12, 17). *Tenth*, this heirship makes the adopted the heirs of heaven, of salvation, of the grace of life, and of the Kingdom of God's promises, to cite some of Scripture's statements (1 Peter 1:4; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 3:7; James 2:5; Rom. 8:17).

Justification means a *changed legal relationship* to God, a change from condemnation to justification. Simultaneously, there is a *change of nature by regeneration*. The effect of regeneration and its consequent act is *faith*. *Sanctification* is *progressive growth* in the new life by means of obedience from the heart to God's *law*. *Adoption* is the new creature in his new relations. "Justification effects only a change of relations. Regeneration and sanctification effect only inherent moral and spiritual states of soul. Adoption includes both. As set forth in Scripture, it embraces in one complex view the newly-regenerated creature in the new relations into which he is introduced by justification"¹⁵

To use an image cited by Gordon H. Clark, a *pardoned* criminal is released from prison, but not thereby *accepted* into society in his previous status. Justification gives us both pardon and acceptance. Adoption witnesses to the objective change of relationship and the subjective change of character. Our King not only pardons us, but

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹⁵ Archibald Alexander Hodge, *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1869), 261.

He also accepts us as His adopted children and as heirs of His Kingdom.¹⁶

¹⁶. Gordon H. Clark, *What Presbyterians Believe, An Exposition of the Westminster Confession* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1956), 56.

The Forgiver

Theologians, quite rightly, in discussing the order of salvation, give priority to things other than forgiveness. Essentially, it is the divine initiative which at every point is prior in time, authority, and determination.

Joseph Bellamy, in *An Essay on the Nature and Glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1762), summarized his analysis of the gospel in three propositions:

Proposition 1. The great God, the Creator, Preserver, Lord, and Governor of the world, is an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, the supreme good, infinitely worthy of supreme love, and honor, and universal obedience, from his creature man.

Prop. II. The divine law, which requires this of us, on pain of eternal death, is holy, just, and good, a glorious law, worthy to be magnified and kept in honor in God's government.

Prop. III. The design of the mediatorial office and work of the Son of God incarnate, was to do honor to the divine law, and thereby open a way in which God might call, and sinners might come to him, and be received to favor, and entitled to eternal life, consistent with the honor of the divine government.¹

We have seen the significance of the forgiveness of sins in relationship to the fact of hell; it is now necessary to look behind the doctrine of forgiveness to the Forgiver. Man is so easily absorbed with the fact of guilt and the need for absolution that he overlooks the offense and the offended one. A particularly vicious woman once remarked bitterly of her husband, "Why doesn't he forgive me? Doesn't he realize how much I'm suffering?" This question itself was a manifestation of sin; her concern was entirely with herself, her misery, her suffering, her burden of guilt. There

¹ *The Works of Joseph Bellamy, D.D.*, vol. II (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), 448.

was no repentance, only regret; there was no awareness of the sufferings of her husband and parents, nor any change in her self-justification, but only a desire to be absolved of guilt, not to forsake sin.

There can be no forgiveness without a forgiver; contrary to the modern belief, there is nothing automatic or necessary about forgiveness. Forgiveness is not inevitable and mandatory. God, as the offended one, has absolute right to establish the terms of forgiveness and to hold the sinner to those terms. The guilty party cannot, either in relation to God or to man, establish and ordain the terms of his forgiveness. The humanist regards himself as the center of the world; as such, if he admits God into his universe, he requires God to provide him with forgiveness, help, and whatever else man wants on demand. "Ilico" very aptly described this perspective:

The present generation is not morally serious enough to believe in hell; it can scarcely understand Calvin's words, "Without judgment there can be no God"; it has sympathy with the gibe of Heine, "The good God will pardon me, for that's His job."²

An attitude not too far different from Heine's is prevalent in fundamentalist circles, where the emphasis is so heavily on personal salvation, a humanistic centrality, rather than the glory of God and His righteousness. God is there to save man, in this perspective, whereas it is clearly the reverse priority which is true. Man's calling is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. The salvation of man is important, but far from primary. To put the emphasis on man's need, whether that need is for salvation, for food, or for pleasure, is to lose perspective on life. The world does not operate for man's benefit nor to satisfy man's needs. If we make man's *needs* central, we are in principle in agreement with those who make man's *way* central. Bellamy summed up the matter ably:

To say, "It is no matter what man's principles be, if their lives are good," is the same as to say, "Paganism and

² Ilico, *No More Apologies* (London: The Religious Book Club, 1941), 76f.

Mahometanism are as safe ways to heaven as Christianity," which is downright infidelity.

To say, "good men may differ; there are more ways to heaven than one, all equally safe; it is needless to be at pains to look things to the bottom," is much the same as to say, "Let every one sincerely live up to his own scheme, and he will be safe," which again will land one on the shores of infidelity.³

In every area of thought, the first premise must be that the God of Scripture is, and that He is all that Scripture infallibly declares Him to be. Implied in the gospel is the fact that, as Bellamy summed it up,

God is considered as the moral Governor of the world; that man is considered as a proper subject of moral government; that God's law is considered as holy, just, and good; that man has broken it, is without excuse, stands guilty before God, already condemned; and is so far from penitence, that he is dead in sin, an enemy to God, and at enmity against his law and government.⁴

Consequently, some very important things are involved before we can think about the forgiveness of our sins. *First* of all, a person has been offended, God Himself. Every sin, whether directly against God or primarily against another man, against an animal, or the earth, is essentially against God and His law-order. As a result, God is rightfully offended by every sin. David, after his adultery with Bathsheba, declared, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. 51:4). As Leupold commented on this, "All sin is seen to be great when it is understood as having been directed against none less than God, no matter how much man may have been wronged by it."⁵ Sin pits man's will against God's will, and man's dream of bending reality to his will against God's purposes and God's reality. Thus, sin is not only committed by a person, but it is also essentially against the person of God.

³. Bellamy, *op. cit.*, 272.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 281.

⁵. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959), 402.

Forgiveness is thus an aspect of relationships between persons. If there is no God, and only an impersonal universe surrounds us, then forgiveness is also devalued. In an impersonal universe reality is essentially impersonal, and answers to problems are sought in heredity, environment, sociology, naturalistic psychologies, and the like. The key then is sought apart from forgiveness and in terms of various adjustments and changes. Forgiveness is seen as an empty formula, an oral expression which clearly cannot change the past or alter the future.

Because we live in an atheistic era which bypasses God and forgiveness, we are infected by its impersonality, and forgiveness is less basic or central to our relationships with one another. The result is that people are a major problem to one another, and for less reason, in a way unknown in more Christian eras. In other eras, men fought more and forgave more: they were more personal. Today, men fight less readily and forgive even less readily. Freud was right: the answer needed by the people on his couch was, "Son thy sins be forgiven thee.... Arise, take up thy bed, and walk" (Mark 2:5, 9). However, the patients on Freud's couch did not believe in, nor want God any more than Freud did; as a result, they were there for a scientific and an impersonal answer. Their id, ego, and superego were to blame, their ancient ancestry and their recent environment. They wanted the benefits of forgiveness, but never the Forgiver.

An impersonal age will have personal problems, because it will recognize neither the centrality of forgiveness to the nature of man nor the permeating scope of forgiveness in the life of man. Personality clashes are common to every era; it was a problem in the Philippian Church, and St. Paul wrote, "I beseech Euodius, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phil. 4:2). Then, as now, women (and men) have personality clashes, but in an age of impersonalism there is less ability to remedy that fact.

Second, not only is the person of God offended by sin, but also His law and His order. God's peace is broken by sin, and His Kingdom claimed by rebellion. The penalty for this offense is death. God's law must stand. As Bellamy so powerfully stated it,

The law supposed that God was really by name God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious Being, as it required us to consider and treat him as such. Our revolt was a practical declaration, that he was not by nature God, nor worthy to be glorified as God. To give up the law in favor of his rebellious creature, must therefore be the same, in effect, as for God to give up his own divinity, and ungod himself in the sight of all his dominions, to gratify a rebel.

Again, the law also supposed, that as God was the Creator, Lord, and owner of the universe, and by nature God; so he was possessed of supreme authority, an authority infinitely binding, and infinitely worthy to be revered. To give up the law, therefore, was in effect the same as to resign his authority in favor of those who had despised it, give quitclaim of the universe, and tolerate a general revolt. As if God should say, "The universe is not mine, nor have I any authority over it; angels, men, and devils, are all at liberty; there is no king, and so every one may do what is right in his own eyes." For to hold his authority merely on the footing of the voluntary loyalty of his subjects, so that whenever any revolt, they are at liberty; no longer to obey; to do this only in one instance, is in effect to relinquish all claim to authority over any, as founded in his Godhead and Lordship; which is, in effect, the same as to quit his claim to his own divinity and to his own world, to gratify those who would gladly ungod him and dethrone him. In a word, for God to give up the law, which requires us to love and obey him with all our hearts, is practically to declare to his rebellious creatures, "Your disaffection to my character, and rebellion against my authority, is no crime; for I am not worthy to be loved and obeyed with all your hearts; for I am not by nature God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, your Creator, sovereign Lord and King, as in my law I claimed to be."

And to alter and abase the law, and bring it down to the taste and good liking of an apostate world, who were enemies to God and his government, enemies to the order and harmony of the universe, must be much the same as for God to give up his law and authority entirely. For he must quit his supremacy, give up the rights and honors of the Godhead, justify their revolt, turn to be on their side, turn enemy to God, and to his law, and employ his infinite wisdom and almighty power to promote the schemes they have laid in consequence of their

revolt; schemes suited to the taste of apostate creatures. And thus they must become as gods, as Satan said, and the Almighty become their true and faithful servant; for nothing short of this would suit an apostate world. But this is even worse than merely to quit his claim to the universe, and resign his government over it; as it would be bad for King George to quit his throne for the Pretender, and fly his country; but worse to become the Pretender's servant, and be obliged to employ all his power to promote the Pretender's interest.⁶

Clearly, the law must stand, or God is not God. The law declares that all men in Adam are sinners and are sentenced to death. This law is just, wise, and holy, and the enormity of man's sin in violating it is in proportion to the majesty and importance of God's law. If a presumptuous relative tells me that to believe in God is stupidity, and orders me to forsake my faith, there is no wrong in disobeying his foolish commandment, because it is no law; the sin would be in obeying it. If, however, someone with authority commands me to do something which I am lawfully obligated to do, then I am clearly guilty if I disobey him. The greater the authority, and the more important the commandment, the greater is my culpability if I disobey. Thus, to disobey God is the ultimate in guilt. The proper and necessary sentence for violating God's law-order is death.

Third, restitution and restoration are then necessary. This restitution can take the form of death; man having broken God's law is himself broken by death and damnation. This is a negative aspect of restitution. Positively, the broken order must be restored. This man is unable to do, and this God does, by His sovereign power and grace, through Jesus Christ, who, as "very God of very God and very man of very man," perfectly keeps God's law, recreates a new humanity by means of His atoning and regenerating work, pays the penalty for the redeemed ones by His death as their substitute, and gives them a new life as their bread of life. As the second and last Adam, Christ undoes the work of the first Adam and begins the dispossession of the fallen race from the world and the reestablishment of the earth as the Kingdom of God under His new race.

⁶ Bellamy, *op. cit.*, 293f.

Jesus Christ as true God is the Forgiver; as true man and the second Adam, He is also the forgiven, and we are forgiven in Him. There is no forgiveness in separation from Him. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). Christ was "made a curse for us," unforgiven and condemned to death, that He might destroy the power of death over us and bring us forgiveness. The requirement of the law held us under a curse, unforgiven and doomed to die. Out of this, "Christ redeemed us," or bought us, becoming a curse for us, on our behalf. As Alford noted, Christ became "*a curse* (not *accursed*, concrete, but a *curse*, abstract, to express that he became not only a cursed person, but *the curse itself*, coextensive with the disability which affected us)." ⁷ Lenski's comment brings this out very clearly:

The expression is powerful; it is not "became accursed" but "became a curse." Not some part of our curse affected him through his contact with us, but our whole curse was on him so that he was all curse. The expression used in 2 Cor. 5:21 is still stronger: God Himself made the Sinless One "sin in our stead." Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24. It is said truly, "Christ became the embodiment of our curse." He became this voluntarily; he gave himself. (Gal. 1:4; 2:20). ⁸

In Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). In some similar sense, the fulness of the elect humanity, fallen but predestined for salvation, dwelled in Christ, the fulness of their sin and guilt being borne by him so that He might fully make atonement for them.

Fourth, man's response to God's grace in Jesus Christ must be, among other things, an obedience to the law of God, and a manifestation of His forgiving grace. The law must be obeyed, because the purpose of our restoration is to establish us in our calling to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth under God as His Kingdom. The mark of the redeemed is their calling to this

⁷ Henry Alford, *The New Testament for English Readers*, 1176.

⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1946), 151.

task, their prayers and activity in terms of it. It is also forgiveness: “forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt. 6:12). We reveal our state of forgiveness by our application of it to those around us. The terms of forgiveness are those laid down by the Forgiver.

The Forgiven

Because we are, due to the Fall, given to a radically false premise that we are our own gods (Gen. 3:5), our approach to the matter of forgiveness is usually off balance. When we think of forgiveness, we too often think of the problem of forgiving *other* people, of their offenses, and of our displeasure at their offenses. With great ease, we can look around us and catalogue the offenses of everyone we know, and we can feel self-righteous at our occasional patience with them. Every approach to the subject of forgiveness is thus humanistic unless we begin with this fact: *we are the forgiven*. St. Peter was on the road to understanding when he asked, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” (Matt. 18:21), in that he had become aware of the continuing nature of forgiveness. All the same, he phrases his question wrong, in that he saw himself first of all as the forgiver. The question is best understood if we phrase it thus: “How oft shall I sin against God, and against man when I break God’s law, and still be forgiven? till seven times?” Forgiveness is a theological and God-centered fact. It is a legal fact. God forgives us as sovereign Lord and Judge, and our forgiveness of others is our response to His grace in terms of His law-word. Forgiveness begins and ends with God and His word. If we see ourselves as the forgiver in any primary sense, we are guilty of a humanistic heresy and have usurped God’s office.

Before we are the forgiven, however, there must be the effectual calling of God and His justifying grace, and our response, *faith*. The *Larger Catechism* has this to say about faith:

Q. 72. What is justifying faith?

A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of the sinner, by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel,

but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.

Q. 73. How doth faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it; nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for justification; but only as it is an instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness.

For our purposes here, a few things with respect to faith must be stressed. *First* of all, faith is not merely belief on the part of man, but rather God's work in man's life, "a saving grace, wrought in the heart of the sinner, by the Spirit and Word of God." The importance of the Word, of Scripture, was stressed by St. Paul in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Second, faith recognizes at once man's condemnation in God's sight, because faith assents to God's law and the judgment of that law. As Bellamy declared,

Saving faith consists in looking to free grace, through Jesus Christ, for salvation; thus viewing God's law, and your own case, as they really be; and he that thus believeth, shall be saved.¹

The Greek word *pistis*, and the English word *faith*, alike fail to carry the full sense of the Biblical usage as it appears in context. It is belief, trust, a firm persuasion, conviction, and much more. Repeatedly, Scripture makes clear that the contrast between unbelief and faith is between death and life. Bellamy stressed the fact of being dead and under condemnation, and then alive and delighting in God and His law. Faith opens our eyes to the sentence of God's law, and faith humbles us to place our every hope in Christ and His atoning grace and mercy.

¹. Joseph Bellamy, "Theron, Paulus, and Aspasio; or Letters and Dialogues," in *The Works of Joseph Bellamy, D. D.*, vol. II (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), 248.

Third, faith, as we have seen, is more than belief, and more than knowledge: it is a God-given life and boldness. When it is reduced to an act of will or an act of intellect, it is made man-centered and weak, or, rather, invalid. Means, who saw faith in these terms, finally saw religion in purely anthropocentric terms, holding to the centrality of “Personality” and the interaction of personalities as basic to religion.² True faith begets strength and boldness in the believer. Bellamy stressed this factor, writing,

Saving faith consists in that entire trust, reliance, or dependence on Jesus Christ, the great Mediator, his satisfaction and merits, mediation and intercession, which the humbled sinner has, whereby he is imboldened to return home to God in hopes of acceptance, and is encouraged to look to and trust in God through him for that complete salvation which is offered in the gospel. The opposite to justifying faith, is a self-righteous spirit and temper, whereby a man, from a conceit of, and reliance upon, his own goodness, is imboldened and encouraged to trust and hope in the mercy of God, (Heb. x. 19, 23. Luke xviii. 9, 14) and accordingly, when such see how bad they really are, their faith fails; they naturally think that God cannot find in his heart to show mercy to such.

Faith imboldens the heart. In a legal humiliation, which is antecedent to spiritual light, the sinner is brought to a kind of despair. The things which used to imbolden him, do now entirely fail: he finds no good in himself; yea, he feels himself dead in sin; and upon this his heart dies within him. “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” And by spiritual light, in evangelical humiliation, his undone state, in and of himself, is made still more plain. But now faith imboldens the heart, begets new courage, lays the foundation for a new kind of hope — a hope springing entirely from a new foundation. “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.” By faith the heart is imboldened, 1. To return home to God, in hopes of acceptance.... 2. Faith in Christ imboldens the heart to look to and trust in the free grace of God through him, for all things that just such a poor sinner wants. “Let us,

² Stewart Means, *Faith: An Historical Study*, 330.

therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace.”³

Fourth, this boldness of faith lies in the assurance of being forgiven and accepted by God in Jesus Christ. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”; these are they “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1). When we know that we are *the forgiven*, that we have been released from the prison-house of sin and guilt and the totality of death, then we are empowered by the holy boldness of faith.

A basic aspect of this holy boldness is the exercise of dominion; another aspect of it is the exercise of forgiveness. To analyze forgiveness in this respect, we must note, *first* of all, that when we, having been forgiven, forgive others, we thereby demonstrate *faith*. The world as God’s realm is subject totally to God; “he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). The commandment to forgive is best stated in the Lord’s Prayer, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt. 6:12). As we have seen, this has reference to the jubilee. Man by his sin brought death and disintegration into the world. Jesus Christ, by His atoning act and His forgiveness of our sins, reestablishes man into dominion under God and institutes the proclamation of the jubilee. In Isaiah 42:1-4, the Servant of God is described as one who brings judgment or justice to the Gentiles: “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment (or, justice) in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law” (Isa. 42:4). Our Lord was this Servant, come to issue the great proclamation of the jubilee (Matt. 12:14-21). Even more plainly, Isaiah 61:1-3 declares the messianic work, the proclamation of the jubilee, which the Messiah will institute:

1. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath appointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound:

³. Bellamy, “True Religion Delineated,” in *Works*, vol. I, 338f.

2. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. (Isa. 61:1-3)

The jubilee means liberty, healing, comfort, joy, beauty, and forgiveness to the redeemed of the Lord, and vengeance to God's enemies. The purpose is that God might be glorified. When our Lord read these verses in the synagogue (Luke 4:16-20), He concluded by declaring, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21), which was the beginning of His open declaration to them that He was the Messiah. The proclamation of the Kingdom of God and of the jubilee were one and the same thing, and the prelude was the remission of sins (Mark 1:3-5; Matt. 3:1-6). If we lack faith in God, in His Kingdom and its glorious jubilee world, then we shall also lack faith in the meaning and centrality of forgiveness. The jubilee realm is one of cancellation, the cancellation of debts, slavery, sin, and death. With those who are the people of God we share this jubilee grace, forgiveness. Forgiveness thus is a bold step into God's future, into the world of the jubilee. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). Through forgiveness we assume the reality of a world and a heavenly city, a new creation and the King thereof, and we institute the reign of that world here and now, although we see it only through a glass darkly.

A *second* aspect of forgiveness is that it is an act of *law*. Where God's law is broken, man's required penalty and restitution are made by Jesus Christ, our federal head. The violation of God's law, however, involves God primarily, and, secondarily, men and earth. Hence, there must be restitution; the sabbath year has as its purpose in part the restoration of the earth. Man must yield to the earth its due, for having taken from the earth. This aspect is more strictly restitution than forgiveness, because forgiveness is personal; however, the sabbath rest, being a duty performed *to God*

primarily and to the earth secondarily, is definitely personal in this respect. Restitution and forgiveness are essentially interrelated and virtually identical concepts. Forgiveness is not only an act of law, but also, as we have seen, an act of grace and of faith. The grace we have received, we share.

A *third* aspect of forgiveness is the holy boldness which is synchronous with forgiveness, productive of it, and a product of forgiveness. A world in which forgiveness is a reality is a world in which, not Karma, impersonal and unrelenting, governs, but a personal God whose grace unto salvation was revealed in the atoning sacrifice of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. St. Paul wrote, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). The world of Karma is a crushing, impersonal world in which man is nothing. God's world encourages the boldness of faith. We are summoned to boldness in relationship to God (Heb. 10:16-22); if boldness is possible in relationship to the Almighty through Christ, how much more so in relationship to men and circumstances?

The forgiven are thus the redeemed of God. They are given the power and the privilege of boldness through faith. A central area for the exercise of their boldness is in relationship to other men, to forgive, as we have been forgiven.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness in pagan antiquity and in modern humanism is an emotional change, an attitude of dismissal and acceptance, and is not related to law. In this respect, forgiveness is an antinomian and anti-theological fact, in that the terms of forgiveness or the refusal to forgive are determined by man without respect for God or His law. Man forgives if he believes in love, or he refuses to forgive if the offense is one which continues to grate on him. In either case, the motive is humanistic and the act of forgiveness is an offense to God. In all sin, it is God's law which is offended, and forgiveness must be granted or withheld in terms of God's law.

Theologically, there are two kinds of forgiveness. *First*, forgiveness is a cancellation of charges or debts because satisfaction has been rendered. There are various usages of the word *forgive* in Scripture, but each varying usage has as its background the fact of the atonement, the fact that God in Christ has forgiven us our sins because satisfaction has been rendered by Jesus Christ and His atonement. *Second*, "there is also a forgiveness which consists solely of a temporary suspension of the charge or of the sentence."¹ When our Lord said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), He was asking that God defer the charges against the soldiers who were crucifying Him, to give them time for repentance and an awareness of their act.

There is, however, not only theological or religious forgiveness, but also civil forgiveness. Civil forgiveness is granted where a law-breaker "pays his debt to society," but paying that debt does not mean going to prison for a stated period of time. The essence of religious forgiveness is *restitution and restoration*. Because Jesus Christ makes restitution for man, and because He both pays the penalty of death for our treason and perfectly obeys the law, He restores us to communion with God and to the status of

¹ K. Schilder, *Christ Crucified* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948), 134.

covenant-keepers. By His regenerating grace, He restores us to the position of God's covenant man, His vicegerent who is called to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. In civil forgiveness, restitution is necessary also. The man who steals must restore what he stole, plus at least an equivalent and as much as a five-fold fine or penalty. He must, then, be restored to his status as a citizen. If he has murdered, he pays with his life. Forgiveness is thus the key to God's order, religious and civil.

Quanbeck wrote,

Forgiveness is the removal of the barriers between God and man. Sin is covered, expiated; it is sent away, removed, wiped away; God has cast it behind his back (Isa. 38:17), or into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19). Forgiveness renews fellowship with God, who is the source of all holiness and life. His mercy and favor replace his wrath and judgment, so that the entire environment of human life has new possibilities. The created world is sanctified to man again; and new relationships become possible in community and family. Terror of conscience and dread of judgment give way to peace. Man's soul is healed, the powers of his personality restored and strengthened.²

Quanbeck added, "Forgiveness is not something men gain by punctilious performance of the proper rituals; it is the free and sovereign gift of the loving God." The *first* aspect stressed here is, rightly, sovereign grace. God is not obligated to forgive; indeed, without His grace, there could be no forgiveness, because man cannot claim God's forgiveness by right. *Second*, "The chief instrument for the realization of forgiveness is the sacrificial cults."³ In the Old Testament era, this meant the sacrificial system; in the New, its fulfilment is in Jesus Christ. Basic to grace, and to sacrifice, as Quanbeck stated it plainly, is the *covenant* relationship to God. The covenant is an act of grace and it establishes a relationship of law. The *third* element in the realization of forgiveness, according to Quanbeck, is repentance.

² W. A. Quanbeck, "Forgiveness," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, E-J (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 315f.

³ *Ibid.*, 316.

Forgiveness means “the renewal of holiness” and “the restoration of divine favor and the overcoming of God’s wrath.” Forgiveness heals the soul and restores strength and power because it takes away the barriers of sin and guilt and reestablishes man in God’s grace and blessing.⁴

Forgiveness is a *legal* fact. As Bellamy said,

For the law required perfect obedience on pain of eternal damnation; as it is written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.” But all have sinned, and so the whole world stands guilty before God, according to the law, which all the world are under. (Rom. iii. 9-10.) This law, therefore, (Rom. iii. 9, 19.) which was ordained to life, can now be only unto death. (Rom. vii. 10.) And there is no other law; so there is no law which can give life. This rendered the obedience and atonement of Christ absolutely necessary in order to prevent the universal ruin of the human race; for the law, being holy, just, and good, must not be set aside. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law must fail; it must be all fulfilled. (Matt. v. 17-18.) Could men have answered the demands of the law, Christ’s obedience and death had been needless; for if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain. So that this was the end of Christ’s death, and that, but for which he never would have died, his death being needless and in vain on any other account, according to St. Paul.⁵

God acts in terms of His law, which is an expression of His nature and righteousness. The forgiven man is a man who recognizes the charges of the law against him, and assents to those charges. Again citing Bellamy,

We cannot from the heart look to God for pardon in the name of Christ, only as we in our hearts feel that we are to blame, and deserve to be punished according to the true import of law and gospel. But cordially to come into this view of ourselves, so as from the heart to say with the publican, “God, be merciful to me a sinner,” is true repentance. It is the

⁴ *Ibid.*, 316f.

⁵ Joseph Bellamy, “An Essay on the Nature and Glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” in *The Works of Joseph Bellamy, D. D.*, vol. II (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), 248f.

character of an impenitent sinner to hide and cover his sins; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. So far as one is cordial in his confession, so far he does actually give up his sins, and begins to forsake them. No impenitent sinner from the heart will own himself to blame in the sense in which he is charged by God in his law, nor in the sense the gospel supposes, when it calls him to repent and offers pardon. And while one will not cordially own himself to blame as he is charged, nor own he needs the pardon which is offered, he cannot from the heart look to God for it, much less look in the name of Christ. To say otherwise, evidently implies a contradiction. (Compare 1 Kings viii. 46, 50, with Acts xx. 21)⁶

Forgiveness presupposes the centrality of the forgiver, so that a Biblical doctrine of forgiveness is God-centered, whereas a humanistic doctrine of forgiveness is man-centered. Very plainly, the question of forgiveness resolves itself into a very simple question: Does God forgive man, or does man forgive God?

For Thomas Hardy, the essence of life was that innocent man was continually frustrated by a perverse universe. His novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, was carefully designed to portray an innocent girl totally the pawn of perverse fate. In 1893, defending his artistic purpose, Hardy wrote, "The best tragedy — highest tragedy in short — is that of the worthy encompassed by the inevitable. The tragedies of immoral and worthless people are not the best."⁷ Hardy was in this respect in the line of Greek tragedy. Elizabethan "tragedies" had aspects of the Renaissance revival of humanism, but, even more, they were closely linked to medieval morality plays. The morality play dealt with sin, retribution, grace, and salvation. The tragedy is concerned with stating man's case against the universe and whatever gods may be. The innocence of the doomed hero or heroine is made one with which all viewers can identify, so that the audience in a tragedy is an audience which believes in its innocence and in God's perversity. Thomas Hardy did not write

⁶ *Ibid.*, 376f.

⁷ "Hardy in Defense of his Art: The Aesthetic of Incongruity," in Morton Dauwen Zabel, *Craft and Character in Modern Fiction* (New York: Viking Press, 1957).

about his or his hero's sins; instead, he presented a case against the universe. Consider, for example, his poem, "Hap":

If but some vengeful god would call to me
From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;
Half-eased in that powerfuller than I
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
— Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan...
Those purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

The best interpretation possible for Hardy was a vengeful, perverse, and demented god bent on frustrating man and laughing at man's grief; in reality, Hardy said, the world is senseless chance, a meaningless horror, which metes out to the innocent an unmerited frustration. In "New Year's Eve," Hardy is again the innocent man, this time confronting an idiot god who does not know why he created the world and man, or to what purpose. In this poem, two stanzas give this god's answer to Hardy's moral question:

Then he: "My labours — logicless —
You may explain; not I:
Sense-sealed I have wrought, without a guess
That I evolved a Consciousness
To ask for reasons why.

"Strange that ephemeral creatures who
By my own ordering are,
Should see the shortness of my view,
Use ethic tests I never knew,
Or made provision for!"

Hardy has an ostensibly moral man confront an amoral god with a moral test and judgment, and the result is self-evident: Hardy

cannot forgive God! In humanism, there is much talk about forgiveness and love by men who will not love God and who believe that it is their moral prerogative to refuse to forgive God. Humanists, in calling for the forgiveness of man, are really asserting that man is beyond forgiveness, i.e., does not require it, because man is the offended one rather than the offender. If the tragic view of life is correct, man is the offended person, not God. Man is the innocent victim of a perverse universe who nobly bears his oppressive wrongs, according to the humanistic view. Thus, the humanist, however much he may talk about forgiveness, will not forgive God, and he plainly assumes that it is his right to judge and condemn God, rather than to be judged by Him.

It is, however, God who is the offended one, and it is God who forgives or judges man. There are limitations to this forgiveness. Thus, as Quanbeck wrote,

That Jesus understood his work as the act of God is shown also by his words: "Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (Mark 3:29). The words are his response to the scribes who asserted that his exorcism of demons was a manifestation of Satanic power. The sin is unforgivable, not because it is too shocking or heinous for God to forgive, but because it labels as diabolical the deeds by which God acts in his anointed servant. This is a perilous misuse of theology: in the name of piety to reject the approach of the merciful God.⁸

Not only are there limitations to forgiveness, but also to prayer. In one of the greatest declarations of the efficacy of prayer, St. John also defines its limits:

14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his *will*, he heareth us:

15. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

16. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. (1 John 5:14-16)

⁸. Quanbeck, *op. cit.*, 318.

God, we are assured, answers prayer. The condition is that we pray “according to his will.” If a fellow believer sins (a “brother”), the Christian *must* ask, he *shall ask*, i.e., it is his duty to pray for his restoration. This prayer will be heard. To pray for those who “sin unto death” would be, Alford commented, “it is implied, an act savouring of presumption — a prescribing to God, in a matter which lies out of the bounds of our brotherly yearning.”⁹

An important aspect of forgiveness concerns our relationship to fellow believers and to unbelievers. How are they to be forgiven, and is there a distinction between them? Religious or theological forgiveness can only be extended to fellow believers. Our Lord declared that men’s sins can be loosed or bound by the church, and by Christians (Matt. 18:18; John 20:23), but this binding and loosing must be in terms of God’s word. Man has no power independently from God, and, this power being conferred by Christ, must be extended to all men who make restitution in terms of God’s law-word (Ex. 22:1-15). Restitution restores men to citizenship and to their status as law-abiding neighbors. Normally, civil forgiveness is a part of religious forgiveness, i.e., a thief must make restitution before he can expect God’s forgiveness. Where civil society does not require restitution, the church, as far as is possible, should require it, and the early church did. Even more, St. Paul said that former thieves should now be marked by charitable giving above and beyond their normal tithes and gifts (Eph. 4:28). However, in the case of the woman taken in adultery, the death penalty was no longer enforced. Our Lord extended to her religious forgiveness, but this did not alter her problem, that there might be some kind of civil penalty, i.e., divorce (John 8:1-11). The Council of Elvira (A.D. 300) shows that the church imposed penalties where the state did not. Canon 12 forbade communion even in death to mothers who prostituted their daughters; canon 52 pronounced anathemas against persons guilty of libel, and canon 65, mindful of the vulnerability of churchmen to slander, forbade communion even in death to one who falsely accused of crime a bishop, priest, or deacon. Canons 63 and 64 forbade

⁹ Henry Alford, *The New Testament for English Readers*, 1755.

communion even in death to adulteresses who destroyed (or aborted) their children, or who continued in adultery up to the time of their last illness. While this council was more rigorous than most, the church as a whole did impose various penalties where the state did not, to indicate the necessity of recognizing that society could not overlook violations of God's law. Someone placed under several years penance for an offense was paying a social or civil penalty within the framework of the Christian community; this social penalty did not mean that God's salvation was denied them, nor that Christ's forgiveness did not remit their sins in relationship to God. It did mean that their works were defective and that chastening was their due. Both church and state have an obligation to chasten. In the early church, the chastening had to supply the defects of the state.

Sin has both social and religious consequences, and the same is true of forgiveness. If the forgiveness is merely an overlooking of the offense, an agreement to forget it, then the problem of sin is not dealt with. It remains, to create problems afresh on another occasion. If there are social penalties, then there are also possibilities of social stability, i.e., if a thief must restore what he stole and also pay a fine, he will have undone the wrong and will have paid a penalty for his breach of God's order. If, on top of that, the thief is also regenerated by God's grace, not only is there a restoration of order but also a development therein, in that a redeemed man now works to further man's dominion under God. Thus, forgiveness is an essential aspect of personal and social renewal. It is basic to the jubilee. The jubilee means that forgiven men forgive. It means that believers exercise grace and forbearance towards one another. Our Lord said, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12), and added,

14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt. 6:14-15)

We are commanded, moreover, “When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark. 11:25).

God’s law gives us the terms of forgiveness where His law is concerned. Unfortunately, the area of life where, daily, forgiveness comes with most difficulty, is in the area of personal relationships where no great law is at stake, or no law at all. It is in matters of thoughtlessness, pride, and small selfishness where we most frequently offend one another, and none of us are free from these offenses. It is in these critical areas where, most of all, grace and forbearance are required. Husbands and wives frequently grate on one another with their set and determined ways, but, with love, these very minor but very real faults are not only bearable, but also sometimes amusing and endearing. Within the family of God, where love abounds, it does indeed cover “a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). St. Peter makes it clear that it is mutual love that covers sins. Solomon saw that “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins” (Prov. 10:12). If we find ourselves dwelling upon and exploiting the sins of others, it means clearly that our attitude is sinful also, and that our sin is hatred of a fellow believer and a desire to stir up strife.

Our Lord said, “trespasses” when he dealt with the terms of God’s forgiveness. Scripture never uses words idly. Just as *debts* refers to the jubilee, and encompasses sins and trespasses, and much more, so *trespasses* is used with intent rather than *sins*. The law provides the way of dealing with the forgiveness of sins: restitution. The word for *trespasses* is different: it is *paraptoma*, “primarily a false step, a blunder.... lit., a ‘fall beside,’ used ethically, denotes a trespass, a deviation, from uprightness and truth.”¹⁰ This is the area where Christians most commonly offend one another. Our trespasses are most offensive to others and least discernible to ourselves. We are regularly offended by the trespasses of people we cannot accuse of an out-and-out violation of God’s law, and we regularly offend others in the same way. Here we must manifest forgiving grace. As we forgive, we are forgiven, and if we do not forgive others, God does not forgive us our trespasses.

¹⁰ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. IV (New York: Revell, 1966), 154.

Regeneration

The problem of personal and social renewal is the most persistent problem of civilization. Again and again, as one culture has succeeded another, each with vigor and promise offering man hope for a stable, happy, and growing society, disillusionment has set in. Sin and frustration erode the cultural hope, and men turn on their society and rend it asunder. Sometimes, before the end comes, many flee to the hills and deserts, or abandon the established forms of society in protest, because man has found his greatest obstacle to be man himself. The decline of both Greece and Rome saw the rise of ascetics and non-conformists, and the decline of Christendom in the fourteenth century meant the rise of disaffiliates, men whose essential position was dissent from and war against the established order. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Bohemians of the various schools of arts, nihilists, beatniks, and hippies are only a few of the many disillusioned groups who protest against existing society.

For some the hope lies in revolution. Somehow, revolution will create regeneration. The roots of this faith are deep in the old chaos cults, in the belief in the energizing and fertilizing power of chaos, and that personal and social regeneration requires the chaos of revolution. This hope, however, has always been very bitterly disillusioning, in that revolution not only destroys the hopes of its believers, but also is normally a force of reaction and greatly aggravates the evils it is supposed to eliminate.¹ The result of revolution is that man is more deeply mired in the morass he sought to escape from.

The various religious and political efforts to escape from the burden of sin and guilt and find personal and social renewal alike

¹. See Jacques Ellul, *Autopsy of Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

end in disaster.² Not surprisingly, a recurring factor in human thought has been the despair of man and of history.

When man loses faith in the future of man, and when he despairs of any meaning in history, then his hope becomes severely localized in terms of the present and the available, and his life becomes trivialized. *Civilization gives way to trivialization*. Man's concern, then, becomes social status, the right kind of foods and wines, in brief, taste refined to a religion, and nothing irritates him more than other people. Man can, then, neither live with or without other people, and his life is a long complaint over their presence as well as their absence. In Ionesco, we find this kind of mood, expressed realistically and with humor:

My contemporaries irritate me. I detest the neighbor to my right. I detest the neighbor to my left. Above all, I detest the one on the floor above me. Just as much, anyway, as the one on the ground floor. (Say! I live on the ground floor myself!) Everyone is wrong. I envy people whose contemporaries were alive two centuries ago.... No: they are still too close to us. I can be indulgent only to those who lived well before Jesus Christ.

And yet when my contemporaries die, I feel terribly distressed. Distressed? Afraid rather, tremendously frightened. That is understandable. I feel more and more alone. How can I manage without them? What am I going to do, living on with all "the others"? Why is it "the others" did not die instead of them? I wish I could make the decision myself and choose those who should remain.³

Such an attitude leads also to self-hate. However, because trivialization has conquered, and because man has rejected ultimate meaning in favor of purely existential interests, the self-hate is also trivial. A man or woman looks into the mirror and does not say, "I am a sinner, and I need to submit to God's word and meaning, and I need to relate my daily concern with ultimate meaning and purpose, or else my life becomes meaningless and trivial." Rather, the look into the mirror is a trivial, surface look. My hair doesn't set

² See. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969), 40-44.

³ Eugene Ionesco, *Notes and Counter Notes* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 232.

right; my skin looks bad, or, age lines are beginning to show; will clothes make the right impression, or, will I look as poorly as I feel? Men hate themselves for trifling reasons, and they adore themselves for ungodly reasons. Despair with respect to history leads to a flight from history and meaning and an absorption with the moment. The roots of that flight are in sin; man despairs over history because it fails to yield him his desired meaning, and he will not accept God's. Like the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21), he makes the world equal no more than his interests.

When men and cultures fail, they long for an opportunity to start over again. They rebel against an empty maturity in favor of a new start. Since they cannot become young again, they seek to destroy the forms of age. The old dress like the young and childishly seek to recapture the freshness and opportunity of youth. Culturally, this means a turning away from the established and mature norms to a worship of primitivism. As Baird observed, "Cultural failure accelerates primitivism, whatever the type." The myth of the noble savage predominates, and the more backward a people, the more they are idealized and romanticized. "Authentic primitivism is a mode of sentence, a creed springing inevitably from a state of cultural failure. It represents one attempt of Western man to restore the symbolism of human existence." The paintings of Paul Gauguin, prior to his departure for Tahiti, show a greater mastery of technique and goal and are superior to his later works, but they are clearly not so regarded by the world of art. The reason is religious. Gauguin was "as though he had grimly determined to compel Tahiti into Paradise." He spoke of Tahitian women as "not beautiful, properly speaking," but as having an indefinable quality "of penetrating the mysteries of the infinite."⁴ Those who delight in Gauguin's Tahitian paintings are men who share in Gauguin's yearning for the primitive, and his hope of a new beginning through primitive man. Such men, like their culture, die sick, diseased, and lonely. The self-conscious primitivist not only corrupts what good he may already possess, but also those whom he idealizes. The primitivist is not interested in the African, the American Indian, the Negro, or the Polynesian, but in himself. He

⁴ James Baird, *Ishmael, A Study of the Symbolic Mode in Primitivism* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 3, 16, 149.

is afraid of death and judgment, and he seeks a non-theistic regeneration in “primitive” man’s ways and culture. He uses the “primitive” man for his own purposes with a radical callousness, both culturally and personally.

Thus, Pablo Picasso regularly stole his son’s clothing, to wear it himself and thereby steal his son’s youth. The boy’s mother commented,

I finally became convinced that Pablo hoped by this method that some of Claude’s youth would enter into his own body. It was a metaphorical way of appropriating someone else’s substance, and in that way, I believe, he hoped to prolong his own life.⁵

This kind of primitivism marks, not a new beginning, but a certain end; it is a sign of approaching cultural and intellectual death.

Others, also aware of the cultural crisis, seek renewal by means of a rigorous legalism. Their hope is that a highly disciplined law-order can bring about social renewal. Clearly, law is important, but, in and of itself, it can accomplish nothing. Some of the strictest laws of the Western World have been passed in the last century, and man’s decline into lawlessness has not been checked thereby. Severe laws against pornography did not check its spread and proliferation. The place of law in society cannot be usurped by love or psychotherapy, but neither can law replace grace and regeneration. Law can never regenerate society; it can greatly develop and further a society of regenerate man and is essential to growth. But before growth can begin, there must be life, and this the law cannot provide.

Moreover, when a society is declining into pessimism and doubt with respect to the future, it has far more faith in primitivism than in law. Law suggests discipline and tradition; whereas a dying world wants the antithesis of order: it wants the raw blood of birth; it is thus drawn to primitivism. The appeal of primitivism is in part the belief that “primitive” man is somehow *before* and *beyond* the law; he is outside the world of culture and its problems. Supposedly, the

⁵ Francoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 232.

“primitive” man lives and dies without any effete and civilized self-consciousness, as a child of nature. To return to that world before history means to return to the world before church, state, family, and religion, a world before morality. This means, in the myth about “primitive” man, a return to the world of the orgy. Modern pornography is an attempt to reestablish the “free” world of the orgy, and to abolish the world of law and morality. Its basic function is rebirth by means of the systematic abandonment of all known scruples and laws of every society in recorded history with respect to sex. By means of this total plunge into sexual chaos, man will supposedly find freedom, and society a new birth. The appeal of pornography is to a large measure religious. People who are disillusioned with religion and society and anxious to escape the inexorable workings of a law-universe hope by pornography to step back into and re-create a timeless world of sexual ecstasy and regeneration. The great myth of all pornography is the dream of cosmic coition, the sex act which brings mystical release from the past and a blinding, soaring bliss to the initiate.

Ernest Hemingway’s insane *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), gives us this magical sex, and it is a telling bit of evidence of the extent of the belief in salvation by the act of cosmic coition that so few laughed at the book. The earth is portrayed as moving “out and away from under,” a copulating couple as they are born again in this magical sexual act. Pornography is turgid and poor writing and tiresome and difficult reading; it is the mystical and religious aspect of its nature which draws its devotees, just as the tasteless and absurd obscenities of perverse sexuality draw people who hope that by their violation of moral law they have also breached the claims of life, death, and God against them.

Whether by mysticism or by pornography, or by any other means, man does not escape God, nor does he escape time and history. Salvation eludes him as long as he seeks to elude God. All his efforts at instituting a regeneration by man or by the state end up in failure. This failure was very much present in the mind of Nicodemus, “a man of the Pharisees.... a ruler of the Jews” (John 3:1). Nicodemus lived in an era that was very much aware of these issues. Greece, Rome, and Judea were alike concerned over social

and personal regeneration. Greek culture was well known to all in Judea, and *koine*, a form of Greek, was their second language. The coinage of the Roman Empire carried the language and hope of regeneration. Not too long before Nicodemus, Virgil (70-19 B.C.) had expressed this common hope in the emperor as the regenerator in his Fourth Eclogue, declaring in part:

Now is come the last age of the Cumaean prophecy: the great cycle of periods is born anew.... Now from high heaven a new generation comes down. Yet do thou at that boy's birth, in whom the iron race shall begin to cease, and the golden to arise over all the world, holy Lucina, be gracious; now thine own Apollo reigns. And in thy consulate, in thine, O Pollio, shall this glorious age enter, and the great months begin their march: under thy rule what traces of our guilt yet remain, vanishing shall free earth for ever from alarm. He shall grow in the life of gods, and shall see gods and heroes mingled, and himself be seen by them, and shall rule the world that his fathers' virtues have set at peace. But on thee, O boy, untitled shall earth first pour childish gifts, wandering ivy-tendrils and foxglove, and colocasia mingled with the laughing acanthus: untended shall the she-goats bring home their milk-swollen udders, nor shall huge lions alarm the herds: unbidden thy cradle shall break into wooing blossom. The snake too shall die and die the treacherous poison-plant: Assyrian spice shall grow all up and down.⁶

Augustus saw himself as the fulfilment of this prophecy of world renewal. In Stauffer's vivid words,

Augustus took his prophet at his word. He gave official sanction and fulfilment to the politicizing of the ancient hope of a saviour. In the year 17 B.C., when a strange star shone in the heavens, he saw that the cosmic hour had come, and inaugurated a twelve-day Advent celebration, which was a plain proclamation of Virgil's message of joy: "The turning-point of the ages has come." From documents known of old, as well as from some which have recently been discovered, from historians, poets, inscriptions, monuments and coins we have more reliable information about these days

⁶ *Virgil's Works*, J. W. Mackail, translator, C. L. Durham, introduction (New York: Modern Library, 1934), 274.

and their official significance than of almost any other happening of ancient history.

Heralds traversed Italy with their star-studded shields and the blessed wand of Hermes, and announced the invitation to the ceremonies. The Roman college of priests, with Augustus himself at their head, distributed holy incense to the masses for purification from past guilt. The people brought the fruits of the land for sacrifices to the chief gods of the festival Apollo and Diana. The emperor inaugurated the ceremonies in the night preceding June 1, a night of full moon. As divine and human mediator between heaven and earth, and the high priest of the Roman people, the emperor approached the altar in order to make a blood offering to the goddesses of fate, with the prayer, "I beseech you to grant the Roman people perpetual invulnerability, victory and prosperity and be ever gracious to me and my house."⁷

By the time of Nicodemus, the hopes of Augustus for world regeneration had died with him, and the new mood was cynicism and contempt. For Nicodemus, as a Pharisee, there was already a radical disbelief in all the pagan efforts at regeneration, as well as despair, as a ruler of the people, over the prospects in Judea and Galilee. The administration of the law had kept neither Pharisees nor Sadducees from corruption, and the common people had only a formal regard for the law, especially the Galileans.

Nicodemus approached Jesus with two opinions clearly in mind. *First*, as he told Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). Nicodemus knew that God had, every few centuries, sent prophets and leaders to His people, and that these men had manifested God's power in miracles. Here, clearly, was another such man. Nicodemus' "we know" was a discreet veiling of the reality of his opinion: "I know." *Second*, the futility of history was only aggravated by these periodical appearances, because history did not seem to be altered, nor regeneration to follow. The Kingdom of God was plainly the religious goal of history: how was it to be obtained? The quest to

⁷ Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars*, K. and R. Gregor Smith, translators (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), 83.

Nicodemus seemed futile. How could men attain that Kingdom? “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). This was clearly the solution, to be born anew, regeneration. Nicodemus recognized both its necessity and its impossibility. “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (John 3:4). Because Nicodemus was a ruler and a religious leader, he was sharply aware of the problem. How can mature men change their lives and directions short of being born again, each from his mother’s womb? Any realistic look at men even in Christian circles indicates how greatly the old ways still prevail within us, so that at times a sight of Christian nature is far from encouraging. For Nicodemus, the problem was a grim one: he wanted a regenerated person and society, and, short of being born afresh from one’s mother’s womb, with a full knowledge of past sins and the power to be a new creature, how could a man avoid the disheartening cycle of sin and decay? When Augustus with all his power could not alter the oppressive cycle of birth, sin, and despairing death, how could any man do more? Was not all history evidence of the hopelessness of the quest? Was there anything more possible beyond that which the Pharisees hoped for, the yoke of the law to keep men in check?

5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. (John 3:5-8)

Man’s rebirth must be, Jesus said, by *water*, symbolizing *purification*, and the *Spirit*, symbolizing *quickenning*, or *making alive*. The words “carry back the thoughts of hearer and reader to the narrative of creation (Gen. i. 2), and to the characteristics of natural birth, to

which St. John has already emphatically referred (i. 13).” More specifically, as Westcott pointed out further,

The water and the spirit suggest the original shaping of the great Order out of Chaos, when the Spirit of God brooded on the face of the waters; and at the same time this new birth is distinctly separated from the corruptible element (blood) which symbolizes that which is perishable and transitory in human life.⁸

Man is related to two spheres of being, one called “flesh,” that which is born of Adam, and the other, called “spirit,” that which is born of God (John 3:6). He must be born again of the Spirit of God, made a new creation by Him. Jesus did not say, “*We* must be born again,” but “*Ye* must be born again” (v. 7), exempting Himself as the creator.⁹

Just as the wind is real and yet unseen except in its effects, so is the man who is born of the Spirit. “Notice that it is not the Spirit but the man born of the Spirit who has the wind’s mysterious character.” The wind is an outside force which acts upon trees and waters; so, too, the regenerate man is an outside force to the degree that he is in Christ and obedient to His law-word. *There is thus far more to history than history*: there are regenerate men, and, supremely, the regenerating and sovereign God. When men view history only in terms of history, their only recourse is to despair. Nicodemus’ problem was that he saw no factor as determinative in history, save that which was born of history; “the Jewish rabbis were not expecting anything new.”¹⁰ As a result, Nicodemus could visualize nothing new. He was as of that moment yet without faith.

Faith, however, establishes men in a new kind of knowledge and power. As Machen noted, “far from being contrasted with knowledge, faith is founded upon knowledge.”¹¹ Moreover,

⁸ B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1954), 49. Westcott’s interpretation is in error in its reference to creation “out of Chaos.”

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰ J. Stephen Hart, *A Companion to St. John’s Gospel* (Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1952), 64.

¹¹ J. Gresham Machen, *What Is Faith?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946), 46.

“Faith” the author of Hebrews says, “is the substance of things hoped for.” The word here translated “substance” is translated in the American Revised Version “assurance.” But the difference is not important. The point in either case is that by faith future events are made to be certain: the old translation merely puts the thing a little more strongly: future events, it means, become through faith so certain that (it) is as though they had already taken place; the things that are promised to us become, by our faith in the promise, so certain that it is as though we had the very substance of them in our hands here and now. In either case, whether the correct translation be “substance” or “assurance,” faith is here regarded as providing information about future events; it is presented as a way of predicting the future.¹²

Faith is a witness to the fact of regeneration and its goal. Regeneration (*palingenesia* in the Greek; *palin*, again, *genesis*, birth) is both personal and cosmic. In Matthew 19:28, “regeneration” is clearly cosmic; in Titus 3:5, it is personal: “according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing (or, laver) of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (cf. John 1:12, 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:1-3; 5:1).

All too often men are discouraged, as they view history, by the fact of judgment and decay. They see an unregenerate world, and are unwilling to see it perish. The presence of decay and death, and every grim reminder of judgment, instead of encouraging them with respect to the certainty of God’s government and triumph, disheartens them. Like Lot, they grieve too much for Sodom.

Regeneration requires that the old man and the old world perish, so that the new may be born. Regeneration occurs within history, but its origin and determination is from God.

¹². *Ibid.*, 231.

Repentance

The doctrine of repentance is one of very great personal and social consequences and is future-oriented. The common misunderstanding of repentance makes it a melancholy cataloguing of past sins and is past-oriented. In Scripture, repentance fixes our attention on the future, calls for action, and is associated with the Kingdom of God. Thus, in Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (ERV, 1881). In Luke 3:7-14, this same fact is again apparent, as it is in the normal usage of repentance: it prepares the man for action today and tomorrow. Chamberlain wrote,

The reason which John and Jesus both give for repentance is not that the Kingdom of heaven *may* come near, but that it *has* drawn near. Repentance does not bring the Kingdom; it prepares men to participate in it. Repentance is not a device for escaping hell; it is a preparation for cooperating with God's will on earth.¹

Two Greek words are translated as repentance. *Metamelomai* means remorse (Matt. 21:29, 32; 27:3), as in Judas' case, whereas *metanoeo* (*metanoia*) means that change of mind wrought by God's regenerating power.²

Ungodly repentance looks backward: it is sorry for its sins because it regrets the consequences. Such repentance is marked by self-torture and misery and a preoccupation with the past. All too often, when we demand that someone repent, we have this kind of repentance in mind. We want them to see the consequences of their acts and to suffer for them. We tend to equate true repentance with deep misery and a past-oriented suffering. There is such a

¹ William D. Chamberlain, *The Meaning of Repentance* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), 19.

² Julius R. Mantey, "Repentance and Conversion," in Carl F. H. Henry, editor, *Basic Christian Doctrine* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 193.

thing as godly sorrow for sin, for, while “Godly sorrow may lead to repentance, (it)... is in no sense identical with it.”³ “For the sorrow that relates the sorrower to God works out a repentance that leads to salvation such as is never regretted, while the world’s sorrow issues into death” (2 Cor. 7:10 Berkeley Version).

John A. Broadus has called the use of the English words “repent” and “repentance” the “worst translation in the New Testament.” The true meaning of the Greek word is “a complete change in mental outlook and of life design.” It is reformation, a change which is durable and has consequences. The early church was aware of this meaning. Thus, Lactantius, in *The Divine Institutes* (Bk. VI, ch. xxiv.), spoke of repentance as a “return to right understanding.” Of the converted and repentant man, Lactantius said, “he returns to a right understanding, and recovers his mind as it were from madness.” This idea is in mind in the parable of the Prodigal Son; we are told that “he came to himself” (Luke 15:17); “he saw himself and God in a new light. This is repentance.”⁴ Clearly, what we all too often require of people is remorse, not reformation. In so doing, we chain the church and its work to the past instead of looking to the future, and we see more virtue in the miseries of hell than in the grace of God.

The word *repentance* is associated with *penance* and thus has the wrong orientation. Restitution is an aspect of forgiveness, but repentance in Scripture means to change from bad to good, from sin to righteousness, and it means a change of mind and purpose which results in changed actions. The Old Testament Hebrew word is similar in meaning. Thus, it speaks of God “repenting” (Gen. 6:6; Ex. 32:14), by which is meant that God’s attitude towards a person or people is changed from wrath to grace. When men are involved, the repentance of man involves a turning from sin to God; the use of the word repentance involves sin because man is a sinner, but the word itself does not require the fact of sin and can thus be used to indicate a change in God’s workings which involves neither sin nor neglect, but simply a radical change in the

³. *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 17, 31, 37.

treatment of a people. For man, repentance means reformation; for God, it means a turn from judgment to grace.

In men, repentance is “a preparation for the future, rather than a mourning over the past.”⁵ This is why repentance is so closely linked with the Kingdom of God: “it prepares men to participate in it.” This fact appears early in the gospels, in the ministry of John the Baptist, who summoned men to prepare for the Kingdom, “As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Luke 3:4). We are then told,

7. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11. He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13. And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages. (Luke 3:7-14)

According to Matthew 3:7-12, what Luke ascribes as “advice” to all the multitude was directed to the Pharisees and Sadducees more specifically (Luke 3:7-9, 16-17). Clearly, our Lord felt that people and leaders were very much alike. The occasion of these words is described by Lenski: “This address was made on the occasion when a lot of Sadducees and Pharisees came to John’s baptism (as

⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

Matthew says) and asked also to be baptized but confessed no sins as did the other people whom John baptized.”⁶ Repentance, John declared, meant a changed life, a membership in the Kingdom which involved sharing our abundance with needy fellow believers, honesty in all our dealings, and contentment. Each group is told to deal with its besetting sin and problem by means of a radical change of action. The Pharisees and others were living unto themselves: they were ordered to share with others. The publicans or tax collectors were ordered to stop their unjust exactions. Soldiers, much given to intimidating people with threats of violence, using false accusations to avenge themselves, and chronically dissatisfied with their wages and consequently using their power to force the government to pay more, are ordered to be content, to accuse none falsely, and to do violence to no man. John asked no man to make a public confession of sins, or to make a show of sorrow for them, but rather that each man change his mind, purpose, and action in conformity to the word of God. If they were good trees, they would bring forth good fruit. If they were God’s planting rather than a generation of vipers, they would manifest that fact by their changed lives.

Thus, while in the background of all repentance by man there is a “godly sorrow” over sin (2 Cor. 7:10), and there can be no true repentance by man without first of all a godly sorrow for sin, repentance itself is the turning from sin to God with a new obedience. St. Paul said to the believers, “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:18). This is the emphasis: to serve righteousness, to become dedicated, working members of God’s Kingdom. By means of repentance, we participate in the work of the Kingdom. The summons preached by the disciples, when the Lord sent them forth to announce the Kingdom (Matt. 10:7), was to repentance: “And they went out, and preached that men should repent” (Mark. 6:12).

There is very little about repentance in St. Paul’s epistles, because he is writing to Christians, to men already changed.⁷

⁶ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1951), 185.

⁷ Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, 70.

Repentance is the work of God in man. "The human and ethical side, however find expression in the idea of faith, which here (Jn. 3:8) as in the NT in general, implies an active turning from sin to God (Jn. 4:7ff; 9:38, 1 Jn. 1:8)."⁸

Quanbeck, in discussing repentance, speaks of its negative aspect as "turning away from sin" and its positive aspect as "turning back to God, the beginning of a new religious or moral life."

The new element in Jesus' preaching of repentance appears at this point. The prophets know that God must give the sinner a new heart and spirit. Repentance in the deepest sense is beyond human powers. They look forward to the time when God will perform the miracle of raising men from the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37). Jesus announces that the time has come: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Repentance is no longer only demand: it has become possibility, for what is impossible with men is possible with God (10:27). Repentance is completed by FAITH. Return to God is now no longer response to law but to a person; it is discipleship. Jesus points to himself with magisterial confidence as the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. There can be no genuine repentance which is not also the acceptance of the divine promise spoken in Jesus of Nazareth.⁹

Despite an element of antinomianism, there is much to commend in Quanbeck's comment. Repentance is God's work in man's life, and it is inseparable from faith.

Repentance is, moreover, inseparable from responsibility. Mantey's comment, "The only normal man is the converted man,"¹⁰ means that, since Adam in Eden was the normal man, all men by virtue of the Fall are abnormal. Christ restores men to the normal estate, although, since sanctification is not complete in this world, we are only normal to the degree that we are sanctified. In

⁸ W. Morgan, "Repent, Repentance," in James Hastings, editor, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. IV (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 226.

⁹ W. A. Quanbeck, "Repentance," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, R-Z (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 34.

¹⁰ Mantey, *op. cit.*, 197.

his fall, Adam went from responsibility to irresponsibility, indicting both God and Eve for his sin (Gen. 3:12). The mark of true repentance is in part the restoration of responsibility, and this means responsibility not only for one's sins, but also responsibility in terms of a calling under God, an active service to Him and His Kingdom.

The parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus gives us a vivid picture of irresponsibility and an unrepentant mind. The rich man in hell has no real desire to leave it: the substance of his remarks is to indict Lazarus and God. His first plea is, "send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:24). The self-pity in this statement is intense, but so is the indictment: Lazarus was at my gate and received nothing; if now he gives me nothing, then how is he any better than I, or more deserving of heaven than I? The rich man's words are preciously contrived to make his request *excessively modest*, only the tip of the finger dipped in water, to cool his tongue, in order to render any refusal *excessively wicked*. Both Abraham and Lazarus are thus vindictively indicted: the purpose of these words is not relief, but accusation.

The rich man then indicts God: "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27-28). The obvious inference is that the rich man went to hell only because God did not prove conclusively to him that his course of action would lead there. Salvation, says the rich man, should be by knowledge and by sight, by scientific verification. God should have warned me; I am suffering needlessly, and, being truly noble at heart, I want to spare my five brothers the same suffering. The rich man's real concern was not his brothers, but finding a means of indicting God by trying to show that he was more concerned with soul-saving than was God. God should spare no means to convince people into heaven, even to sending them one from the dead. Then "they will repent" (Luke 16:30). He even uses the right word for repent, *metanoeo*. Abraham's answer is, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the

dead” (Luke 16:31). Thus, though the rich man uses the right word, his basic perspective is past-bound: he is determined to justify himself and his past and thereby to indict God. False repentance seeks to change the past; true repentance works to change the future because it is itself changed by the grace of God.

The significance of all this is very great. It means that, with pietism in particular, and revivalism, the church has stressed remorse rather than that change of mind and action which is repentance. It has been past-bound rather than future-oriented. Godly sorrow is important, but it is not the same as repentance, the change of direction. Restitution and forgiveness are important, but they are still something other than repentance: the ungodly can make restitution, but they cannot make that change of mind and action which is true repentance. The word *repentance* is of Latin origin, *re* and *poenitere*, or *poena*, meaning indemnification, recompense, retribution, satisfaction, expiation, punishment, penalty, or price. This is an entirely false orientation for *metanoia*. It makes repentance into a kind of self-atonement, a means of satisfying God and repaying man by means of remorse and suffering. This is humanism of a sort. It leads thus to a lacrimose piety; it makes a virtue of the shedding of tears rather than a changed mind and action. *The modern call to repentance is thus a call to sickness.* God, however, in speaking to Solomon, spoke of both godly sorrow and repentance, and separated them as distinct, declaring, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). To *turn* from their wicked ways meant to turn their hearts, minds, and lives into obedience to God’s law and the establishment of it as their way of life as a people and as a nation. The evidence of *godly* sorrow is that one brings forth “fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). Repentance means changed thinking and action. Where there is godly repentance, there is action. Ungodly repentance is like the weeping and wailing over the past which is the mark of hell. For a church to summon people to hell is reprobate indeed.

Sanctification

The prophet Zechariah gives us a vision of sanctification in the Kingdom of God which is radically different from the usual ideas of sanctification. In his culminating and final vision, we have, instead of people palpitating with charismatic manifestations, bells and pots as “holiness to the LORD.”

20. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

21. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. (Zech. 14:20-21)

Lowe says that these words tell us

that in that day there will be a general elevation of everything in sanctity. Even “the bells upon the horses” will, like the plate of gold on the mitre of the high priest, have inscribed on them “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (Exod. xxviii. 36, & c.). The pots of the sanctuary in which the “peace offerings” were cooked will be raised to the grade of sanctity of the bowls in which the blood was caught; and the ordinary pots will be raised to the grade of sanctuary pots.

These verses have nothing to say about either the retention or termination of the Mosaic ritual: their purpose is to set forth the future holiness in terms of then current standards.¹

Hengstenberg said, of v. 20, “The meaning therefore is this: in that day the Lord will adorn the horses with the symbol of holiness, which has hitherto been borne by the high priest alone.” Then Hengstenberg goes to the heart of the vision, its meaning in terms of God’s ultimate purposes:

¹ W. H. Lowe, “Zechariah,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. V (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 592.

The distinction between sacred and profane originated with the fall. To abolish this distinction, and re-establish the sole supremacy of holiness, was one of the ultimate designs of the divine economy of salvation; whilst, on the other hand, the prince of this world endeavoured to exterminate altogether the other of the two, namely, everything holy. In order to secure his purpose more perfectly at last, the Lord allowed the two to exist for a long period side by side, that the points of contrast might be more and more conspicuous. He set apart for himself a holy nation in comparison with which all other nations were profane; and to this nation he gave a law, in which the distinction between sacred and profane was universally maintained in things small as well as great. He was satisfied for a time that only a certain outwardly defined territory should be kept sacred as his own; since, otherwise, if the two opposing principles were mixed up together, the evil would completely swallow up the good. With the first coming of Christ, the ultimate purpose of God drew nearer to its realization. The *outward* distinction between sacred and profane fell into the background, because a much stronger support and aid were communicated to the former by the spirit of Christ. Nevertheless, the two antagonistic elements still continue, and even in the believer the good does not attain to complete and sole supremacy in this present life. The day will come, however, when the Lord will be all in all, and when every distinction between the holy and the unholy, every corrupt admixture of the two, and all differences of degree in the holy itself, will come to an end.²

Everything that Adam did in Paradise prior to the Fall was holiness to the Lord: it had as its purpose the service of the Kingdom of God. Thus, Adam's pots, his hoe, and shovel, were all sanctified in terms of Adam's obedience to God and the dedication of all things to God's service. Their holiness was no less than that of sanctuary vessels in the days of Aaron and Abiathar. The distinction between the sacred and the profane (*profane* meaning outside the temple, outside the realm of God), and between good and evil, was then a potential rather than an actual one. With the Fall of Man, that distinction became actual, with the evil, profane

² E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel, 1956), 134f.

world apparently in power. The world was now in warfare. The purpose of the forces of revolt was, and is, to redefine reality and to place everything beyond good and evil, to abolish the antithesis entirely, and to declare that the truly holy and pure is that which is profane or outside of God. Especially since Christ has come, the world has intensified its efforts to live beyond good and evil, because it is increasingly aware, as the implications of the word of God are sharpened, of the death sentence against itself. Wars very often are most bitterly fought when the end approaches, because it is then that the loser begins to fight with desperation in an attempt at a final thrust to victory.

God, however, also purposes to eliminate the actual distinction between the sacred and the profane, perfectly in the new creation, and to a high degree in time. God allows evil to destroy that which has been already profaned, so that He can, by regenerating men and nations, bring about true holiness. As Hengstenberg wrote of Jeremiah 31:38-40, inward profanation is followed by outward profanation:

This inward victory must, according to divine necessity, be followed by the outward one. The covenant-people which, inwardly, had submitted to the world, which, by its own guilt had profaned itself, was, outwardly also, given up to the world, and was profaned in punishment. And this profanation, inflicted upon it as a punishment, again manifested itself just at that place, where the profanation by the guilt had chiefly manifested itself, viz., in the holy city, and in the holy temple. It is with a view to the former manifestation of the victory of the world over the Kingdom of God, that here the victory of the Kingdom of God is described; and the imagery is just simple imagery. To the outward holiness of the city and of the temple, the outward unholiness of the places around Jerusalem is opposed. While the victory of the world over the Kingdom of God had been manifested by the profanation of these places, the victory of the Kingdom of God now appears under the image of the sanctification of these formerly unholy places.³

³. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, vol. II, 448f.

The profane cannot attain their goal; their inward profanation is always followed by outward profanation. Instead of gaining utopia by abolishing God and His law, people gain instead a lawlessness in which they are the victims. Thus, in 1972, the growth in crime meant so great an increase in private guards and police that, "Private guards and 'special police' working under commercial contract already outnumber regular cops in both San Francisco and Detroit."⁴ Moreover, stricter law enforcement still does not offer too great a hope:

The nationwide game of cops and robbers is only beginning, of course, and even the police are beginning to acknowledge that fact. "If law enforcement catches more criminals, the prisons fill up, criminals are paroled sooner, then probation officers are flooded and the criminal gets back into trouble," says Capt. John W. Start of the Compton, Calif., police.⁵

The economic cost of crime, whether in a tribal, jungle society, or in a modern state, is a major form of decapitalization and social regression. Liberals who tell us how much war costs should also investigate the cost of crime to a society; the cost of crime steadily inhibits the ability of a society to advance. Even more, however, it forces an antithesis onto every society, a division between good and evil, law and crime, which a society cannot ignore. This new antithesis is an unprincipled one. As Frank Rizzo, mayor of Philadelphia, observed: "You know what a conservative is? That's a liberal who got mugged the night before."⁶ All the same, society cannot ignore the difference between the sacred and the profane. It may try to live beyond good and evil, but it cannot. Community in holiness is possible; indeed, the more people grow in grace and holiness, the more easily they can live together. The more profane a society becomes, the less it is able to live in community, so that, this side of hell, sanctification or holiness is a social necessity. Hell is not a community, but a place of isolation, each man pursuing the goal of sin, to be his own god and universe, and knowing only total

⁴. "Living With Crime, U.S.A.," *Newsweek*, 18 December 1972, 34.

⁵. *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶. *Ibid.*, 31.

frustration, weeping, wailing, burning, and gnashing of teeth, in that pursuit.

A totally profane society is impossible, but a totally holy society is not only possible, but also inevitable. The more people grow in holiness, the more readily they live in community, and the more ably so. Communism aims at community and only accentuates the isolation of man from man, whereas in the Kingdom of God men are most fully themselves and the most fully so in community. It is sin which thwarts man's desire to live peacefully and happily with others, but it is also sin which makes it most difficult for man to live alone, because he is as much a torment to himself as he is to others, and much more so.

The inner becomes the outer: this is the Biblical premise. Our Lord said, "that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matt. 15:11). Profanation is from the heart, and the inner profanation leads to an outer profanation. God allows the actualization of the potential, so that man is forced into an epistemological self-consciousness of both holiness and profanity. The modern environmentalist temper seeks to change the outer first; it gives priority to the outer as determinative, whereas in Scripture the reverse is true. Before Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, they had inwardly considered the possibility of independence from God as an advantage. A major aspect of the significance of history is this, that it is an actualization of the potential, so that all potential profanation and profanity is realized and developed by man as he explores the potentiality of independence from God. This means the Marquis de Sade, Lenin, Stalin, and communism; it means every form of degeneracy and perversion in every area of life.

But it means much more than that. It means the realization and actualization of the potentiality of holiness, also. In every area of life and activity, the potentialities of the sacred will be developed in history and worked out to their logical consequences. This means, among other things, the actualization of dominion under God. The triumph of redeemed man in every area of life and activity, means that the development of holiness, the full exploration and establishment of the sacred, will characterize all the arts and sciences. Every calling, the very "bells of the horse," the

ornamentation of life, will be “holiness to the Lord” and an area of holy dominion. Man, knowing full well the implications of profanity, will turn on it and crush its head under its feet, in terms of God’s promise (Gen. 3:15, Rom. 16:20).

In God’s Kingdom, Zechariah tells us, there will be no Canaanites “in the house of the Lord of hosts.” Many commentators wrongly limit the meaning of the word “Canaanites” to *tradesmen*, and they cite our Lord’s cleansing of the Temple of moneychangers as its fulfilment. The cleansing of the Temple was a symbolic fulfilment, but the meaning is far more extensive. The Temple or “house of the Lord of hosts” was more than a church: it was the seat of God’s civil government and of all authority. Just as Isaiah 1:10 speaks of the nation’s princes as “rulers of Sodom,” and the nation as “people of Gomorrah,” so Zechariah here calls all authorities who are outside of Christ, all profane authorities, Canaanites. In God’s Kingdom, all authority shall be godly authority, in every area of life. As Leupold noted,

One might call this one of the passages that operates on the principle of the proverb, *Ex ungue leonem*, “you recognize the lion from the mere claw.” One seemingly trifling incident is recorded in order to indicate what the whole situation must be at this blessed future time. When it is said that even such trivial things as bells on the harness of horses shall be holy to the Lord and shall bear an inscription to that effect even as the high priest wore a gold band on his official cap with these very words inscribed on it (see Exod. 28:36-38), that is the equivalent of saying that such a complete state of sanctification or consecration shall mark the life of God’s people that nothing shall be exempt from its all-pervading influence.⁷

Holiness is total in its extent: it is the dedication of man and the world to God, and their separation to Him. Inanimate objects can be holy if they are dedicated to a holy use. Sanctification means that our life is defined, not in terms of ourselves, our children, or our husband or wife, but in terms of God. Sanctification involves our relationship to one another, so that our relationship to our children

⁷ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1956), 276.

and family members is an aspect of sanctification, but it can never be limited or reduced to that level. We cannot say that our life ends when children leave us, or a loved one dies, because the meaning and purpose of our lives can only be defined in terms of God. Everything must be related to God and His Kingdom. Nothing is too trifling to be omitted. As Moore commented,

The “bells of the horses” were those bells that were fastened to them partly for ornament and partly to make them easily found if they strayed away at night. They were not necessary parts of the harness, and trifling in value. When, therefore it is said that even they should have the inscription that was engraved on the breastplate of the high priest, this declares the fact that even the most trifling things in this future state of the Church should be consecrated to God, equally with the highest and holiest.⁸

This means that there is no area of neutrality, that every area must be brought into subjection to God and His law. The *means* of holiness or sanctification is the law of God, whereby man, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, serves God in terms of God’s appointed way and seeks holiness in terms of the only possible means. To be antinomian is to be profane; it is living outside of God and His righteousness.

John Murray has rightly called attention to the fact that the common objection to the doctrine of justification by grace, received by faith, complete, perfect, irrevocable, and entirely the work of God, is that it “is inimical to the interests of holy living” and that it removes “the need for and incentive to good works.”⁹ However, as Murray pointed out, this charge can only be met if the Biblical doctrine of sanctification is upheld, with its requirement of good works (of the law) as the test of faith.

Sanctification is both definitive and progressive. Our dedication to God is an accomplished fact by our union to Christ. St. Paul speaks of believers as those who “are sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1

⁸. Thomas V. Moore, *A Commentary on Zechariah* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 235.

⁹. John Murray, “Sanctification (The Law),” in Carl F. H. Henry, editor, *Basic Christian Doctrines* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 227. Curiously, despite his title, Murray does not discuss the law.

Cor. 1:2). “Ye are washed... ye are sanctified... ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11). This is definitive sanctification, as Murray has pointed out, and “Union with Christ is the pivot on which the doctrine turns, specifically union with Him in the meaning of His death and the power of His resurrection.”¹⁰

To hold only to definitive sanctification leads to a false perfectionism and is untenable. We must recognize that, in our union with Christ, in our life as new creatures in Christ, there is growth in the principle of that new life. This is progressive sanctification. The life of the believer “must be one of progression, a progression both negative and positive, consisting, thus, in both mortification and sanctification.”¹¹

The agency in progressive sanctification is the triune God, especially the Holy Spirit. The means, way, and rule of sanctification is the law of God.

The goal of sanctification is to bring all things under the authority of Jesus Christ, the King of creation. As Moore noted, “When there shall be universal holiness, there shall also be universal happiness.”¹² This does not mean that all men are converted, but that all men shall serve God and be under His authority. In this respect, St. Paul made it clear that even the unbelieving are in an outward sense “sanctified” (1 Cor. 7:14).

The result of the sanctification of all things to God in Christ is well described by Moore:

All shall be happy because all shall be holy. Sorrow shall cease because sin shall cease. The groaning earth shall be mantled with joy because the trail of the serpent shall be gone, and the Eden of the future makes us cease to look back with longing at the Eden of the past. If then a man would have the beginnings of Heaven, it must be by this absolute consecration of everything to God on earth....¹³

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹² Moore, *op. cit.*, 238.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 236.

The Incarnation

Some theologians have tried to relate the incarnation to our redemption by developing a so-called *incarnation theology*, the essence of which is to posit a divinization of the world. Nothing could be further from the reality of the incarnation: its purpose is not to divinize man and the universe, but to restore man to his God-ordained humanity. This so-called *incarnation theory* would do better to renounce the restraints of Christian terminology and openly espouse Roman imperial theology. It was classical antiquity which held to the doctrine of the divinization of heroes and rulers, and took for granted as a presupposition of faith that a continuity existed between the human and the divine, whereas Biblical faith asserts a radical discontinuity bridged only in the unique incarnation. The emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96) ordered the Roman procurators to use the written formula, *Dominus ac Deus noster hoc fieri jubet* (Our Master and Our God bids that this be done).¹ Greek and Roman mythology could readily ascribe all kinds of vices to the gods because there was no essential difference of kind between gods and men, only a difference in the degree of power. If man sinned, then the gods sinned; if man lusted, then the gods lusted also: there was a common being in both of them.

The mystery and miracle of the incarnation is that the perfect and uncreated being of God was brought into union without confusion with the created being of man. This miracle is set forth in Matthew 1:1-2:23, and in Luke 1:26-2:20, but these are not the only references to it. As Robinson has pointed out, it is the presupposition of several statements in the New Testament. For example, St. Paul speaks of the birth of Jesus in Romans 1:3, Galatians 4:4, and Philippians 2:7. The Greek verb, *gennaō*, "born," "has the connotation of begotten and is often rendered 'begat.'" St.

¹. Suetonius, "Domitian," *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (New York: Book League of America, 1937), 355; and Douglas Edwards, *The Virgin Birth in History and Faith* (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), 16n.

Paul uses instead “forms of the verb *ginomai*, which means born in the sense of come into being, become, made. The King James Version renders this word ‘made’ in each case.” Recent versions translate both words as “born.” Where *gennao* is used, it implies a human father unless, as in Matthew 1:16, 20, it is specified “that this was a begetting of the Holy Spirit, not by a human father.” St. Paul assumes knowledge of the virgin birth. “Both Paul and his predecessors taught that Jesus was made or born of a human mother, but never suggested a begetting by a human father. As he had no divine mother, so also he had no human father.”²

A very important reference to our Lord’s miraculous birth is St. Paul’s reference to him in 1 Cor. 15:45 and 47 as the second or last Adam or man, i.e., as the new head of a new humanity. St. Luke refers to this same analogy in Luke 3:38, where the miraculous birth of Adam is brought into focus after the miraculous birth of Christ is told. Paul also spoke of Adam as a type of “Him that was to come” (Rom. 5:14). As Edwards points out, it is important to know in what sense Adam, “in whom all die” (1 Cor. 15:22), and “through whose disobedience the many were made sinners” (Rom 5:19), could be the type “of the obedient, sinless, death-defying Christ.”³

For observe, it is not enough to say that Christ is the Second Man because He gave us a fresh start. Nor will it do to say that He is the Last Adam because, like Adam, He was the Head of a new race. To speak in this way is to suppose that what makes Christ the Last or Final Adam is His Godhead. The real question is how, being Man, He Himself *got* the fresh start, or again how He could be the Head of a race, of which (if born like others), He was but, with us, a fellow member. On the other hand, if — as all the evidence goes to show — the Virgin Birth was an integral part of Christian doctrine from the first, then (for St. Paul and his readers) Adam *was* a type of Christ that was to come.

Just because he was “the man” (which is what the word Adam means) Adam’s actions involved us all; and because he sinned,

² William Childs Robinson, “The Virgin Birth — A Broader Base,” *Christianity Today*, vol. XVII, no. 5, 8 December 1972, 238-240.

³ Edwards, *op. cit.*, 106.

we suffered. So also, just because He was “the Man” (which is what the title “the Son of Man” means) Christ’s actions involved us all; and because He was obedient we gained. This indeed is precisely the connection in which the remark that Adam is a type of Christ was made.⁴

Both Adams entered history by the direct act of God. However, whereas the First Adam and his every descendant originated from the dust (Gen. 2:7) and was made a “living soul” by God’s power, the Second Adam originated from Heaven and was made “a quickening spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45).

Genuinely, completely human as it was, Christ’s body was a Spirit-body — a body created in holiness for the Divine Man by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost — and therefore beyond the touch of the corruption that is the heritage of sin. Adam’s body, on the other hand, was only a soul-body — *as also is that of every single one of his descendants.*⁵

The descendants of the first Adam inherit death. The descendants by faith of the second Adam inherit life, as men who have become the sons of God by adoption in Jesus Christ. According to St. John,

12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name:

13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

These words clearly presuppose the virgin birth of our Lord, who was “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The virgin birth of Christ establishes the type or pattern for the rebirth of all members of the new humanity. Even as Christ’s birth was supernatural, so our rebirth is supernatural. Even as Christ, through the Virgin Mary, was related to the old humanity of Adam and a member thereof, so we too are members of that old humanity, but are now by God’s regenerating power made members of the new humanity of Jesus Christ.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 106f, the reference in the last sentence is to Rom. 5:14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 113f.

Jesus Christ is the perfect new man or second Adam. St. John makes it clear “that the human traits of Jesus are reproduced in the lives of those (and of those only) who believe on His Divine Name.”⁶ Just as Adam’s traits were passed on to his seed, so the traits of Jesus Christ are implanted in His new race. Jesus identifies Himself with His people, so that, in confronting St. Paul on the road to Damascus, He challenges Paul, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*?” (Acts 22:7; 26:14). In persecuting the Christians, Christ told Paul, he was persecuting also and essentially their Lord Jesus. This is a telling example of the extent to which Christ identifies Himself with His people. It is also a reminder to Christians that they must identify their lives with Christ by faith, obedience, and service. We must manifest His self-sacrificing love towards one another: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16). The lives of Christians are to manifest the redeemed humanity of which they are members, and the example of Christ, who is their federal head and Lord. Moreover, “as he is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). We can therefore face the Day of Judgment with boldness, and we can live in the confidence of His grace and power.

St. John tells us in 1 John 1:8-2:2 that none of us are without sin; the godly man commits acts of sin, but he does not go on sinning habitually and deliberately. Ross, in commenting on 1 John 3:9, renders its meaning thus and comments:

“*Everyone* who has been made a child of God and remains so does not *go on sinning*, because His seed abideth in him: and he cannot *go on sinning*, because he has been made a child of God and remains so.” That is a very strong and an utterly uncompromising statement, to be understood, however, in the light of the interpretation already given of v. 6. The germ of the new life has been implanted in the soul of the child of God and it grows, is certain to grow — a gradual process and subject to declensions from time to time, but it assuredly grows from more to more. The incorruptible seed of the Word of God, implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit, has

⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

brought to the soul the new life of the children of God (1 Pet. 1:23). The man to whom that has happened cannot live habitually in sin, though there may be lapses into acts of sin, he cannot revel in sin, because he has been born of God and remains a child of God. He can say with Paul: "It is not I (the real 'I,' in whom the seed of God abides) who do the deed, but sin that dwells within me" (Rom. 7:17, Moffat), for sin is still there in his soul, though not now dominant. "The believer's lapses into sin," says Dr. David Smith, "are like the mischances of the weather which hinder the seed's growth. The growth of a living seed may be checked temporarily," but, after that temporary check, it begins again, and it goes on until the time of harvest arrives.⁷

In 1 John 5:18, we are told that whoever has been born of God does not sin (i.e., continually and deliberately sin), because "he that is begotten of God keepeth himself (or, him), and that wicked one toucheth him not." The one who was "begotten of God" is Christ Himself, the virgin-born Son of God.

The Eternally Begotten keeps him who is begotten by grace. We find some confirmation of this interpretation in the fact that the second of John's phrases, *He that was begotten of God*, is the same form of expression that we have in the old Nicene Creed, "begotten of the Father," where the reference is to the eternal generation of Him who is "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God."⁸

The incarnation thus, while a *unique* act, is not an *isolated* fact. It is essentially related to every member of the new humanity. Christ as true man and very God, has given us a new birth by His regenerating power. God, "according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). He has made us heirs of all things and summoned us to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth as members of the new humanity of Jesus Christ.

But this is not all. St. John says of the believer, "that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18). This does not mean that the godly

⁷. Alexander Ross, *The Epistles of James and John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1954), 185.

⁸. *Ibid.*, 223.

do not suffer physically at the hands of evil men who are the servants of Satan. St. John wrote when persecutions were already a reality, and he very obviously was aware of what was happening all around him. The reference cannot be understood without recalling Eden. Those who are born again by the grace of the Lord, He who is “begotten of the Father,” cannot, like Adam, be touched in their calling. Adam was called to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth as the Kingdom of God. “That wicked one” did *touch* Adam. *Touch* (*hupto*) means “primarily, to fasten to, hence, of fire, to kindle,” also having the meaning of to cling, lay hold of, adhere to, or to assault and sever from, as in 1 John 5:18.⁹ Adam was severed from God’s calling and obedience. We *cannot* be so severed; we are beyond the reach of Satan. We are secure in our calling. Man, now reestablished in his calling to dominion, will prosper therein, and he shall persevere therein, until “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

⁹. See W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. IV (New York: Revell, 1966), 145.

Perseverance

The doctrine of perseverance means that those whom God has redeemed in Christ can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, for by the sovereign decree of God, they shall persevere therein to their life's end, and shall be eternally saved. As we have seen, in 1 John 5:18, we are told that

We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not. (ERV, 1881)

In the state of grace, we are not immune to sin, but we are immune to the power of Satan insofar as any severing of ourselves from the grace and calling of God are concerned. We have been redeemed and restored to our calling to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. As far as being touched in our calling is concerned, Satan cannot touch or sever us from it: we have an immunity by the grace of God.

Two things are at once apparent. *First*, the doctrine of perseverance cannot be reduced to a merely personal victory against Satan. It is clearly that, but it is also much, much more. In neither its personal nor its social implications is the doctrine of perseverance a “grin-and-bear-it, and you will survive” philosophy. The root meaning of *perseverance*, from the Latin through the French, means to persist in a purpose, to continue striving (*per*, through; *severus*, strict). The word *perseverance* appears in Ephesians 6:18, but not in the doctrinal sense. The word there used is *proskarteresis*, meaning, to continue steadfastly in a thing and give unremitting care to it, as in Romans 13:6, where it is translated “attending.” The doctrine thus is not readily expressed in any single word but is set forth throughout Scripture in a number of sentences and assumptions. Thus, in Jeremiah 32:36-44, it means that God will use His saints to accomplish His purpose of restoration and reconstruction, although Jeremiah’s reference is to

the limited restoration after the Babylonian Captivity and before Christ's first coming. In Isaiah 54:10-17, it clearly has reference to the triumph of all believers and their establishment on earth under God. Our Lord and St. Paul also stressed the aspect of our indefectibility, which is a central facet of the doctrine:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:28-29)

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6)

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us.... For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:33-34, 38-39)

God's grace is sovereign, irresistible, and indefectible. It is a significant fact that those who, like Blunt, deny the doctrine of indefectible grace to the redeemed, replace it with the doctrine of the indefectibility of the church. As Blunt defined this, it meant

(1) the perpetuity of the Church, by which it is free from failure in succession of members. (2) the inerrancy and infallibility of the Church, by which it is free from failure in holding and declaring the Truth.¹

As so stated, it is on the one hand at least meaningless, and, on the other, very mischievous. It declares that there will always be a true church on earth, and that the true church will never be faithless to its Lord or err in the faith. This true church in this sense cannot be identified with any historical church but is the invisible and elect body at its best and most faithful service. So viewed, the doctrine

¹. Rev. John Henry Blunt, editor, *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1891), 340.

means that, from the perspective of eternity there is always an indefectible and faithful church, but it is never a particular church. The danger is that infallibility is made by this doctrine an attribute of an historical institution which is in processes of development, growth, decay, and reform. An attribute of God and His word is transferred to an aspect of history and process. Blunt (and others) have added inerrancy and infallibility to indefectibility. The practical consequence has been arrogant churchmanship: the theological consequence has been a neoplatonic idealization of the church. The Biblical grounds for the doctrine of the church's inerrancy and infallibility are not valid ones; it would be as easy, in terms of a like misuse of texts, to justify a doctrine of the state's inerrancy and infallibility from Romans 13:6, "for they are God's ministers, *attending continually* upon this very thing."

Blunt's argument against indefectible grace to the elect is that it denies free-will.² In any absolute and primary sense, it clearly does; Scripture reserves sovereignty and primary freedom and causality to God, for they are the attributes of God. Blunt denied the doctrine to man, to preserve man's free will, as his own god, and ascribed indefectible grace to the church, to exalt the church.

Let us examine a declaration of our Lord, which speaks of the church and is relevant to perseverance, Matthew 16:15-19:

15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?
16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.
18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

² *Ibid.*, 341.

Among other things, our Lord here declares that Peter's free and voluntary confession of faith represented also the primary will and purpose of God the Father. He declared Simon's name to be Peter because of this confession, i.e., of the rock, God, and on this rock, God the Son, and man's confession of Him, He would build His church. Morgan commented:

Once more reminding ourselves that He was speaking to Hebrews, it is of great significance that if we trace the figurative use of the word "Rock" throughout the Hebrew Scripture, we find it is never used symbolically of man, but always of God. The Hebrew word is the word *Tsur*, and we find it occurring at least forty times figuratively in the Old Testament. Twice it is used of false gods in Deuteronomy 32, as they are put into contrast with the Rock of Israel, Who is the living God. In every other instance the figurative use of the word applies to God.

The Rock therefore is the living God, and those forming the Church are such as are built into Him, as Peter presently puts it in one of his letters, such as are "partakers of the Divine nature." The intention is very clearly revealed as we take the words of Peter once again, beginning at the end. First, "the living God," then One Who is "the Son of the living God"; and finally, that One, the Messiah. Jesus said, "On that Rock I will build My Church," that is, on God manifest in time in His Son, and administering the affairs of the world through the Son as Messiah. Peter had found the foundation, the *petra*, and by being brought into living touch with Him, had become *petros*, of the Rock nature.³

The triune God is the Rock, and Peter and all believers are of that Rock when they confess Christ as Lord and Savior. The same point was made by Aelfric (955-1022), in a homily, "Of the Apostle Peter":

Jesus then said, "What say ye that I am?" Peter answered him, "Thou art Christ, the living God's Son." The Lord to him said for answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon, dove's child," & c. ***Bede the expounder unveils to us the deepness of this lesson*** The Lord said to Peter, "Thou art rocken." (Literally

³. G. Campbell Morgan, *Peter and the Church* (London: Pickering & Inglish, 1937), 17f.

stonen, having the same relation to stone as rocken to rock, golden to gold, earthen to earth, & c.) — For the strength of his faith, and for the firmness of his confession, he received that name; because he joined himself with steadfast mind to Christ who is called a Rock by the Apostle Paul.

“And I will build my church upon this rock”; that is, upon the faith which Thou confessest. All God’s convocation is built upon the rock; that is, upon Christ; because he is the ground-wall of all the structures of his own church.

All God’s churches are accounted as one convocation; and this is built with chosen men, not with dead stones; and all the building of those lively stones is laid upon Christ; because we are, through faith, accounted his members and he our “aller” head. Who(soever) builds off the ground-wall, his work shall fall, to (his) great loss.

Jesus said, “The gates of hell shall not have power against my church.” Sins and erroneous doctrine are hell’s gates, because they lead the sinful (man) as it were through a gate into hell’s torment. Many are these gates; but none of them shall have power against the holy convocation, which is built upon the firm rock, Christ; because the believer, through Christ’s protection, escapes the perils of the devilish temptations.⁴

Going back even earlier, we find that Tertullian distinguished between “the *doctrine* of apostles and their *power*.” The *keys of the Kingdom* meant the power to interpret the law faithfully: where God’s law was faithfully set forth, men’s sins were bound or loosed in heaven because the earthly action set forth God’s law and reality. Of Acts 15:7-11, Tertullian wrote, “This sentence both ‘loosed’ those parts of the law which were abandoned, and ‘bound’ those which were reserved.” The true church, the church faithful to the law-word of God, thus alone has this power:

And accordingly “the church,” it is true, will forgive sins: but (it will be) the church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man; not the church which consists of a number of bishops. For the right and arbitrament is the Lord’s, not the servant’s; God’s Himself, not the priest’s.⁵

⁴ E. Thomson, editor, *Select Monuments of the Doctrine and Worship of the Catholic Church in England Before the Norman Conquest* (John Russell Smith, 1875), 95-99.

Clearly, our Lord's point is that He is the church Himself, and that we are *of the church* when we confess the triune God and the incarnate Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Our Lord also clearly declared that the elect cannot be plucked out of His hand (John 10:28-29): they are indefectible. Now, in speaking of the church as the elect (Matt. 16:17), He then declares (v. 18) that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The word *prevail* is in the Greek *katischuo*, to be strong against. It means here that "the gates of hell" cannot hold out against the true church, the people of God. The image is clearly one of defensive structures, designed to prevent intrusion and conquest. Our Lord thus portrayed His people, those confessing His name, as besieging, conquering, and destroying "the gates of hell."

The doctrine of perseverance is thus clearly what can be called a "postmillennial" doctrine. It means that 1) the elect are indefectible, and that 2) their perseverance culminates in the defeat and destruction of the enemy's forces and their triumph in Christ. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). Satan shall be crushed under the feet of God's elect.

Second, it is apparent that the doctrine of perseverance has, as a result of pietistic influences, been limited to the victory of the individual believer, and then only negatively, against sin, not positively in exercising dominion and subduing the earth. But our Lord made it clear that the enemy cannot "prevail," withstand, or hold out against the attack of the people of God, that is, the church as a congregation and as elect persons rather than as an institution.

Older hymns still reflected a vision of conquest. In 1864, W. W. How wrote,

Guard the helpless; seek the strayed;
Comfort troubles; banish griefs;
In the might of GOD arrayed,
Scatter sin and unbelief.

Be the banner still unfurled,

⁵ *The Writings of Quintus Sept. Flor. Tertullianus*, in Tertullian, "On Modesty," *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. XVIII (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), 116-120.

Still unsheathed the SPIRIT'S sword,
Till the kingdoms of the world
Are the Kingdom of the LORD.

This sings of perseverance unto conquest. Where the element of triumph is eliminated from the doctrine of perseverance, two things then ensue. *First*, the doctrine of perseverance withers and begins to disappear, because it has become merely a matter of suffering unto death. The difference between a perseverance unto martyrdom and a perseverance unto victory is sharply defined by the difference between John Knox and other men of his day. As Ridley has seen it, Knox had almost nothing to say about the horrors of being a galley slave. All the available accounts make it clear that the torments of such slaves were very great.⁶ Yet Knox does not tell us about his own sufferings.

But Knox had suffered for his faith in the galleys. The sixteenth century, like the twentieth century, was an age of propaganda, and stories about the sufferings of martyrs and prisoners played an important part in the propaganda. Martyrs like Anne Askew, Hooper, and others wrote simple and moving accounts of their sufferings in prison, of the tortures to which they were subjected, and the mockery and insults which they endured. Bale and John Foxe published these stories, and roused the pity and indignation of their protestant readers. Knox might have written an account of the sufferings of a galley slave which, nearly two hundred years before Marteilhe, would have stirred the anger of Protestant Europe at the treatment of Protestants in the French galleys. He did not do so. In the whole of Knox's writings, there are only a few short references to the "torments of the galleys"; and in his *History* there is nothing about torments. The references are to resistance, to caps kept on during religious ceremonies, to the throwing of the statue of the Virgin in the river, to threats by the prisoners to "stick" the priest at mass. It is not an account of the sufferings of a martyr in a lonely prison cell, but a mass resistance by prisoners of war. As with some modern reminiscences of prisoners of war, the reader is almost sorry for the guards. Knox makes no attempt to arouse the reader's pity for himself.

⁶ See Edwin Arber, editor, *The Torments of Protestant Slaves in the French King's Gallies, and in the Dungeone of Marseilles, 1686-1707 A.D.* (London, 1907).

Knox may have been lucky enough to have had a relatively mild *souscomite*, to have been allowed his rest after a reasonable shift, and never to have felt the whip on his bare shoulders as he pulled the oar; but there must have been, at least, many insults and humiliations which had to be borne, many instances of bullying, and taunting, and the raucous bawling of orders in the international language of the sea, with the dreaded shout of “Arranque! Arranque!” to make the galley slaves row faster. Not even for the sake of Protestant propaganda was Knox prepared to let the world know about them. He saw himself as trampling on his enemy, not writhing under his enemy’s foot, and if there were moments in the galleys when he was trampled on, he was eager to forget them and to tell no one else. Many Protestants gloried in their sufferings, and seemed almost to be seeking martyrdom. Knox did not want martyrdom; he wanted victory.⁷

Knox exemplified a victorious perseverance, clearly. Deny this element of victory, and perseverance means finally the ability or grace to maintain the faith under suffering unto death. It means then that the grace of God unto the elect is effectual only in the limited sense of maintaining the faith, and not with respect to perseverance in faith *and* in the creation mandate to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. These two things are inseparable. We are redeemed in order to continue in that calling which Adam abandoned. The purpose of our salvation is not merely to save us from hell, but to reestablish us in God’s purpose for man and to prosper us therein. The meaning of perseverance is that God ordains that we persevere in that faith and calling. In its pietistic sense, the doctrine of perseverance has a purely personal, human reference. In its Biblical sense, it has that personal sense, but it is firmly tied to the sovereign purpose and calling of God.

Second, when the element of triumph is eliminated from the doctrine of perseverance, not only does the doctrine fade away, but it is also transferred elsewhere, wherever the note of victory is sounded. The claimants to perseverance include both church and state. Whenever theology has grown weak and heretical, there the institutional church has added to its powers. Where the believer

⁷ Jasper Ridley, *John Knox* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 82.

becomes weak, there the church as protector makes itself strong. Doctrines of the indefectibility of the church have abounded in ages of apostasy.

Similarly, the state has also claimed indefectibility. The Marxist theory asserts that the processes of history assure the infallible and indefectible nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Victory is thus supposedly inevitable. In the democratic theory, the Great Society represents the indefectible order which assures the triumph of man and his hopes.

St. John, however, tells us that the evil one cannot sever us from our membership in Christ and our creation mandate in Him. The Adam from above has established us, His new humanity, in God's original calling, and we shall persevere therein unto victory. How far-reaching that victory shall be, Scripture makes very clear:

1. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.
2. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.
3. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.
4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.
5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
6. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. (Isa. 35:1-6)

XLVII

Incarnation and Indwelling

As we have seen, some churchmen have stressed the inerrancy and infallibility of the church, an invalid concept, rather than the perseverance to victory of the people of God. These ideas have been linked also to a belief in the church as a continuation of the incarnation. The rationale is that, because Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, the church, as His mystical body, is the extension of that incarnation into continuing history.

A major expression of this faith appeared in 1957 in Donald M. Baillie's *The Theology of the Sacraments*. Baillie's presupposition is that we have "a sacramental universe." Earlier, Tillich had argued in favor of nature as "a sacramental element."¹ It is clear that the word "sacrament" is used in a very different sense by these men than with most Christians. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* gives us a succinct definition of the term:

Q. 92. What is a Sacrament?

A. A Sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

So, to limit the meaning of *sacrament* is not to regard nature as outside of God and salvation, and to call the universe *sacramental* is to say much more than that nature is included in the history of salvation: it makes nature a bearer of grace, supernatural grace, to man. Tillich spoke of nature as "bearer and an object of salvation."² How does nature "bear" or bring salvation to man? Nature, like man, is fallen and needs restoration; to make it the "bearer" of salvation is to make it in effect one with Christ or a continuation of the incarnation. Because of his belief in a sacramental universe, Baillie found "something akin to what we mean by 'sacramental' in most religious traditions, including the

¹ Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 112.

² *Ibid.*, 102.

most primitive,” since all such religions are expressions of the world of nature.³ Moreover, Baillie added,

Some writers go further in developing the connection between nature and sacrament. Dr. Lampert, of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, maintains, as a general basis of the sacraments, that there is something holy and theandric in nature itself, and even that in some mystical sense there is a natural connection between baptism and water.⁴

Theandric means relating to, or existing in terms of, the relationship of the divine and the human. Nature is theandric and holy, i.e., it has inherent in it both the divine and the human. Both Lampert and Tillich limit the church sacraments to the Biblical ordinances, but they insist on reading a sacramental nature into the universe. A “sacramental universe” means more than that the universe was created by God; it means that the universe is somehow a continuation of the incarnation.

Baillie saw the sacraments as an extension of the incarnation; others have seen the church also as an extension of the incarnation. Baillie was not ready to agree with that: “now the relation of Christ to the Church is not that of the soul to the body, but rather of the *head* to the body. It is quite a different idea from that of Christ being incarnate in the Church.”⁵ Because of his Calvinist heritage, Baillie was aware of the difference, and he described it clearly:

If we are to work out soundly the relation of Church and sacraments to the historic incarnation, we must take seriously the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This doctrine is wholly dependent on the fact of the historic incarnation of God on earth, but it is also wholly bound up with the idea that the incarnation did not go on for ever, but came to an end, and that since then the divine Presence is with us in a new way through the Holy Spirit working in the Church through Word and sacraments.

That excludes the idea that Christ is actually incarnate in the Church. But of course it excludes the idea, which sometimes

³. Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 43.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵. *Ibid.*, 65.

seems to lurk in certain sacramental theologies, that we are concerned with a dead Christ who lived and died long ago and whose grace has to come to us across the centuries as it were through an unbroken sacramental channel. That is an even more fatal way of saying that there is an extension of the incarnation through the ages in the Church and sacraments.

I do not mean that any church or any respectable school of theologians really holds this crude position. But it seems to be implied in the way in which people sometimes talk of the apostolic succession through the laying on of hands of bishops, as if it were a channel called grace, flowing through the centuries from the incarnate Christ; a stream that would be lost if there were any break in the succession, or any break in the pipeline that runs through the ages. On this view, at its crudest, the Church with its sacraments becomes a kind of supernatural installation instituted by God for the purpose of transmitting to all future time the grace that came into the world with the incarnation. Such a theory forgets that grace is not a transmissible substance but a living personal relationship; and it also seems to imply a dead Christ whose grace has to be transmitted as it were horizontally through the ages. Whereas we ought to think of the living Christ who is with His people in every age through the Holy Spirit, and who establishes with us through His Church, His Word and sacraments, that personal relationship which is the very meaning of grace.⁶

Baillie still held out for a “continuity” and an extension of the incarnation in the sacraments. “But if we are to be at all true to the New Testament, we must make this continuity, this extension of the incarnation wholly dependent on the Word and the Spirit.”⁷ Baillie thus rejected both the Catholic and the Protestant positions.

Among the errors which mark Baillie’s position is the fact, *first*, that he linked the sacraments primarily to the incarnation rather than the atonement. He could therefore declare that we are saved by God “through faith, and therefore partly through sacraments, which He uses to awaken and to strengthen our faith. Thus the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is indeed a means of grace, an

⁶. *Ibid.*, 65f.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 66.

instrument of salvation.” The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is the celebration of our redemption and our renewal therein, not a means of salvation. Not surprisingly, Baillie has nothing to say about propitiation, substitution, and atonement: his doctrine of salvation points to a deification rather than a redemption of man, although he shrank from any such conclusion. When Baillie does refer to Calvary, it is to call it “an eternal sacrifice,” whereas Scripture gives us a single act of total power and validity. Baillie confused Christ’s *intercessory* work with His atonement and called it “a continual offering of Himself to God on behalf of men.”⁸

Second, the concept of a sacramental universe has no ground in Scripture. It implies that nature either must be overcome by grace to be tolerable, or is itself inherently the domain of grace. In terms of Scripture, neither view is tenable. “Nature,” even in its fallen estate, witnesses to its Creator; this is not a sacramental but an epistemological witness; it is a question of knowledge rather than grace. Nature’s future, like man’s, is restoration.

Third, Baillie wanted neither the infallible word of God, the Bible, and the sovereign, predestinating power of God, of Calvinism, on the one hand, nor the incarnate church with its inerrant, indefectible, and infallible powers, as in Catholic doctrine, on the other. Baillie wanted the freedom of autonomous man, and yet he wanted available grace, on tap when the free person of man chose to receive it. This is what he meant by keeping it “personal.” A letter delivered to me from a distance by the agency of the post office is no less a personal letter, however, and the grace of God delivered through an apostolic succession is no less personal. Baillie has missed the point here, because he has chosen to. The question is, which position is Biblical? All are in some sense personal. Which, moreover, preserves the divine initiative? Baillie would give us an extension of the incarnation which is a momentary thing. For Barth, the Bible is the word of God, not in any objective sense, but in the subjective sense that it speaks to me personally at the moment of hearing, in my experience. This indeed is personal, but it is more than that. It exalts the person to the

⁸. *Ibid.*, 101f., 116-117.

throne of God: it gives priority in revelation to man's experience, and it reduces the sacrament to an experience of immanence, to a form of mysticism rather than a celebration of our new life through the atonement and our common new humanity with Christ our Lord. The Catholic doctrine limits God's initiative; Baillie's doctrine eliminates it.

The doctrine of an extended incarnation is not new. Before the church adopted it, the state had already proclaimed it. The state was an extension of the deity inherent in being, and its officers, offices, or the state itself, were extensions and developments of a concretization or incarnation of that divinity. This same power was claimed for the individual by some philosophers.

The doctrines of Baillie and Tillich reopen the door to a divinized state, a sacramental social order in which politics is a means of grace and a manifestation of God incarnate. Their ideas are thus far more radical than those of churchmen who limit the continuation of the incarnation to the Church. The whole universe of things and institutions is open to incarnation. If, in terms of the theanthropic heresies of some Eastern theologies, the waters of the earth have a natural sacramental significance, why not all wines also? Then every alcoholic could grow in grace as he indulged himself.

Then, too, the sexual act, as in some religions, would also be sacramental and a means of grace. In fact, in such a perspective, all things save Christ's ordinances are made sacramental.

If we have a sacramental universe, all things as such are holy, and, therefore, whatever is, is right.

When Scripture speaks of incarnation, it is only of the unique incarnation of God in Christ. The term to be used for all else is indwelling. St. Paul declares,

16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
17. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

19. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

The Temple in Jerusalem was standing when St. Paul wrote these words, and to every Hebrew reader, there was an immediate association of the glory of that temple with their bodies. Moreover, every Hebrew and Gentile reader was well aware of the magnificence of the pagan temples of Corinth, Athens, and other cities; these too came to mind. A second image also came to mind, especially with all Hebrew readers, the Shekinah or Glory of God indwelling in the Holy of Holies.

These images are brought to focus in both passages on the believer's body. In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, there can be a reference to the individual believer as well as to the church; in vv. 5-10, the reference is to the church; in vv. 11-15, the reference moves from the building done by Paul, Apollos, and the leaders in Corinth to every man; both the church and also every believer laboring therein are the temple of God in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, it is clearly every believer's body. Shore's comment on 1 Corinthians 3:17 is very much to the point on the significance of indwelling in a temple:

If any man defile. Better, If any man destroy — the opposite of "building up." Which should be the work of the Christian teacher; the architectural image being still in view.

Which temple ye are. — Literally, *the which are ye*, "which" referring rather to holy than to the temple; the argument being that as they are "holy" by the indwelling of God's Spirit, therefore they are the temple of God. As God commanded the punishment of death to be inflicted on whoever defiled the actual Temple (see Ex. xxviii. 43; Lev. xvi. 2), because it was holy unto the Lord, and His presence dwelt there; so they, having the same Spirit in them, were a temple also holy unto the Lord, and God would not leave him unpunished who destroyed or marred this spiritual temple.⁹

Any profanation of the church is a direct offense against God. The holiness of God's temple, the church or our bodies, is not by virtue of anything in or of the church or our bodies but by virtue of God's indwelling Spirit. Profanation thus means that God's vengeance is directed against the church as a whole, or its leaders, or a profane party therein. This vengeance is also directed against us if we profane our bodies.

Turning now to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, which deals exclusively with our bodies, it is important to recognize that ownership of our bodies belongs to God. As Hodge noted, of v. 19,

There are two things characteristic of a temple. First, it is sacred as a dwelling-place of God, and therefore cannot be profaned with impunity. Second, the proprietorship of a temple is not in man, but in God. Both these things are true of the believer's body. It is a temple because the Holy Ghost dwells in it; and because it is not his own. It belongs to God. As it is a temple of the Holy Ghost, it cannot be profaned without incurring great and peculiar guilt. And as it belongs in a peculiar sense to God, it is not at our own disposal. It can only be used for the purposes for which he designed it.¹⁰

Shore's comment on these two verses is also telling:

There are two reasons why we are not our own. (1) The Spirit which has possession of our bodies is not our own, but given us "of God." (2) We have been bought with a price, even the blood of Christ; it is a completed purchase (I Pet. i 18, 19). Our bodies not being our own to do as we like with, we have no right to give them over unto sin.¹¹

There is a very great difference between incarnation and indwelling. *First*, in an incarnation, there is a union of two things, God and man, in perfect unity without confusion: it is not possible either to commingle and confuse the two natures or to separate and isolate them: they are in perfect union. Thus, one nature cannot sit

⁹ Rev. T. Teignmouth Shore, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VII (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 297.

¹⁰ Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 106.

¹¹ Shore, *op. cit.*, 306.

in judgment on the other as a separately functioning thing. If the church is an extension of the incarnation, then the church must have the same immunity from our judgment as Christ, and it must possess the same infallibility as Christ. The doctrine of the church's infallibility is a logical development of the doctrine of the church as an extension of the incarnation. If the universe is sacramental, then an element of divinity is channelled through the universe, and the groundwork is laid for a view of the world of nature as God manifest and incarnate.

Second, with indwelling as with incarnation, there is no confusion of either deity or humanity, deity or the natural, created order. However, there is no perfect unity or an incorporation, and, whereas we cannot separate the earthly person of Jesus Christ from the second person of the Trinity and declare that this much was God, and that much was not, where indwelling is concerned, the line of division is very clear and obvious. The indweller, moreover, judges the one indwelled. God the Son never judges Jesus of Nazareth: the idea is an impossibility. God the Son does judge the church, and He does judge the believer. To call persons, officers, the church, or the state extensions of the incarnation is to place them beyond the criticism of God and man alike. This Scripture does not allow us to do. Rather, that which is indwelled is most severely judged for profaning its privileges and glory. In fact, "judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). Although the believer has the hope of redemption, whereas the reprobate do not, the believer is most quickly judged. That which is indwelled has a high privilege, but it is also subject to judgment for abuse of privilege.

Third, the Christian can be God's temple, and the church also. Clearly, too, the godly state in the Old Testament also could be indwelled by God's Spirit. The Civil pentecost¹² was a witness to this, as well as the anointing of kings. The Christian state can be indwelled, as can the Christian family, school, and place of

¹² See R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1972), 242ff.

business. God will house where He is honored and His law-word obeyed. He calls rulers who obey him his “shepherds” (Jer. 23:4).

Fourth, the concept of indwelling on the one hand keeps God and man separate, as Scripture requires, and, on the other, brings them together in terms of man’s faith and obedience. It means that, as man grows in his reconstruction of all things in terms of God’s word, he enjoys more clearly the comfort, glory, and power of the indwelling Spirit. It means also that he is in all things, places, and institutions under the jurisdiction of God’s Spirit and God’s law-word. He cannot separate himself at any point from God, nor from God’s indwelling Spirit, nor isolate any vocation, institution, or function of his life from the requirement of holiness.

It means, moreover, that the church is the body of Christ only insofar as it is holy and obedient to the Lord. It does not incarnate a status and guarantee itself an irreversible destiny by virtue of being called a church. As our Lord said of one church, “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:15).

Men, in analyzing the Bible for its doctrines of the church and of the state, have been consistently annoyed at the paucity of data. The reason is an obvious one. The non-Christian world has always been heavily institutionalized. It looks to a network of institutions to provide the binding and sustaining element in society. Scripture, however, sees the binding and sustaining element as God’s law, which men and institutions must serve. There is a marked difference between a society dominated by institutions and one dominated by the law of God. The institutional society seeks to divinize itself. The law society of God rejoices in the indwelling Spirit.

Predestination

Few things are more often deliberately misunderstood than the doctrine of predestination. Because so much is at stake in this doctrine, every attempt has been made to obscure and distort the basic issues. In order to understand what is involved, certain things need to be brought into focus.

First, predestination is an inescapable concept. It is the doctrine of ultimate, absolute, and controlling power and law governing all things. The alternative to predestination is a belief in chance, that nothing save total and absolute randomness prevails. Things are and occur without order, meaning, aim, choice, or law; all things are accidental and casual, and an undetermined probability, which is total possibility, alone exists. This belief has not been held by any religion or philosophy, although it has been nominally professed as a means of undermining some particular faith. Polytheism in the ancient world held to the passing of the gods, but, behind the gods was all-controlling fate and a governing cycle of an eternal recurrence of all things. For Hinduism and Buddhism, the universe might be mindless, and nothingness ultimate, but law and karma still governed all things. God was absent from these and other systems of thought, but not predestination. The fact of God and of moral accountability to Him has been consistently denied in the history of apostate thought, but the reality of God has been admitted in some adulterated form, so that predestination without God has been affirmed.

Second, the doctrine of predestination is only truly theistic in its Biblical form. While related to God in some faiths, as in Mohammedanism, it also tends to become therein a blind, mechanical fate. *Historically*, thus, the doctrine is not necessarily theistic. It can be a blind karma; it can be dialectical materialism, naturalistic determinism, Spinoza's pantheism, or any one of a number of other doctrines, but in every case it still affirms an ultimate and absolute law and order. In the overwhelming majority

of cases, the doctrine, as we encounter it in the history of thought, is not theistic. *Metaphysically*, we can affirm that the concept of an absolute and ultimate government and order is illogical and impossible without God, but *historically* we must recognize that it is normally separated from God and given other names.

Third, when the doctrine of predestination is denied, it does not disappear. Where denied to God, predestination then accrues to some other agency, nature, man, or the state. The doctrine cannot be denied: it can only be transferred, so that it is important, wherever we meet a denial of it, to ask immediately where the new locale of ultimacy of determination has been established. The common objection to the doctrine as “the horrible decree” is to God’s predestination. There is less objection to it when it is called *naturalistic determinism*: it is then a good scientific doctrine. The same is true of dialectical materialism: Marxist predestination is hailed by many as a liberating doctrine. The doctrine is seen as oppressive only when theistic.

Fourth, this means, plainly, that the issue at stake in the doctrine of predestination is a very simple one, namely, who is truly God, the God of Scripture, or man? The doctrine is “horrible” when ascribed to God because the goal of sinful man is to be his own god, determining for himself what constitutes good and evil (Gen. 3:5). God’s predestination is an affront to man, who chooses to be his own predestinator. Henley’s *Invictus* is to the sinner beautiful sentiment and a fine creed, but God’s word is an affront, because fallen man is determined to be his own god. Determination of all things is thus taken from God by the philosophers of autonomous man, and placed in “nature,” whose crowning voice and expression is man. Therefore, man now makes himself, is his own predestinator, defines his own essence, in Sartre’s language, and becomes his own law and government. No power beyond man is permitted.

Fifth, as is thus obvious, man is made lord, so that the logical step is predestination by man. Orton saw, though dimly, the connection between the decline of the Puritan faith in Providence and the rise of a new providence and predestination by the state:

There is an interesting connection between the rise of direct democracy and the increasing centralization of power. It is not wholly due to the technological factor. Perhaps some of the attitudes people used to assume towards an anthropomorphous deity or the Puritan "Providence" have been transferred to the modern state simply because it is big, powerful, and remote, and some sort of faith is still needed. The fact that state action minutely affects everyone does not dispel the psychological distance, because while the doings may be ubiquitous, the doer remains remote and (often literally) inaccessible. "Providence" was rather like that — remote, majestic, a little grim, but nonetheless supposed to be minding everybody's business.¹

This is more than "an interesting connection"; it is a necessary one. Fallen man is the creature who wills to be god and therefore to govern and determine all things. By whatever agency he displaces God's government, man will thereby seek to establish his own ultimacy and absolute government. Fallen man is unwilling, in Calvin's words, "to leave to God his whole power untouched."² Indeed, as Sartre baldly states it, "man is the being whose project is to be God." To be God means to be the controller of all things and the source of all possibilities. Sartre defines freedom thus: "For freedom is nothing other than a choice which creates for itself its own possibilities."³ This is not creaturely or secondary freedom, but an ultimate freedom that Sartre aims at: it is an integral aspect of deity.

Sixth, salvation means predestination; the savior is the predestinator, and vice versa. It is impossible to save man if one cannot also protect man from all contingencies. If the savior is not the predestinator, his salvation amounts to no more than saving a man from one leaky, sinking lifeboat to place him into another no better than the first; this is not salvation but mockery. Accordingly, the modern savior state has made itself the modern predestinating state. Having claimed to be man's savior, it must of necessity

¹. William Aylott Orton, *The Economic Role of the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 17.

². John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948), 431.

³. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 566.

control all of life. This means total control over man. Not surprisingly, this means control over man's mind, his genetics, his right to live or die, his family, education, vocation, religion, and all things else. Predestination is thus not an irrelevant or obsolete subject in the modern world: it is a central issue.

The predestination of the sovereign and triune God is *transcendental*. This means that it is a control from beyond time and history, beyond man. It is exercised by God from all eternity. Having made all things in perfect harmony with His will and within the framework of creation, there is no conflict of interests in God's sovereign counsel. As a result, there is no conflict between man's secondary freedom and responsibility and God's primary freedom and His determination of all things. The clockmaker does not have a conflict between the hour hand and the minute hand he makes: each serves his purpose. So all things in God's creation serve His purpose and find their own fulfillment therein. Man is not frustrated nor constrained because God is God, but only when man plays at being god. As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* declares, in Chapter III, Section I,

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

God has a plan from all eternity with respect to His creation, a comprehensive plan which determines all things and which is not conditional. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). As A. A. Hodge noted,

The plan of God comprehends and determines all things and events of every kind that come to pass.

This is rendered certain from the fact that all God's works of creation and providence constitute one system. No event is isolated, either in the physical or moral world, either in heaven or on earth. All of God's supernatural revelations and every advance of human science conspire to make this truth conspicuously luminous. Hence the original intention which

determines one event must also determine every other event related to it as cause, condition or consequent, direct and indirect, immediate and remote. Hence, the plan which determines general ends must also determine even the minutest element comprehended in the system of which those ends are parts. The free actions of free agents constitute an eminently important and effective element in the system of things. If the plan of God did not determine events of this class, he could make nothing certain, and his government of the world would be made contingent and dependent, and all his purposes fallible and mutable.⁴

St. Paul declared, God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:11). God is absolute and sovereign in the government of all things; moreover, His decree is from eternity and is eternal. As Shaw clearly stated it,

To suppose any of the divine decrees to be made in time, is to suppose the knowledge of the Deity to be limited. If from eternity he knew all things that come to pass, then from eternity he must have ordained them; for if they had not been determined upon, they could not have been foreknown as certain.⁵

Predestination by man and/or by man’s institutions and agencies is *immanent* predestination. It is inherent to the world and is from within the world. Whereas God’s predestination offers no violence to the will of man, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away or denied, but rather established, immanent predestination does violence to the will of man and it does destroy the liberty of second causes. Two powers cannot exercise equal and identical authority within the same area, yet this is precisely what immanent predestination involves. The state or some other human agency seeks that determining power over man which properly belongs to man; it seeks control over schools and churches, which means the elimination of their self-determination. The predestinating agency (now the state, but in other times the clan or family, religious institutions, and other organizations) preempts an

⁴. Archibald Alexander Hodge, *A Commentary on The Confession of Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1869), 93f.

⁵. Robert Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1846), 60.

area of life which under God is a separate and distinct area of law and government. When an agency within creation claims absolute powers, it must of necessity suppress and enslave all other agencies. For a second cause to claim to be the first cause means that it must war against all other second causes. There is, then, a denial of man's only freedom, secondary freedom. The state, when it seeks to predestinate by cradle-to-grave control over man and by total planning, cannot reach out into eternity and touch God, but it can within time subjugate and enslave man.

When men deny God's predestination, they then assert in one form or another predestination by man. Predestination by man is the fountainhead of all tyranny and slavery. However, as Boettner has shown, predestination by God is a doctrine which has proven to be a source of liberty and morality.⁶

A doctrine of salvation which is not grounded on predestination proves to be quicksand and disaster. It does not offer salvation, and, very quickly, another savior-predestinator appears. When the churches abandoned the doctrine of predestination, they soon began to drop the orthodox doctrine of salvation by Christ. The state then presented itself as savior and predestinator, and most churches were ready to hail it as such.

⁶ Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1960).

XLIX

The Principle of Hilarity

In a very striking passage, the psalmist speaks of a fact of life which modern man has forgotten about:

5. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
6. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Ps. 126:5-6)

The reference is to a time of famine, still a common fact in many parts of the world, although Western man, especially in America, is only rarely aware of it. Whether occasioned by drought, war, or royal tyranny, famine left men starving. For a farmer, then, to take out of the meager store of remaining grain, seed for sowing was a trying act. If the weather or enemy troops destroyed that seed as it sprouted, he and his family were doomed to die of hunger. As a result, through the centuries men have often sown in tears; they have gone forth, weeping, "bearing precious seed," knowing that their hope of life was in that harvest, but also knowing that the scattered seed shortened the number of days left for survival.

With respect to God's Kingdom and calling, the psalmist says, those who sow in this same way, with the same surrender of the moment to God's future, shall doubtless reap a rich harvest.

St. Paul refers to this in 2 Corinthians 9:6,

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

A man cannot survive by a sparing or token sowing of grain; halfway measures are futile. To eat the seed grain is an abandonment of the future in favor of eating today and dying tomorrow; so it is with the man who does not give to the Lord. To give sparingly is comparable to being unable to live either for today or tomorrow; it is a halting between two opinions. Only he who sows bountifully can and shall reap bountifully. The future we have

is the future we plan for, either in terms of ourselves or in terms of God.

The context of Paul's comment is the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. This was not a part of their tithe. Paul is asking for a voluntary gift (2 Cor. 8:1-9:15). The tithe is not a gift: it is God's tax. We cannot regard this collection as a part of the poor tithe or any aspect of their normal giving. Paul makes it clear that he cannot command their giving: "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love" (2 Cor. 8:8). The Berkeley Version renders this, "I am not issuing an order, but I would test the genuineness of your love by the readiness of others," i.e., I am asking you to take a cue from the readiness of others to give, and, if possible, to do still better. Christians have a requirement of generosity laid upon them by Christ, Who declared, "freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). This has been ably paraphrased thus: "But let me remind you of the great love of Christ, who divested Himself of the riches of His glory and became poor for your sakes, that by His self-denial and humility you might inherit eternal salvation."¹

God is asking no man to give what he does not possess, or to be prodigal in his giving. He is, however, asking for generous giving, and God will provide for His faithful ones as He provided His people with manna in the wilderness, i.e., He will providentially care for them. Again, the paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 can help us understand St. Paul's argument:

(10) In saying this I am not laying a command upon you, for you have already manifested the spirit and practised the duty of giving this twelvemonth past. (11) Complete the offering according to your means, (12) for the willing mind is shown by gifts in accordance with your ability, and not by foolish prodigality beyond it. (13) My purpose is not to make others a burden upon you, (14) but to get you to supply what they lack,

¹ J. R. Dummelow, editor, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 937.

and them to supply what you lack; (15) thus acting on the principle of equality illustrated in the bestowal of the manna in bygone days, that none should have too much, and none too little.²

Paul's reference in vv. 14 and 15, Plumptre pointed out, meant that "A time might come in which their relative position would be inverted, and then he would plead no less earnestly that Jerusalem should assist Corinth."³

Let us examine some of the implications thus far of what St. Paul has said. *First*, tithing is not involved, but gifts apart from the tithe. It is a voluntary gift, since no one can be commanded in God's name to give above his tithe, which is God's tax. *Second*, while the giving Paul speaks of is not mandatory, it is revelatory: "to prove the sincerity of your love" (2 Cor. 8:8). The test of love is in action. "So many suppose they really love God because they are conscious of feelings which they dignify with that name; yet they do not obey him. It is therefore by the fruits of feeling we must judge of its genuineness both in ourselves and others."⁴ To pay taxes to Christ is one thing: to be ready and zealous in gifts is one aspect of love.

Third, the one we must love is not man primarily, but Christ. In the next verse, 2 Corinthians 8:9, the love of Christ is cited to remind us of the extent of His love, so that we might not be niggardly in our giving. To love Christ is to love His people, also. Our Lord made this clear in the Parable of the Last Judgment: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). We are to prove the sincerity of our love of Christ by ministering to the needs of fellow believers.

Fourth, related to this is the common requirement of hospitality, which is stressed in all of Scripture. Christians are *required* to "use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Peter 4:9); but this commandment also applies to strangers, and we should not be

² *Ibid.*

³ E. H. Plumptre, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VII (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 392.

⁴ Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 199.

“forgetful to entertain strangers” (Heb. 13:2). Church officers are not only *required*, as a part of their qualification for office, to be “given to hospitality,” but also to be known as “lovers” of doing so (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). Practically, this means today that the Christian must be marked, not by a miserly spirit, but by a readiness to entertain other Christians, to pick up the check when together, to demonstrate, in brief, that the bonds of love between fellow believers, and hospitality to a stranger, are more important than a self-seeking prudence. A miserly man is clearly lawless, because hospitality is a requirement for Christians and a manifestation of grace.

Fifth, self-protection and self-advancement must give place to the love of Christ and of His people. For the Christian, survival is not the highest “law,” nor is it to be regarded as having priority over God’s law. Men are not to harm themselves by giving prodigally, but neither are they to be self-serving with their property. Hodge ably sums up the meaning of 2 Corinthians. 8:13-15 thus:

The moral lesson taught in Exodus 16:18, is that which the apostle had just inculcated. There it is recorded that the people, by the command of God, gathered of the manna an omer for each person. Those who gathered more retained only the allotted portion; and those who gathered less had their portion increased to the given standard. There was as to the matter of necessity an equality. If any one attempted to hoard his portion, it spoiled upon his hands. The lesson therefore taught in Exodus and by Paul is, that, among the people of God, the superabundance of one should be employed in relieving the necessities of others; and that any attempt to countervail this law will result in shame and loss. Property is like manna, it will not bear hoarding.⁵

Lest anyone foolishly conclude that Hodge was a “radical,” let it be noted that he was in his already comparatively conservative time an arch-conservative, although he did cause grief and anger to his Southern students and friends by his views in 1861.⁶ Hodge was

⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁶ Robert Manson Myers, editor, *The Children of Pride* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1972), 649ff.

being faithful to Scripture. The point in Exodus 16:18 and in 2 Cor. 8:13-15 does clearly state that in a Christian society there will be a generosity of giving, whereby in matters of necessity such as food there will be an equality. This is not communism. The whole of Scripture emphatically stresses private property, but it also stresses stewardship. It is not Biblical to accept the one without the other. In a Christian society, the basic tax is the tithe. Above and over that, the kind of giving St. Paul here sets forth as a test of our love of Christ is an aspect of our stewardship. The man who takes the private property emphasis of Scripture without accepting the tithe, the law of hospitality, and the standard of St. Paul is marked by self-justification rather than Christ's justification.

Sixth, there is a law involved, St. Paul adds, a law of reward and judgment. In 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, there is at the beginning and end a reference to the sowing of seed (cf. Ps. 126: 5-6). Clearly, one of the laws, not only of farming but also of our relationship with men under God, requires a bountiful sowing, i.e., generosity, hospitality, and a use of property to advance the cause of Christ and His Kingdom rather than merely ourselves:

6. But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

9. (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

10. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

11. Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. (2 Cor. 9:6-11)

In His own way, God exacts vengeance on the miserly believer, whereas He blesses those who give generously.

Seventh, this giving is as “every man... purposeth in his heart.” It is a test, and the guidelines or answers are not revealed to us precisely because it is we who are being tested. If we begrudge giving, or being hospitable, and if we justify ourselves with endless good reasons (all excuses are good excuses when we make them), we have indeed been tested and found wanting. Tithing is a matter of law; failure to tithe is a sin. Hospitality is a commandment, but the measure of hospitality and the extent of voluntary giving is a test of man.

Eighth, the word “cheerful,” like other English words, has weakened in its meaning since the King James Version was translated. The word *cheerful* in the Greek is *hilaros*, and it means a readiness and a joyfulness which is prompt to do anything. St. Paul tells us that “God loveth a cheerful (hilarious) giver.” This is not new to St. Paul. Proverbs 22:9 declares, “He that hath a bountiful eye (i.e., who is cheerful and a giver, LXX) shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.” This is a beatitude. If we give because we feel that we must, we avoid judgment but gain no blessing. It is the joyful, the hilarious giver whom God loves, the man who delights in opportunities to serve and help in Christ’s name. The grudging giver gains nothing.

Normally, the time of sowing is a time of joy. The tears described in Psalm 126:5-6 refer to times of disaster. At all other times, sowing was a joyful occasion, and, until recent years, preceded in much of the world by a variety of religious festivals and rites. Sowing and reaping were holy or sacred times and were celebrated as such. The word *holyday* has become holiday, and holidays have become man’s new sabbaths. Holidays now are more and more geared, in one country after another, to nationalistic events and less and less to God’s time. Except for Christmas, Easter, and three hours on Good Friday, little is left of holy days, and even these have been made humanistic in emphasis. The weekly Lord’s Day is now justified on humanistic grounds almost entirely. The emphasis in earlier holy days, in terms of Scripture, was rejoicing in God’s bounty and in the certainty of His government.

Thus, when St. Paul speaks of sowing bountifully, he speaks of the joy of the sower in anticipating a bountiful harvest. The

calendar originally marked time religiously. It was “not the ‘civil,’ but the ecclesiastical year; not the time measurer, but the significance of salvation appearing in time.”⁷ Every step of godly man in the fulfillment of his calling is an aspect of the reconquest of all things in Christ. To sow seed, or to give joyfully to the Lord, and to do our daily work in the confidence that nothing is in vain in Christ, means casting our bread (rice seed) upon the waters in the confidence of finding it, after many days, returning to us bountifully (Eccl. 11:1). Giving, like sowing, is an act of faith in the future, faith that a harvest will come. Hence, the man of faith is joyful or hilarious in giving.

Ninth, 2 Corinthians 9:8 tells us that, when we are hilarious givers, “God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” The word *sufficiency* is in Greek *autarkeia* (*autos*, self; *arkeo*, sufficient). We have the same word translated as “contentment” in 1 Timothy 6:6, “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” Sufficiency, *autarkeia*, was the ideal of Stoicism, to be free of men and of needs. *Autarkeia* is also the ideal of modern anarchism, or autarkism. The infallible word of God here tells us that the way to “all sufficiency (*autarkeian*) in all things” is not by miserly, niggardly ways, nor by Stoic and anarchistic practices, but by hilarious giving. This is the declaration of the God whose word is truth. We had better heed it. Our salvation means in part the new *autarkeia* of Jesus Christ, a trust in Him as our sufficiency, and a readiness to trust that His commandments are for our blessing.

⁷ Gerardus Van Der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (Macmillan, 1938), 386.

L

The Holy Spirit and the Redeemed Man

The redeemed man is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. What does this mean?

By examining the Biblical word, *spirit*, we can see something of its implications. The Hebrew word translated as *spirit* is *ruah*, which is also translated very often as wind, air in motion. When man was created, “the breath (*ruah*) of life” (Gen. 2:7) was breathed into him. As Howard has written,

Any unusual manifestations of power or energy could be described as having or showing more “spirit.” This was often used in relation to God-given vitality for some special purpose (e.g. Gen. xli. 38, 39, Judges xv. 14, etc.). What is important to note is that in every instance to be filled with “spirit” implied action. Indeed, one could go so far as to say that to be filled with “spirit” and not engaged in some activity, not performing some action, is a contradiction in terms.¹

The Holy Spirit clearly was not unknown in the Old Testament, but the prophets spoke of a fulness of His manifestation and power in the era of the Messiah. His presence was clearly with the disciples before the death and resurrection of our Lord, because Christ declared, “ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17). After His resurrection, the *gift* of the Spirit is given to the assembled followers. This is to be distinguished from the later *gifts* of the Spirit at Pentecost. When the disciples were assembled in a closed room, Jesus came and stood in their midst:

21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

¹. Dr. James Keir Howard, “The Concept of the Soul in Psychology and Religion,” in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, vol. 24, no. 4 (December 1972): 150.

23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:21-23)

First of all, this remarkable event was clearly a reenactment of the creation of man. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). God the Son, having regenerated His people, now breathes on them and gives them the indwelling Spirit. The word, breathed (*emphusao*), is a Greek word used nowhere else in the New Testament, but familiar to John and his readers as the word used in Genesis 2:7, in the Septuagint. The parallel to Genesis 2:7 is thus deliberate. The people of Christ are the new creation, the new humanity, for a new world order. As against the old humanity, in revolution against God, Christ creates a new people by His creative act. He declares to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Holy Ghost in the Greek is *pneuma hagion*. Pneuma is usually translated "spirit" but it can mean "mind," as in Acts 19:21 ("Paul purposed in the spirit" can mean in his mind, or in the Holy Spirit, but in either case purpose and thought is intended), and 2 Corinthians 2:13 ("I had no rest in my spirit," or, in the Berkeley Version, "I enjoyed no peace of mind"). In Philippians 1:27, Paul asks the church to "stand fast in one spirit (*pneumati*), with one mind (or soul, *psyche*) striving together for the faith of the gospel." Spirit and soul are here equated. "In conjunction with *soma* (body) it denotes the totality of human personality (1 Cor. v. 3-5, vii. 34)."²

The Holy Spirit thus indwells as the new mind, spirit, or soul of the believer, as his essential life and motivating purpose. He is the breath or rushing wind, the energy of the new man, and yet He is also the third person of the Triune God, reigning in all eternity.

Jesus Christ regenerates man; as Christ's new creation, the new man has the indwelling Spirit. Christ regenerates or re-creates man, and man now must reconstruct the world in terms of God's law-word. Our Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John

² *Ibid.*, 150.

14:12). This promise is not limited to the disciples; it is to all who believe in Christ. It cannot refer to miracles such as Christ worked; the disciples alone performed such miracles, and theirs were not “greater works” than our Lord’s. Its meaning is obvious: Christ, God the Son incarnate, breathes on fallen men, dead in sin, and makes them a new creation. Redeemed man breathes on the fallen world and society of Adam; he infuses it with the energy, mind, purpose, and power of Spirit-filled man, and makes it again the Kingdom of God in faith and obedience. The “greater works” of Christian man is thus the reconstruction of all things in terms of the law-word of God, and this he does in the power of the indwelling Spirit.

We have thus already indicated a *second* aspect of the meaning of receiving the Holy Spirit. The prophets and saints of the Old Testament who were filled with the Spirit were great and powerful men. When Cleopas and his friend spoke of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, they did so in Old Testament terms, in terms echoing the power of the Spirit-filled seers: they spoke of Jesus as “a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all his people” (Luke 24:19). This was the impression Christ made on His times, a man of “mighty works” (Matt. 11:20; 13:54; 14:2; Mark 6:2, etc.). The people of his own country, however much offended, still acknowledge something supernormal, if not supernatural, in Jesus: “Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” (Matt. 13:54)

The mark of the new man in Christ is the same. Because he is indwelt by the Spirit, however humble his calling, his work is marked by wisdom, energy, and power. To speak of impotent Christianity is a contradiction in terms: no man indwelt by the Spirit is impotent. True, many Christians have been brutally tortured, imprisoned, and killed, but the world has struck at them because it has recognized the power in them. The world is fearful lest too many men of power stand up against it.

Of 200 million people in the U.S., about 120 million claim to be Christians. Of these, it is estimated that 40 to 55 million are “Bible-believing.” The 80 million who are modernists and/or nominal Christians, we can rule out. But what can we say for the 40 to 55

million? A handful of communists and Fabian Socialists exercise more power in the U.S. than do all these “Christians.” But, as Howard said, in terms of Scripture, “to be filled with ‘spirit’ implied action. Indeed, one could go so far as to say that to be filled with ‘spirit’ and not engaged in some activity, not performing some action, is a contradiction of terms.” Moreover, Howard was not here discussing the Holy Spirit, but simply the Biblical word *ruah*, spirit, breath. Where the Holy Spirit is present, the action and rushing power are very great. To speak of impotent Christians is thus a contradiction. To assume that 40 to 55 million Christians exist in the U.S., and accomplish very little, is blasphemy. Men indwelt by the Holy Spirit are men of action and power: they reconstruct all things in terms of God’s word. However humble the believer’s calling or talents, there is a work of conquest and reconstruction under way wherever a believer is at work.

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:5). An important part of the way in which Christ makes all things new is by means of His people through the indwelling Spirit. Our Lord said, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:20). A profession of faith is essential, but faith without works is dead (James 2:26). It is a Hellenistic heresy to assess men by an intellectual profession only. It reduces the meaning of redemption to *nonsense* to talk about millions of impotent Christians allowing a country to slip into the hands of the enemy. To say that some of these millions are good, moral people means little; they are living on an inherited discipline, not in terms of faith, and that discipline is rapidly eroding. Either a professing Christian is a part of the mighty work of world conquest and reconstruction, or he is not a Christian. However humble the Christian’s calling and station, either that domain is turned into an outpost of the Kingdom of God, or there is no faith. A housewife, a farmer, worker, or any other person can make his or her calling an area of dominion under God. Moreover, in a very real sense, we are all required to do more than we are capable of doing normally, because more is involved in the acts of Christians than themselves. The indwelling Spirit is the key factor.

Third, the power of the Christian is tied to the Spirit and the word of God. Hendriksen translates John 20:22-23 thus:

And having said this, he blew, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain (those) of any, they are retained.³

Jesus sends them into the world, even as the Father sent Him, to do the work commissioned, in absolute obedience and faithfulness. Toward this end, Christ breathed or blew, giving them the Holy Spirit by His creative act. The wind or breath of heaven, the third person of the Trinity, now is the person driving them from within. "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps. 1:4). The ungodly are driven from without. The godly are drivers, driven from within by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The gift of the Holy Spirit includes a ministerial and declarative power. The believer knows the word of God, and he can declare that which God makes known. He has no independent power, but he does have power in the knowledge of the word and in the fact that what the word declares is valid in heaven. In terms of that word, he can declare that a man's sins are forgiven or retained insofar as the terms of the word of God are met. Hendriksen to the contrary, this power is *not* limited to church officers. Any parent, teacher, or other believer can assure a sinner of the forgiveness or retention of sins. Whether the declaration is made by the humblest believer or the greatest statesman of the church, it is *only* valid insofar as it is faithful to Scripture. There is no independent power. Church officers have authority to rule, but they have no more and no less power to bind or to loose than the humblest believer. If a church member sins against a brother, and is chastised by the church, he can make restitution to his brother, who can absolve him before God at once. This is a valid absolution. Absolution by the church officers is a formal necessity for the life of the church, but it does not mean that the church member had no absolution prior to its formal, public pronouncement. To so limit the power of the keys is to hold that the legal processes of the church are more valid than the realities of actual restitution and forgiveness.

³. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1954), 461.

However necessary the ecclesiastical acts, they cannot be confused with the original actions. It is not excommunication that binds a man; a man is excommunicated because the word of God declares that his actions bind him. It is not ecclesiastical absolution that releases a man; such an absolution is declarative and declares that a man has been forgiven by his brother, having made restitution to him.⁴

Fourth, as has already been indicated, the Holy Spirit indwelling in the believer makes him a new man in Christ, the new Adam. As the new humanity of Adam, the indwelled believer now has *the work of Adam* to do, to develop the implications of the image of God, knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion, and to subdue the earth in terms of it. The indwelling Holy Spirit means the personal power of God in action in, and through, man. Nothing short of this can be called Christian.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 461f. Hendriksen is right that, "Without authority, chaos reigns supreme!" (462). The authority is first of all in God and His word, and in those who act in terms of it. Matt. 18:15-20 emphatically makes it clear that the binding and loosing begin on the personal level and are then carried to the church level. "If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained a brother," means that repentance, restitution, and absolution are accomplished on a person to person basis.

LI

The Return to Reality

Hadas, in his introduction to the translation of *Three Greek Romances*, commented:

What the serious reader finds most objectionable in the Greek novels is their shrieking implausibilities. There is no logical nexus between event and event or between event and character. But in a world where the links of causality are broken and Fortune has taken control of the affairs of men it is the very incalculability of events that absorbs interest. Logic is supplanted by paradox and emotion becomes sentimentality, to be savored for its own sake. The cavalier attitude to probability is not a mark of indifference but a true reflection of current beliefs. Consequently, by making virtue triumph in the end as they regularly do, our authors are consciously arguing that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, there is a divine power which does guide and protect its special charges. If *An Ephesian Tale* is an absorbing tale of love and improbable adventure, it is also a tract to prove that Diana of the Ephesians (who was equated with Isis) cares for her loyal devotees.¹

Hadas' term, "their shrieking implausibilities," is an excellent one. This is even more true of much of Asia's literature, of pre-Christian European tales, and of the legends and stories of other continents. Moreover, because of the deep influences of neoplatonism, much of European literature during the "Middle" Ages is marked by the same "shrieking implausibilities"; it is dominated by an idea, often an idea of love, rather than reality.

In the world of Hadas' three novels, Diana of the Ephesians and other gods and goddesses still insured a happy ending, but, before long, the fate of the gods was also to pass away, with Fate and Fortune toppling all things. Then as now, another kind of shrieking implausibility developed, a determined view that held that the

¹. Moses Hadas, translator, *Three Greek Romances* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), 7f.

universe was causeless, perverse, and meaningless. Again, in this view, “the links of causality are broken,” and events are as incalculably frustrating and perverse as they were before incalculably lucky or fortunate. In either case, causality is meaningless. The universe, or multiverse, is not penetrable by reason, because it is irrational and meaningless. The results of any action are the products of chance, and for reason to confront utter irrationality is frustration compounded. Men, however, have not been ready to accept the logical conclusion of their world view. This implicit and explicit denial of all causality and rationality has never been systematically adhered to. When men have no Goddess Fortuna, or Lady Luck, to appeal to as a remedy against chaos, then they turn to such answers as occultism, the spirits or powers who, in alliance with man, introduce a new principle of power and rule into the universe.

Modern literature, films, and television reveal the same “shrieking implausibilities” because they have a common premise. In the Roman era, Seneca wrote in *Hippolytus*, “The shifting hour flies with doubtful wings; nor does swift Fortune keep faith with anyone.” A medieval French proverb held that “Fortune has no reason.” Similar ideas prevail today. The recurring theme of much literature is simply the perversity and irrationality of life and also the irrationality of the mind itself. Another era will remark on the studied and “shrieking implausibilities” of modern writers. One of the dangers of continuous exposure to modern art forms is the influence of their shared philosophy, so that the implausible becomes the plausible for us. However much man may rail against the irrationality and perversity of the world, he will still, as a creature created in God’s image, seek to comprehend that world by means of a system of thought, i.e., to impose rationality on irrationality as a means of coping with it.

However, the regenerate man is delivered not only from sin but also from this world of “shrieking implausibilities.” His universe is now a realm of causality and meaning, and, like himself, it is God’s creation. As a result, his growth in grace is a heightened awareness. He becomes progressively more knowledgeable about God, man,

law, and the universe. He is living in terms of reality, not imagination.

All men, whether they like it or not, live *in* a real world; however, not all men are ready to live *in terms of* reality, which, supremely, means that God is sovereign and that the universe, God's handiwork, moves in terms of His law. Salvation in part means conformity to this reality.

St. Paul, in Romans 2:12-16, gives us a sharp perspective on this matter:

12. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

13. (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

For many people, statements like this one are a problem. How can St. Paul, the champion of salvation by God's grace through the atonement of Jesus Christ, speak of justification by law: "the doers of the law shall be justified"? This sounds very much like James 2:17-26:

17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

20. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

24. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

26. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James says that “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” St. Paul, however, also tells us in Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9:

4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).

8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God:

9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.

This is emphatic: salvation is the work of God, and it is entirely of grace. None of these statements, however, are in contradiction. The initiative, determination, and ordination in our redemption is *entirely* of God. But man is not a puppet, nor an automaton. His *response* to God’s grace and his *manifestation* of the grace of God is by faith, and faith reveals itself in works. The just live by faith; they place their whole trust in the saving grace of God, and they show that trust by their works. A dialectical or a dualistic view of man’s nature has long haunted our view of man, and, as a result, the unity of man’s actions evades us, even as it escaped St. Paul’s Greek audiences. For a Biblical psychology, the unity of mind and body, and of faith and works, is the inescapable fact. As a result, the problem is not one of reality, but of ideas imposed on reality.

There is still another aspect to be considered, St. Paul’s statement that “the doers of the law shall be justified.” Let us analyze what St. Paul tells us in Romans 2:12-16. *First* of all, the term “without law” (or, without *the* law) means without God’s law revealed in Scripture, not without any law whatsoever. Those who are within

the law, i.e., within the tradition of the Biblical faith and the revelation therein of God's law, shall be *judged* by that law. *Second*, those who are Gentiles and unbelievers shall also be judged and perish "without law," or, outside the terms of Biblical law. The standard of their judgment, as vv. 14 and 15 make clear, is still the law of God as written into the nature and constitution of all reality and man. Hodges' comments on the doctrinal import of these verses is of particular interest:

The responsibility of men being very different in this world, their rewards and punishment will, in all probability, be very different in the next. Those who knew not their Lord's will, shall be beaten with few stripes. And those who are faithful in the use of ten talents, shall be made rulers over ten cities, vs. 9, 10.

The heathen are not to be judged by a revelation of which they never heard. But as they enjoy a revelation of the divine character in the works of creation, chap. i. 19, 20, and of the rule of duty in their own hearts, vs. 14, 15, they are inexcusable. They can no more abide the test by which they are to be tried, than we can stand the application of the severer rule by which we are to be judged. Both classes, therefore, need a Savior, ver. 12.

The moral sense is an original part of our constitution, and not the result of education, ver. 14.

Jesus Christ, who is to sit in judgment upon the secrets of all men, must be possessed of infinite knowledge, and therefore be divine, ver. 16.²

This failure of the ungodly, and it here means those who never *heard* or *read* the Bible, i.e., the pagans of antiquity and those of today who are outside of the realm of Christian missions, is a failure judged in terms of the revelation of God's law in them and around them. The millions who have never heard the gospel still have this general revelation, according to Romans 1:8-21, and they suppress it or "hold" it down in unrighteousness. Murray feels that "holding down" is not an accurate rendering of the Greek, and

². Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Armstrong, 1893), 88f.

offers as the accurate sense “hinder,” or “restrain,” “hold back,” so that the truth is restrained or denied.³ These have the law of God, although not in its enscriptured form, and they are judged by the law given to them.

Those who have heard the gospel, or are inside the pale of special revelation, are judged accordingly. As Murray so ably states it:

The judgment of those inside the pale of special revelation, who rejected the gospel, will be executed in terms of three criteria, all of which were applicable to them (a) the criterion of law naturally revealed which, of course, applies to all men, (b) the criterion of law specially revealed which did not apply to the preceding class, and (c) the criterion of the gospel which likewise did not apply to the preceding class. They will be judged by the gospel because they rejected it, that is, they will be condemned for gospel unbelief. It is a capital mistake to think, however, that unbelief of the gospel will be the only condemnation of such. It would violate all canons of truth and equity to suppose that the sins against law naturally revealed and specially revealed would be ignored. By faith in the grace of the gospel sins are blotted out but other sins are not waived by unbelief of the gospel. Hence law in the utmost of its demand and rigour will be applied to the judgment of those in this category — they will be judged according to their works. This also is expressly stated in verse 12 — “as many as have sinned with the law shall be judged through the law.” Judgment according to works, therefore, applies to all who will be damned.⁴

This still does not answer the question as to v. 13, “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Negatively, we have already seen that “specially revealed law is not the precondition of sin — ‘as many as have sinned without the law.’ Because such are sinners they will perish.”⁵ Thus, negatively, the law condemns. But Paul also says, positively,

³ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959), 36f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

that the law in some sense justifies. How is this to be understood in terms of justification by God's grace?

Let us consider again Moses Hadas' comment about the "shrieking implausibilities" of classical Greek novels: "There is no logical nexus between event and event or between event and character." In the world outside of Christ, there is no logical nexus between anything; things fall apart, and there is no center. It is an exercise in patience sometimes to read such literature, because the logical nexus is missing. Modern literature tries to find a logical nexus outside of God, and it thereby reveals its Christian background as well as its apostasy. The nexus is sought in such things as man and his psychology, and in the proletarian revolution, but in these and other instances the nexus is artificial and is imposed on events. A university student, an intelligent and practical girl, summed up in disgust her reaction to two courses on ancient epics and sagas: "They are fairy tales." There was no logical nexus which tied them to reality.

This lack of logical nexus is impossible for the orthodox Christian. All things having been created by God have their meaning also from Him. Salvation does not sunder reality: it cleanses and purges it. Faith, knowledge, law, grace, and works are *not* in contradiction to one another but in harmony under God. Remove the triune God and no nexus remains. Redemption reunites man to God, so that God's saving act means our response of faith and our obedience to the law. Gnostics, neoplatonists, and Manichaeans will separate these things, but the Christian will hold to the primacy of God's determination of all things and its responding harmony in all of man's being. Because God redeems us through Christ's atoning work, we respond with faith, and our works are in terms of the law. Supremely and centrally, most essentially, we are justified by the law in the person of Jesus Christ, who kept the law perfectly for us. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). We fell by Adam's sin; we are redeemed by Christ's atoning sacrifice in our stead and His perfect law-keeping. In both cases, we are judged in terms of a representative man, the Adam of the

old humanity and the Adam of the new humanity. In the old Adam, we sinned. In the new man, Jesus Christ, we keep the law. Our life outside of Christ reflected Adam's declaration of independence from, and war against, God. Our life in Christ reflects our trust and dependence on Him and our obedience to His law-word. We do not reflect Christ's perfect obedience in this life, but we are now the people of Christ, the people of the law. We are doers of the law, because Christ is the doer of the law, and we cannot be His people if we deny Him by unbelief and by disobedience. For us, the logical nexus has been restored. We neither wrongly divide the word of God, nor do we wrongly divide reality.

Ours is not a world of "shrieking implausibilities," but the glorious handiwork of God.

LIII

Work

The dictionary (Funk & Wagnalls) tells us that "Work is the generic term for any continuous application of energy toward an end." It may be hard or easy, physical or mental, but it is continuous application of energy towards a goal or purpose. Because of this purposive nature of work, it is inseparable from religion, and yet, historically, it has often been divorced from it. Van Der Leeuw's study of *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, a phenomenological study, has much to say on festivals and rites surrounding work, but nothing on work as such. The same is true of Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Biblical dictionaries rarely say much on the subject, since all too often their perspective is neoplatonist, Arminian, or Modernist.

Outside the Biblical tradition, i.e., the Christian and Jewish world, work has been something despised, done only out of necessity, and regarded as the province of slaves. In many cultures, mental work has been the duty of underlings and slaves. Arabic science waned and disappeared when Christian slaves and their children no longer provided a captive group of intellectuals. In Babylon, the wise men, as the Book of Daniel gives us evidence of, were commonly the captive elite of conquered aristocracies; the Babylonians themselves preferred to exercise power rather than intellect. The Turkish Empire rested on slave labor, conquered people as its bureaucracy and builders, and a levy of boys for its elite troops, the janizaries.

In the modern world, examples of the same contempt for work are many. Ethiopia is nominally Christian, but its people have little knowledge of the meaning of the faith. Among the elite Amharic people, O'Callaghan reported in 1961 that many parents still regarded it as a disgrace for a daughter to become a typist or a nurse, but thought nothing of apprenticing them to a brothel at the age of thirteen or fourteen. "The custom is traditional with both men and women of Amhara that they will never do any work that

involves using their hands. That is why there are still so few Amhara doctors, nurses, typists or shopkeepers in Ethiopia.” Government jobs are preferred by the men, and prostitution is the route for the women. Prostitution is not seen as a disgrace, nor a bar to marriage when the girl reaches twenty-one and is too old for the brothel. She has, after all, been a “lady” and commanded a slave or two, black slaves, of course. The same is true of the Arab. “He is a proud man, too proud to do any menial work. From time immemorial there were slaves for that type of work, and as long as the Arab has money to buy them he will do so.”¹

A similar attitude prevails among African negroes, for,

... although the African male is attached to the soil, he does nothing to cultivate it. This is left to the women and children. They are beasts of burden, the motor power for all agricultural operations. Women in the African tribes are treated as little better than cattle; indeed in some tribes, like the Mash, the cattle are considered more valuable.²

O’Callaghan noted further:

It is thought that when some of the Africans became detribalized this practice would cease, and that they would adopt the white man’s ways when they moved to the cities. Instead the position became worse. They got jobs as taxi drivers, or in garages or as house-boys, and probably for the first time owned some money. Saving this, the African went back to his tribe, and with it bought a wife. He brought her to the city, installed her in a shack, and rented her out to his friends, who could not afford a wife. Soon he had the money to buy another wife which he duly did. He rented her out, and bought a third. In the course of a few years he had acquired nine or ten wives, all of whom were earning him a steady income. I know several taxi drivers in Nairobi, who have several wives acquired in this way. They say proudly that there is now no need for them to work but the taxis are useful for

¹ Sean O’Callaghan, *The Slave Trade Today* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1961), 59, 97, cf. 112ff.

² *Ibid.*, 135.

ferrying clients from the centre of Nairobi to the brothel districts of Eastleigh.³

The modern liberal is very fond of idealizing the various backward peoples of the world, and he consistently portrays the Christian as the despoiler and the ravager of the simple paradise of “primitive” cultures. Our concern here is not with the sexual and other depravities of these cultures, but simply their attitude towards work. It needs to be said, however, that the various idealizations of these backward cultures are works of fiction.

The often idealized Tuaregs of North Africa, who still regard themselves as a white race, leave all their work to their slaves, the Bela people.

... These Bela, men, women, and children, belong to their masters body and soul. I have lived in these Tuareg camps, and I have seen these slave girls and slave women working from dawn until dusk. I should explain that among the Tuareg women fatness is considered a sign of great beauty, and so the Tuareg women are not allowed to do any work, even if they want to. So there they lay, rather like sea lions in the zoo after feeding time, watching their slaves from behind the folds of their indigo veils, and doing nothing. Moreover, the Tuareg caste of nobles refer to and think of themselves as nobles; and nobles do not work — nobles in the Sahara, I mean to say! No Tuareg noble would think of handling a spade, erecting a tent or carrying a gourd of water. And so they have these great herds of slaves, exactly as they have always had great herds of sheep; and in the great wastes of the Sahara they have been able to preserve this institution of slavery some 65 years after the French occupation put an end to slavery.

I have lived in these camps and seen these little skinny boys, with bellies horribly distended from malnutrition, going out in the morning, before dawn, with the herds; and I have known that, until they came back in the evening, they would be in the desert without anything to eat or drink. And when they got back after the Tuareg nobles had eaten, and after their wives had had their ration of milk, if there was anything left they would get it. I have seen the marks of cruelty on their bodies. If they were disobedient, or if they lose an animal by neglect,

³. *Ibid.*, 136f.

they are tied to a tree and lashed until they lose consciousness — and sometimes they do not recover and are just left to die.⁴

The goal of life, in non-Christian societies, is to reach a position in life where work is unnecessary and where others can be commanded to work for you. With the departure of Western man from the faith, a similar attitude has developed among Westerners. The goal of life becomes vacations and retirement for all too many. The result of any such view, over a span of time, is a decline of productivity, a collapse in the standard of living, and an erosion of moral character.

The attitude of the Hebrews, still surviving to a degree among many Jews, was that a man who did not teach his child two things, the law of God, and how to work a trade, taught him to be a thief because of his neglect. Because of a like grounding in the law of God, the Puritans held to this same standard.

A parent had to provide for his children, because they were unable to provide for themselves. If he was ever to free himself of the obligation, he must see to it that they knew how to earn a living. “If you’re careful to bring them up diligently in proper business,” Benjamin Wadsworth advised parents, “you take a good method for their comfortable subsistence in the World (and for their being serviceable in their Generation) you do better for them, than if you should bring them up idly, and yet leave them great Estates.” According to law every father had to see that his children were instructed “in some honest lawful calling, labour or employment, either in husbandry, or some other trade profitable for themselves, and the Commonwealth if they will not or cannot train them up in learning to fit them for higher improvements.”⁵

The goal in rearing children was how to make them “serviceable in their generation.” Work was not the duty of slaves but the calling

⁴ *Ibid.*, 176f. The above is from a statement in parliament by Lord Shackleton (Robin Maugham). For a detailed account of what Maugham discovered in his study of slavery, see Robin Maugham, *The Slaves of Timbuktu* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961).

⁵ Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family, Religion & Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England*, Revised edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 66.

of God's elect. It is not surprising that slavery soon disappeared from New England and from other areas affected by Puritanism. As Puritanism moved South after 1770, it created an anti-slavery element in the South whose strength and influence has never been sufficiently appreciated. The Puritan standard thus represented a break with the Cavalier and aristocratic tradition and meant that, instead of work, *idleness* was now the evil.

Puritan boys and girls were routinely placed in other homes as a part of their education. This was something more than the old apprenticeship idea, for it was done when there was educational advantage, and it was done with girls as well as boys. Morgan's comments on this are excellent. The parents knew how great their love for their children was, and how easy it is to indulge one's child. They held that a child learned better manners and work habits in another home than his own. Taking seriously God's law that an incorrigibly disobedient or delinquent child deserves death, they took pains to avoid fostering an ill-mannered and undisciplined child.⁶ It is not at all surprising that the Puritan culture is spoken of today as a *work ethic*, as production-oriented rather than consumption-governed.

In terms of the modern mentality, it has become the mark of the new elite to be given to *conspicuous consumption*, to spend money casually and freely, to use and discard styles and possessions quickly and carelessly. This has also become a middle class goal. As Bell commented,

If "conspicuous consumption" was the badge of a rising middle class, "conspicuous loafing" is the hostile gesture of a tired working class. In many machine plants, as sociologist Donald Roy describes it, workers play the "make-out" game, i.e., working at a breakneck pace to fulfill one's piece-work quota so that one can be free for the rest of the day.⁷

There is a marked flight from work; work is seen as a curse, and idleness as a blessing, a goal to be attained, and a state of bliss. Men work in order to be free from work and to be idle. Idleness is seen

⁶. *Ibid.*, 77f.

⁷. Daniel Bell, *Work and Its Discontents* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), 15f.

as the reward for, and deliverance from, work. To cite again Bell's perceptive analysis:

The most significant form taken by the flight from work is the desperate drive for "leisure." Work is irksome, but if it cannot be evaded, it can be reduced. In modern times, the ideal is to minimize the unpleasant aspects of work as much as possible by pleasant distractions (music, wall colors, rest periods) and to hasten away as quickly as possible, uncontaminated by work and unimpaired by its arduousness. A gleaming two-page advertisement in *Life* magazine shows a beautiful Lincoln car in the patio-living room of an elegantly simple house, and the ad proclaims: "Your home has walls of glass. Your kitchen is an engineering miracle. Your clothes and your furniture are beautifully functional. *You work easily, play hard.*"

The themes of play, of recreation, of amusement are the dominant ones in our culture today. They are the subject of the "hard sell." Sports clothes, travel, the outdoor barbecue, the portable TV set all become the hallmarks of the time. In this passivity, there are already the seeds of decay.⁸

The reward for work is dominion and achievement. To tell men that the reward for work is leisure or idleness is the same as saying that the reward for sex is castration. The purpose of rest is not escape from work, but a rest in the Lord, and a refreshing before return to work.

Today, in both the Western nations and the Marxist states, work is increasingly seen as a burden and a curse. The greater the departure from Christian faith and a free economy, the greater the flight from work and the less the dominion exercised by man. However comfortable his circumstances, leisured man is still a slave; he is an heir of the bread and circus mobs of Rome.

Ironically, however, both under capitalism and socialism, work has been held out as a great ideal and as man's hope. Lenin, for example, believed intensely in the necessity for work, and he was profoundly influenced by the American assembly line, and by the efficiency expert, Frederick W. Taylor. In June of 1919, he introduced piecework and Taylorism into the Soviet Union,

⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

stating, "The possibility of socialism will be determined by our success in combining Soviet rule and Soviet organization or management with the latest progressive measures of capitalism. We must introduce in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and its systematic trial and adoption."⁹

For Marxists and capitalists alike, *work* rather than Jesus Christ had become the means of salvation. This was very clearly in evidence in Henry Ford's, *My Philosophy of Industry*. Ford was essentially a "funny money" man; he also believed in statist industries and public works to relieve unemployment. Religiously, his position was pragmatism: "We know when we have reached Truth. We are on the right road toward Truth when the things that we are doing make men a little freer than they are. We may also know when we are on the right road by examining what our motives are." (This is self-righteousness, as well as pragmatism!) Moreover, "Morality is merely doing the sound thing in the best way."¹⁰

Ford's vision of the future was summed up in a chapter heading: "Machinery, the New Messiah." Because of mechanization, individual farms would be replaced by corporate farms. Men will, by mental powers newly developed, communicate with other planets, and will perhaps visit them. In every area of life, the machine will give man dominion and salvation:

Machinery is accomplishing in the world what man has failed to do by preaching, propaganda, or the written word. The airplane and radio know no boundary. They pass over the dotted lines on the map without heed or hindrance. They are binding the world together in a way no other systems can. The motion picture with its universal language, the airplane with its speed, and the radio with its coming international programme — these will soon bring the whole world to a complete understanding. Thus may we vision a United States of the World. Ultimately, it will surely come!¹¹

⁹. *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰. Henry Ford, *My Philosophy of Industry* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1928), 28, 36, 97-101.

¹¹. *Ibid.*, 18f.

In the 1920s, the men who worked for Ford were farm folk and immigrants. They were work-oriented and simple, trusting Christians. The machine and the assembly line were to them things of beauty, and they talked freely of the increased “horsepower” the machine provided. (I recall vividly as a boy, in Detroit during most of the 1920s, hearing workers talk with pride of their work and enlarge with voices filled with awe on what the machine enabled man to do in the way of more work. For these workers, it was a status symbol to be a man engaged in a work which was changing the world.) Today, while we can agree with Kristol that talk of alienated workers is nonsense and “faded neo-Marxism,”¹² it is still true that, for most workers, “it’s a job.” The old zeal for work is gone.

The reason is religious. Bell recognized the link between Biblical faith and work. Secular thinkers like Tolstoy and A. D. Gordon could preach about salvation through work, but if life is meaningless, work is also meaningless. Freud saw work as the chief means of binding an individual to reality, but if a man finds reality unpleasant, he will run from it into liquor, leisure, drugs, or some other means of escape.

As Bell noted, for the Protestant reformers, “all work was endowed with virtue.” Luther said that “A housemaid who does her work is no farther away from God than the priest in his pulpit.” For Zwingli and Calvin, “work was connected with the joy of creating and with exploring even the wonders of creation.”¹³

Now, with the loss of faith, dominion is replaced by domination, and work by leisure. As Bell stated,

In the last century or more, with the decline of religious faith, this belief in death as total annihilation has probably increased. One may argue, parenthetically, that here is a case of the breakthrough of the irrational which is such a marked feature of the changed moral temper of our times. Fanaticism, violence and cruelty are not, of course, unique in human history. But such frenzies and mass emotions were displaced,

¹² Irving Kristol, “Is the American Worker Alienated?,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 18 January 1973.

¹³ Bell, *op. cit.*, 54-56.

symbolized, drained away and dispersed through the religious sphere. But now there is only this life, and with it the realization that domination on earth means an assertion of self. One can challenge death by emphasizing the omnipotence of a movement, like the “inevitable” victory of communism, or overcome death, like the “immortality” of Captain Ahab, through the triumphal domination over others. The modern effort to transform the world solely or chiefly through politics (rather than the transformation of the self) has meant that all other institutional ways of mobilizing emotional energy would necessarily atrophy. In effect, sect and church became party and social movement.¹⁴

Bell's point is excellent. Irrationalism and violence are especially potent forces in our time and have appeared where they should least appear, in student circles and in the middle class youth. Precisely because meaninglessness and irrationalism have captured these areas, what was once the province of reason has become the domain of unreason. With the enthronement of a faith in universal meaninglessness, the standard of work and dominion has been replaced by the new standard, leisure and domination. The goal now is to dominate over others, often with brutality and murder. The standard in family relations is the same, domination. The old-fashioned father of some years ago exercised far more authority and dominion than the father of today, but he was not domineering. His dominion was protective, not oppressive. Similarly, the state has moved from a protective to an oppressive role.

Capitalist and Marxist alike begin by seeing work as the means of redemption and have alike problems now with a generation given to violence and idleness. This transition is not new. The family of Cain began by trying through work to re-create paradise. They worked to build a walled city, and to develop arts and crafts (Gen. 4:16-26), but they also at the same time developed a strain of violence. Violence replaces work, over and over again in history, as the means of attaining one's goals. The consequence is a drift into the politics of violence, socialism.

¹⁴. *Ibid.*, 55f.

St. Paul made clear the standard for Christians in writing to the Thessalonians:

6. But we charge you, brothers, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother who, instead of observing the instruction you received from us, is walking out of step.

7. For you know yourselves how you should follow us, because we did not live neglectful of duty among you,

8. neither did we eat anyone's food without pay; instead, we did hard and heavy work night and day, so as not to impose on any of you.

9. Not that we did not have the right to it, but to furnish you ourselves as an example which you should follow.

10. For while we were with you, we gave you this charge, "If anyone does not want to work, then he should not eat either."

11. We are hearing, however, that some of you live neglectful of your duty, not busily working but busy in other folks' affairs.

12. Such persons we direct and charge in the Lord Jesus Christ that, doing their work quietly, they eat their own food. (2 Thess. 3:6-12, Berkeley Version)

In a Greek city, St. Paul set an example of a new way of life. He worked with his hands, and worked with his mind as their teacher. This he did both to gain an independence from them, and also, as he stated, to furnish them with an example to follow. Greek culture was not given to an appreciation of work. Even mental work was treated as a hobby by some, not as work. Failure to work St. Paul termed "walking out of step," or walking in a "disorderly" manner. The Christian has a goal, and his life is a "continuous application of energy toward an end," and this is dominion of which work is a part.

LIII

Justice

The doctrine of propitiation is basic to Scripture and is inseparable from the Old Testament rituals and practices. *Propitiation* means the covering of sin by cleansing and forgiveness. The sin in the situation is with reference to God, and the covering is God-ward in its reference, and it is also by an act of God's sovereign grace. In the New Testament, *propitiate* also has the meaning of to placate, pacify, appease, or conciliate. As Murray summed up the meaning of propitiation,

Propitiation presupposes the wrath and displeasure of God, and the purpose of propitiation is the removal of this displeasure. Very simply stated the doctrine of propitiation means that Christ propitiated the wrath of God and rendered God propitious to his people.¹

This doctrine encounters more than a little distaste among many men, because of its emphasis on God's justice and wrath. There is a good reason for this. The sinner is as little interested in justice as the thief; where his victims are concerned, he does not want justice for them. Men are interested in justice for the affronts they suffer, but not for their own effrontery and crimes. Justice is something we invoke on our own behalf, not in behalf of those whom we offend. As a result, the justice of God is for man a most painful subject. Man, who constantly violates God's justice, finds all discussions thereof in bad taste. The subject of justice, God's justice, is then a threat to us, and we find it far more to our taste to talk about the love of God, as though our talking could alter reality.

The doctrine of propitiation is thus basic to any discussion of salvation. As Murray stated it,

The antipathy to the doctrine of propitiation as the propitiating of divine wrath rests, however, upon failure to

¹ John Murray, *Redemption — Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1955), 36.

appreciate what the atonement is. The atonement is that which meets exigencies of holiness and justice. The wrath of God is the inevitable reaction of the divine holiness against sin. Sin is the contradiction of the perfection of God and he cannot but recoil against that which is the contradiction of himself. Such recoil is his holy indignation. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). The judgment of God upon sin is essentially his wrath. If we are to believe that the atonement is God's vicarious dealing with the judgment upon sin, it is absolutely necessary to hold that it is the vicarious endurance of that in which this judgment is epitomised. To deny propitiation is to undermine the nature of the atonement as the vicarious endurance of the penalty of sin. In a word, it is to deny substitutionary atonement.²

There must be a reconciliation between God and man. God is alienated from man by man's sin. "This alienation on the part of God arises indeed from our sin; it is our sin that evokes this reaction of his holiness."³

Redemption requires a ransom, as our Lord indicated (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). "Ransom presupposes some kind of bondage or captivity, and redemption, therefore, implies that from which the ransom secures us."⁴ We are redeemed from the curse of the law, its sentence of death against us (Gal. 3:10, 13). We are redeemed from the guilt and the power of sin, and are justified, forgiven, and delivered from the defilement and power of sin (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15).

Atonement is thus inseparable from *justice*. It is the satisfaction of God's justice, not either its bypassing or its death. We are not redeemed to be freed from God's law and justice, but to be brought into line with it again. Christ, who died to meet the justice of the law, does not permit his atonement to be an excuse for the contempt of that law and justice. Those who deny God's law and justice are not of Christ.

². *Ibid.*, 38f.

³. *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 49.

There are, according to Deuteronomy 27 and 28, two relationships to the law, those of *curse* and *blessing*. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). This means that the law is now a source of blessing to the believer, so that, on obedience, it yields unto him a rich harvest. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). The discipline and chastening of God's righteousness is His law, and it yields to His sons a rich harvest.

The *atonement*, *law*, and *justice* are thus inseparable. Where they are separated, serious consequences follow. Thus, the Modernists in religion want to separate justice from both the atonement and God's law. As a result, their concept of justice becomes a form of injustice. It is a variety of statism and socialism, with a highly centralized and messianic state as man's savior. Justice becomes socialism and law is what the state does in the process of instituting socialism. Modernist justice is thus a step towards greater tyranny and is a means of enthroning man's needs as the ultimate test for all things.

In contrast, pseudo-evangelicalism and pseudo-orthodoxy both lay heavy stress on the doctrine of the atonement, but they separate it from God's law and justice. The result is an abstract idea of atonement for an abstract man living in an abstract world. The bones are there, but the man is gone. If the atonement has reference to God's law and justice, then antinomianism is a blasphemous denial of the gospel. If antinomianism is true, then the atonement is false, and vice versa. The purpose of the law is not merely negative, to condemn, but also positive, to establish an order. The purpose of laws against theft is not merely to trap and condemn thieves, but also, first and foremost, to protect our property and possessions from the lawless hands of sinners. To reduce the laws of theft to a merely thief-catching function is a monstrously insane idea. To see the function of the law as merely the condemnation of sinners is as monstrous and as insane. The purpose of the law is to set forth the justice and the righteousness

of God as the only means for establishing true order and as, therefore, the basic elements of God's Kingdom.

Both the Modernist and the pseudo-Christian are antinomian and egocentric. The Modernist wants justice for himself, but not for God. The antinomian in the camp of "orthodoxy" wants salvation but without any further mention of justice and law. The result in both camps is sterility and decay.

Where the unity of *atonement*, *law*, and *justice* is denied, there wrath, lawlessness, and tyranny prosper and abound. Dostoyevsky foresaw the kind of world that unbelief was creating:

Tyranny will become first a habit and then a disease... Blood intoxicates, and minds will be opened to the worst abnormalities. Such degeneracy can take place that abnormalities will seem like pure joys... The opportunity for going on such a rampage often infects a whole people. Society despises the hired executioner, but not one who is provided with unlimited power...⁵

A world which denies God's justice will very quickly deny men all their rights and privileges and think nothing of it. Having denied God's justice, it will deny before long that such an idea as justice has any meaning. Tacitus wrote of Nero, "Nero after having butchered so many illustrious men, at last aspired to extirpate virtue itself by murdering Thrasea Paetus and Barea Soranus."⁶ To war against God means, ultimately, to war against everything. Any separation of the world of law and justice from God and the atonement is either a surrender of the world to the enemy or a joining of forces with him.

The doctrine of the atonement thus requires us to be concerned with God's law and justice, with the Kingdom of God and the rule of God in and over every domain of life. When we think of the atonement, therefore, we must think of the reinstitution of God's law and justice in and through His redeemed people.

⁵ Cited in Walter Mehring, *The Lost Library* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1951), 181.

⁶ Tacitus, "Annals 16:21," in Moses Hadas, editor, *Complete Works of Tacitus* (New York: Modern Library, 1942), 409.

Age after age, from the beginning of history, men have cried out for justice. The whole of recorded history is one great longing for justice. Nothing, however, has been more conspicuously absent than justice, though kings and commoners have professed their love of it. Neither the rulers nor the revolutionists have been able to institute justice. Something clearly has been wrong. When the demand for justice is so extensive, and the professed love of justice so well-nigh universal, we can only conclude that either the profession is hypocritical, or the idea of justice false, or both. Clearly, humanistic attempts at gaining justice have been signal failures. Justice has been defined in terms of man, not in terms of God, and the result has been injustice. Only through the Biblical doctrine of justice can men realize peace and order.

Christian Liberty

One of the great landmark statements of church history is Chapter XX of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, “Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience”:

I. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evils of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love, and a willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law: but under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected; and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

II. God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

III. They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

IV. And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by

God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature; or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either, in their own nature, or, in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church: they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church.

The importance of this concept in our history cannot be overstated. Too often we credit the modern liberal state, an enemy of Christian liberty and of all liberty of conscience, with our contemporary liberty of conscience. However, as historian L. John Van Til has shown, this was a Puritan idea, derived from Scripture and with difficulty imposed on the civil order by law.¹ The modern church and state are hostile to Christian liberty and are working to destroy it. Clark has made this clear with respect to the church:

Some years ago a young man presented himself to a presbytery for ordination. As he was known to believe that the boards and agencies of that church were infiltrated with modernism, he was asked whether he would support the boards and agencies. He replied that he would support them insofar as they were true to the Bible. This answer did not please presbytery, and he was asked if he would support the boards regardless of what they did. When the young man declined to make any such blind promise, the presbytery refused to ordain him.

One of his friends remarked that the difference between modernism and Christianity might be stated thus: in modernism you believe as you please but do what the officials

¹ See L. John Van Til, *Liberty of Conscience, the History of a Puritan Idea* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1972).

tell you; in true Presbyterianism you do as you please so long as you believe what the Confession says.²

The issue in this matter was ultimate authority: did it reside in God and His word, or in the church? If men deny the ultimate, absolute, and infallible authority of God, then that authority accrues to some human agency, institution, office, or group of men. In the case cited by Clark, the infallibility of Scripture had been specifically denied and the total authority of the church affirmed.

As Clark pointed out,

One of Christ's most serious complaints about the Pharisees was that they substituted the commandments of men for the teachings of God (Mt. 15:9).³

This was not a peculiarity limited to the Pharisees. In every age, whenever and wherever men deny God, they will then ascribe all authority to man, or to some aspect of man's life, or to an institution established by men. The alternative to God's authority is never, "no authority," but always some other authority, of either anarchistic man or organized man. The ultimate and absolute authority of God is simply transferred to another agency.

Clark commented further:

The twentieth century church in America seems to have fallen into a curious self-contradiction. The lust for power and control over men and organizations has produced an almost papal claim to authority on the part of bureaucratic ecclesiastical officials. When the majority speaks (and the officials manipulate the majority) it is the voice of God. Yet with all this unscriptural claim to authority, the officials and their obedient servants are horrified at the thought of censuring or excommunicating a minister who denies the virgin birth or the resurrection. No doubt such a thought strikes too close to home.⁴

². Gordon H. Clark, *What Presbyterians Believe, An Exposition of the Westminster Confession* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1956), 80.

³. *Ibid.* 81.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 82.

With all due respect to Clark, no “self-contradiction” is involved by a necessary and strict logic. Having denied the authority of God and His word, such churchmen must assert some other kind of authority, and in their case, it is the authority of the church as controlled by them. Our Lord declared,

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. (Matt. 6:24; cf. Luke 16:13)

Apostate churchmen are serving their new master, a church created in their own image.

If God is our ultimate and absolute authority, then God is also the source of our liberties, liberty of conscience, civil liberty, religious liberty, and all things else. We are free only insofar as God gives us freedom, and we are bound insofar as God binds us to Himself.

Where the state is the ultimate authority, there the state sets the boundaries of our freedom and retains the right to limit, to extend, or to abolish them. Man’s conscience can only be bound then by the state, and the state can compel man’s conscience as man’s ultimate authority. If the church claims this power over men, then man’s freedom and conscience are subject to the church and the will of the church.

Apart from the Old Testament tradition, the ancient world knew no freedom of conscience apart from the state and anarchistic man. If a man denied the authority of the state to compel his conscience or to restrict his actions, and protested, which rarely occurred, he did it in terms of anarchism. Thus, Socrates opposed to the authority of the state the voice of his own daemon or private revelation. The Cynics took a position of radical anarchism as their means of countering statist absolutism. It was thus the absolutism of the individual as against the absolutism of the state. In Israel, however, in the name of God, men could challenge kings and priests, as Nathan did, when he confronted King David with his sin, declaring, “Thou art the man” (2 Sam. 12:7). The whole history of Old Testament prophecy is the history of such a continuing challenge in the name of the Lord. Neither priests nor kings were

allowed to absolutize themselves and set their authority against the word of the Lord.

Conflict between Christians and Rome was thus inevitable. Rome allowed no independent conscience or religious liberty. For Rome as for Greece, man was a creature of the state. Rome was ready to be tolerant, and to license diverse religions, provided that at all times the religious priority of the Genius of Rome was granted. This the Christians could not accept. Ultimate authority rests with God, not the state. In pleading their cause, the Christians cited the fact that they were better citizens than their non-Christian neighbors, more honest and loyal, and obedient in all other matters. This plea Rome rejected: the ultimate authority of the triune God could not be granted; Christ must submit to Caesar.

The fall of Rome did not end the battle. It entered a second phase with Constantine the Great. The existence of the church as an independent realm under Christ was more or less granted, but a long conflict between church and state began, each claiming best to express Christ's ultimate authority and to represent God on earth.

The third phase of the battle came with the Puritans. William Perkins, an Elizabethan Puritan theologian, developed "a theology of conscience." He challenged the primacy of the state. The roots of his position were in Calvin, and the essence of it was sphere laws.⁵ Each area of life is a law sphere under God. Church, state, family, school, vocation, mathematics, physics, etc., are independent and interdependent law spheres, alike under God rather than under the control of any one of them.

The essence of this position is that God's ultimate and absolute authority limits all human authorities, institutions, and spheres. This means also that man himself is limited. Man cannot claim absolute powers or liberties, because man, no less than church, state, and all things else, is under the absolute government of God. Both collectivism and anarchism are thus untenable from a Christian perspective.

⁵. Van Til, *op. cit.*, 16-25.

In the fourth phase of the battle, as Christian faith waned, the state began to claim increasing power over every area and sphere of life. Totalitarianism has arisen as faith has declined. Anarchism has also flourished, the absolute individual claiming independence from God and other men alike. These trends cannot be countered by stressing the primacy of political action but by declaring the primacy of God and faith in Him.

The issue at stake is *authority*. "The question of authority is crucial in any view of conscience; in fact, the claim of conscience is no better than the authority called upon."⁶ If our authority is man or the state, our only possible view of conscience or liberty is strictly governed by the limitations of our principle of ultimacy. We have only as much freedom of conscience and liberty as the state chooses by its legislation to grant us, and no more. If our authority is ourselves, anarchistic man, then we have no more authority, power, and liberty than an individual man is able to assert in a world of competing men. Our conscience is then a law unto itself, but our power is the extent of our liberty, so that we are limited indeed.

The implications of the Christian gospel were startling to the Greco-Roman world. Both to new converts and to its enemies, Christianity seemed to be lawless. Its enemies regarded it as atheistic because of its denial of existing authorities. As a result, the New Testament is full of commandments to submit to duly constituted authorities. Thus, 1 Peter 2:13-19 declares:

13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;
14. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.
15. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:
16. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.
17. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

18. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

We fail to appreciate the meaning of this statement if we do not see that it was *necessary* for St. Peter and others to so command the Christians. By declaring the prior authority of God and the kingship of Messiah Jesus, the apostles had opposed to the claims of ultimate authority by Caesar the ultimate authority of Christ. They had to be warned against a misuse of their Christian liberty (Gal. 5:13). It was necessary also to teach the Christians why authorities should be obeyed. The Corinthians had been ready to see even moral law dissolved by God's higher authority. The authorities, they were told, are ordained of God and are under His judgment. The role of civil officers is to be a ministry of justice and a terror to evil-doers (Rom. 13:1-8). Honor should therefore be rendered to all authorities as a duty to God. The office, not the man, is honored. The command therefore is to "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for *the Lord's sake*." St. Peter thus requires obedience to the king as "supreme" in his realm, the state. In v. 17, the verb *timao*, honor, is applied equally to "the brotherhood," i.e., fellow Christians, and to the king; the king thus, while having a supreme authority under God in his realm, is no more highly to be honored apart from that realm than are all our fellow believers. We are, in v. 16, described as "free" or *freemen*, who are called to use our freedom, not as a covering for maliciousness, but as God's bondmen, working to further God's kingdom. We are to *honor all men*, give to all men their due authority and dignity under God (v. 17).

Our obedience is "to every ordinance of man" (v. 13), or, literally, "to every human creation." The word *ktisis* or "creation" normally refers to every creative act of God. Only once does it have a reference to human actions, in 1 Peter 2:13. Church, state, vocations, families, etc. are human creations; they represent the dominion of man as expressed through various channels. They are human creations which are still the will and purpose of God in His word and eternal decree. These ordinances or creations thus have

a special status. As Mason noted, St. Peter “does not say that we are to submit to every *law* that men may pass.”⁷ Laws can be the fiat creation of men and often are. We are not to disobey all such laws, but all which would compel us to deny God or to sin. We thus submit to the ordinances or orders, but not to all laws.

The Biblical method of social renewal is not either civil disobedience or revolution, but regeneration. It is “the will of God” that “with well doing” we make our reforms and also muzzle or gag the critics who accuse us of being in principle rebellious because we deny the ultimacy of man, the state, or any other human agency.

Mason noted, with respect to v. 16 and its declaration of Christian freedom and restraint:

This points at once to what was the gist of the accusation. The Christian took up a position of complete independence within, and professed himself in a certain sense to be above the laws, by virtue of being a member of Christ’s kingdom. This position of independence the heathen state resented, and looked upon the Christian Church as a dangerous organisation. Here, therefore, St. Peter both insists upon, and defines that independent position. “This the Apostle adds,” says Leighton, “lest any should so far mistake the nature of their Christian liberty as to dream of an exemption from obedience either to God or to man for His sake, and according to His appointment. Their freedom he grants, but would have them understand aright what it is.”⁸

Freedom is not to be used as “a cloke of maliciousness” or a curtain for vice, but as servants or slaves of God.

The mark of grace, “for this is thankworthy” (literally, “for this is grace”), is to be ready to endure wrong rather than create the greater wrong of disobeying God. Where God requires obedience, we must submit for the sake of conscience.

Christian liberty thus is grounded in the supreme authority of God over every area of life, and in our necessary obedience to God.

⁷ A. J. Mason, “I Peter,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VIII (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 406.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 407.

Our necessary obedience to God means our necessary liberty under God from rival claims of ultimacy and our necessary disobedience where we must obey God rather than men.

Christian Obedience

The *Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly* declares, with respect to the duty of man,

Q. 91. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

We have already seen, in discussing Christian liberty, the centrality of the doctrine of authority and obedience to liberty. It is important now to analyze more fully the significance of obedience.

According to Moses,

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deut. 29:29)

Moses had given God's law to the people, and also prophecies concerning the future. He made clear also the plain-speaking of God's law, its relevance to their daily life, and their knowledge of it:

11. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

13. Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. (Deut. 30:11-14)

What God asked of man was nothing difficult or impossible, but something practical and necessary to his welfare. His word was not something requiring a search of the universe in order to be discovered, but rather the word was revealed to them, the word was close to them, the word was in their very hearts as a part of their being. St. Paul declares that this word is known to those who have

never heard the revealed word; the unwritten word is a part of their being, so that they are without excuse. They hold or suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:17-21).

Turning back now to Deuteronomy 29:29, we find that, as Wright noted, with respect to its import,

The secret things, i.e., the future, belong to God. In our limited knowledge we cannot know them. Yet sufficient has been revealed to us in the covenant that we may now live. We are to do what we should while it is day, for the night belongs to God.¹

Man has been given the law, which he must obey. He has been told what the consequences of obedience and disobedience are. More than that, man does not need to know.

That which is revealed includes the law with its promises and threats; consequently that which is hidden can only refer to the mode in which God will carry out in the future his counsel and will, which He has revealed in the law, and complete His work of salvation notwithstanding the apostasy of the people.²

Man is more often prompted by curiosity than by obedience. St. Paul describes this as “itching ears” which “turn away from the truth” for fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4). For every question a pastor receives about the details of God’s law, he normally receives several which express little more than a curiosity about God, the life to come, and other things which are aspects of “the secret things which belong to God.” Curiosity wants a charted future. It says in effect, “If I do thus and so, will God do thus and so and do it precisely when I want it?” Curiosity is in essence asking two questions. *First*, what is the secret will of God, and what is involved in it? *Second*, why am I not consulted in the decreeing of that secret will, since it is so important to my future? All this is an aspect of man’s original sin, man’s desire to be his own god (Gen. 3:5). The regenerate and the unregenerate are both barred from this kind of knowledge. The sin of man was to be as God, knowing or determining good and evil

¹ G. Ernest Wright, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. II (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 507.

² C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, vol. III (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949), 451.

for himself. To determine good and evil is also to determine the future, in that, if we can determine law, we can determine consequences. Man, in making the claim, had to be severed immediately from God and from life, from any remote ability to establish his claim by living forever. Man had been told that disobedience meant death, that, in the day he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would begin to die, or, dying thou shalt die (Gen. 2:17). As a result, he was cast out of the Garden of Eden and separated from the tree of life, from any possibility of both sinning, and living indefinitely (Gen. 3:22).

As against curiosity and a probing about “secret things,” we are plainly commanded to obey God’s law and to recognize that the law gives us a knowledge of the future which is legitimate. Deuteronomy 28 and 29 call attention to this prophetic aspect of law. The summons thus is to obedience. The unfolded or revealed things are with us for all time, to the end that we may obey all the orders of the law. The revealed word thus requires obedience. If we are men of faith, we obey. If we are unbelievers, we demand answers about “the secret things” as a condition of obedience.

Calvin said, of Deuteronomy 29:29,

To me there appears no doubt that, by *antithesis*, there is a comparison here made between the doctrine openly set forth in the Law, and the hidden and incomprehensible counsel of God, concerning which it is not lawful to inquire.

It is a remarkable passage, and especially deserving of our observation, for by it audacity and excessive curiosity are condemned, whilst pious minds are aroused to be zealous in seeking instruction. We know how anxious men are to understand things, the knowledge of which is altogether unprofitable, and even the investigation of them injurious. *All of them would desire to be God's counsellors*, and to penetrate into the deepest recesses of heaven, nay, they would search into its very cabinets. Hence a heathen poet truly says,

Nought for mortals is too high;
Our folly reaches to the sky. Hor. Od. i, 3-37.

On the other hand, what God plainly sets before us, and would have familiarly known, is either neglected, or turned

from in disgust, or put far away from us, as if it were too obscure. In the first clause, then, Moses briefly reproves and restrains that temerity which leaps beyond the bounds imposed by God; and in the latter, exhorts us to embrace the doctrine of the Law, in which God's will is declared to us, as if He were openly speaking to us; and thus he encounters the folly of those who fly from the light presented to them, and wrongfully accuse of obscurity that doctrine, wherein God has let Himself down to the measure of our understanding. In sum, he declares that God is the best master to all who come to Him as disciples, because He faithfully and clearly explains to them all that is useful for them to know. The perpetuity of the doctrine is also asserted, and that it never is to be let go, or to become obsolete by the lapse of ages.³

The purpose of the revealed things is to command our obedience. The subject of obedience is important to an understanding of Scripture. In analyzing Christian liberty, we have seen that the world requires an obedience to itself as ultimate, which would deny the sovereignty of God. Too often, as men require obedience as a Christian virtue, they speak of it in terms more like the claims of totalitarian humanism, as the absolute claim of man over man.

To cite a specific example, St. Paul in Ephesians 5:24 declares, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." This is commonly interpreted to mean as total a subjection of women to their husbands as of the church to Christ. This would be a justifiable claim only if husbands were as perfect and sinless as Christ. Hodge, commenting on this verse, makes clear the fallacy of the totalitarian approach:

As verse 22 teaches the nature of the subjection of the wife to her husband, and verse 23 its ground, this verse teaches its extent. She is to be subject *in every thing*. That is, the subjection is not limited to any one sphere or department of the social life, but extends to all. The wife is not subject as to some things, and independent as to others, but she is subject as to

³. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses, Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, vol. I, C. W. Bingham translator (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 410f.

all. This of course does not mean that the authority of the husband is unlimited. It reaches its extent, not its degree. It extends over all departments, but is limited in all; first, by the nature of the relation; and secondly, by the higher authority of God. No superior, whether master, parent, husband or magistrate, can make it obligatory on us either to do what God forbids, or not to do what God commands. So long as our allegiance to God is preserved, and obedience to man is made part of our obedience to him, we retain our liberty and our integrity.⁴

The men who demand a totalitarian obedience from their wives forget that Sarah rebuked her husband Abraham, and God not only backed her up (Gen. 16), but also made her a type of the godly wife (1 Pet. 3:6). Moreover, these men are not ready to render unto civil authorities (kings, presidents, governors, prime ministers, tax collectors, etc.) any such obedience as they demand of their wives, although the word of God uses the same word "obey" in both instances (Rom. 13:1-8; 1 Pet. 2:13-17, etc.). Still further, servants or employees are required to "be subject to your masters (or employers) with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Pet. 2:18). "Servants" in Eph. 6:5 means "slaves," but in Peter the reference is plainly to paid employees. How many men who demand a totalitarian obedience from their wives render such an obedience to their employers? We cannot have a pagan obedience in one realm and a Christian obedience in another, requiring people to render us a pagan obedience while we reserve the liberty of a Christian to ourselves. The degree of authority in every sphere of life is at all times limited by the prior authority of God. While the extent of the husband's authority is unlimited, i.e., he is the authority in every sphere of the marriage, in every area it is also conditional in terms of the word of God. *The authority of God is absolute; the authority of man is always conditional.*

Adam in Eden no doubt had at least one pet dog from the moment of his creation as a mature man. He was created mature into a mature creation. If all he needed was someone or something to boss and to order to come at his whistle, or his beck and call, a

⁴ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 314f.

dog would have been sufficient. But God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). A helpmate is *not* a doormat, but a subordinate and necessary partner.

One of the problems with respect to obedience is that too many commentators are still under the influence of a Medieval and Reformation perspective which at this point is very faulty. This influence is *the divine right doctrine*, which assumes that divinely ordained authority is beyond questioning. The *divine right of kings* gave way, for many, to the divine right of husbands, an equally pernicious idea. Indeed, all legitimate authority is established by God, but this does not entitle human authorities to the unquestioning obedience God alone is entitled to. *All* human authorities are to be obeyed *in the Lord*, i.e., in terms of a questioning and devout attention to the word of God as prior to man. The old *divine rights doctrine* is still promoted, as witness a reprint of the worthy John Bunyan's comments, which are regrettably in this temper, in an evangelical periodical.⁵

Bunyan, however, is mild compared to most in the European tradition. A totalitarian obedience to civil authorities, churches, pastors and priests, employers, and husbands has deeply infected the European tradition, and European groups have brought the doctrine of *divine rights* to this country. (A liberal form is with us politically as the divine right of the people, the democratic consensus, etc.) In its every form, the doctrine takes a *relative authority* and a *relative obedience* and absolutizes it to give man the same authority as Christ or God. This is sinning in God's name, or blasphemy. We are indeed to obey all due authorities "for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13), not because man requires it. This means that we subject all human orders to the scrutiny of God's word, because we are to have "none other gods" before Him, i.e., it is *idolatry* if we obey any human authority with the same unquestioning obedience with which we obey God. Such idolatrous obedience leads either to slavery or to resentment and senseless rebellion and revolution.

⁵ John Bunyan, "Duties of Husbands and Wives," in *Sword and Trowel*, vol. IV, no. 12, December 1972, 1-2, 9-10.

The requirement of unquestioning obedience by any human authority is a *sin* and defiles the very intent of God's word. The unquestioning obedience which Scripture requires is only to God, never to kings, rulers, employers, husbands, or parents. To render unquestioning obedience is *sin*.

Obedience thus is basic to God's plan for man, but all obedience must be to the word of God: "those things which are revealed belong unto us." "The secret things" means essentially the hidden things of the future, and the "revealed" means "the unfolded issues of the day" in terms of the law-word of God (James Moffatt). In a secondary sense, however, all that the word of God forbids to us means not only the issues of the future, but also men and the things of today. We cannot treat the world as something totally ours to use: it must be used under God. We cannot treat people as our creatures. Even in marriage, in its sexual relationship, the boundary is sharply drawn. The menstruous woman cannot be taken (Lev. 18:19, 20:18): to do so is to treat her as totally man's creature, which no man can do. The woman was also guilty, if she permitted it.⁶

"The secret things" of God extend to our own lives and persons. We are not our own: our todays and tomorrows are totally under the government of God, and, beyond our obedience to His law-word, we have no right to demand special knowledge, reward, or privileges. Precisely because God requires us to be obedient to Him, He at the same time sets boundaries on our authority over one another and our claims upon one another. We have Christian liberty to the degree that we have Christian obedience.

In the European tradition, rulers were compared to God, and husbands to Christ, employers to God, and priests and pastors to Christ, without *any* real stress on the difference between absolute and relative authority. In the American tradition, the Puritans began by resisting authority in the name of God, and they established a tradition of *godly and relative authority* as against *idolatrous and divine right authority*. As a result, America has not had the

⁶ See R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1972).

revolutions and social upheavals so common to Europe. Too many European groups in the U.S. today are reviving this dangerous tradition, wherein rulers expect people to be unquestioningly obedient, wives to be docile cows, employees to bow and scrape before their employers, and church members never to question the pastor or priest in his infallible wisdom. The result is either stupid obedience or wild rebellion.

The Puritan wives were not given to servile obedience, and they provided the strong-willed helpmeets necessary to the conquest of a continent. The Puritan men held that the Kingship of Christ was the only absolute power, and they acted on that principle.

Today, as anarchy and contempt for authority are spreading everywhere, the worst possible answer is a blasphemous and idolatrous doctrine of authority. The only valid answer to either of these two crimes is godly authority.

The position of Elizabeth I of England, with respect to her royal authority, has been summarized thus by Hume:

It was asserted that the queen inherited both an enlarging and a restraining power; by her prerogative she might set at liberty what was restrained by statute or otherwise, and by her prerogative she might restrain what was otherwise at liberty; that the royal prerogative was not to be canvassed, nor disputed, nor examined; and did not even admit of any limitation: that absolute princes, such as the sovereigns of England, were a species of divinity: that it was in vain to attempt tying the queen's hands by laws or statutes; since, by means of her dispensing power, she could loosen herself at pleasure; and that even if a clause should be annexed to a statute, excluding her dispensing power, she could first dispense with that clause and then with the statute.⁷

The origins of this belief are in pagan antiquity and in emperor worship. They rest in the belief in the immanent deity inherent in earthly powers. This pagan concept has infiltrated and corrupted the Biblical doctrine of obedience. It must be resisted, and the people of God must be taught that it is a *sin* to *require* unquestioning obedience, *and a sin* to *yield* it. We are not God: we cannot require

⁷ David Hume, *The History of England*, vol. IV (New York: Harper, 1852), 336f.

or expect for ourselves the absolute obedience due unto God. We are not man's creature: we cannot yield to any man the absolute and unquestioning obedience due only unto God. The church must be cleansed of the requirement of pagan obedience or it will continue under the judgment of God.

Liberty of Conscience

Liberty of conscience is an important issue in the modern world. There are many persons who claim this liberty, and there are many nations that deny it. Liberty of conscience cannot be confused with *toleration*. Toleration is a statist grant of exemption; it rests on the premise that the state or civil authority has absolute and inalienable prerogatives and that any liberties granted to certain persons or classes of persons are a state grant and not a right. Thomas More's *Utopia* is often held up for admiration for a supposed defense of religious liberty; on the contrary, all that More advocated was toleration. King Utopus decreed what would and would not be tolerated in the way of religious opinions.¹ The presupposition of tolerance is the prior right of the state to control the faith and conscience of the people. This was the premise of ancient Rome; its policy was to grant toleration to religions in terms of their utility to social, political, and military policies. Its opposition to Christianity was because Christianity had no intention of serving the empire. We would expect a like hostility to have existed towards the Jews, but, although there was some concern over Jewish nationalism, the religion was tolerated. Guterman gives evidence for the rationale of this toleration: "It was no idle boast of Philo's when in the middle of the first century he declared, in answer to traducers, that the Jews considered whatever country they inhabited as their real fatherland." Some "sects existed which assimilated the Jewish God to Jupiter, others to Jupiter Sabozius, still others to Liber and to Saturn."²

For the church to claim a freedom from the state, and Christians a liberty of conscience, was to deny the fundamental unity of ancient civilization, a unity which brought every aspect of life

¹ William Dalian Armes, *The Utopia of Sir Thomas More* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 190f. See L. John Van Til, *Liberty of Conscience, the History of a Puritan Idea* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1972), 6ff.

² Simeon L. Guterman, *Religious Toleration and Persecution in Ancient Rome* (London: Aiglon, 1951), 84f.

under the jurisdiction of the state. To deny this unity was to deny the essential principle of the ancient state, and this is exactly what the Christians did. As Guterman wrote,

The end of the ancient state coincides with the triumph of Christianity. The triumph of Christianity marks the close of the political and religious development of the classical civilization. The dichotomy between church and state which characterizes society since the fourth century makes its appearance in the last age of the Roman Empire. "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's," is a rule which the ancient state knew not and could hardly acknowledge.

This is not merely a coincidence; it is a consequence, as Fustel de Coulanges has pointed out. The close integration of the ancient gods with the classical community was of the essence of the life of the ancient civilization. When this link disappeared the vital part of the classical culture went with it.³

To maintain the unity of ancient culture, Rome, ready enough to be tolerant, felt that it was necessary to move against the church as a treasonable and destructive agency. The letter of Pliny the Younger (62-c.113) to the emperor (written c. A.D. 112) indicates clearly the use of the death penalty against professing Christians and his amazement at their "pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy" in resisting the state, which alone was grounds for punishment. To him, this constituted "madness." Some recanted under pressure, and Pliny was happy to report that the almost deserted temples of the gods were again frequented, and the "contagion of this superstition," which "has spread not only in the cities, but in the villages and rural districts as well.... seems capable of being checked and set right." From the recanters, Pliny made the following report on Christian faith and life:

... They all worshiped your image and the statues of the gods and cursed Christ. But they declared that the sum of their guilt or error had amounted only to this, that on an appointed day they had been accustomed to meet before daybreak, and to recite a hymn antiphonally to Christ, as to a god, and to bind

³. *Ibid.*, 158f.

themselves by an oath, not for the commission of any crime but to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery, and breach of faith, and not to deny a deposit when it was claimed. After the conclusion of this ceremony it was their custom to depart and meet again to take food; but it was ordinary and harmless food, and they had ceased this practice after my edict in which, in accordance with your orders, I had forbidden secret societies. I thought it the more necessary, therefore, to find out what truth there was in this by applying torture to two maidservants, who were called deaconesses. But I found nothing but a depraved and extravagant superstition, and I therefore postponed my examination and had recourse to you for consultation.⁴

Trajan thus had only a report of the superior morality of Christians; clearly, the highest standards of citizenship were apparent in these people. Later, Tertullian (c.160-240) stressed the fact that the emperor had no better subjects than the persecuted Christians. The significant fact to the empire was the denial of ultimate power and sovereignty to the state, and the denial of the unity and subordination of all life under the state. Tolerant Rome could not tolerate this fundamental breach of the premise of its power.

The same position as that of antiquity is again the presupposition of the modern state. Every area of life is held to be within the jurisdiction of the state, and the religious "liberty" granted by the state is not truly liberty but rather toleration.

The heart of the philosophy behind toleration and proscription by state law is *the exclusive and ultimate claims of the state to sovereignty over man and the world*. Only that which the state permits can have liberty: all else is proscribed.

However, the philosophy of religious liberty and liberty of conscience means *the exclusive and ultimate claims of God to sovereignty over man and the world*. Liberty means the duty of *all* areas of life to be godly, and their freedom under God to develop their potentialities. State, church, school, family, vocation, the arts and sciences, and all things else have an obligation to serve God and to obey His law. All have a freedom from mutual interference and a

⁴ Henry Bettenson, editor, *Documents of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 6f.

liberty to manifest their meaning under God. Ultimacy and sovereignty belong to God, not to man or the state. Freedom, therefore, is under God and in terms of His law.

The idea of absolute freedom is a myth. The Marquis de Sade, who proposed a radical anarchism, still required, in the most consistent statement of anarchism yet made, the abolition of Christianity, of marriage, of the church, of all protection of life and property, and much more.

Every philosophy of freedom has its areas of constraint. The anarchistic constraints Sade made clear. With statism, the state is free to do as it pleases, and the people are constrained and can at best expect toleration for certain practices.

Liberty under God means that there is no liberty for murder, theft, adultery, false witness, fraud, cannibalism, astrology, witchcraft, and other practices contrary to God's law. This does not mean that all these are capital offenses, as has at times been held, although some are. It does mean that every society must proscribe certain things if it is to maintain the liberty of others. Russell, in his study of medieval witchcraft, has given us an account of some of the practices of the movement, its antinomianism, human sacrifice, and much more. While we may hold that the methods used to combat witchcraft were faulty or erroneous, and court procedures sometimes unbiblical, still we must recognize that society was faced with a major threat. Russell points out that

Now once again institutions are failing and men are being thrust back upon their own formulations of symbolic order. Once again, lacking the framework of a coherent rational system, we are increasingly subject to propaganda, nihilism, and mindless violence. Dogmatic and unreasoning ideologists are preparing for us a new witch craze, couched now in secular rather than in transcendental terms.⁵

The modern argument for liberty of conscience rests on a belief in the sovereignty and inalienable rights of the individual. Such a belief places the individual in the position of God and gives to his

⁵ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1972), 289.

every feeling an exemption from all laws of God and man. The concern with liberty of conscience manifested by the New Left of the 1960s and 1970s rests on this radical anarchism. It is a claim by the sovereign individual to be his own universe and to the right to veto all acts of God and man which go contrary to his will. It is an assertion that man is lord of his conscience.

The statement of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* militates against this anarchism as it does against statism. Neither man nor the state is the lord of man's conscience. To cite again the telling Section II of Chapter XX of the Confession:

God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

Only that which God requires can bind our conscience, and only God can bind our conscience. For men or institutions to attempt to bind our conscience apart from the word of God is an act of usurpation and an arrogation of the powers of God. As Shaw declared,

No person on earth can have authority to dictate to conscience; for this would be to assume a prerogative which belongs to none but the supreme Lord and Legislator. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." James iv. 12. Such a power was prohibited by Jesus Christ among his followers: "the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but ye shall not be so." Luke xxii. 25. It was disclaimed by the inspired apostles: "Not that we have dominion over your faith," said the apostle of the Gentiles, "but are helpers of your joy." 2 Cor. i. 24.

From the principles laid down in this section, it manifestly follows, that a right of private judgment about the matters of religion belongs to every man, and ought to be exercised by every Christian. Christians are expressly required to examine

and prove every doctrine by the unerring rule of the word of God. Isa. viii. 20; 1 John iv. 1.⁶

Shaw's point is very important. When the apostles themselves refused to lord it over man's conscience, certainly church and state dare not do so without sin. Only God has dominion over our conscience. The law can govern practices, and, in terms of the word of God, forbid what God forbids, and forbid the propagation of certain practices, but it cannot compel the mind of man. Thus, cannibalism is against God's law, quite obviously; we can legitimately outlaw its practice, and all attempts to promote belief in it, but we cannot attempt to enter the area of thought by forcing other doctrines on those who practice cannibalism. It is an area for education and conversion, not compulsion.

The extent to which conscience, and liberty of conscience, is bound to the word of God, is apparent in Galatians 2:1-5.

1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.
2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.
3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:
4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:
5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

The point here is a very telling one. Circumcision, the covenant rite of the Old Testament, had been replaced by baptism. The mark of membership in the Old Covenant was circumcision, in the New, baptism. The Judaizers insisted on circumcision as a *religious* necessity, holding that access to the Messiah was through Israel and Israel's covenant with God. Now the church retained many of the practices of the Old Covenant, while making clear their voluntary

⁶ Robert Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1846), 234f.

and instructional nature rather than their religious necessity. Thus, the Armenian Church retained the practice of killing animals at the door of the sanctuary and giving a portion to the clergy. The ritual made it clear that this was now no longer law, and that its typical character was a reminder of Christ's work. Circumcision, similarly, has been maintained among many Christians, for various reasons. (The Coptic Church alone has kept it as a religious necessity.) A respect for Scriptural precedent and its health values has led many Christians to practice circumcision, but never, with the exception of the Copts, as a religious necessity. St. Paul had been circumcised on the eighth day (Phil. 3:5) and had circumcised Timothy, who had a Jewish mother and a Greek father (Acts 16:1-3), but not Titus (Gal. 2:3). He insisted that circumcision now had a symbolic or spiritual meaning (Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11). This symbolic meaning is not an arbitrary one, but is central to Paul's ministry. Its origin is in the Old Testament, as witness Exodus 6:12, 30, Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6, Leviticus 26:41, and Jeremiah 4:4, 6:10.

In view of the symbolic meaning of circumcision, it would have been easy for St. Paul to accommodate his preaching to its practice as a religious necessity. In doing so, he would have avoided trouble with the Judaizers and still have enabled himself to bring out the meaning of baptism, stressing its superiority to the ritual practice of circumcision. But Paul is emphatic, in writing to the Galatians, that he never considered such a compromise. There could be no tenable requirement made of any Christian unless the word of God requires it. Man's conscience can *only* be bound by the word of God, and the *requirement* of Scripture is now baptism, not circumcision.

The same principle appears again in Galatians 4:9-10.

9. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Commentators often speak of the "days, and months, and times, and years" as the Old Testament sabbaths and festivals. It is difficult to see how the Judaizers could be promoting sabbath years

and the jubilee, which were not at all practiced by the Jews any longer. The sabbath years had been practiced in Palestine in the Maccabean and post-Maccabean periods, but the Jubilee Year had been omitted entirely. The practice of the feasts by the Jews of the Dispersion was limited, so that again it would be difficult to imagine Judaizers demanding practices of the Christians in the Dispersion which they had not practiced as Jews; to ask the same of Gentile converts would have been doubly difficult.

Moreover, if St. Paul referred here to the Biblical days, months, times, and years, he would have, had he set them aside as no longer valid but completed in Christ, explained their symbolic meaning. Instead, Paul calls them “weak and beggarly elements,” something he would never call God’s law, even if it were a ceremonial law now terminated. Moreover, he says they “observe” these things, or, more literally, “observe scrupulously.” What was then *observed scrupulously* by the Jewish Church was *not* the law of God but the canonical and non-canonical feasts and fasts as their character had been interpreted and altered by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Some of these were beautiful and rich in meaning, such as the Feast of Dedication, *Hanukkah* (Dedication), or Lights, the significance of which our Lord applied to Himself (John 8:12).⁷ The *Simbath Torah* was a festival in honor of the law and means *Joy of the Law*, again an honorable purpose. Some of the communal fasts were non-canonical also: one observed the burning of the Temple by Babylon (2 Kings 25:8-9; Jer. 52:12-13), another the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 41).

Because these festivals and fasts, days, months, years, and times, were weak and beggarly elements (“weakness and poverty,” as Moffatt rendered it) as compared to the word of God, to return to them was bondage indeed. Note Paul’s use of the phrase, “ye desire again to be in bondage” to these “weak and beggarly elements.” To have obeyed the word of God was never bondage; the bondage was to non-canonical practices and non-canonical observances of Biblical festivals.

⁷ See A. Edersheim, *The Temple* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.), 333ff.

When in Galatians 4:3 Paul speaks of being, as children, “in bondage under the elements (lit., rudiments) of the world, his reference is to the rudiments of religious teaching, Gentile and perhaps Jewish also, which were more ritual than meaning.”⁸ It follows that his reference to bondage immediately thereafter, in Galatians 4:9, has reference to something similar. The reference to Hagar, a foreign woman, who is a type of the religion “which gendereth to bondage” (Gal. 4:24), is in line with this. The Jewish Church was not in the line of faith and promise, but of bondage. It was not faithful to the word of promise, but had substituted a word of bondage. It was bondage because it bound the conscience of man to something other than the word of God. Men can only be bound to the word of God, and only in the manner the word requires.

Paul was not opposing immoral or evil practices and observances. On the contrary, the practices were far from devoid of meaning and had, when properly observed, a rich content. He opposed them, however, for their claims on the conscience of man.

The church is of God’s ordinance, as is the state. Both alike have a holy calling. However, neither can compel the conscience of any man apart from the word of God. Herein is our liberty of conscience: it gives us the ground whereon we can confront all powers in the assurance that Christ has called us, not to bondage, but to liberty. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1). If church or state compel our conscience, they are thereby claiming to be our lord and savior. Paul points to this very plainly. In Galatians 5:2-4, he makes it clear that to follow the Judaizers in their mandatory circumcision meant to believe in salvation by the law rather than by Jesus Christ. It meant forsaking Christ as Savior for circumcision, or, more plainly, the rules and regulations of men in the place of the word of God. No doubt the Judaizers would have denied this charge and would have claimed the name of Christ equally with Paul, or, in fact, would have claimed greater faithfulness. Paul, however, was right: in

⁸ W. Sanday, “Galatians,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VII (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 449.

commanding man's conscience apart from the word of God, they were offering another plan of salvation. The same is still true: all who claim lordship over man's conscience claim it as would-be saviors.

LVII

Mercy

One of our Lord's strongest indictments of the religious leaders of His day is in Matthew 23; vv. 23 and 24 in particular declare:

23. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

This is a startling statement. The religious leaders are blind guides, our Lord said, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel. *Tithing* is not only *not* condemned, but is separated from the other matters of the law as an *easier* duty. The more weighty and difficult obligations are *justice*, *mercy*, and *faith*. Tithing does not make us great Christians or signal observers of the law: it is an elementary obligation. It is the necessary tax of the Kingdom; payment signifies citizenship, not a distinguished service medal. We are not up to the level of the Pharisees, if tithing is the high point of our faith: it is an elementary mark of faith, the abc's of the Kingdom. The Pharisees obeyed the law of the tithe as given in Leviticus 27:30 and elsewhere; in this particular requirement they surpassed most who claim the name of Christian today. Justice, mercy, and faith, however, were left "undone."

Clearly, mercy is an important aspect of Christian faith and a mark of the redeemed, of the blessed ones of God (Matt. 5:7). It is necessary for us therefore to understand the meaning of mercy.

The Old and New Testament words translated as *mercy* and sometimes *compassion* mean to show mercy or compassion, to be gracious, and to pity. Achtemeier, however, gives us a very clear meaning of what this involves by divorcing it from our usual interpretation of these words to place *mercy* in its theocentric context:

It has often been pointed out that one Hebrew word for “mercy” or “compassion” derives from the stem meaning “womb,” and that its original meaning was brotherly or motherly feeling — i.e., the feeling of those born from the same womb or the love of a mother for her child. Thus Yahweh’s mercy has been defined in terms of such familial love, and some OT passages support this reasoning: in Ps. 103:13; Isa. 63:15-16; Jer. 31:20, Yahweh is a father to Israel (cf. Hos. 11); in Isa. 49:15 a mother; in Isa. 54:4-8 a husband (cf. Hos. 1-3). As such, the Lord welcomes his sinful child or wife back to him with overflowing yearning and love and forgiveness.

It is a mistake, however, to define Yahweh’s mercy only in terms of such familial affection, more of one to view it solely as an inward feeling. God’s mercy in the OT, like his faithfulness, his steadfast love, his righteousness, his judgments (cf. Hos. 2:19), represents his continual regard for the covenant which he has established with his chosen people, Israel (cf. Exod. 33:19; Isa. 63:9). Not once is God’s mercy granted to those outside the covenant relationship. Further, although mercy signifies, more than the other terms listed above, an affection or love within the divine person (cf. 2 Chron. 36:15), it is never described in the OT apart from its concrete manifestation in some outward act by Yahweh within history. It is, in general, a loving act of Yahweh by which he faithfully maintains his covenant relationship with his chosen people.¹

The idea of mercy, unfortunately, has moved from this God-centered and exclusively covenantal meaning towards a man-centered interpretation wherein *mercy* is confused with *charity* and *the love of man*. The Bible does give an important place to charity, but it is not the same as mercy, and humanism has no place whatever in Scripture.

In Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, mercy still has a God-centered orientation, and its relationship to salvation is openly indicated. Mercy, it is stated, is a “must,” but not a matter of “compulsion,” because

¹ E. R. Achtemeier, “Mercy, Merciful; Compassion; Pity,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, K-Q* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 352.

The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown;
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this scepter'd sway,
 It is enthroned in the heart of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea consider this
 That in the course of justice none of us
 Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy. (Act IV, sc. 1.)

For Shakespeare, it was this quality that represented character. By the nineteenth century, the picture had greatly changed. James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), in "Abou Ben Adhem," gave a specifically and deliberately non-Christian interpretation of greatness of character:

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
 And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
 An Angel writing in a book of gold:
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
 And to the presence in the room he said,
 "What writest thou?" The Vision raised its head,
 And with a look made of all sweet accord
 Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord,"
 "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
 Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
 But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
 Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
 it came again and with a great wakening light,

And showed the names whom love of God had blessed, And
lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

There is more of the Victorian era in this poem than much of what passes for Victorian. Note that Abou Ben Adhem does *not* ask to be listed among those who love the Lord; he specifically asks to be listed as a lover of man. Note further that God blesses Abou Ben Adhem above all others, thus making the love of man the greatest grace and virtue. Implicitly, if this is true, we must not only love man but also be merciful to man for man's own sake. However, as Thomas Randolph (1605-1635), a writer in the generation just after Shakespeare, observed in the play *The Muses' Looking-glass*,

He that's merciful
Unto the bad, is cruel to the good.

Exactly so. Modern mercy is a form of warfare against the good by making them the objects of wrath, while the bad become objects of mercy.

Turning again to Achtemeier's excellent statement, it must be qualified at one point. He states that "Not once is God's mercy granted to those outside the covenant relationship." While *normally* God's mercy is granted to the covenant people, it is also given at times to the unregenerate for God's own reasons. Thus, while Ahab was plainly unregenerate, God heard his prayer and was merciful to him (1 Kings 21:17-29). Ahab was outwardly one of the covenant people, but plainly unregenerate and at war with the covenant, and yet God extended mercy to Ahab when he humbled himself.

God's mercy is in terms of His law, and man's mercy must be likewise. For example, mercy towards the idolater (Deut. 13:8), the murderer (Deut. 19:13), or the false witness (Deut. 19:21) is forbidden by law. Mercy is not to be promiscuously given to everyone, because mercy, being an aspect of grace, can no more be antinomian than grace. The idea of antinomian grace and mercy is not Scriptural.

Achtemeier, in speaking of "the structure of communal relationships... which govern the limits and demands of mercy," wrote,

The closest ties which the Hebrew knew were those of the family. Within the family circle, mercy — help, love, consideration of need — was not only expected; it was a duty. Where a family was, there was mercy. Where mercy was lacking, the familial ties were gone. Thus mercy was to be rendered to the brother (Amos 1:11; Zech. 7:9).²

Mercy within the family could not be antinomian, however. The incorrigible delinquent had to be cut off and denounced before the authorities (Deut. 21:18-22).

The covenant people are to be regarded as the family of God and as our brethren. Accordingly, the law stipulated,

17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.
 18. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self: I am the LORD. (Lev. 19:17-18)

We are not permitted to say that what our neighbor does is of no concern to us, or, conversely, that what we do is of no concern to our neighbor. The key question here is, who is my neighbor? “The rabbis took the reference to be to the fellow Israelite.”³ Our Lord made it equally emphatic that it included the Good Samaritan and more (Luke 10:29-37). There is no question that, in a primary but distorted sense, the rabbis were right. The reference is to “the children of thy people.” The calling of Israel, however, was to be the witness of God to the world, and to proclaim God’s grace to all nations. As such, they were to be what the Good Samaritan was, the good neighbor whose mercy and law would alike be a testimony to the nations. Solomon, in the dedication of the Temple, had prayed specifically that God particularly answer the prayers of foreign believers who came to the Temple in order to strengthen their testimony, so “that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee.”

41. Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name’s sake;

² *Ibid.*, 353.

³ Nathaniel Micklem, “Leviticus,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. II (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 97.

42. (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm:) when he shall come and pray toward this house;

43. Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name. (1 Kings 8:41-43)

Psalm 87 gives eloquent witness to the presence of Egyptians, Babylonians, Philistines, Phoenicians, Ethiopians, and others in the circle of the redeemed. Israel had a duty to the world to be the witness to God's law and mercy. Thus, when the Lawyer raised the question concerning "eternal life," our Lord asked, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke 10:25-26). The lawyer answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Our Lord agreed that this was indeed the mark of grace, of election. The practical question which put the answer to the test was, "who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). It was at this point that our Lord declared the failure of Israel by depicting the lack of mercy, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, of the priest and the Levite, whereas the Samaritan, regarded as a false pretender to the covenant, manifested godly mercy on the man who fell among thieves and was left "half dead."

In terms of the parable, Christians have long made their missionary efforts works of grace and mercy. It can be argued with justice that some aspects of this should be the work of a diaconate mission, but it is still an aspect of the Christian mission. People in pagan areas have known thereby that Christians are the people of mercy, and the God of Christians is the God of mercy. Moreover, wherever this mercy has been scriptural in nature, they have known that it is not antinomian mercy. To cite an example, the Chinese goddess of mercy, Kwan-yin, refuses to enter paradise, it is held, as long as anyone remains outside the gates of paradise. To humanists this sounds wonderful.⁴ The fact is that this sentimental and antinomian mercy produced no mercy among its religious

adherents, only more lawlessness. Where the word of God is faithfully proclaimed on the mission field, the people know that God's law is declared, and that mercy is manifested. Why are not the followers of Kwan-yin notable for mercy rather than Christians? The faith of Kwan-yin is in a world in which evil is not judged but triumphs; Kwan-yin waits outside the gates of paradise for everyone to come in finally at their wish and on their terms. There is no divine initiative nor grace operative, only a cosmic indulgence. There are no absolutes outside of man, and the result is freedom for man's sin to express itself and to demand a cosmic indulgence.

The Christian community is a law-community whose witness is to the grace of God and whose requirement of itself and of others is law-obedience, and whose character manifests mercy. Having received mercy, the people of God reflect mercy, but never in any antinomian sense and always as an aspect of Christian witness, not as a sentimental gesture.

A notable area of mercy is with the orphans, the aged, widows, and children. God is mindful of them (Ps. 72:12-13), and man is required to manifest the same mercy:

9. Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

10. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. (Zech. 7:9-10)

This is presented in Zechariah, according to Leupold, as a summary of the teaching of the prophets, who had set forth the requirements of the law.⁵

The English word *mercy*, as Hastings pointed out, now has a connotation missing in its original form and in the original Hebrew and Greek. In the original languages, the words rendered *mercy* mean compassion and pity, not pardon.⁶ Mercy is kindness,

⁴ Moncure Daniel Conway, *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), 71.

⁵ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1956), 136f.

consideration, and compassion. Mercy does not mean pardon, so that, while it is closely associated with *grace*, it is still different, in that grace redeems, and mercy spares. This does not mean, however, that mercy and forgiveness cannot be extended together. We are told that “The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (Num. 14:18). Mercy and forgiveness are clearly tied together in Deuteronomy 21:8, 32:43. We may thus say that, while grace always implies mercy, and redeeming grace means forgiveness, mercy does not always mean forgiveness. The mercy extended is evidence of this.

Mercy is an aspect of the redeemed man’s nature, and it manifests and furthers his blessedness. “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7). Mercy is required by God (Matt. 9:13; 12:7; 23:23). God’s people must show compassion one to another (Matt. 18:27; 1 John 3:17) and to all men in their grief and troubles (Luke 10:37). Christians are reminded of their duty to be merciful “with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:8); to be in Christ means to be merciful (Phil. 2:1); they are to “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col. 3:12-13). Mercy is a part of the wisdom from above (James 3:17).

In pagan antiquity, mercy was something which, when manifested, flows from the superior to the inferior. This is not the case in the Kingdom of God. Paul was grateful for the compassion of God’s people when he was in bonds (Heb. 10:34); their common life in Christ made love and mercy flow in every direction.

⁶ J. Hastings, “Mercy, Merciful,” in James Hastings, editor, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. III (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1919). See also W. H. Bennett, “Mercy,” in *ibid.*, vol. II, 345f.

LVIII

Justice and Mercy

Our Lord, in Matthew 23:23, described the weightier matters of the law as judgment (or justice), mercy, and faith. For Him, as for all of Scripture, justice is inseparable from law and righteousness, and justice, law, and righteousness are inseparable from the covenant. Moreover, as Harrelson noted,

The time-honored distinction between the OT as a book of law and the NT as a book of divine grace is without grounds or justification. Divine grace and mercy are the presupposition of law in the OT; and the grace and love of God displayed in the NT events issue in the legal obligations of the New Covenant.¹

Moreover, the fact of Christ's kingship is inseparably connected with law, in that, in antiquity, the words of a king were law. The fact that Christ, in discussing the Mosaic law, declared repeatedly, "I say unto you" (Matt. 5:18, 20, 22, 26, etc.), is a clear indication that He, as King, was declaring the meaning of His own law and his intention of being unrelenting in its application (Matt. 5:18).

Not only were the words of a king law, but, without law, there was no kingship. The modern idea of a king who reigns but does not rule, i.e., who has the name of a king but whose kingship or law-making power is transferred to parliament, did not exist in antiquity. It cannot be read back into the Bible. The Biblical idea of kingship is of a king whose word is law and whose rule is inseparable from law. For this reason, Hebrew kingship differed from all others. The true king of Israel was God: therefore, His prophets could command His royal vicegerents in His name. The Hebrew king could *only* rule in terms of God's law, i.e., God's Kingship (Deut. 17:18-20). The sin of Israel was that it wanted a pagan kingship, not God's Kingship (1 Sam 8:7), and God gave them Saul, who very quickly manifested his idea of an independent

¹ W. J. Harrelson, "Law in the OT," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, K-Q* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 77.

kingship by offering sacrifices as a priest (1 Sam. 13:9ff.), and who made judgments independently of God's commandments (1 Sam. 15). The idea of kingship in Scripture has a necessary connection with law and justice.

The idea of justice is also related to the Old Testament concept of peace as wholeness, health, prosperity, security, and the spiritual completeness of the covenant. All peace, like salvation and all creation, is of God: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). The covenant is an everlasting covenant of peace (Ezek. 37:26), and His peace is salvation (Isa. 52:7).²

Justice in the Bible means the righteousness of God; in man, it means the moral and religious perfection of man, and the application of that standard and way to all of life. Justice does mean "just balances" (Lev. 19:36); it also means that "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. 23:3); it means, too, that "Whatsoever is right I will give you" (Matt. 20:4). But, as Banks noted, "In the main, Scripture refers only to absolute, essential righteousness; in demanding this it demands all." Justice and mercy "are the two complementary aspects of holiness.... Justice as righteousness forms the solid substratum of moral character in God and man, and must come first; but this point being secured, mercy lifts us up to a higher stage."³

There can be no mercy if there is no justice; mercy is not antinomian but an aspect of the law, as our Lord makes clear in Matthew 23:23. Not only is mercy inseparable from justice, but it is also essentially an aspect of justice. It is of God's mercy and blessing that He gives His people the law. "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob" (Deut. 33:4). In particular, for a fallen world to receive God's law or justice is not only an act of mercy but also an aspect of redemption.

The essential requirement God's law makes of man is *restitution*. The broken moral order must be restored, and man must make restitution to God and to man. All things having been made good

² E. M. Good, "Peace in the O.T.," in *ibid.*, 705f.

³ J. S. Banks, "Justice," in James Hastings, editor, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 826.

by God, the goal of justice is restitution, the restoration of all things to their original goodness, with that goodness developed and extended as an aspect of both restitution and the creation mandate. Since man is incapable in his fallen estate of accomplishing this, God enables man to do this through Christ. The goal of justice being restitution, it follows that salvation and mercy are necessary aspects of God's justice, not exceptions thereof. Mercy and salvation, where not antinomian in conception, are a fulfilment of the requirements of justice. The righteousness of God requires a creation in which righteousness has full and developed sway, so that the purposes of justice require God's mercy and salvation, and man's witness to that same salvation and mercy.

This relationship is very clearly in view in David's prayer, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness" (Ps. 51:14). The psalm has a "total vindication of God" and His justice, and a "total indictment of man," as Leupold pointed out.⁴ Because God is the God of justice, David looked to Him also for salvation: both God's judgment and mercy move to the same end, the fulfilment of justice in the restoration of all things, and this means salvation.

In Isaiah 45:21, God indicts all idolatry and declares,

Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

As Payne so clearly points out, the thought here is *not*, "A just God, and yet at the same time a Saviour," but rather a righteous, just, and redeeming God, and therefore a Savior.⁵

Because restitution is so basic to God's order, it must be basic to the redeemed man's order. "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow"

⁴ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959), 402.

⁵ J. Barton Payne, "Justice," in J. D. Douglas, editor, *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1973), 682.

(Isa. 1:17). Of the righteous man, God declares, “He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this known to me? saith the LORD” (Jer. 22:16). This is not socialistic welfare but the personal activity of the redeemed man as he manifests the justice of God in his community.

Achtemeier is right in stating that God’s “righteous judgments are saving judgments.”⁶ Psalm 36:6 declares of God,

Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

The justice of God preserves man and beast and it also cleanses His creation of iniquity. Moreover, “There are two sides to his righteousness: salvation and condemnation; deliverance and punishment.”

However, and this is an important point — Yahweh’s righteousness is never solely an act of condemnation or punishment. There is no verse in the OT in which Yahweh’s righteousness is equated with his vengeance on the sinner, and not even Isa. 5:16 or 10:22 should be understood in such a manner. Because his righteousness is his restoration of the right to him from whom it has been taken, it at the same time includes punishment of the evildoer; but the punishment is an integral part of the restoration. Only because Yahweh saves does he condemn. His righteousness is first and foremost saving. He is a “righteous God and a Savior.”⁷

God’s salvation is a covenant act, and justice thus is God’s covenantal faithfulness and man’s obedient response to the grace of the covenant.

Thus, when our Lord spoke of “judgment (justice), mercy, and faith” as “the weightier matters of the law” (Matt. 23:23), He meant exactly that. Justice, mercy, and faith are basic to God’s law, and they are inseparable from salvation. Justice must be, the law requires, without regard for the nature of a man’s estate, rich or poor, alien or citizen, but it is not impersonal. God’s law expresses the righteousness of a personal God, and it manifests His demand

⁶ E. R. Achtemeier, “Righteousness in the OT,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of The Bible, R-Z* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1962), 83.

⁷ *Ibid.*

that justice be done to Him and to all His creation. *The goal of justice is the restitution and restoration of God's order and purpose; because mercy is not antinomian, it serves to further both justice and restoration. The grace of God unto salvation similarly has as its purpose restitution and restoration, and Christ's atonement satisfied the requirements of justice and manifested God's saving grace. To separate salvation from justice and the law is impossible: the key to their unity is restitution and restoration.*

LIX

Faith

Much can be said about faith, but our concern is a limited one, to examine briefly the relationship of faith to salvation, and to law. When our Lord declared that justice, mercy, and faith are the weightier matters of the law (Matt. 23:23), He implied that all three were not only matters of law, but also related to one another in that they were aspects of the law.

We have seen that the law, like salvation, has restitution and restoration as its function. Godly justice is inseparable from restitution and restoration, and the function of mercy is to further these things. Man cannot of himself meet the requirements of the law, being a fallen creature, and so it is saving grace which restores him to righteousness by imputation, and sanctifying grace which by means of the law enables him to grow in righteousness and to develop its requirements in terms of every vocation, calling, and sphere of life.

Our concern now is with the relationship of faith to these things. A comment by Machen on Bible reading in state schools in his excellent study of the meaning of faith is relevant to our discussion:

The reading of selected passages from the Bible, in which Jews and Catholics and Protestants and others can presumably agree, should not be encouraged, and still less should be required by law. The real centre of the Bible is redemption; and to create the impression that other things in the Bible contain any hope for humanity apart from that is to contradict the Bible at its root. Even the best of books, if it is presented in garbled form, may be made to say the exact opposite of what it means.¹

This principle is true also with respect to faith. Much that is true concerning it becomes false when isolated from its central context, *redemption*. Redemption, however, cannot be interpreted in its

¹ J. Gresham Machen, "*What is Faith?*" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946), 128.

narrow, pietistic, and humanistic sense as simply the salvation of souls. It is that and much more. It is the restitution and restoration of all things through Christ to their original righteousness and purpose, so that, in terms of the creation mandate, God's Kingdom brings all things, developed and glorified in Christ, to their full expression of potentiality.

We are told that, God having revealed His purpose to Abraham, Abraham "believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). The meaning of *believed* here is not only believe or trust, in our sense of the word, but also, "said Amen to."² The calling of Abraham was to establish a separate people as God's Kingdom and to become the channel for the coming of the promised and God-given King, who was to be the destroyer of Satan and the restorer of paradise and God's Kingdom in power. Abraham, by his trust, belief, and works, said *Amen* to God's declared purpose, and it was accounted for him as righteousness. His seed should be as numerous as the stars, or the sand on the seashore (Gen. 15:5; 17:6ff.); God's Kingdom would triumph, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

In the New Testament, faith is saying Amen to Christ and His salvation; it means accepting the verdict of death on ourselves which the law pronounces to law-breakers, and accepting the atoning work of Christ as our vicarious substitute. It means also the response of gratitude in the form of works of law, the obedience of faith, as the means of setting forth God's Kingdom. Leon Morris says of faith:

Central to the New Testament is the thought that God sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. Christ accomplished man's salvation by dying an atoning death on Calvary's cross. Faith is the attitude whereby a man abandons all reliance in his own efforts to obtain salvation, be they deeds of piety, of ethical goodness, or anything else. It is the attitude of complete trust in Christ, of reliance on Him alone for all that salvation means. When the Philippian jailer asked, "Sirs, what

² E. C. Blackman, "Faith, Faithfulness," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, E-J (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 222.

must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered without hesitation, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 30f.). It is "whosoever believeth in him" (Jn iii. 16). Faith is the one way by which men receive salvation.³

It can be added that works is the way men manifest that they have received salvation. Paul rightly condemned the law "as a system whereby a man may merit salvation. For James the law is 'the law of liberty' (Jas. ii. 12). His 'works' look uncommonly like 'the fruits of the Spirit' of which Paul speaks."⁴ Faith thus is more than mere belief. It is the act of God's grace in man, whereby "an entire self-commitment of the soul to Jesus as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world," is effected.⁵

With this in mind, let us now examine the relationship of faith to law, as declared by our Lord in Matthew 23:23. Our Lord illustrated this relationship in a parable, whereby the relationship of faith to the law was sharply set forth:

1. And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
 2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
 3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
 4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
 5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
 6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
 7. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?
 8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?
- (Luke 18:1-8)

³. Leon Morris, "Faith," in J. D. Douglas, editor, *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1973), 411.

⁴. *Ibid.*, 413.

⁵. B. B. Warfield, "Faith," in James Hastings, editor, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 831.

This parable is spoken to believers, specifically, in its context, to the disciples, “unto them.” It is thus an illustration of perseverance *and* triumphant faith to men of faith.

Our concern here is with the meaning of faith as an aspect of law, as a weightier matter of the law, according to our Lord (Matt. 23:23). It is necessary first to define faith in theological terms, i.e., in relationship to God, in order that we might see more clearly the relationship of faith to God’s law. According to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*,

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

The *Larger Catechism* makes it clear that faith is of grace, i.e., it is not of ourselves, but the gift of God. Faith does not justify but receives justification:

Q. 73. How doth faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it; nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for justification; but only as it is an instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and His righteousness.

“The grace of faith,” as the *Westminster Confession of Faith* refers to it, is instrumental; it is the gift of God whereby we receive and apply Christ and His righteousness. There is thus an “obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; Acts 6:7), whereby we respond to God and His law-word. “Faith is not a dead assent, but the act of a quickening soul, which possesses, like seed-corn, a germinating power.”⁶

With this in mind, let us turn to the parable as one spoken to believers as a guide and instruction for the life of faith. It is called the “Parable of the Unrighteous Judge” or “The Parable of the

⁶ George Smeaton, “Faith,” in *Fairbairn’s Imperial Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1957), 275.

Unjust Judge,” as though the concern of the parable were with the judge rather than the believer. The concluding sentence of the parable asks, “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” With respect to this question, certain things need to be pointed out. *First*, as Hulse has so ably pointed out, the language here is literal, and it means judgment, but “it must not be assumed that the word 'cometh' applies only to the second coming at the end of the world.” It applies to the Lord’s every coming in judgment against men and nations. Older expositors, such as the Puritans, saw this clearly.⁷ Our Lord had just been warning the Pharisees concerning the coming of His Kingdom, and then, to His disciples, spoke of past comings in judgment, citing the Flood, and the destruction of Sodom, as comings in judgment. He was warning them of the coming judgment upon Jerusalem and Judea (Luke 17:20-37). As Hulse points out,

Jesus then continues to encourage his disciples to pray and uses the parable of the widow and the unjust judge to describe the kind of faith he requires. She did not despair. She kept persevering until her petition was answered. Now whenever Jesus comes, whether in judgment on a nation, or at the end of the world, will he find faith of this character? Will he find faith like that of the widow who persevered?⁸

Second, the point of this question is not cynicism. Our Lord is *not* saying, “I will find no faith on the earth.” He had just declared that some have always manifested faith, and, in the coming fall of Jerusalem, His own would be preserved (Luke 17:31-36). Heretics love to push this question away from themselves and to hold that it has reference to a great supposed falling away from the faith before the end of the world. The question, however, was asked of disciples who would face the judgment on Jerusalem, and they were asked as individuals to face up to this question, even as we are. This question is not for the end time but for us *now*. As Hulse states it,

⁷ Erroll Hulse, *The Restoration of Israel* (Worthing, Sussex: Henry E. Walter, 1968), 27. See also J. M. Kik, *The Eschatology of Victory* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1971), 127-135. See also R. J. Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1971) 238ff.

⁸ Hulse, *op. cit.*, 28.

This question, “will he find faith” is calculated to stir up self-examination. If he suddenly comes to call me into his presence will I have faith; true persevering faith? That is a question you and I must answer without delay.⁹

It must be noted, *third*, that this parable gives us an example, not only of faith in the person of the widow, but also of triumphant faith. The widow is avenged. Her adversary is judged and compelled to make restitution. “I will avenge her,” the unjust judge finally declares. In Scripture, “Vengeance is proper for man only in the restricted sense of dispensing justice for a legally punishable crime or sin, meted out in the prescribed manner.”¹⁰ This means restitution, and it was this that the widow gained. Since the widow is often pictured in Scripture as one who is exploited by ungodly men, and the widow’s cause as very important to the Lord, we can assume that such a reference is in mind here. The widow had been defrauded, and the judge brought judgment against her adversary and gained restitution for her.

Fourth, this parable is a stinging indictment of all weak faith that does not work for and expect victory. Moffatt’s rendering of Luke 18:6-8 brings this out sharply:

“Listen,” says the Lord, “to what this unjust judge says! And will not God see justice done to his elect, who cry to him by day and night! Will he be tolerant to their opponents? I tell you, he will quickly see justice done to his elect!”

If an unjust judge can on occasion grant justice, how much more so the righteous God, who is judge over all? For the brigade of snivelling churchmen to turn this parable into one of defeatism, and to declare that the Adversary will triumph in time and history, and Christ will find virtually no faith on His return, is not only a blindness to the text, but also blasphemy. If the unjust judge will give justice, how much more so the righteous and omnipotent Judge? False eschatologies have turned a great parable of hope and victory into a parable of despair. This parable requires us to be zealous in prayer and confident that God will hear. It requires us to

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Joshua H. Shmidman, “Vengeance,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 16 (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 94.

expect more of God than of man, and it specifically declares that God will see that justice is done to His elect. It is an act of unbelief to deny what God has promised.

Fifth, our Lord asks, “when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?,” or, more literally, will he find “*the* faith” on the earth? Without agreeing with Geldenhuys’ pessimism about the end times, or his reference of this question to the end, we can agree that “the faith”

clearly refers to the faith that is here being discussed — faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Messianic Son of Man, through whom God will vindicate the cause of the elect. The Saviour had Himself already answered this question in xvii. 26-37.¹¹ Plummer also held that “The necessary faith, the faith in question, (is) faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour.”¹²

Sixth, this points plainly to the fact that “the faith” Christ requires is not only in Himself as Messiah and Saviour, but in what His redemption and kingship involves, namely, His protection as law-giver of His covenant people, as the *righteous* Judge. What the unrighteous judge can be prevailed upon to do, Christ will certainly do. He is the supreme law-giver, and every true cry for vengeance, for justice, is an appeal to Christ the King. Faith in this parable is plainly related to the law, as Matthew 23:23 makes clear it must be. Faith here means that we, as God’s covenant people and law-keepers, are required to believe that God’s justice will prevail. The widow was *not* resigned to injustice: she cried out against it and triumphed despite the heartlessness and injustice of the judge. If we hold to the faith, it means that we believe that our Savior and Judge, Jesus Christ, will see to it that justice is done to His elect; He will not be tolerant to our opponents. To have faith in Christ as our Savior means also to have faith in Him as our righteous Judge and Avenger, now and forever. This is clearly in mind in Hebrews 11:6, where we are told that “without faith it is impossible to please him:

¹¹ Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1951), 449.

¹² Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), 415.

for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Seventh, we “ought always to pray, and not to faint.” We must, like the widow, refuse to accept injustice as a governing reality, but must appeal to Christ the King as the governing reality. The widow prayed incessantly to an unjust judge and triumphed. If we, with the righteous Judge of all as our covenant Lord and Redeemer, fail to “cry day and night unto him,” we get then the injustice we obviously believe in, and not the justice of the God whom we neglect.

Justice, mercy, and faith are indeed the weightier matters of the law (Matt. 23:23). They clearly reveal whether men today, like the Pharisees of old, are ready to observe the easier matters of the law, like tithing, and neglect the essential aspects thereof. Unhappily, too often today as then, men deny the faith while professing to uphold it.

“Just and Having Salvation”

That which our Lord declared in Matthew 23:23, i.e., that justice, mercy, and truth are the weightier matters of the law, He set forth in His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The Triumphal Entry was in fulfilment of prophecy, and the people knew it. However, as Schilder observed, in his magnificent study, “The people are willing to accept prophecy only in so far as it seems to be compatible with their own notions.” This is true today, when men are busy studying prophecy in terms of their own preconceived ideas. But, as Schilder said, “To see Christ in our own light is to sin terribly, for it is to deny Him the right to minister His threefold office to us.”¹

Moreover, this misconstruing of the inner essence of Jesus’ activity soon reveals itself in its true colors. Luke, by his usual, sensitively discriminating phrasing, tells us significantly that the people “began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the *mighty works* that they had *seen*.” Their admiration, you see, is based on the miracles. Moreover, they stop at the visible things. That is Luke’s double emphasis: Jesus’ *mighty deeds* appeal to the Jews; and, they accept these not for their real meaning, but at their face value.²

The miracles, Schilder pointed out, all are eschatological and prophetic: they are examples and moments of time in which the Kingdom does “come.” They manifest a realm in which Christ’s word and law prevails and all things bow before Him, are in captivity to Him, and serve and magnify Him. Miracles thus point us ahead to Christ’s reign; they point to a time when every knee bows before Him, and every tongue swears by Him (Isa. 45:23). Our Lord was filled with grief at the refusal of the people to accept His coming in terms of His meaning and Kingdom. It was their kingdom they thought of, and it was their desire to put Christ to

¹ Dr. K. Schilder, *Christ in His Suffering* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 120-121. In what follows in this chapter, this writer’s debt to Dr. Schilder is obvious, and it is great.

² *Ibid.*, 122.

work in the service of *their* hopes. As Schilder so powerfully stated it,

In addition, Christ also suffers on this “festival” because the misguided people overemphasize the element of “might” in Jesus’ work at the expense of the fundamental element in it: namely, the restoration of justice. Christ comes to do mighty deeds, yes; but He comes primarily to restore justice. The redemption He wants to achieve is juridical first of all: just because it is basically that, it is also dynamic. By His perfect sacrifice and by His completely satisfying the law He wants to lay a foundation of righteousness under the living temple of grace, which is the church. After that, and only after it, the living waters of salvation will flow from beneath the temple-gate out into the world. Then the active energy of the Spirit will proceed dynamically to all forms of spiritual and material life; by it souls will be sanctified, the world will be renewed, the earth be born again and actually wedded with heaven.³

Very plainly, this is the meaning of the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9-10 concerning Christ’s coming. Zechariah declared, concerning Christ’s Kingdom, and His entry into Jerusalem:

9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

10. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

The *first* thing stressed by these sentences, as well as the last, is that Christ is a King, the King of all kings, whose dominion shall be world wide and total. Psalm 72:8 is clearly cited: “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” We are also told in that psalm, v. 11, “Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.” Moreover, v. 9 declares, “They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him;

³. *Ibid.*, 123.

and his enemies shall lick the dust." Very definitely, Christ's Kingdom shall triumph in time and history.

Second, we are told that "He is just, and having salvation." Here, as in Isaiah 45:21, "a just God and a Saviour," justice is not set against salvation but together with it in fulness of harmony. Moore's comment concerning the word "just" is particularly good:

He is "just." The righteousness here referred to is not his priestly, but his kingly righteousness, that rigorous justice of his reign in virtue of which no good should be unrewarded and no evil unpunished. In the unequal allotments of the present, when the good so often suffer and the bad so often escape, it is surely ground for rejoicing that the king, under whose rule this dispensation is placed, is just, and will render to every man according to his work. This attribute is assigned to the Messiah also in Isa. 45:23; 53:11; Jer. 23:5; 33:15, & c.⁴

Moreover, despite all appearances of helplessness and defeat in the Passion Week which followed, this just King already possesses salvation for Himself, His Kingdom, and His people.⁵

Third, He is "lowly" and rides upon a humble animal, the ass, a work animal. The usual exposition of this statement seriously warps the meaning. It does not do justice to Christ's Kingship, in that all the stress is on humility and insignificance. Zechariah's meaning is very different, and it is associated with Christ's Kingship. The ass is an animal of *work and peace*, not of war and prancing parades. We are told immediately, by way of contrast and to show the meaning of riding on an ass, that Christ shall eliminate the war-horse and chariot, and the weapons of war. Everything connected with war shall be eliminated. The reality, apart from Christ is, as Isaiah saw, idolatry, loot, war-horses, and chariots (Isa. 22:4-7), but in Christ, it shall be otherwise:

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and

⁴ Thomas V. Moore, *A Commentary on Zechariah* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 146f.

⁵ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1956), 174.

their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Isa. 2:4)

Lowly thus here means everyday, common, associated with the ordinary routine of life as against pretensions or ostentations.

Fourth, despite this King's deceptive appearance, His power is such that He wages war successfully against all war, so that the very weapons of war are abolished. He shall do so by speaking peace to the nations, to the whole world. Moore observed that "War will cease on earth only when wickedness ceases, and wickedness will cease only when Christ's universal empire begins."⁶ Leupold translated "I will cut off" as "I will exterminate."⁷ War is exterminated, and worldwide peace prevails.

Fifth, Christ rode into Jerusalem, as Zechariah prophesied, on "a colt the foal of an ass," with the she-ass trotting along. We are told by Mark that the colt was one "whereon never man sat" (Mark 11:2); it was unbroken to saddle, and yet our Lord rode it easily, and without any problems. Many strange interpretations of this fact have been made.⁸ There is a simple and obvious fact here: To ride an unbroken colt easily and without any problems is a remarkable thing. Colts must be broken to harness or saddle. They fight against the bridle. To ride a colt so perfectly as our Lord did has an element of the miraculous to it. All miracles, Schilder said, are examples of the Kingdom suddenly "come." Here we see Christ as naturally and perfectly Lord of all creation. It is His, and He made it, and it serves Him without a hint of rebellion. This, too, is the fulness of salvation. Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee." In the fulness of salvation, we are in a Sabbath peace in Christ's Kingdom. We respond perfectly and gladly to the royal law and His Kingly rule. In His Kingdom,

10. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. (Ps. 85:10-11)

⁶ Moore, *op. cit.*, 151.

⁷ Leupold, *op. cit.*, 163, 176.

⁸ See E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, vol. III (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel, 1956), 362ff.

The Resurrection and Man

At a lecture in which the question of the scientific conquest of death was being discussed, the speaker observed that progress was rendered very difficult by the fact of death. Men too often die before their hard-gained wisdom can be applied to the problems of man. The speaker observed, "It is hard to plan intelligently for the future when we know that the men we are planning with will soon be dead and that the task of education must be repeated with a new generation." A listener in the small audience commented, none too quietly, "It is even harder to plan for a decent future if the people now living will never die!"

Both points were well taken. The repetition of generations seriously disturbs the continuity of development and tends to produce a repetitive stagnation. An alumnus who visited his university and attended some classes, to hear a newer set of professors, declared with some dismay, "The students are still asking the same stupid questions we asked forty-two years ago, and the professors are still giving the same stupid answers!" Another man remarked, "It's punishment to see my boys go through the same phase as I did of being a stupid ass." Does man make no headway?

However, progress is not furthered when and if a generation remains on the scene indefinitely. The men who lived before the Flood lived 900 years or more, and, instead of advancing morally, they degenerated all the more spectacularly. Men do not improve with time, but only by grace. Time only confirms a man in his basic character and increases his opportunities to demonstrate his hardened inabilities. The great impediment to lack of progress is not the brevity of time, but the fact of *sin*.

It is sin that endlessly repeats the past and reenacts the Fall by destroying its opportunities and vindicating its insanities. Solomon stated it thus: "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (Prov. 26:11). St. Peter echoed the same

condemnation, pointing out, with respect to unregenerate teachers within the church, that they are “wells without water.” “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Peter 2:17-22). Moffatt translates 2 Peter 2:18-19 very powerfully:

By talking arrogant futilities they beguile with the same lure of fleshly passion those who are just escaping from the company of misconduct — promising them freedom, when they are themselves enslaved to corruption (for a man is the slave of whatever overpowers him).

2 Peter 2:1-22 is entirely devoted to this matter of false teachers, and one of the emphatic points made is that, while these unregenerate men talk grandly of ideals, they are themselves so strongly governed by sin as to be insatiable for it: “Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin” (2 Peter 2:14). Peter then compares such men to dogs turning to their vomit.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible does not reflect a hostile view of dogs; it does recognize that the dog is a scavenger, and their very necessary function in ancient society included that. Man, however, created in the image of God, and called to exercise dominion and subdue the earth, becomes no more than a scavenger through sin and is thus then compared to a dog. A scavenger can be said to feed on the past; man was called by God to create the future in terms of God’s calling and decree. Through sin man becomes past-bound; he talks grandly about a glorious future while reenacting a sin-sick past.

Unregenerate men can go so far in history and no further. They are plagued by sin, so that their most eloquent dreams mock them because man remains man in the process, and he pollutes everything he touches. The mark of the liberal and radical is his belief in the natural goodness or at least moral neutrality of man, so that he sees evil in institutions and the environment rather than in man. Change the world around man, and a perfect, happy, and united humanity will result. George Sand held that this wise and noble universal man would soon arrive. In a letter of April 23,

1848, Sand held that “the ideal expression of the sovereignty of all is not majority but unanimity. The day will come when Reason will get rid of its blinders, and the conscience of liberated people of all hesitation. Not one voice will be raised in the Council of Humanity against Truth.”¹ When logically developed, this liberal belief leads to the conviction that a universal reign of peace and prosperity will immediately follow world revolution. Since all evil is concentrated in the environment, call it by whatever name you will (capitalism, Christianity, communism, etc.), it follows that the destruction of that evil environment will release man into peace and prosperity. The belief of Marxists and anarchists in the utopia of revolution is a logical consequence of their presuppositions. Beginning with a religious faith in man, they move systematically to purify the world and man by destroying the source of evil, which is capitalism for the Marxists and the state for the anarchists.

Marxism is often called a Christian heresy. This term is profoundly in error, because heresy is a departure from a system of doctrine which claims to be within that system. The heretic declares himself to be a Christian, and, in fact, affirms that his departures from orthodoxy constitute a return to true faith. In no sense is Marxism Christian, nor does it claim to be; it is at war with Christianity and seeks to destroy it, not to “correct” it. There is a reason why, however, humanists have called Marxism a Christian heresy, and, in the same sense, liberalism can be called the same. I have called the term “Christian heresy” when applied to Marxism a “profound” error. *Profound* means arising from the depths of one’s nature or from the matter in question. The nature of the humanist’s faith is his trust in man and man’s future. Man shall prevail, man as autonomous, sovereign man, and man’s future will be one of total victory without God. The belief in time involved here is clearly borrowed from the Bible. Instead of paganism’s cyclical view of history, the liberal and radical holds to a straight line theory, history as progress. This faith has been borrowed from the postmillennial eschatology of Scripture and secularized. This faith, however, wanes and is succeeded by cynicism and despair

¹. Cited in Thomas Molnar, *The Decline of the Intellectual* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1973), 56.

because it is constantly frustrated by man's depravity. The U.S. district attorney for Massachusetts, George V. Higgins, is keenly aware of the fact that crime does pay because most men as sinners favor lawlessness. They may blame the consequences on others, but, in reality, they are pushing the courts in the direction of lawlessness.

But law enforcement agencies would have a better chance to deal with crime, Higgins feels, if law was not used as an instrument of social engineering.

"We make the courts decide social questions that we can't through our legislatures. For example, the laws against prostitution, marijuana and homosexuality effectively have been repealed. Even though some legislatures may never take those laws off the books, it is clear in the courts that the people don't want them enforced."²

As a result, Higgins expresses his "basic faith in human nature" very succinctly: "I believe most people are dishonest."³

When this kind of cynicism with respect to human nature sets in, men become in time *reactionary* in their political outlook. The viewpoint of the reactionary is not that of the Christian. Higgins says, "I believe *most* people are dishonest." The Scripture declares that *all* men are fallen in Adam, and all men are without excuse, that "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). This, however, is not the whole story about man. Man was created with original righteousness and in Christ is regenerated and set on the course of sanctification towards the fulness of God's Kingdom and His righteousness. The reactionary becomes an elitist or a racist, whether his politics is socialistic or monarchistic. To cite an example of reactionary thinking, Revilo P. Oliver defines Christianity without any mention of regeneration and identifies Christianity with the white race. His summons is in essence a call to racial purity, so that his book is anti-Christianity in the name of Christ, regeneration by racial integrity and domination rather than regeneration through God's sovereign grace.⁴

² Digby Diehl, "Lingering Suspicion Confirmed: Crime Does Pay, says DA," *Los Angeles Times Calendar*, 8 April 1973, 59.

³ *Ibid.*

The reactionary, like Oliver and others, often maintains a position of modified friendliness to Christianity, despite his contempt for the infallible word of God, because, as Molnar noted, "As a political force, the doctrine of original sin is profoundly antirevolutionary."⁵ The church is thus highly "usable" for many reactionaries. Charles Maurras was in this sense a dedicated Catholic, but, as Joseph Vialatoux wrote in 1927,

The conviction of Maurras is not that the Church ought to become pagan, but that she is pagan... and that herein lies her merit. Maurras does not think of assigning a new mission to the Church; he accepts and approves her traditional mission.⁶

The liberal and radical seem to agree with Scripture with respect to time; the reactionary (and conservative) seem to agree with Scripture with respect to man's nature. Both, however, are essentially hostile to Scripture and are alike humanistic, with varying emphases. Molnar's comment is very good.

The conservative pursues the concept of order with the same amorous expectation as the progressive pursues the concept of change. It is interesting to compare the imagery of the two types of thinkers, the figures by which they represent to themselves the destiny of man. While the progressive uses variations of the symbol of the straight line (the arrow or the statistical curve), the conservative chooses in preference the circle and the rhythmic, cyclical images of recurrence. In the optimistic eighteenth and nineteenth century the history of the human race was conceived as the flight of an arrow, straight and aiming ever higher. Just before the First World War the cyclical image reappears, indicating the alarm that conservative philosophers felt about our destiny. The concept of historical cycles of Joachim de Flore and Giambattista Vico came to be studied with a perfected apparatus of research. Our civilization was declared mortal (Paul Valéry), declining (Spengler), in a state of crisis but redeemable (Toynbee).⁷

⁴ Revilo P. Oliver, *Christianity and the Survival of the West* (Sterling, Virginia: Sterling Enterprises, 1973). A similar work is Wilmot Robertson, *The Dispossessed Majority* (Cape Canaveral, Florida: Howard Allen, 1972). Robertson's contempt for Biblical law is apparent on p. 383, n. 18.

⁵ Molnar, *op. cit.*, 175.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 172n.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

Nietzsche moved from a liberal to a reactionary stance as his hope in man gave way to an intense hatred of man. Like all humanists, his position in either case was elitist. When men turn from a radical to a conservative position, the gain for Christianity is nil; in either case, they remain the enemy, and radicals and reactionaries differ only in their often changing view as to whether Christianity should be destroyed or else chained and used as an instrument of state. Both philosophies are self-conscious about their failures and resentful (as well as cynical) of the declaration of Scripture that God can regenerate man and, at the last, resurrect man. St. Paul states the implications of the resurrection for man very clearly:

12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?
13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:
14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.
15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.
16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:
17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.
18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.
19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.
20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.
21. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.
22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:12-22)

There is more than enough said here to fill several volumes of analysis. For our purpose, we must note, *first*, that there is a necessary connection between sin and death. All men die and all men sin because there is a necessary connection between all men and their forebear, Adam. Much effort has been expended by theologians in trying to define that connection.⁸ Definitions,

however, are often elusive. We know what life is, but to define it precisely is difficult, because, while we know we are alive, we do not understand all that life means. The same is true of our relationship with Adam. The old Puritan alphabet rhyme,

In Adam's fall
We sinned all,

is clearly true to the Christian, but the *why* of the *fact* escapes us. The *fact*, however, is that in Adam's fall, sin and death became an aspect of the life of humanity, a hereditary, cancerous growth on man's being. Thus, the *second* point is clearly an aspect of the first, namely, that there is a necessary connection between all men and Adam, so that all men are now born to sin and to die. There is thus no hope for humanity "in Adam." History is doomed to manifest man's frustration "in Adam," not in a cyclical fashion, but as a maturing and development of evil. The tares become more obviously tares (Matt. 13:24-30). But for the grace of God, history would be a story of progressive degeneration. The Second Law of Thermodynamics gives us an account of cosmic decay, because the Fall has its effect on all creation. Paradise has disappeared, and the original longevity of man before the Flood is gone, although, by the grace of God, all this will be reversed (Isa. 65:20). Thus, *third*, there is a necessary connection between Adam, all men "in Adam," and the whole creation, which groans and travails, waiting for "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19-23).

However, *fourth*, there is a necessary connection between Christ and man, because, while sinless and, like Adam, a special creation, He is not only God but also very man of very man. This necessary connection is not an inevitable connection, in that only the elect utilize that connection to gain deliverance. The connection between all men and Adam is both necessary and inevitable. If no connection between Christ and man existed, no salvation would be possible. A thing is *necessary* if it is "such in its nature or conditions that it must exist, occur, or be true." The incarnation placed Christ

⁸. See George P. Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin in American Presbyterian Theology* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1972).

in the necessary position as the second or last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45-47), the head and source of a new humanity. As sons of the first Adam, we inherit his fallen nature; we sin and die. As members of the last Adam, we are born again and we grow in terms of a new nature, to obey God and to inherit eternal life. Therefore, *fifth*, to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny that Christ is risen; it means that Christians have no hope of eternal life: they are “perished.” The inevitable connection between the last Adam and His new race is one that requires the resurrection of the dead. Indeed, because Christ is also very man of very man, the resurrection involves necessarily even the unregenerate, who awake to “shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). Because Christ is the true and greater Adam, in whose image Adam was created, His word, life, death, and resurrection govern and judge all men, so that all are without excuse before Him.

Sixth, our hope in Christ is both “in this life,” where the saints of God shall prevail and shall judge or govern the world (1 Cor. 6:2), and in the life to come, in eternity (1 Cor. 15:42-58). For this reason, we can rejoice, knowing that our “labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). Life, time, and history do not end in frustration but realization.

Seventh, to deny the resurrection of man or of Christ is to invalidate life, time, and history, “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:16-17). Then man has no future. He is doomed to the frustration of his own being, the nemesis of sin, generation after generation. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the break with the past which is also in profound continuity with it. The justice of God is satisfied; the law of God is again made the life of man; the earth is made the Kingdom of God and progressively brought under the sway of God’s law and purpose, and man grows in grace and righteousness in Christ his redeemer. The resurrection thus proclaims to the world the glorious future of man in Christ: “now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). As the firstfruit, Christ represents all men. He shall reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). All men shall rise again because of Him, “some

to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). The future of man and of history is neither radical nor reactionary: it is in Christ.

Modern man has seen how seriously man is limited by death, but he refuses to treat the root of the problem, sin. As a result, his frustration only increases. Apart from Christ and His regenerating power, there is no remedy for sin and death.

The Daysman

One of the most remarkable statements in Scripture is Job's declaration on the futility of contending with God. Whatever happens to man, Job recognized, ultimately comes from the hand of God. The RSV renders the latter part of Job 9:24, "if it is not he, who then is it?" God is omnipotent and omniscient; nothing occurs apart from His will and decree. Moreover, a man cannot justify himself before God and claim anything as his right from God. God owes nothing to any creature. Therefore, "I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent" (Job. 9:28). Then, in 9:30-35, Job cries out that he needs a mediator:

- 30. If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;
- 31. Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.
- 32. For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.
- 33. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.
- 34. Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me:
- 35. Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

Job clearly recognized that salvation is only by God's grace, but he struggled with the need to make room for justice in the plan of salvation. David, in Psalm 51:7, declares, "wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Job struggles with the other side of this thought: "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch" (Job 9:30-31). Job realizes that man cannot purify himself, but his concern is this: does the sanctification or purification of the godly mean nothing? Man is saved by grace, but why should grace eliminate justice, and why should his righteousness be crushed by contradiction?

Job then raises the central point. God is so great and so far beyond man that there is no comparison between God and man. How, then, can God feel the agony of Job in his grief and misery? Great, omnipotent, and omniscient as God is, He is still *not* man. Samuel Terrien's comment here, while not written from the perspective of orthodoxy, is still very telling:

There is no meeting place between heaven and earth. God and man may not *come together in judgment*, since *he is not a man, as I am* (v. 32). The thought of God becoming man, of God made flesh, does not possess the poet's mind, but it enters there for a fleeting instant. The noble Arabian prince is not a prophet for the Christian mystery of the Incarnation, nor is he able to glance at the "shocking" spectacle of a God Incarnate. Yet the poet is desperately trying to bridge the awful gap which separates Creator from creature, to fill the abyss which keeps impure man apart from the holy God. Toying with the idea of a human God for a short while, Job rejects it almost as soon as it is conceived. But for a moment he dwells on the new perspective thereby opened at the edge of his despair. He cannot altogether abandon this impossible thought. Obstinate he clings to his foolish fancy and goes groping in the darkness of his theological thinking, spurred on by his passionate search for a way to bring God and man face to face.¹

Orthodox commentators have felt that Job knew more than Terrien is ready to recognize. Because for Job God as His ultimate Lord and savior is very real, Job's every word carries far more meaning than a modern commentator can ascribe to it.

Moreover, as Douglas stated, with respect to the *daysman*,

Following the eastern practice, the daysman laid his hands on the head of the disagreeing parties, thus stressing both his judicial function and his desire to give an impartial verdict. Job (ix. 33) declares that no man is worthy to question the purposes of (literally 'lay his hands on') God.²

¹ Samuel Terrien, *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. III (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 984f.

² J. D. Douglas, "Daysman," in J. D. Douglas, editor, *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1973), 297.

A daysman was a third party in a dispute, the neutral observer, the arbitrator or umpire. This, at least, is the definition given by most commentators. There is a serious flaw in it, despite a superficial element of truth. A modern arbitrator or umpire is a stranger to both parties: this is not true of the daysman. In the familistic society of the Near East, the daysman was a man known and respected by both sides, akin to both, trusted by both, and with the moral authority to require and bring about justice, peace, and harmony. A modern arbitrator can walk away from both parties, disliked by both, and never seeing either again. The daysman lived with both sides continuously. By placing his hands upon the heads of the disagreeing parties, he united them by means of his person, his patriarchal dignity and authority. He placed all three, the two disagreeing parties and himself, in communion. By his justice, he blessed them both, because his hands on their heads were a sign of blessing bestowed and blessing received. No modern umpire or arbitrator even remotely resembles the daysman in this respect. His office is impersonal, whereas the daysman's office is highly personal.

Job recognizes that no man can be a daysman between God and man, but he feels the need for one, not because Job indicts God, but because Job cannot understand God's ways. What Job wants is beautifully stated by Terrien:

The word applies to a person who decides, judges, and convinces, sometimes corrects and rebukes. The astounding significance of its use in this verse lies in the fact that it refers here to some hypothetical being who would be different from God and man, and *who might lay his hand upon us both* (v. 33b). Since God is not a man, and a human God remains an impossibility in terms, let there be someone else who might understand the respective standpoints of both God and man, who might terminate their mutual estrangement, make them intelligible to one another, reconcile their differences, and resolve their reciprocal antagonism into the unity of peace.³

Theologically, Job's statement requires an insight and a knowledge which requires that we acknowledge not only that the Book of Job

³. Terrien, *op. cit.*, 985.

is a part of God's infallible word, but also that Job himself a man of wisdom and perception. Leathes rightly observed,

The light that has shined upon us was shining then in the heart of Job, and shines forever in the pages of his book. Job felt, as he had been taught to feel, that in himself there not only was no hope, but no possibility of justification with God, unless there should be an umpire and impartial mediator, who could make the cause of both his own, and reconcile and unite the two in himself. It is useless to inquire what other particular form the aspiration of Job may have taken, or how far he understood and meant what he said; but here are his words, and this is what they must mean, and it is for us to adore the wisdom by which they were taught accurately to correspond with what we know has been given to us by God. We know that a daysman has laid his hand upon us both; and while we see that this is what Job wanted, we cannot but see more plainly that this is what we want. It is to be observed that this word daysman, or judge, is immediately connected with the Scripture phrase, "the *day* of the Lord," and St. Paul's words, "the day *shall* declare it" (I Cor. iii. 13).⁴

As Terrien noted, the call of Job is for an umpire, and the framework of a daysman *is* a juridical settlement, but "the overtones of the figure go beyond the realm of justice. A conciliator who places his hands over the shoulders of two enemies is more than a judge who imposes a verdict. He not only mediates justice, he also fosters harmony and inspires love."⁵ We have thus in Job a remarkable idea of a mediator between God and man, but it is not the only one the Old Testament gives us.

The office of priest was a mediating office. The priest represented man before God and brought God's appointed sacrifices "to redeem, propitiate, and make atonement for sin through faith in the Coming One."⁶ The priest was chosen by God, who named the tribe of Levi the priestly tribe, and the house of Aaron in particular, and every aspect of his office and ritual was of

⁴ Stanley Leathes, "Job," in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 21.

⁵ Terrien, *op. cit.*, 985.

⁶ Duane Spencer, *Word Keys Which Unlock Calvary* (San Antonio, Texas: Grace Bible Press, 1973), 30.

God's appointing. The priest was a substitute for God's Coming One, the great high priest, Jesus Christ.

The prophet was sent by God to speak his revealed word to the people. His calling also was from God, not from man, and in Jesus Christ the Great Prophet appeared, whose being and words expressed God to man. The king was a type of Christ also, and, in his required obedience to the law of God (Deut. 17:18-20), the king mediated God's order and administered it. Because of his obligation to bring the people into conformity to the law of God, the king had a mediatorial function in judging the nation, in acting as the supreme court in all matters of law.

The primary reference of the office of daysman and of a mediator is juridical; while it goes beyond law in Scripture, it is firmly grounded in law. For this reason, the prophet, who declares the law, and rebukes men and kings in terms of it, has a mediating role, as does the king, who is the supreme judge of the nation. The priest, by sacrifices of atonement, clearly has a mediating role. Of necessity Christ, to be the great and one mediator between God and men, combined in His person the offices of priest, prophet, and king. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

The Greek word for mediator in the New Testament is *mesites*, a go-between. Christ fulfils this office because He has the nature and attributes of both parties in the situation. He is "very God of very God," and "very man of very man." Being both in perfect union, He is able to represent the justice of God and also the need of man for grace and mercy. As the sinless one, He was able to offer Himself as the sacrifice of atonement for men, to satisfy God's justice. Also, because He represents both God and man, He can be the surety for both (Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Thus, as God, Christ can assure His elect that God's salvation is assured from all eternity, and no man can pluck His elect out of Christ's hand. Christ is emphatic on this point:

27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30. I and my Father are one. (John 10:27-30)

Man has the assurance of eternal security because his salvation rests, not on his work, but on the perfect work of God incarnate. God has the assurance in Christ that the elect will persevere in the faith and in their calling in Christ, so that God's Kingdom will indeed be manifested and will triumph.

God and man are reconciled in Christ, but this work of reconciliation is more than a restoration of communion. It is a restoration from a covenant-breaking status to a covenant-keeping status. Christ as mediator is our Savior. As our Savior, He not only restores us to our calling, but also declares that, from all eternity, the results of our calling are established. He shall reign over all nations and shall smash the rebellious ones like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2). Therefore, we are told that Christ came "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14). He declared unto His church, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29).

Moreover, our Lord repeatedly and commonly spoke of Himself as "the Son of man," and He linked this name to His work as mediator (Matt. 20:28), and His role as Messiah, King, and Judge (Matt. 26:24). As Bavinck noted so ably, "The Kingdom of God will in the true, full sense be a dominion, but that dominion will be a human dominion, the dominion of the Son of man." Bavinck said further of Christ:

He is the perfect fulfillment of the whole Old Testament law and prophecy, of all the suffering and all the glory which were preparatory and foreshadowed in Israel, the counterpart of the kings and priests in Israel, the counterpart of the people of Israel itself, which had to be a priestly kingdom and a royal priesthood. He is King-Priest and Priest-King, Immanuel, God with us. Hence the Kingdom which He came to preach and establish is at the same time internal and external, invisible and visible, spiritual and physical, present and future, particular and universal, from above and from below, coming

down from heaven and yet existing on the earth. And Jesus will return. He came to preserve the world, to save it: He will return to judge it.⁷

The New Testament speaks of Christ as *the mediator of the covenant* (Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24, etc.). The covenant is a law-treaty between God and man. Man transgressed the covenant, and its penalties are death and the curse. Christ took upon Himself the guilt of sinners and fulfilled the penalty of the law upon Himself in order to reestablish men “to the right legal relationship to God.”⁸ He brought God and man together. He not only satisfied the requirements of the law but also regenerated men into their new estate. He intercedes for elect men with the Father, and, as their mediator, is their voice at the throne of God.

God Himself provides the daysman or mediator, so that the bold hope of Job is fulfilled by the provision from all eternity of the triune God. We can speak, and He will hear us.

⁷ Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956), 304.

⁸ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946), 282.

Prophet, Priest, and King

The office or calling of Adam was to serve God as prophet, priest, and king as God's "friend-servant." As Hoeksema pointed out so clearly, these three "are not three separate offices, but rather different aspects or functions of the one office." Adam was called to be the servant of the Lord and king over creation. As the office-bearer of God, God's image-bearer and representative in creation, Adam, "From the viewpoint of his intellectual life, . . . was prophet of God; from the viewpoint of his volitional life, he was priest; and from the viewpoint of his active life in relation to the world, he was king under God."¹

Through sin, however, the office-bearer of God became a rebel. He became the office-bearer of the devil. From the viewpoint of all three aspects of his office, — those of prophet, priest, and king, — he was, subverted into the very opposite of the position in which God originally created him. . . . He became the friend-servant of the devil, and loved the lie; he was priest of the devil, and consecrated himself in enmity against God to the service of sin and iniquity; and he was king under Satan, and the latter became prince of this world through him.²

The role of man as prophet was an intellectual one, a calling to interpret the world in terms of the law-word of God and to apply that law of God to the development of the world. Man was required to live by the law of God which is part of all creation in that man and the world are created in the context of God's law and with that law in every atom of all creation. Man cannot be truly himself unless he obeys the law of God, nor can the world around

¹ Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966), 363f. In the development which follows, this writer is deeply indebted to Hoeksema, and the reader is referred to the fuller and excellent study by Hoeksema, pp. 363-397 in particular, as well as other chapters. This does not mean that the thesis of this writer is necessarily that of Hoeksema in every detail, nor that Dr. Hoeksema should be charged with this writer's eschatological "offenses."

² *Ibid.*, 364.

man thrive unless it is fully governed in terms of God's law. Man by his fall rejected true knowledge and created not only a false concept of knowledge, but also an anti-theistic idea of law.

Creation is inseparably set in the context of God's law, but fallen man seeks to act as a false prophet and to set creation in the context of brute factuality, in isolation from God and his law. Man as a false prophet proclaims a lie, and, as Hoeksema declared, "in the world and throughout history there is a development of the lie in the direction of and culminating in the false prophet that is pictured to us in the book of Revelation."³

The priestly office of Adam was a calling to dedicate the world of God, to consecrate himself and all reality to the living God. Instead of all things being profane, outside the temple, or outside God, all things, having been created by God, are by nature holy or sacred and must be used and seen only in terms of God's holy purpose. As St. Paul declares, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15).

Man as a false priest insists on seeing all things as profane, outside God, or, if he talks of the sacred, it is a false holiness; he ascribes an innate holiness to all things apart from God. The anti-Christian idea of holiness is a reversal of all Biblical norms. Thus, in *Howl*, Allen Ginsberg sees the profanity of the world as the judging law of God: for him, the world is de-sacralized and desecrated because marijuana and homosexuality are condemned, because certain practices are regarded as perversions and as evil. God and His law are seen as "Moloch the heavy judger of Man!" Because this "Moloch... entered my soul early," Ginsburg feels that his life was long clouded and he was "a consciousness without a body... frightened out of my natural ecstasy!" As a result, Ginsburg renounced God to declare, in *Footnote in Howl*, the total and absolute holiness of fallen man, man as he is in his sins and unbelief. This is Ginsburg's idea of true reformation, and true

³ *Ibid.*, 367f. Hoeksema's interpretation of the significance of the false prophet is amillennial; see Herman Hoeksema, *Behold He Cometh, An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1969), 465-476.

holiness, and, in terms of this “America, I’m putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.”⁴

To divorce the idea of the holy from God and His law is to assert profanity as holiness, and this modern man is insistent on doing. True priesthood works to reconsecrate every area of life to the living God and to see every area as a sphere of holiness.

As king under God, Adam was called to rule over the world in terms of God’s law and to develop all things to their full potentiality under God, a task in which the priestly and prophetic functions unite with the royal. God created the world as His kingdom, and the glory of that creation was to be developed by man in his threefold office.

Man, however, has by his fall rejected his calling under God in favor of a Satanic concept of kingship. Man seeks to be his own god and to assert an independent kingdom, one in which all things serve man, not God, and in which all things are interpreted in terms of man’s imagination rather than God’s word. The result is a kingdom at war with God and at war against the people of God.

Jesus Christ came as the second Adam to reestablish His newly created humanity in this threefold office under God. By His regenerating power, Jesus Christ creates a new humanity. By His atoning death and by His resurrection, He justifies His people before God and removes them from the realm of sin and death into life and righteousness.

Because Jesus Christ is “very God of very God” and “very man of very man,” as prophet He is able to express the mind of God as no prophet before Him could. By His government of the world as King, and by His indwelling Spirit in the church, He continues to speak for God to the world, bringing to light more and more the wisdom and light of His word. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* declares that “Christ executeth the office of a Prophet, in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation” (A. 24). Van Til states,

⁴ Thomas Parkinson, editor, *A Casebook on the Beat* (New York: Crowell, 1961), 3-15.

Now if we recall that man set for himself a false ideal of knowledge when he became a sinner, that is, he lost true wisdom, we may say that in Christ man was re-instated to true knowledge. In Christ man realizes that he is a creature of God and that he cannot seek for comprehensive knowledge. Christ is our wisdom. He is our wisdom not only in the sense that he tells us how to get to heaven; he is our wisdom too in teaching us true knowledge about everything concerning which we should have knowledge.⁵

As our priest, Jesus Christ is priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:1-3). The priesthood of Melchisedec was “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” (Heb. 7:3); in his *person* Melchisedec had descent, parentage, and birth and death. His *priesthood*, however, coming directly from God, had none of the limitations of a hereditary priesthood, or one of man’s appointment. Moreover, this eternal priesthood of Melchisedec combined in one person the priestly and royal offices. As our priest, Jesus Christ made atonement for our sins, and He reconciled us unto God. Man is reconciled to God by God Himself through Christ. Of Christ’s priestly office, Van Til points out,

Christ could not give us true knowledge of God and of the universe unless he *died* for us as priest. The question of knowledge is an ethical question at the root. It is indeed possible to have theoretically correct knowledge about God without loving God. The devil illustrates this point. Yet what is meant by knowing God in Scripture is *knowing and loving* God: this is *true* knowledge of God: the other is *false*.⁶

The *Shorter Catechism*, A. 25, declares, “Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconciles us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.” In His intercessory work, Christ keeps us ever before the Father and delivers us from our adversaries (Heb. 7:25).

In A. 26, the *Catechism* gives an especially telling statement of Christ’s kingship:

⁵. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, First edition (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 33.

⁶. *Ibid.*

Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

The postmillennial character of the *Westminster Standards* is clearly in view here as elsewhere. As King, Christ conquers and subdues us and all his enemies and ours. His great victory was the conquest of sin and death by His atoning death and resurrection. We and all other men are as nothing in view of that victory, and our conquest is a small thing to Christ the King.

By His conquest of us, Christ restores us to man's original calling, to be priest, prophet, and king under God. As the second or last Adam, He is the head of the new humanity which shall, in and through Him, do that which the first Adam failed to do, to make this world the Kingdom of God wherein God's law and peace shall prevail.

It is a grievous offence to regard Christ as an impotent king who must surrender the world to the devil and retreat to eternity in order to establish His realm. Time and eternity are alike His domain. He governs both, and His purposes shall be everywhere manifested. Man in Christ is reestablished in Adam's calling; unlike Adam, he has a battle to wage against the powers of darkness in the world and in himself. Unlike Adam, he has an eternal security in his calling, and the certainty of perseverance unto victory in his Lord, Jesus Christ, the greater Adam.

Pentecost and Responsibility

The ex-Jesuit, Malachi Martin, has written that the goal of Pope John XXIII, and of the calling of Vatican Council II, was to spark a unity of all men in a great overflowing of love, in a transcending of creeds and institutions.

He had to gamble on the Spirit and on Chaos; so that what lacked to man could shine out from among men, shine and catch fire, melt and warm over the iced face of human society, liquefy its members, and let all men of good will live just one shattering moment and experience their unity as men. Just one moment would suffice. This was Roncalli's planned Event.¹

On one occasion, Pope John remarked to Cardinal Tardini, "If we could only step outside ourselves, outside our Latin, our kings, our rulers, our protocol, our dignities and grades, and love and feel love and act out that love, we would see our truth in fullness. All men would listen." What he longed for, according to Martin, was "a mystical light" binding Christian and non-Christian in love and bringing them all together in a new and redemptive world order.²

While this idea may be in part Martin's dream and a reflection of Jesuit humanism, it does appear clearly in the words and acts of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, whose visit to the United Nations was in keeping with this dream.³ John's encyclical of April 10, 1963, was in part addressed "to all men of good will, on establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty." His hope was clearly in a world community, and he expressed his earnest hope that the United Nations Organization would create that world community.⁴ Pope Paul's encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*, August 6, 1964, expressed the same hope as John's *Pacem in Terris*.

¹ Malachi Martin, *Three Popes and a Cardinal* (New York: Popular Library, 1972), 288.

² *Ibid.*, 298, 303ff.

³ For Jesuit modernism, see Farley Clinton, "Modernism is Alive and Well in Brussels", *The Wanderer*, vol. 106, no. 19, 10 May 1973, 1, 5-6.

⁴ *The New York Times*, Western edition, 11 April 1963, 7.

The evidence is very clear that Martin has not imposed his own thinking on the popes: their hope was clearly, and the goal of Rome still is, a worldwide humanistic pentecost in which the church will play a key role. The World Council of Churches shares this same humanistic dream.

The idea of a humanistic pentecost is not new. The poet Siegfried (Lorraine) Sassoon (b. 1886) gave beautiful expression to it in his poem, written on the declaration of the Armistice at the end of World War I in 1918, "Everyone Sang." The joy of the news of peace he saw as a song catching up all men in its delight:

O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never
be done.

The first Pentecost in Jerusalem has appealed to the imagination of humanistic men, and, as a result, they have dreamed of another, a second, pentecost, a humanistic pentecost to replace the Christian Pentecost.

For the same reason, Pentecostalism and the so-called charismatic movement have had a great appeal to humanists, and neo-evangelicalism widely cultivates this imagined gift. For such people, ignorance is bliss, ignorance, that is, of creeds and problems, of differences and conflicts. The idea is to concentrate on the bliss of their imaginary experience and "salvation," rhapsodize about it, love everybody, regard all insistence on truth as unloving, and then work to catch up everybody in this bliss of ignorance and *irresponsibility*. This, of course, is the key, irresponsibility, intellectual and working indifference to the day by day responsibilities of life. The plain fact is that men who are caught up in this kind of movement are indifferent workmen, and the women indifferent housewives. Some years ago, a leading Pentecostal pastor admitted to me that the overwhelming majority of people in his movement were continuously involved in irresponsible and often immoral acts, and that the responsible and moral element were those who had come in to the movement from disciplined Calvinistic and Lutheran churches. His answer,

however, was to hope that “full submission” to the Spirit would replace the need for discipline and create a “higher” responsibility.

The same thing is true of the love, sweetness, and light people. They believe in “rising above” conflicts, intellectual and moral problems, and creeds, with love. Practically, this means irresponsibility, and their lives reflect it, the deeper they get involved in the dream of the pentecost of love. Serious problems and failures in their own lives and in their families usually drive these people into either the neo-evangelical or the openly humanistic love-and-joy religion, but the result is only to powder and rouge over the surface of an ugly cancer, not to heal it. Their irresponsibility is often greatly increased because they imagine that their evasion by love is an answer to their problems.

All of these and other dreams of a humanistic pentecost are radical misinterpretations of the Biblical Pentecost. *First* of all, the meaning of the Feast of Pentecost is forgotten. Pentecost celebrated the giving of the law of God through Moses on Mt. Sinai. This was the meaning of Pentecost to the people in our Lord’s day. In the Old Testament, it was a festival of joy after harvest (Lev. 23:15ff; Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10), but it was held by the rabbis to be the anniversary of the giving of the law and so celebrated. It thus was a time of rejoicing in work accomplished, and in the law of God. It was a festival which thus stressed the responsibility and accomplishment of work, and joy of life in terms of God’s law. It was clearly not an “escapist” holy day.

Second, the prophecy of the Christian Pentecost appears in Joel 2:28-32, which predicts that the old orders of the world, the reigning powers (the “sun” and the “moon”), shall be darkened and shaken as the new power emerges, a Spirit-filled people who “call on the name of the LORD.” Our Lord made it clear what it means to “call on the name of the LORD.” “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). God’s will is declared in His law. In Pentecost, according to the whole of Joel’s prophecy, a faithless and lawless people are judged and set aside and a new nation is created, as the new world power. This new nation is a holy convocation which believes and

obeys. “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). In other words, the prophetic office as manifested in Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and all the prophets, will be manifested in all the people of God. When we look at the prophets from the standpoint of Scripture rather than our own perspective, we see that their essential function was to summon rulers and people to faith and obedience, to uphold God’s law and to declare its judgments, and to predict the consequences of apostasy and disobedience as well as the results of faith and obedience. This was their task, and they were inspired by the Spirit to fulfil it. Joel declares that, when all the Lord’s people are prophets in the future, then it will mean the darkening and destroying of the old powers and the deliverance and establishment of God’s people. The vision of Joel is thus one of the responsibility of the prophetic office’s being transferred to all the people of God. No prophet ever cultivated experience for experience’s sake, as these modern religious humanists do. The prophet’s experience was a summons to action, highly responsible action.

Third, the Christian Pentecost of Acts 2 is the first step in the missionary work of the early church. Peter openly declared to the crowd that gathered that this was the first step in the conquest of all of God’s enemies:

32. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.

33. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

34. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool. (Acts 2:32-35)

This is plain language. God raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, exalted Him to the throne of heaven, to sit by His side while His people, as David prophesied, work to make *all* the enemies of God into Christ’s *footstool*. This is a constant note in the psalms, as witness Psalm 18:40, “Thou hast also given me the necks of mine

enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.” Christ and His people shall triumph. Peter at Pentecost declared that this day marked the beginning of the victorious battle which should culminate in the destruction of Christ’s enemies. This is the joy of Pentecost: it is not an escapist experience but the prelude to battle and to triumph through battle. The very next episode in Acts shows the imprisonment of Peter and John as the battle begins, and it declares their certainty of Christ’s reign and triumph (Acts 3:1-4:30).

Pentecost thus is inseparable from responsibility. The humanistic pentecost is a dream of religious irresponsibility, and its practical consequence is that in every area of life, man dreams in terms of irresponsibility. Life is imagined as ideal, if it is a continuous vacation. The best job is the one with the highest pay and the least responsibility. The “new morality” is really a demand for the right to call sexual irresponsibility moral. The appeal of fornication and adultery is that they offer sex without responsibility. For all too many, marital sex is dull and unappealing because it is inseparable from responsibility.

The psalm Peter quotes at Pentecost is Psalm 110, a psalm “quoted more often in the New Testament than is any other.”⁵ According to Psalm 110,

1. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
2. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.
4. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
5. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
6. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

⁵ H. C. Leupold, *The Psalms* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959), 770.

7. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

Christ is declared to be the great priest-king whose dominion goes forth from Zion, where His earthly life was spent. It goes forth as the word of power, the word of His redemption, is carried to all the world by willing people, by an army of men with the power of youth, the power of the future. "As dew in unnumbered gleaming globules is born at each new dawn, so shall these warriors be, numberless and continually fresh."⁶

The humanistic pentecost dreamed of by Popes John and Paul, and by humanists everywhere, within and without the church, is armed with great money and human power. All the same, it continually creates a fresh Babel rather than pentecost, because it is godless, lawless, and irresponsible in its hopes.

The Pentecost of Christ, dedicated to bringing all things into captivity to Christ and to subduing all His enemies by His power, is at work and shall prevail.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 772.

Salvation and Evangelism

The first summons of men after the resurrection to believe in Christ as their Lord and Savior gives us the Biblical pattern of godly evangelism. On the day of Pentecost, St. Peter declared in part,

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:22-24, 36-39)

The apostolic preaching followed this pattern. *First*, men are declared to be sinners, under God's wrath and sentence of death. In varying forms, this judgment against man was plainly set forth, so that men cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" *Second*, God as man's only Savior through His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, has in grace and mercy provided the way of escape. The atonement and the resurrection are proclaimed as man's only hope. Christ is the mediator and the captain of our salvation. *Third*, to be saved means more than the release of the condemned, although it is clearly that.

It means baptism into Christ and His Kingdom; it means obedience to His law, fellowship with His saints in the Church, and a common service to the acknowledged King, and much more.

The evangelisms of then and now are diametrically opposed. One young man, a campus worker, defended his methodology by saying, "I use the soft sell, you use the hard sell," referring in part to the soft-peddling of God's indictment of sin and His wrath against sinners. The difference is much deeper, although his statement was revelatory in an important sense, in that the stress in his evangelism was "the soft sell," *salesmanship*. Here the heart of his evil is exposed, as though Christ were on sale, and a commodity to be appraised by sovereign man, the buyer.

Christ is not merchandise, to be presented to a sovereign buyer as though He were a possible asset for the wise shopper to consider. Merchandising involves appealing to the buyer, seducing him into a favorable mood, presenting him with the favorable aspects of purchase and soft-peddling or concealing all problems and liabilities.

Modern evangelism is salesmanship: it is also blasphemy. It utilizes all the methods of modern selling to appeal to the buyer, who is told that he *needs* Christ, and how much richer and happier his life will be with his decision to "buy" Christ. In testimonial meetings, liars parade their new merchandise and declare that, since they accepted Christ, all their troubles are over, and their lives are filled with joy and peace, and so on. St. Paul could not have said that his troubles were over when he "accepted" Christ, or that life thereafter was on some sweet "higher plane." People are asked, is your life flat and empty? Do you feel there is something more to life than dirty dishes, parties, and hemorrhoids? Then buy Christ. Come forward, and sign a decision card, and settle the matter of time and eternity with your decision. Come now! So goes the sales pitch.

True evangelism is more like a warrant for arrest on a death penalty offense, with the possibility of pardon for the guilty. True evangelism does not sell: *it indicts*, and those who submit to the indictment also submit to the saving grace of God. To accept the

indictment is thus to admit the justice of the death penalty against us, and at the same time to accept the sovereign grace of God, who gives us grace both to receive His warrant of death and His pardon, and then to accept joyfully our drafting into His service. We are baptized, and we become citizens of a community, the Kingdom of God, members of His Church, workers in every area of our lives in terms of God's law, and, in all things, servants or slaves of Christ, in whose will is our freedom.

Some aspects of this Biblical evangelism which appear clearly in St. Peter's words are, *first*, the first insistence on "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and also on human responsibility. Man is not allowed to plead that God's sovereignty voids his responsibility. While man is a secondary cause, and his freedom is a secondary freedom, a contingent one, it is no less real for all that.

Second, this responsibility for sin is very plainly set forth. The sinner must see himself as *a sinner before God*; his sin is not in a vacuum, nor is it merely a sin against man, or against himself, true as these aspects of sin are. We are ourselves commonly offended by our sins and shortcomings. This is not enough. The central fact is that they are offensive to God.

Third, the sovereign power and wisdom of God is so great that it uses man's sin to redound to the glory of God. The very sin of Israel became the setting forth of Christ's atonement and of His power over death in the resurrection. Man cannot frustrate God. As the psalmist declared, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10).

Fourth, if God can bring good out of our evil, how much greater will be the good and the glory He will set forth through our obedience.

Fifth, the summons is *to repent*, to be *baptized* "in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins," and to "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Peter does not here speak of the *gifts* of the Spirit, the "charismatic gifts," but the abiding *gift* of the Spirit.

Sixth, "the promise" is to us and to our covenant children. God has ordained an elect people, "even as many as the Lord our God

shall call,” to be the citizens of His sovereign Kingdom and to do His holy will. The summons to them is a marching order, a call from the march to God’s gallows to service in His Kingdom as His ambassadors, soldiers, witnesses, and a holy nation.

The Scripture gives us abundant evidence of the preaching summons, as well as of the promise. Of the summons, for example, we read:

Matt. 4:17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 24:47... repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 3:19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

The Scripture from beginning to end speaks of the promise, of which two brief instances can be cited:

Isa. 60:3. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Eph. 2:13. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Clearly, Biblical evangelism is markedly different from the salesmanship of modern evangelism. Olmsted, in 1860, gave a vivid report of an Arminian preacher in the South preaching a nagging, pleading, whining evangelistic sermon, and the language is all too familiar. We have the same today. The sermon, cited in part, was empty of Biblical content, devoid of intelligence, and essentially a plea for fire insurance, to avoid hell by “buying” Jesus:

The speaker, presently, was crying aloud, with a mournful, distressed, beseeching shriek, as if he were himself suffering torture: “Oh, any of you fond parents, who know that any of your dear, sweet, little ones may be, oh! at any moment snatched right away from your bosom, and cast into hell fire, oh! there to suffer torment for ever and ever, and ever and ever — Oh! come out here and help us pray for them! Oh, any of you wives that has got an unconverted husband, that won’t

go along with you to eternal glory, but is set upon being separated from you, oh! and taking up his bed in hell — Oh! I call upon you, if you love him, now to come out here and join us in praying for him. Oh, if there's a husband here, whose wife is still in the bond of iniquity," etc., through a long category.¹

Preaching of this kind is in the name of Christ; some may be saved by it, in spite of the preacher. But it is another religion: it is a form of the neoplatonist flight from the world.

¹. Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 209. Based upon three earlier volumes; first published 1860, reprinted 1953, etc.

“The Kingdom of Heaven Suffereth Violence”

One of our Lord’s more difficult statements is in Matthew 11:12. It is set in the context of great praise for John the Baptist, Matthew 11:7-15, of which vv. 11-15 declare:

11. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

15. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The Berkeley Version renders v. 12 thus:

But from the time of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been rushed, and the impetuous seize it by force.

Terry summarized seven ways in which this passage has been interpreted.¹ Essentially, these seven ways assume either a bad interpretation for the seizing of the Kingdom, or a good one, or a combination of both meanings. Some observations can be made about the interpretation of v. 12. *First*, the context seems to preclude a negative meaning. John the Baptist is praised as the greatest of all men “born of women,” i.e., by natural birth. He is thus placed second only to Himself by our Lord. John proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom and was thus the new Elijah, proclaiming not only judgment on a rejected kingdom, but also the coming of a new kingdom, for which the old Elijah prepared a

¹ Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (New York: Eton & Mains, 1890), 113-117.

remnant. *Second*, in the glory of this new kingdom, the least is greater than the great man of the ages, John the Baptist. *Third*, John himself opened up this great pressing in of men to the kingdom by his ministry in the wilderness, to which men crowded, in eagerness to hear the word of the kingdom (Matt. 11:7-9). Because John proclaimed the end of the old order, declaring that the ax had been laid by God to the roots thereof (Matt. 3:7-12), men with urgency sought the way of escape from the old and entrance into the new. In such a situation, men distrusted the old institutions, and no longer followed the old ways with the same unthinking acceptance. John had declared that God's ax and fire were the future of the old order. Men in a burning building will use violence to save themselves: they will break windows and resort to any measures necessary to find their freedom. This means, *fourth*, that those who took John's preaching seriously were the violent ones, the impetuous ones, who were seizing the Kingdom by force. At Peniel, this had been Jacob's own temper as he faced God, and also the prospect of his brother's vengeance, to take the Kingdom of God by force, declaring, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32:26). This same spirit marked the true believers "from the days of John the Baptist until now."

Ellicott said of Matthew 11:12, "The words describe the eager rush of the crowds of Galilee and Judaea, first to the preaching of the Baptist, and then to that of Jesus. It was, as it were, a city attacked on all sides by those who were eager to take possession of it."² Lenski pointed out that the word rendered "violent" is found in the secular Greek "in the sense of strong, courageous."³ Johnson cites Rudolf Otto's rendering as a possible interpretation of the verse:

From John's time until now, the kingdom is exercising its own spiritual force, and men of spiritual force are able to lay hold

² C. J. Ellicott in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VI (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 66.

³ R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), 438.

of it, for the law and the prophets were until John, but now the new age has come.⁴

The merit of this reading is that it links the exercise of force with the coming of a new era, the Kingdom of God.

Calvin's comment is especially interesting:

I have no doubt that Christ speaks honourably of the majesty of the Gospel on this ground, that many sought after it with warm affection; for as God had raised up John to be the herald of the kingdom of his Son, so the Spirit infused such efficacy into his doctrine, that it entered deeply into the hearts of men and kindled that zeal. It appears, therefore, that the Gospel, which comes forward in a manner so sudden and extraordinary, and awakens powerful emotions, must have proceeded from God. But in the second clause is added this restriction, that *the violent take it by force*. The greater part of men were no more excited than if the Prophets had never uttered a word about Christ, or if John had never appeared as his witness; and therefore Christ reminds them, that the *violent*, of which he had spoken, existed only in men of a particular class. The meaning therefore is, A vast assembly of men is now collected, as if men were rushing *violently* forward to seize *the kingdom of God*; for, aroused by the voice of one man, they come together in crowds, and receive, not only with eagerness, but with vehement impetuosity, the grace which is offered to them. Although very many are asleep, and are no more affected than if John in the wilderness were acting a play which had no reference to them, yet many flock to him with ardent zeal. The tendency of our Lord's statement is to show, that those who pass by in a contemptuous manner, and as it were with closed eyes, the power of God, which manifestly appears both in the teacher and in the hearers, are inexcusable. Let us also learn from these words, what is the true nature and operation of faith. It leads men not only to give a cold and indifferent assent when God speaks, but to cherish warm affection towards Him, and to rush forward as it were with a violent struggle.⁵

⁴. Sherman E. Johnson, "Matthew," *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VII (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 383.

⁵. John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke*, vol. II, William Pringle translator (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1957), 14f.

A *fifth* point makes it clear that this positive meaning was clearly intended by our Lord: these “impetuous” or “violent” men do seize the Kingdom; they do gain it, and it would be impossible to assume that the ungodly in any way gain the Kingdom of God. (Matthew uses “Kingdom of Heaven,” because, in writing for Jews, he avoided the casual use of the name of, or word, *God*.)

Sixth, it is very clear that our Lord plainly relates and equates salvation with an intense and zealous concern for the Kingdom of God. There is no hint here either of an ascetic flight from the world, or a Manichaeian surrender of the world to the devil. The entire framework of redemption is the Kingdom of Heaven or of God. It is a realm ruled from Heaven by Almighty God, and its laws are derived entirely from God and His word. However, the Kingdom of God must be manifested on earth and must reign among and over men. This appears clearly in the Lord’s Prayer.

The first petition is, “Hallowed be thy name” (Matt. 6:9), the meaning of which has been beautifully summarized by Johnson:

Hallowed be thy name means approximately the same as “Father, glorify thy name” (John 12:28), but here the passive form is used, as in the Kaddish, to avoid a direct imperative. God is asked to sanctify his name and to cause men to sanctify it. The sanctification of the name is a rich and many-sided concept in Jewish thought. God sanctifies his name by condemning and opposing sin, by separating Israel from the world and giving it his commandments and his love and grace. It is also Israel’s task to sanctify God’s name by sanctifying itself, in keeping his commandments and doing all other things which redound to his glory. God’s name will be fully sanctified in the age to come, when everything that opposes his will has been removed and punishment is no longer necessary.⁶

Hallowing God’s name thus means believing in Him, obeying His law, and uniting with God in “condemning and opposing sin.” It means that we acknowledge God’s grace and law, and that we work to bring all things into the state of salvation and sanctification whereby man hallows God’s name in the totality of his life and endeavor.

⁶ Sherman E. Johnson, in *op. cit.*, 310f.

"Thy Kingdom come" is the second petition (Matt. 6:10): "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Christ, who taught us this prayer, knew Himself to be the Head of the Kingdom, and, in requiring that we pray for that Kingdom, made it clear what our priorities should be. In heaven, God's will is done to perfection, without any "variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). "That all wills on earth should be brought into the same entire conformity with the divine will as their (the hosts of heaven), is what we are taught to pray for."⁷

Those who best hallow God's name and best serve His Kingdom do so in the driving force our Lord described. For them, the Kingdom is a matter of urgency and life.

That this interpretation is not mere supposition is apparent from Luke 16:16, where our Lord, in another context, makes a similar statement, declaring,

16. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery. (Luke 16:16-18)

Vine notes that the meaning of the verb "biazo" ("suffereth violence," in Matthew 11:12, here "entereth violently") "indicates the meaning as referring to those who make an effort to enter the Kingdom in spite of violent opposition."⁸ The world seeks to interpose the Kingdom of Man between man and God's Kingdom. It alters God's law, or sets it aside, and it offers a substitute kingdom and law. The people of God do violence to the Kingdom of Man, and they enter God's Kingdom only with a forceful activity which demands that God's order be recognized, and that the kingdoms of this world submit to their Lord and Christ.

⁷ Ellicott, *op. cit.*, 34f.

⁸ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. IV (New York: Revell, 1966), 189.

Godly Rule

In an important study of seventeenth century England, William M. Lamont analyzes *Godly Rule, Politics and Religion, 1603-1660*. Norman Cohn, in *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957), stressed the millenarian aspects of revolutionary movements in medieval and Reformation Europe, and many have assumed that millenarian thinking is of necessity associated with peripheral and revolutionary groups. Lamont shows that this was not the case. Millenarianism was then common to virtually all Christian groups in varying degrees. Premillennial thinking was predominant in seventeenth century England, and, after that, postmillennial views. Millenarianism was normal to Christian faith, and it was its absence rather than presence which was notable. Scholars with an inadequate knowledge of theological history, on finding it present in certain radical groups, have assumed that it was peculiar to those groups.

The dividing issue, however, was something different: it was the question, how shall Christ's rule be established? Lamont traces the history of the answers to this question of godly rule. Four main answers predominated: (1) the belief in a godly prince as the instrument in inaugurating godly rule; (2) the belief that the answer was in godly bishops; (3) the hope in a godly people; and (4) the hope in a godly parliament as the instrument for godly rule.

Common to all these groups was a belief in Christendom, a belief that England was a Christian realm whose essential problem was organization and discipline to augment the development of godly rule. As a result, the area of conflict among the varying groups was a question of theological emphasis and methodology of development.

A small group differed from this, in that they held that the policy of excommunicating (or disciplining) a population whose real need is *conversion* led to an unrealistic approach to the church's problem. For these men, too, the forces of antichrist had to be overcome,

and godly rule established, but the means to this goal were godly preaching and an emphasis on conversion.¹

The failure of this hope for godly rule, the millenarian expectation, led to pietism, mysticism, Quietism, and other forms of retreat from *the conquest of the whole world by the people of God* to the emphasis on *salvation as self-preservation*, an emphasis on personal salvation and personal morality. In some forms of pietism, the echoes of godly rule were still strong, but essentially the *outer* world was surrendered and the attempt now was to preserve the *inner* world.

In one respect, there was a measure of progress, in that *conversion* became the emphasis rather than *discipline and excommunication*. As a result, the character of the church underwent a drastic change as the necessity for facing up to the unconverted nature of many churchmen came home to theologians. The undercurrent of paganism in Europe, which had reappeared as magic and witchcraft, was fought through much of the seventeenth century, by Protestants and Catholics, as a civil and religious aberration on the part of church members and citizens of the state. Whatever some freethinkers may have concluded, eighteenth century churchmen on the whole did not see these things as delusions, but as real evils. The *answer* had changed, however, to a belief that the crying need is conversion, not judgment and punishment.

However, the emphasis on *conversion and salvation as self-preservation from the judgment and wrath of God* meant a negative emphasis. The Christian man was no longer seen as the *reborn destined lord of all the earth*, but rather as a man who had found safety and insurance against the storm. The secularization of the world began, with Charles II in England, Louis XIV in France, and so on, until the French Revolution brought about the logical divorce between Christianity and the state. In the seventeenth century, William Barlow had seen some hint of the implications of the future in his observation, "But RELIGION turned into STATISME, will soon prove ATHEISME."² Since then, whether in Marxism, monarchy,

¹ William M. Lamont, *Godly Rule, Politics and Religion, 1603-1660* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 113ff.

² *Ibid.*, 157.

fascism, republicanism, or democracy, the logical development has continued: it is now the fallen man who seeks to conquer the whole world. This has been the nature of fallen man since Eden, but now he works with very little opposition, because *the negative view of conversion* has led to a retreat of the church from its calling, and a progressive *deformation and denial* of the real meaning of conversion.

One of the first heresies with respect to the new emphasis on the inner man was Quietism. For the Quietists, conversion became essential union with God. This meant that, *first*, there was virtually no Christology in Quietism, because union replaced regeneration, and the individual could effect that union directly. *Second*, this led to the supposition that “the kingdom of Christ... (was) an earlier and inferior dispensation, the reign of the Spirit the later and perfect dispensation.” Moreover, “Quietism aims at an entire abstraction from all externals, and seeks to put the spirit of man into direct and immediate union with the very nature of the Godhead.”³ This led to a pantheistic absorption of man into universal being and a denial of activism and conquest. Man withdrew from the world instead of conquering it. Union meant perfection, and perfection meant no thought, wish, or hope, but rather total passivity. The individual sought self-annihilation in the universal being, or deification therein. *Third*, Quietism meant a practical denial of ethics. *Moral concerns are activist concerns.* Any philosophy of surrender or withdrawal is of necessity indifferent to moral action. Eschatologies which do not emphasize victory and conquest will also produce weaker moral character. Quite rightly, Catholic theologians who were anti-Quietist recognized that it represented an antinomian element in the church, and Molinos was attacked for teaching antinomianism.

Rome was sorely beset by Quietist antinomianism, as was Protestantism in pietist versions thereof, as witness the early Moravians and other groups. Quietism as a moral attitude is still very much with us. It is present wherever people refuse actively to overcome their sins and shortcomings because they are waiting on

3. “Quietism,” in John M’Clintock and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. VIII (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), 845-846.

the Spirit to do it for them. To cite two examples: a man who is consistently guilty of adultery and fornication admits it is wrong, but he will quit when the Holy Spirit takes away the desire from him. Similarly, a man who is becoming an alcoholic holds to a like opinion: he is praying that the Holy Spirit take away all desire for liquor from him, but, until then, he continues to drink. In all such cases, there is a denial of the reality of the individual's will (except in its fallen aspect) and an insistence that the only moral action is supernatural action. The result is a practical immoralism, a denial of the validity of moral action on man's part. Revivalists of the nineteenth century often opposed Christian schools and catechism teaching as a false source of morality; for them, the only source of morality was infused holiness through conversion. Thus, instead of the Biblical doctrine of redemption by the *objective* work of God in Christ, salvation now became *essentially a subjective experience* in the heart of the believer. In Scripture, it is clear that our salvation is the work of God in Christ on the cross and in His resurrection, i.e., outside our hearts and before our birth. In time, it becomes our experience, but the objective fact is prior and determinative. This subjectivistic view with respect to salvation was the medieval church's doctrine of salvation, and it became again the doctrine of Protestants and Catholics in the eighteenth century. As one writer has summarized the medieval view,

... the church did not abandon such Biblical expressions as *justification* and *salvation* by grace. The words of Paul were still used freely by the theologians (as they are today), but the great Pauline words (*justification, grace, etc.*) had evolved a new meaning altogether. *Justification* had lost its objective, forensic meaning. Instead of meaning what God did outside of man in pronouncing him righteous, it came to mean God's renewing, sanctifying act in man's own heart. Instead of justifying *grace* meaning the disposition of mercy and favor in God's heart, *grace* had come to mean a God-given quality that adorned the human soul....

The contrast between the medieval church and the Reformation may be summarized as follows:

Medieval

Justified by God's work of grace in the heart
Justified by Christ's work in our hearts

Reformation

Justified by God's work of grace in Christ
Justified by Christ's work outside of our hearts, i.e., on the
cross.⁴

The increasing closeness of Rome and of the Modernist and evangelical churches is a natural one. At the same time, the humanism inherent in Scholasticism is akin to that of Modernism. And, Arminianism is simply the Protestant version of Scholasticism, minus the ecclesiology.

When salvation becomes essentially a subjective experience, it means, *first*, that justification and sanctification have become confused, and man's response to salvation becomes confused with salvation. *Second*, it means also that God's sovereignty in salvation has been replaced by man's decision. Instead of God's decree and grace, "wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6), we have man's decree, whereby man says, "I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior." What man *accepts*, man can take exception to, and hence the implicit antinomianism of Arminianism, and its hostility to predestination and the security of the saints. Man is sovereign in such thinking, and his will cannot be overruled by God nor determined by it. *Third*, in such a faith, there being no sovereign God, there is no sovereign law over all creation, nor a total mandate to conquer all things in the name of Christ the King. Man can choose to be a Christian with respect to his inner life, and the world to come. In education, he can favor statist schools; in politics, humanism; in art, relativism; in morality, situation ethics, or a limited Biblical moralism, and so on. In every area, man is lord. If his standards coincide with Scripture, this is a matter of choice, not of moral imperative. While sexual ethics have remained somewhat closer to the Biblical norm, in most areas private and cultural tastes have prevailed. As a result, the churches

⁴. "The Great Issues of the Reformation," *Present Truth*, Special Issue, 1972, 18.
This writer does not, of course, agree with other emphases of the periodical.

have steadily moved from a God-centered religion to a man-centered religion.

The difference is clearly in evidence when St. Paul speaks of the meaning of salvation:

13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal. 3:13-14)

The meaning of this statement makes it clear, among other things, that, *first*, we are all under the curse of the law, i.e., its death penalty, as rebels against God. *Second*, Christ became accursed and was “a curse” for us, while He Himself remained sinless. The curse of our fall was laid upon Him (Isa. 53:6). *Third*, Christ redeemed us, without any action on our part. Our sanctification requires our action; our justification is entirely Christ’s work. In this sentence, Paul does not even mention our faith (a working of grace in our hearts, and entirely of God), but only the objective, justifying work of Christ, the forensic act. *Fourth*, the purpose of this sovereign act was to bring “the blessing of Abraham” unto all peoples. It is thus important to analyze briefly the blessing of Abraham:

1. Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 12:1-3)

14. And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

16. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

17. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. (Gen. 13:14-17)

4. And behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (Gen. 15:4-5)

1. And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4. As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

9. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations....

19. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. (Gen. 17:1-9, 19)

17. ... in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies;

18. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen. 22:17-18)

The blessing of Abraham is so great that it extends even to Ishmael and his seed (Gen. 17:20-21). It is a promise of land, Canaan, and of prosperity and power. It is a promise, too, that the spiritual heirs of Abraham shall possess the earth. Men shall be blessed as they bless Abraham and cursed as they curse him. The friends and enemies of Abraham are the friends and enemies of God, an amazing and close covenant. According to Smith, on Genesis 12:2, “I will bless thee” should read, “Be thou a blessing,” by your faith and obedience, to all the families of the earth. All things are promised to Abraham and his seed: the entire earth is their inheritance and possession. Abraham is to be the father of “a thronging crowd of nations.”⁵ Not only does God *promise* these things to Abraham, but He also confirms them by a *covenant and oath*. There is both a literal and spiritual fulfilment, a present and a future blessing.

“The blessing of Abraham” means thus that we share in Abraham’s blessing. If men are blessed and cursed by God as they bless and curse Abraham, this then is also true for us. God reacts with the same intense closeness to us: people are His friends and enemies insofar as they are ours. We have a calling and a predestined future, to possess all the earth, and our blessedness therein is both a present and a future one. Christ’s purpose in our redemption is not simply our self-preservation but also “that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through faith” (Gal. 3:14).

Then, as St. Paul adds, “that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. 3:14). Our inheritance is thus not by blood descent from Abraham, but by the grace of God in Christ. All the earth and all nations are thus included in the promise. Salvation as St. Paul speaks of it is thus very different from self-preservation: it is redemption, regeneration, inheritance, and conquest.

⁵ R. Payne Smith, “Genesis,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 57, 71.

Christendom in the seventeenth century, despite its defects, still believed in godly rule. Today, the churches are instead involved in an ungodly surrender. What is required is a Biblical emphasis on justification, on the necessity for conversion, and then the training of the godly for world conquest and rule.

Justification, however closely related to regeneration and conversion, is a separate and objective act, a forensic act, and it is entirely God's act. In our experience, we know it subjectively, but it is not a subjective fact. We experience regeneration, which is a consequence of God's sovereign grace to those whom He justifies, but we are still altogether passive in our regeneration. While justification and regeneration cannot be separated, neither can they be identified. Godly rule begins with the rule or sovereignty of God in our salvation.

Manipulated Man

Jorgenson, in a study of literary and artistic "creativity," cites with approval the comments of author John Fowles in his novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*:

You may think novelists always have fixed plans to which they work, so that the future predicted by Chapter One is always inexorably the actuality of Chapter Thirteen.... Only one same reason (for writing novels) is shared by all of us: *we wish to create worlds as real as, but other than, the world that is*. Or was. This is why we cannot plan. We know a world as an organism, not a machine. We also know that a genuinely created world must be independent of its creator: a planned world (a world that fully reveals its planning) is a dead world. It is only when our characters and events begin to disobey us that they begin to live.¹

Jorgenson fully subscribes to Fowles' thesis, because his religious convictions require free will and deny predestination. Jorgenson's view is simplistic: only one kind of freedom exists, primary freedom. There is no recognition that a primary or first cause alone has primary freedom, and that man, as a secondary cause at best, has only a secondary freedom. Jorgenson wants free will, and he writes:

For Fowles, a world alive with characters who bear responsibility makes free will a necessity. A novelist who refuses to program his characters frees them to assume a

¹. Cited from John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (New American Library, 1971) by Dale A. Jorgenson, "To Forgo Manipulation," *Christianity Today*, vol. XVII, no. 16, 11 May 1973, 34. The modern novelist is implicitly or explicitly theological in his theory of writing. He is either indicting God for the kind of world God made, or he is in effect saying, if I were God, I would make man in a very different way; I would give him and the world an independence God does not give us. Fowles is very obvious in his theological orientation. As a humanist, he is indicting God, and he is affirming that his philosophy of creation is wiser than God's.

believable existence, just as God willingly endows his creatures with a totally “other” life of their own.²

It could be pointed out that a novelist *does* program his characters in terms of his own faith and character. Given an identical episode or characters, no two novelists would write the same novel about them. The differences would be determined by their own natures. Jorgenson, however, is really talking about God, who “willingly endows his creatures with a totally ‘other’ life of their own.” Now Jorgenson does not derive this conviction from Scripture but from his views on art. From one end of Scripture to the other, it is clear that God “programs” all creation, and there are no surprises in it for Him (see Isa. 45:6-7; Rom. 9; Acts 2:23, 4:27-28; 15:18; Prov. 16:4, 33; 1 Tim. 5:21; Eph. 1:4-6, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:8, etc.). Neither does Jorgenson derive this conviction from science or observation. He was *not* free to choose his time of birth, sex, race, or aptitudes; he is genetically a product of countless generations, and one could also say a product of his environment, and scientifically these statements are more tenable than Jorgenson’s faith. To this point, moreover, Jorgenson might agree. Wherein is man then free? The citation from Fowles makes this answer clear: man is free to disobey his creator, ultimately and absolutely free.

Jorgenson quotes Matthew Lipman’s *What Happens in Art* (1967), to the effect that “The crucial point in the creative process is that at which the developing quality of the artwork becomes dominant.” The creature determines the creator. Jorgenson adds the theological implication, to make sure that we miss nothing of his meaning:

Recognition of this process is probably one reason why the awe-inspiring moment of man’s creation painted by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel remains so breathtaking. In all literature and art related to the Judeo-Christian faith, this moment remains one of the ultimately aesthetic experiences: the moment when Creator God gives man breath, thought, choices, values, and eternity of his own, as well as the need to create. Skinnerian

² *Ibid.*

behaviorism has no adequate explanation for this self-contained entity — a human being — who takes on life and becomes a creative personality under his own control...

God willingly created man with this selfhood, even at the risk of human rebellion. Since fiction is created by people and is about human experience, it illustrates the integrity that God grants human personality. And it should also convey respect for this integrity...

Seeing Michelangelo's vision of *Creation* transposed from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel into living creatures of God's design, we realize that it is impossible for us to manipulate people or impose upon them standardization and conformity. And we realize also that it is essential to bring them the love of Christ that frees man to conform to the real personality God intended him to possess.³

Jorgenson sees man as "a self-contained entity"; at its best, this is hyperbole. Every time we eat or we feel the need for companionship, we deny that statement. Moreover, Jorgenson holds "that it is impossible for us to manipulate people or impose upon them standardization and conformity." Again, this is not true, and the Incas of Peru were proof of this fact that men can be manipulated and standardized. Hypnotism, to which non-religious man is very prone, is also evidence of a ready temperament of man where manipulation is concerned.

In Jorgenson's perspective, man becomes independent of God by virtue of his creation. In the Biblical perspective, man's claim to independence as another god is itself an aspect of God's eternal decree or program.

Jorgenson's view is flattering to man and thereby renders him more prone to manipulation. In my student days, I recall hearing a shabby young man, an accomplished seducer, boast in the locker-room about having deprived another girl of her virginity the previous night. He was specific as to name and place, and loud enough to be heard over the lockers. When asked by a listener how he did it so easily, he laughed as he described it. His method was essentially flattery: flatter the girl into believing that she is

³. *Ibid.*, 36.

everything she dreams of being, and that you are overwhelmed by love and unable to control yourself. She will have to doubt your description of her if she doubts your intentions, and she will yield almost out of a sense of duty and pity to her poor creature, only to find herself the poor creature.

In other words, an age which most exalts man will most of all manipulate man. A humanistic culture thus aims at totally manipulated man.

A religion which abets this illusion concerning man, as Arminianism does, abets the radical seduction of man which began in Eden with the tempter. In its logical implications, its idea of conversion completes the perversion of man inaugurated by the adversary. For Jorgenson, salvation is "to bring them (men) the love of Christ that frees man to conform to the real personality God intends him to possess." True enough, we do find our true selves and our true freedom only in Christ, but only as creatures who are totally created, predestined, and redeemed by the sovereign God. This is not Jorgenson's meaning. Christ confirms man, in his perspective, in the humanistic freedom described by Fowles, so that man is better able to go his own way by utilizing Christ as a resource. Jorgenson sees the fulness of the Fall as man's salvation.

Man, however, is a *creature*; more than that, he is *God's creature*, so that not only man, but also all the conditions, possibilities, and potentialities of man's life are totally of God's creation. Man's fall is of God's ordination, and man's salvation is of God's sovereign grace.

Let us look again at John Fowles' comment: "We wish to create worlds as real as, but other than, the world that is. Or was. This is why we cannot plan. We know a world as an organism, not a machine." The world is neither an organism, nor a machine. The *real* world is a planned world, a world ruled by God's law. We can plan that the sun will rise and set in a predetermined way, and, in the plan of God, *all* things have their place and function. Fowles holds that "a planned world (a world that fully reveals its planning) is a dead world." Any exhaustive knowledge of the world is

impossible, but the world does reveal its planning; an unplanned world only exists in man's imagination: it cannot be. Fowles also holds that "a genuinely created world must be independent of its creator," and Jorgenson obviously approves. A "genuinely created world" is indeed *separate* from its creator, but it cannot be independent of him unless it is self-created. It is its creator's product and totally manifests at every point that it is a creation and has neither made itself nor governs itself. The myth of evolution offers us a self-made and independent world, but, because the artist "creates" something, his "world" is totally his creature and totally his product. Sartre is far more logical than Fowles. In *The Flies*, Orestes declares his independence from God, but he realizes that he is therefore separating himself from himself, from other men, and from nature. Orestes says in part:

Foreign to myself — I know it. Outside nature, against nature, without excuse, beyond remedy, except what remedy I can find within myself. But I shall not return under your law; I am doomed to have no other law but mine. Nor shall I come back to nature, the nature you found good; in it are a thousand beaten paths all leading up to you — but I must blaze my trail. For I, Zeus, am a man, and every man must find out his own way. Nature abhors man, and you too, god of gods, abhor mankind.⁴

The humanism of Jorgenson is an absolute one. Sartre faces the problem of humanism's radical despair and hopelessness more honestly. Jorgenson's humanism is bound to stumble. It calls itself Christianity and it seeks after righteousness on syncretistic terms, but its terms are doomed, because they deny man's Maker His due. As St. Paul wrote of Israel,

31. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit, and Three Other Plays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 122.

33. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Rom. 9:31-33)

Israel was notable for its zeal in following after righteousness, and its earnestness therein puts Arminians and antinomian “Reformed” churchmen to shame. Israel claimed to follow the law of righteousness, i.e., to keep the law, but they failed to keep it and to gain its protection, because they sought to do so in the wrong way. Their effort was wrong, because they rejected Christ, “that stumblingstone.” They rejected God’s justification in Christ, and they sought, not sovereign grace, but man’s choice of grace and man’s earned protection and power. St. Paul quotes Isaiah 28:16 concerning the stumblingstone. God, Isaiah made clear, is the only true foundation stone for the Temple, the only ground for man’s life and redemption. To seek life apart from Him, or to turn religion into a humanistic concern, is to stumble on the stumblingstone, Christ, and to fall.

Israel was ready to accept Christ and make Him King, *on their terms* (John 6:14-15), and Christ abandoned them, and indicted them (John 6:22-71). Modern Arminianism and antinomianism claim to believe in Christ, but *on their terms*. Are they any the less guilty?

St. Paul declares, of those who truly believe in Christ, “whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:33). This can also be rendered, “shall not be confounded.” The reading in Isaiah 28:16 is, “he that believeth shall not make haste.” Young calls attention to the identity of meaning: those who trust in the sovereignty of God work in quietness and confidence, without haste and in confidence of the outcome.⁵ To claim any freedom for man apart from God is to stumble over the sovereign Christ. As Calvin observed, “when we claim for ourselves any righteousness, we in a manner contend with the power of Christ; for his office is

⁵ Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1969), 288.

no less to beat down all the pride of the flesh, than to relieve and comfort those who labour and are wearied under their burden.”⁶

To accept ourselves as totally God’s creatures is not to be manipulated but to be free. If I imagine myself to be Napoleon, I am not free but mad. And if I also imagine myself to be a god, I have not gained freedom and power by this ultimate madness but have lost what freedom and power I might have had. My freedom is to be myself, God’s creature in all my being.

Jorgenson’s essay makes very clear the affinity of Arminianism to humanism. Jorgenson prefers to line up with Fowles rather than St. Paul. Fowles is open about his faith, which is in the tradition of Marx and Sartre. Fowles declares that “the novelist stands next to God.”⁷ Moreover, Fowles makes clear his radical break with Biblical theology in favor of the new non-theistic doctrines:

The novelist is still a god, since he creates (and not even the most aleatory avant-garde modern novel has managed to extirpate its author completely); what has changed is that we are no longer the gods of the Victorian image, omniscient and decreeing; but in the new theological image, with freedom our first principle, not authority.⁸

The heading for Fowles’ last chapter is a quotation from Martin Gardner’s *The Ambidextrous Universe* (1967), which affirms the ostensible cooperation of chance with “natural law” (derived from the void, apparently) “to create living forms better and better adapted to survive.” His second epigraph is Matthew Arnold’s “True piety is acting what one knows.” Fowles’ moral, at the end of his book (the next to the last paragraph) is this:

For I have returned, albeit deviously, to my original principle: that there is no intervening god beyond whatever can be seen, in that way, in the first epigraph to this chapter; thus only life as we have, within our hazard-given abilities, made it ourselves, life as Marx defined it — *the actions of men* (and of women) *in*

⁶ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948), 379f.

⁷ John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (New York: Signet Books, 1969), 80.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

pursuit of their ends. The fundamental principle that should guide these actions, that I believe myself always guided Sarah's, I have set as the second epigraph. A modern existentialist would no doubt substitute "humanity" or "authenticity" for "piety"; but he would recognize Arnold's intent.⁹

Jorgenson, and *Christianity Today*, are more at home with Fowles than with Scripture, and the same is true of most evangelical churches. They thus preach a salvation which is no salvation at all.

⁹. *Ibid.*, 365f.

Humanism

Humanism having entered into the churches, it soon entered into all of life. The humanistic emphasis of nineteenth century revivalism soon perverted Christianity into a form of humanism. The catechism was held up to ridicule. Whereas the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* declares, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever," the practical import of religion was increasingly the reverse: God's chief end is to glorify man, and to enjoy him forever.

The popular literature of the day sang of the glories of man, and of God's duty to act as man's faithful ally and servant. It was seen as Christ's duty to judge man on man's own terms. A very popular example of this thesis appeared in Hay's poem, "Jim Bludso, Of the Prairie Belle," for many years a much loved American poem which still appeared in twentieth century school anthologies of poetry, such as Carhart and McGhee's *Through Magic Casements*. The author, John Milton Hay (1838-1905), was assistant secretary to Abraham Lincoln, Assistant Secretary of State under President Hayes, ambassador to Great Britain under McKinley, and Secretary of State under McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. His poem "Jim Bludso" (sometimes also spelled Bludsoe) appeared in his *Pike County Ballads* (1871). Hay was a key figure of American policy: he was instrumental in establishing the Open Door policy in China and in making the Panama Canal a possibility. His poem is of importance, not for any literary merit, for it has little, but as a reflection of an intelligent man's religion in a humanistic society.

Bludso was a river boat engineer, "no saint," with "one wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill, And another one here, in Pike." He was a profane man, but no liar.

And this was all the religion he had,
 To treat his engine well;
 Never be passed on the river;
 To mind the pilot's bell;

And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,
A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

The Prairie Belle grew old, but Bludso still refused to be passed. When the Movastar, a better boat, came by, he raced her, with the result being the destruction of the owner's property, the boat, by a fire caused by over-feeding and over-pushing the old boat. Bludso headed the boat to the shore, and everyone's life was saved save Bludso's, the cause of it all.

Bludso, a profane and godless man, a bigamist, a man who gambled with the lives of the passengers (although they survived), and with the properties of owner and passengers, is still a hero for Hay, who concluded:

He weren't no saint, — but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing, —
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a going to be too hard
on a man that died for men.

Hay, an urbane and sophisticated man, expressed this humanistic plan of salvation in the affected language of an uneducated and homespun rural American, his idea of Rousseau's pure natural man. Today, Hay's poem is no longer in favor: the need to bring in Christ is no longer there. Man now saves himself on his own terms and without any need for God or Christ.

Even more, man now holds that he needs no salvation: he is good as he is, whatever he is, and his only problem is that the Christian religion corrupts him into thinking he is a sinner, and that certain acts are sinful. Thus, Allen and Martin hold, with Kinsey, that all acts capable of being performed are therefore natural, and what is natural is therefore moral. Anal intercourse, homosexuality, incest, and other acts are held to be neither "immoral, sick or abnormal."¹ If there is nothing wrong with man, then man needs

no saving *unless* it is from Christianity because it declares man to be a sinner.

For Biblical faith, salvation is from sin into the service of God, to exercise dominion under Him. For humanism, salvation is from the idea of sin and of being a sinner into the glorification and service of man, whatever he is and whatever he does.

As Reese, a humanist, declared in 1927, "Humanism is the conviction that human life is of supreme worth; and consequently must be treated as an end, not as a means."² This means in part, Reese declares,

Man is not to be treated as a means to the glory of God. The Westminster catechism said, "The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." This is typical of orthodox theologies. The glory of God is primary; man is secondary. The result is that today in most religious circles man is thought of as only an instrument in the hands of God. The "event" likewise is said to be in the hands of God.³

Reese's point is a logical one. Events are either in the hands of God, or in the hands of man. Either God is primary, or man is. Humanism insists on the ultimacy of man. In Reese's words, "Humanism... holds to man's nature and essential worth" as against some eternal worth beyond man. Moreover, "Man is not to be treated as a means to cosmic ends.... To fix attention on cosmic ends is to weaken one's grasp on the human situation."⁴ This means that man must fix his attention on man, without any other standard save man. Neither God nor anything in the universe must be allowed to impose a requirement on man. "The sense of ought, the feeling of responsibility, and the like, are products and instruments of the emotional life of men, not authorities to be imposed upon man." The only ought is what man wills, and not even other men can become a moral imperative for man. Yet "the

¹ Gina Allen and Clement G. Martin, M.D., *Intimacy: Sensitivity, Sex and the Art of Love* (Chicago: Cowles Book Company, a Subsidiary of Henry Regnery Company, 1971).

² Curtis W. Reese, in "Preface" to Curtis W. Reese, editor, *Humanistic Sermons* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1927), viii.

³ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁴ *Ibid.*

good of each must become the concern of all.” No man can compel another, and this mutual respect for one another’s ultimacy is assumed to be capable of producing “mutuality” instead of anarchy. Reese believes that all men should be concerned about all other men. “Every hair that is prematurely gray, every clod that falls too soon upon the casket of the dead, every unnecessary sorrow that darkens a human brow, weighs upon the conscience of the enlightened man.” This is wishful thinking, because humanism, having posited man’s own ultimacy, leads to egoism rather than mutuality. “The primary concern of Humanism is human development.”⁵ In reality, it becomes the individual man’s will, since no moral imperative exists beyond man.

Long before Reese, the Marquis de Sade stated the case more clearly for humanism and its moral egoism. Sade saw that humanism requires anarchism and egoism. Polanyi, in discussing personal and political moral nihilism, has said that

The two lines of antinomianism meet and mingle in French existentialism. Mme. de Beauvoir hails the Marquis de Sade as a great moralist when Sade declares through one of his characters: “I have destroyed everything in my heart that might have interfered with my pleasures.” And this triumph over conscience, as she calls it, is interpreted in terms of her own Marxism: “Sade passionately exposes the bourgeois hoax which consists in erecting class interests into universal (moral) principles.”⁶

Polanyi himself sees no answer except a return to the Enlightenment and its more rational brand of humanism. He does not tell us where such a humanism will find its moral values, moral values which are more than nihilism and more than man.

One of the great humanists of history acknowledged that he found his sanity and salvation in recognizing the absolute sovereignty of the God who in His grace had chosen him. Nebuchadnezzar wrote:

⁵ *Ibid.*, x, xf, xiii-xix.

⁶ Michael Polanyi, *Beyond Nihilism* (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), 26.

34. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

35. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36. At the same time my reason returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty added unto me. (Daniel 4:34-36)

What Nebuchadnezzar testified to was the absolute sovereignty of God in all things, including his salvation. "None can stay his hand," i.e., "none can oppose God's action."⁷ Moreover, Nebuchadnezzar tells us that his reason returned to him when he looked up to God and recognized and acknowledged God's absolute sovereignty. "It is significant that from the Aramaic point of view 'reason' is *manda*, 'knowing.'"⁸ The beginning of wisdom and knowledge is the fear of the Lord and the recognition of His absolute power and dominion.

Moreover, the words of Nebuchadnezzar echo Scripture. The following verses are clearly in Nebuchadnezzar's mind:

Ps. 145:13. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Isa. 40:17. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Isa. 43:13. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

Isa. 43:21. This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

⁷ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949), 113.

⁸ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1949), 202.

There is no reason to suppose that Nebuchadnezzar did not know the Hebrew Scriptures. It was a part of his work to be highly informed about every country he warred against, and his network of spies was a very effective one. As the historical motive force of the Hebrews, the Scriptures would be of especial interest to Nebuchadnezzar, as was also the prophet Jeremiah. In part, his previous actions were both an interest in and a war against the God of Israel. Now he acknowledges Him as the only Lord and Savior of man. "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Dan.4:37). This is a most telling confession. Because God is absolute and ultimate, all His works are truth, and man must conform to God, not God to man. For humanism, logically, all man's works are truth when arising out of his own existential being. For Nebuchadnezzar, all man's works are under the judgment of God who is alone sovereign. For man the sinner, who is born and who dies, and who comes into a ready-made world for a brief season, to claim priority and ultimacy is indeed humanism, but it is also insanity, as all sin is. For anyone to try to confuse Christianity and humanism or to make them one is indeed to sin, and is insanity compounded.

Marriage and the Family

An important aspect of the Christian marriage service, which was once common in many areas and still survives in some, was the crowning of the bride and groom. In the Armenian wedding service, a crown with a cross was worn. Prior to the wedding, on the eve thereof, in the home of the bridegroom, and, separately, in the home of the bride, bride and groom were crowned and seated on a chair, symbolizing a throne. Friends and relatives then danced the circle-dance around the crowned person, singing the crowning song. After each stanza, the chorus took the crowned person on a tour of the great Armenian monasteries, declaring in song, "Now you are facing (the Monastery of) the Holy Cross, wearing red and green. May God keep you blameless to enjoy your Queen," or "Now you are facing (the Monastery of) St. Thomas, wearing red and green. May God keep you blameless to enjoy your Queen," and so on.

On the wedding day, a procession, with music and dancing, took the bride and groom from their homes to the church. Both took communion as a part of the service. The bridegroom was mantled as a king, a cross in his crown, a dagger in his belt to defend his realm and dominion, and the Gospel clasped to his breast as the principle of dominion. The bride also was mantled and wore a cross in her crown. The "sharragon" or hymn sung pertained to their coronation.

The wedding festival lasted three days, with the king's throne in the wedding-hall surrounded by an honor guard. The purpose of the service was to set forth the family as the central area of dominion of the redeemed man, and the husband and wife as king and queen, exercising dominion under God. In some parts of Armenia, it was common for men, on coming home, to enter their house declaring, "I am a lord!" Outside were the ungodly Turks, and limitations on his power; here, he was a lord in Christ. The

Armenian word for queen, “takkuhee,” was often used as a name for girls, and men often referred to their wives as “my queen.”¹

These old world marriage services, with their coronation rites, represented relics of a postmillennial faith, a belief that the redeemed man is reestablished in Adam’s calling to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth under God. They witness to the fact that the central institution for this dominion is the family. We are told, in Genesis 1:26-28,

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

This text is of central importance to the significance of marriage. While, on an individualistic basis, dominion is primarily given to man (1 Cor. 11:1-16), this does not mean that it is reserved to man. It is unto “them,” male and female, that God gives the order to exercise dominion. A central aspect of subduing the earth is by being fruitful and multiplying, but it is far from all of it. It is from the family that dominion goes forth: the family is thus the nursery of dominion and the historical center thereof. Proverbs 31:10-31 makes it clear how important the woman is to dominion and how practical her calling is: she manages farms and business, and is a queen exercising dominion.

The Armenian wedding service included a prayer blessing the crowns, and praying for the eternal crowns which do not pass away, and for a conquest in history over the forces of Satan:

¹. From a letter by my father, Rev. Y. K. Rushdoony, February 24, 1956, and subsequent conversations on the subject of old Armenia’s wedding customs.

In thy living name, God and Lord, maker of heaven and earth, who madest all things by the word of thy behest, thou fashionedst man, the first Adam, and establishedst from him the marriage of Eve. Thou blessedst the marriage of Seth, and therefrom the earth increased down to Noe. Thou blessedst the marriage of Noe, and therefrom the earth drew her heritage down to Abraham. Thou blessedst the marriages of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and they increased on earth and were crowned in heaven. Out of the stock of Judah thou blessedst David, and from the seed of David, Mariam, and from her didst beget the Saviour of the world, for thou becamest crowner of all Saints. Now with blessing let this crown be blessed and the marriage of these persons, that this servant and handmaid of thine may pass their lives in peace in all religiousness, To the end that Satan be driven afar from their midst, and thy mercy may come upon them, and that we may utter to thee praise and glory, together with the Father and the holy Spirit, now and ever.²

Genesis 1:28 is often cited with respect to the creation mandate to exercise dominion, but it is too rarely noted that the *primary* purpose of marriage is not simply procreation, but that procreation is an aspect of subduing the earth and exercising dominion over it. This dominion is total: it is to include all the earth and “every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” This mandate to dominion is to man as male and female, and it is inherent in every institution man creates and every area of his life.

It is essential to the life of church, state, and school, to the arts and sciences, to every calling and every phase of life, but, in its primary assignment and orientation, it is given to the family. The central area of dominion is thus not politics nor economics, but the family under God.

The family cannot be limited to the modern atomistic family, those living under one roof as husband, wife, and children. The marriage unit of husband and wife is the nuclear family, but it is not the sum total of the family. To illustrate: on the one hand, a family with three children, nominally religious, is in no sense Christian, nor an area of dominion. Each member goes his own way: there is

² F. C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 111f. This prayer is from cod. I, “a very simple and relatively early form.”

no sense of any moral responsibility to God or to one another, nor to the grandparents. This is a marriage and a family, but in a biological sense and a legal sense, not in a Christian or moral sense, in that even adultery and fornication are tolerated within limits. On the other hand, another family has three children, two sons and one daughter. A son and daughter have never married; all three children reside some distance from home. They are, however, a godly family. The parents are supported in retirement by the unmarried son and daughter, with help from the other son. The married son was helped through the university by his brother and sister. The family has helped other relatives, and some friends as well, and, while absent from their small town home, have been important in aiding some Christian causes therein. All three children are exercising dominion under God, and all three have a strong sense of family. The daughter, nearing retirement herself, has more of a family life in her effect on other families, and the love she has earned, than the lawless mother in the first family. In the first family, family life means little more than a legal sexual relationship and life under one roof, an essentially biological concept of family life. In the second family, family life is a form of social organization with theological premises, so that it exists and governs where no sexual relationship exists.

The family as a social organization is the prime area of dominion. It has far more than personal significance. Originally, and, to some degree, in some areas of the world, the family in the larger sense, as clan and tribe, has been extremely important. The weakness of these older forms has been the primacy of blood rather than of faith. By insisting on the primacy of blood, the theological significance of the family has been obscured, and, instead of *dominion*, the clan or tribe has aimed at *power*. This has meant a separation from rightful and godly authority and a divorce of power from its justification in terms of an ultimate moral law.

However, in the modern world, romanticism and pietism have reduced the family to the personal and emotional level, so that marriage and the family become purely personal to the parties involved, and they are indifferent to the theological and social significance thereof. Thus, the pietist sees Christ as King in the

personal sense, “my Lord,” which indeed He is, but the pietist fails to see Christ as King over Church, state, school, family, vocation, arts and sciences, and every area of life, and the pietist thus fails to see the social significance of redemption and Christ’s kingship.

The family in Biblical law controls three central areas of life, the control of which governs society. Any institution or agency which controls *children*, *property*, and *inheritance* is the determining agency in any society. Not surprisingly, the modern state, in its totalitarian designs, has invaded all three areas in varying degrees, by means of property taxes, inheritance taxes, statist schools, and laws limiting the jurisdiction of the family. The state seeks to be the new family of man.

The state, moreover, claims dominion over the earth and over man. It has separated itself from God and presented itself as the new god and creator, the source of determination or predestination. The state is thus of necessity hostile to the Biblical doctrine of marriage and the family. The state and the family represent two rival powers claiming jurisdiction over the same territory and claiming the same powers of dominion.

However, the degree to which the state takes over the government of man, from man and the family, is also the degree to which it disintegrates the soul of man and the stability of society. Because God located the primary exercise of dominion in and through the family, it means that if church, state, school, or any other agency weakens the family, the end result is a weakening of that agency. Dominion is best exercised in every area when it is best exercised first of all in the family. The nursery of man’s life is also the nursery of man’s dominion under God.

Because the family as a social organization is the prime area of dominion, it has also been a primary area of deformation. Social deformation began as the family saw itself as an area of tyrannical power, as in ancestor worship. The family was made into a lawless domain wherein the head of the house or clan exercised vast powers to the destruction of its members. In Scotland, for example, the Highland clan chiefs treated clan members as slaves

without title to their lands and lives. In old China, the family could take the life of its members or reduce them to servitude at will.

The Biblical family is a radical break with the blood family. In the Biblical family, ostracism is not, according to Scripture, for violations of clan law in the blood family, but for violations of God's law. All members of the family are placed under God's law. Instead of a purely immanent frame of reference, the family in Scripture has a transcendental framework and law.

Moreover, the particular family is required to align itself with the covenant family as the family of God. The early Christians spoke of themselves as the "third race" (as against Greeks and barbarians), and the "Christian race." As a family, through the deacons, they cared for their sick, unemployed, widows, orphans, and needy members. The church must be seen as the new larger family; the twelve disciples replaced the twelve tribes, the old family unity of blood, as the new family government and structure.

In the modern world, the nuclear family sees freedom in dissociation from its members. Relatives, grandparents, and then children are separated from the family, not only physically, having other residences, which is normal, but also emotionally. The smaller the family becomes, the weaker it is. Most people are not mature enough to take the total brunt of one another's foibles and weaknesses. The more people we *must* live with, the more readily we will make ourselves agreeable to one another. Television is much given to portraying dramatic clashes of persons on frontier outposts, in wagon trains, and in like situations. This is nonsense. People in such a context could not afford to quarrel easily with one another; they needed one another too much. As a result, tension and conflict over minor matters, while always present, was not as freely indulged in. Those who have known people from the pioneer era can witness to their far greater tolerance of foibles and weaknesses; such people could speak candidly about the faults of others with no intention of breaking with them or fighting readily about matters of difference.

In a modern urban context, we have from thousands to millions of people living around us. Being sinners, we thus know that we

have vast resources for fellowship and friendship. As a result, we can quarrel with some and join ourselves to others very casually. We develop a low tolerance as a consequence. People are expendable as friends, because there are so many people around us. The result, too, is a lowered ability to put up with the foibles of relatives and family members.

The same problem besets the church. A man or woman who troubles one church can move from one congregation to another indefinitely and find a new area in which to exploit their foibles, and the result is an undisciplined situation. The consequence is not dominion but anarchy.

The wedding crown was once common to much of Christendom.³ It was a symbol of the purpose of the Christian family, to function as a particular area of dominion under God, the key area in which children and property are held. If responsibility and dominion wane in the family, they will wane in all society.

Technically, the doctrine of salvation means the sovereign act of God's redeeming grace. This act, however, does not occur in a vacuum and cannot be held in abstraction from life. Man was created to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth under God, to develop the implications of creation in terms of God's law. Man's salvation is his restoration to this calling. Where salvation is present, there man awakens to his calling and works to fulfil it. Salvation means God's sovereign grace and regenerating power in the life of man. The idea of impotent Christianity is a contradiction of terms. The power of God in man's life means his active kingship in every area, and an immediate battle against the claims of the Kingdom of Man. The family is the first area of that kingdom, and the ceremonial crowning of the bride and groom was an expression of that faith.

³. Alma Oakes and Margot Hamilton Hill, *Rural Costume, Its Origin and Development in Western Europe and the British Isles* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1970), 166f.

Manners

A year before his death, Dostoyevsky, in a conversation with the editor, Alexey Suvorin, raised a significant hypothetical question. Supposing, he said, you were looking at pictures in Daziaro's shop window, and another man was also there, pretending to be looking at pictures. Suddenly, an excited third person comes running and says to the other man, "The Winter Palace will blow up soon! I've just placed a bomb there!"

"What would you do?," asked Dostoyevsky. You have accidentally heard of a conspiracy and the possible death of the tsar. Should you run for the police, go to the Winter Palace to warn them, or do nothing? "And what would I do?," Dostoyevsky asked, and answered, "nothing."

But I keep asking myself why not? Surely it is a terrible thing! There is going to be a terrible crime. Surely we should do something! I was rolling cigarettes when you came, but all the time I was thinking about this, and I thought of all the reasons which would lead me to prevent the crime — weighty, substantial reasons — and then I thought of all the reasons why I would do nothing at all. And really, it is because doing anything would be perfectly ridiculous! Why? Because I would be afraid of being taken for an informer. Imagine! I am going to the Winter Palace, they look at me, they question and cross-examine me, and offer me a reward, or perhaps they suspect I am an accomplice! It's published in the newspapers: "Dostoevski informed against the criminals." How absurd! It is a matter for the police. After all, they are paid to do these things. The Liberals would never forgive me: they would drive me to despair and worry me to death! Everything in this country is abnormal; that is why these things happen, and no one knows how to behave, nor only in the most difficult circumstances, but in the very simplest.¹

¹ Robert Payne, "Dostoevski: The Last Days," in *New World Writing*, vol. 14 (New York: New American Library, 1958), 235f.

The problem suggested by Dostoyevsky is an important one. When the basic standards are in doubt, men hesitate to act in the most obvious situations. They are paralyzed with doubts, and immobilized by considerations, where, in times of clear-cut moral standards, men act unquestioningly.

It has often been pointed out that revolutionary eras are also reactionary eras; revolution is a major force for reaction. *First* of all, the revolutionist, by denying the validity and value of all normal and peaceable courses of action, throws society back into brute force and coercion. Nothing is tolerated except revolution. In other words, the problems of life have as their solution death. When all law and order are denied in favor of revolution, it is difficult then for revolution to reestablish precisely what it has worked to destroy. The revolutionist finds the demand for law and order counter-revolutionary.

Second, those who oppose revolution do so in steadily reactionary terms when they are without faith. Being without principles, they cling to the past as against the present. During the French Revolution, it was not only Robespierre and his successors who were reactionary, but the Monarchists as well. The revolutionists had become a savage band of murderers, and the Reign of Terror was their fitting memorial. The Monarchists, however, waged war, not against the Revolution, but against France itself; by aligning themselves with France's great enemy, Britain, they betrayed everything that the monarchy had stood for. Napoleon was thus the only alternative: both the Revolution and the Monarchists were discredited.

Third, because a revolutionary era is hostile to normal and peaceable courses of action, it tends to stifle and to destroy growth and progress, because every move towards amelioration, relief, and improvement is damned as an enemy of revolution. To cite a minor but revealing example, a revolutionary era stifles the development of good manners and etiquette. For example, in pre-revolutionary Europe, women's dress was so full, and chairs were so heavy, that it was necessary, as a practical matter, for a woman at table to be helped with her chair; this was not only good manners but also a necessary act. Similarly, in eighteenth century London, a gentleman

took the curbside of the walk, and the woman was thereby protected from being splashed by the mud and filth churned up by passing carriages. These and other illustrations can be cited to show that etiquette rested on a very practical and necessary basis, as good manners always must. To turn to Emily Post's *Etiquette* (1922) is to step back into a world closer to Louis XVI than to Henry Ford.

Good manners are a form of reconstruction. The everyday problems of life are met in terms of a desire to solve them with grace and charity. A revolutionary temper is hostile to reconstruction: its urge is to destroy, not to rebuild. As a result, in a revolutionary era, etiquette tends to be frozen and archaic, an echo of the past rather than a force for the present.

Let us examine briefly one or two areas where manners are in need of reconstruction. A very prominent aspect of life in the second half of the twentieth century is the working wife. This fact, however, is governed by no rule of modern manners. It is useless for a working wife, whose partial support of the family is a necessary factor, to be helped with her chair if there is no evaluation of her work in the house. Does she now have two jobs, the work outside the home, and the work at home? What is the role of the children, and what is the duty of the husband? It is assuredly more than help with a chair. And then there is the fact that the financial power gained by the working wife tends to make her independent in her relationship towards her husband. What, in terms of God's standard, does her new power give her, and what does it require of her? Could it not be the basis for a return to the standards of Proverbs 31:10-31, with a renewed importance for the wife, and also a stronger unity in marriage?

When St. Paul wrote, "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33), the word he used was *ethos*, ethical conduct or morals. Moffatt rendered it "character." Shore commented on this sentence,

They (the Corinthians) had become tainted by the bad moral atmosphere in which they lived and which was impregnated with the teaching of that false philosophy, "Let us eat and

drink, for tomorrow we die.” “Be not deceived,” he adds solemnly; it is a fact. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” This is a proverb, slightly modified in one word from a line in the *Thais* of Menander. It is impossible to say whether the Apostle was acquainted with the original line in the poem, or not: for in any case he would probably have quoted it in the form in which it was current among ordinary people. The force of the proverb is, that even evil words are dangerous. The constant repetition of an immoral maxim may lead to immoral life. Words that seem harmless, because they float lightly like thistle-down, may bear in them a seed of evil which may take root and bring forth evil fruit.²

This is true enough, but it reduces St. Paul’s meaning to its minimum. St. Paul had just quoted an ancient pagan proverb, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32; cf. Isa. 22:13, 56:12; Luke 12:19). The Corinthians were too intimate with the pagans around them who shared this faith, rather than faith in the resurrection. St. Paul summoned them to “Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some are in ignorance of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor. 15:34, ARV). The “evil communications” were with people, principles, and practices which were a fruit of the denial of the resurrection. The “good manners” or character required were a product and an outcome of salvation through Jesus Christ, a belief in the resurrection of the body, and daily “communications,” associations, or fellowship in a realm of development of good manners. Good communications strengthen, develop, and reconstruct good manners.

The doctrine of salvation thus has far-reaching implications; it affects everyday mundane matters as well as weighty and eternal concerns. If a man denies God and is a humanist, then his “ethos,” character, or manners, in their every detail, is informed and governed by a heedlessness for the future. “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32).

This is a revolutionary premise: it is a revolt against the future in the name of the present. The revolutionist refuses to work patiently for a future good which he may only partially see in his

² Teighmouh Shore, “I Corinthians,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. VII ((Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 349.

own lifetime. What he cannot have now he despises and destroys. The implicit premise of his actions is, “tomorrow we die.” Death for him means also the futility of morality and hope: it means the absurdity of life and manners. As a young student, for a time a humanist and a revolutionary minded atheist, observed, “I was deliberately rude and immoral; I figured if life was senseless enough to make everything add up to nothing, then manners and morals were nothing but lipstick and paint on a corpse.” The logic of unbelief in salvation and the resurrection is a revolutionary act of murder against the future, and against past and present. Our Lord declared, “because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). The revolutionist says in effect to man and the world, “because I die, you shall die also.” His gift to the world is death.

In contrast, the Biblical doctrine of salvation leads to a reconstruction of every area of life. It gives scope and focus to reason, and it gives foundation to manners and morals. The doctrine of the resurrection makes a future-orientation inescapable to true faith, because every act today has both temporal and eternal consequences. Life is not absurd, but rich with meaning. St. Paul made clear what characterizes men who are “stedfast” and “unmoveable” with respect to salvation and the resurrection:

57. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:57-58)

Reigning in Life

A London Sunday newspaper ran a questionnaire a few years ago to check on religious belief among its readers. Readers were asked if (a) they believed in heaven and hell, (b) in reincarnation, or (c) did not know? The yes answers for reincarnation had a large lead over those for heaven and hell. Except for the farming areas, “hardly one in 20 attended religious services, even irregularly.” In the U.S., where church attendance is as high as eleven in every twenty, there is still a tendency to believe in what is most convenient to believe. When an American reader of a book on reincarnation was asked if there were any truth to it, he said, “‘Well, I don’t know,’ but added, ‘I’d rather believe in it than nothing. Hell, I don’t want just to die. I’d like to have a second chance.’”¹

This comment is very indicative of a major factor in the modern mentality. *First*, the man said that he did not know the truth of the matter, but, in effect, he denied the relevancy of truth for a *pragmatic* criterion. Some kind of belief he felt was necessary, particularly one that got around the fact of death. Thus, reincarnation offered him a good possibility, because it posited the continuation of life, and it eliminated the possibility of hell. This consideration was no doubt a major factor in the British preference for reincarnation. *Second*, the decision is man-centered, not God-centered; it is anthropology rather than soteriology. Salvation is not what God ordains, but what man decides he needs. Such a perspective is humanism, whether it chooses God or reincarnation, because the main focus is on man. *Third*, the man stated, “I’d like to have a second chance.” Every day of that man’s life was a second chance, but he never saw it as such. I recall hearing of a man, who had only recently died, of whom a relative said that, at thirty, he declared that, if he were twenty again, he would do things differently. At forty, he said that, if he were thirty, he would do things differently;

¹. Robert Graves, “Reincarnation,” in *Beyond Reason* (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1973), 140f.

and at fifty years of age, he made the same comment about being forty, and so on, until his death as a bungler who muffed every opportunity that came his way. When the man said, "I'd like to have a second chance," what he meant was that he preferred a universe in which there was neither law nor judgment, but which was always open to revision. There would then be no universe, only brute and meaningless factuality.

Fourth, we must recognize that the man was at least honest. He wanted to have priority with respect to salvation, another "chance" to make use of it whenever he felt ready for it. He was like the humorous old reprobate in Nevada who remarked, "Salvation would make sense if a man could turn it on five minutes before hell." This attitude is precisely the mentality of hell, i.e., the sovereignty and ultimacy of man.

The context of the Biblical doctrine of salvation is the Kingdom of God and the sovereignty of God. God does not save man to make man happy, but to restore man to his rightful place of service under God. Men are comparable to runaway slaves who forsake a good master to serve a bad one; their lord redeems them to restore them to their rightful duties. If this image is not flattering to man, it is because it is not intended to be: it is a necessary corrective to the humanism which uses God to satisfy man's problems and ensure man's happiness. It must be added that man, created in God's image, violates his being and nature when he forsakes God and can therefore only be truly free and happy when he obeys God and serves Him.

St. Paul, in Romans 5:17-21, sets forth the significance of man's calling:

17. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

18. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The emphasis here is not on the individual man. Paul's presupposition is that two humanities exist, and he only considers us in relationship to these two, the humanity or race of Adam, and the humanity or race born again in Jesus Christ. Our particular individuality is not separable from our membership in these races. All are born in Adam; many are born again in Jesus Christ. St. Paul analyzes the life of these two humanities, and our life, in terms of the two heads, Adam and Jesus Christ.

On the one hand, St. Paul declares, Adam fell from his calling, and by his offense, death reigned. The consequence is condemnation, the death penalty to all the sons of Adam. Thus, by Adam, *all* are made sinners. The law, given through Moses, made the offense of Adam all the more fearful. As Murray noted, "The more explicit the revelation of law the more heinous and aggravated are the violations of it."² The law is not only a statement of what God forbids, but also, implicitly, a declaration of what man must do. To declare, "Thou shalt not kill," means that man must regard all life as God-created and entirely subject to His law-word, so that man must at all times see all life and death in conformity to God's word. The law thus made it clear how far-reaching man's sin is. Man from Adam on likes to say to himself, why should God make such a fuss over my little sin? The law makes clear the extent and nature of his sin. It makes it clear that by sin death reigns, so that his sin is no longer a small thing, but a deadly blight destroying man.

Christ, however, as the second Adam, by His grace and the free gift of righteousness, enables man to "reign in life." Christ gives His redeemed ones "the justification which is unto life and issues in life."³ By His grace, "many" are made righteous. Therefore,

² John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959), 208.

³ *Ibid.*, 202.

“grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

At this point again, Murray’s comment is telling:

The similarity of verse 21 to verse 17 is apparent; the governing thought in both is the *reign* contemplated. But the differences are worthy of note. In verse 17 it is the reign of death, in verse 21 it is the reign of sin in death; in verse 17 the recipients of the gift of grace reign in life, in verse 21 grace reigns unto eternal life.⁴

Man was called to dominion (Gen. 1:26-28); he was called to establish his reign over the world under God. By his fall, man introduced the reign of death into the world; sin in him reigns unto death, both in time and eternity, if he remains in the Fall. Christ, however, by His grace and the gift of righteousness, enables man to *reign in life*, i.e., in this life or world, and to “reign through righteousness unto eternal life,” i.e., in the life to come. The Fall means the reign of sin and death over man. Christ’s redemption means man’s reign in time and in eternity. Very plainly, salvation means reigning. The rebellious slave is established in kingship. We are “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:37) in Christ, because we are also kings. We cannot understand the full meaning of salvation if we separate it from the fact of *reigning*. Paul’s multiple use of the word “reign” in Romans 5:17 and 21 makes clear the centrality of reigning in the doctrine of redemption. To defer the fact of reigning to the other world is a Manichaean separation of the world into two alien realms, one (the material) surrendered to one god, and the other (spiritual) reserved for the other god. The hostility of many to the idea of victory in the material world is evidence of Manichaean leanings. St. Paul is emphatic: we “reign in life.” The Biblical doctrine of salvation requires it.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 209.

Appendix

The Curse

Psalm 137 is regarded with some embarrassment by many Christians. Thus, the Rev. Archdeacon Aglen echoed an earlier judgment, declaring, “The psalm is beautiful as a poem — the Christian must seek his inspiration elsewhere.”¹ However, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Clearly, this psalm is given by inspiration of God, and it must be profitable for instruction in righteousness. Let us first examine the psalm, and then analyze its significance doctrinally, among other things, for the doctrine of salvation.

1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
3. For there they that carried us away captive, required of us a song: and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
4. How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a strange land?
5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.
7. Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem: who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.
8. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.
9. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Those who regard this psalm with horror, and the feelings of the captives as ungodly, are themselves the ones whose morality needs

¹ The Rev. Archd. Aglen, “Psalms,” in C. J. Ellicott, editor, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.), 284.

questioning. These captives had seen their homeland destroyed, their temple and capitol city razed to the ground, their friends and relatives killed, their wives and daughters raped, and, in the line of march of captives being led to Babylon, newborn babies seized and brained against the rocks as an impediment to the march. It requires some kind of moral monster to say to these captives that they should feel only loving thoughts towards their captors.

But let us first examine what the psalm reports, and then return to its meaning. The waters or rivers of Babylon were more than the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. In view of the desolation that is now Babylon, and much of the Near East, it is difficult to imagine the world of that day. Babylon was a beautifully irrigated land, a network of canals flowing at all times, providing not only year-round irrigation for the land but also a source of much beauty. The tree-lined canals were a natural gathering place, and there the displaced persons gathered to worship God. Their worship and their music interested their captors, who listened to these services. Purely on esthetic grounds, they found the “Lord’s song,” the music of the psalms, appealing, and they *required* that these and other Hebrew songs be sung for their amusement. This request rubbed salt into the wounds of the captives. As Leupold observed,

The grief described is not the ordinary longing for the homeland, a longing which displaced persons may always have felt. It was rather occasioned by the fact that they remembered Zion and all that that ancient capital stood for: the Temple, its services, the remembrance of godly men that dwelt there, the mighty deliverances that God had wrought, the dynasty of David that had had its seat there, and the Holy City as the object of sacred pilgrimages during high festivals. All these facts would flood through the minds of captives and move them to bitter tears, which we cannot help but believe were frequently the tears of repentance.²

As they gathered by the waters, the psalmist reports, “We sat down”; Taylor comments, “to sit on the ground was the posture of mourners in the ancient East.”³ Overcome by grief as they tried to

² H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959), 935.

³ William R. Taylor, “Psalms,” in *Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. IV (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), 704f.

sing, they gave up, and “We hanged our harps upon the willow trees in the midst thereof.” Their tears came as they “remembered Zion,” but their grief was aggravated by the demand of their captors that they resume their song to amuse the Babylonian onlookers. Their tormentors required mirth; they wanted no tears to indict them, but music to entertain them. The response is well described by Taylor:

The thought of anyone singing the sacred songs to tickle the ears of a godless people evokes from the psalmist a passionate expression of his love for Jerusalem in the form of a curse on himself should he ever fail in loyalty to her. Sardonicly, he offers a song with a string of curses (vss. 5-9) as a grim substitute for the request of the foe. He lays a curse on hand and tongue should they with lyre or song prove traitor to *Jerusalem*, which is higher than *my highest joy*.⁴

The psalmist curses Edom, who in 587 B.C. had rejoiced over the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. In Obadiah 10-16, we read not only of Edom’s joy at Jerusalem’s destruction, but also of their entry into the war after Jerusalem’s fall, to cut off all who escaped from the Babylonians. The judgment of God upon Edom and “upon all the heathen” was this: “as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head” (Obad. 15). This law is the other side of the Golden Rule; as men do to others, so God shall do to them. What follows is in terms of this: the Babylonians, like many peoples past and present, had ruthlessly brained the babies of their enemies. Such horrors are reported in 2 Kings 8:12, Isaiah 13:16, Nahum 3:10, Hosea 10:14 and 13:16. Homer reported similar murders in the *Iliad*, XXII, 63. Braining babies and ripping open pregnant women was practiced in Europe and the Near East into the twentieth century, against the Jews in pogroms, and by the Turks against Armenians.⁵ Isaiah 13:16 is a prophecy that what Babylon has done will in God’s time

⁴. Taylor, *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. I, 706.

⁵. When this writer lived among and was a missionary to the American Indians, an aged Shoshone neighbor and friend had seen her newly born daughter, many years earlier, brained against a rock by her husband. The reason: three daughters had been born in a row, and no sons. To change her luck, the immediate sacrifice of the baby girl was mandatory. She believed that this was true; after all, her next child was a son. J. O. was an unusually kindly, thoughtful, and sensitive woman whom I can only remember with affection; the act was to her a painful but necessary one because of the “spirits” and their requirements.

be done to her: "Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished." The psalmist recalls this prediction, made long before Jerusalem's fall, and now echoes it. God had predicted this. As Leupold observed, "If a man takes such an attitude, is he more cruel than the Lord?"⁶ The practice was brutal and wrong, although no more so than the mass murder by bombing of civilian populations in modern warfare. It is a moral law that God returns to a people that which they have done, at the hands of others like them; this is the declaration of Obadiah 15.

Taylor's interpretation of this curse is modernistic, but he is right in seeing that it was also true that "the operation of the curse was entrusted to God as the sole source of power in all things."⁷ Moreover, in this case, Taylor adds,

The curse takes a more ghastly turn as a blessing is invoked on him who in implementing it perpetrates heinous acts of vengeance and *takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock, wiping out the breed forever.*⁸

Let us now examine the meaning of this, the heart of this psalm, *the curse*. We fail to see the meaning of a curse if we do not recognize that, whatever else may be said of it, it is first of all a *form of prayer*. Most prayers are prayers of and for blessings: they ask for the care, protection, and prospering hand of God. Prayers which ask for judgment on evildoers are prayers which ask for God's curse upon all such peoples. Proverbs 3:33 tells us that "The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the inhabitation of the just." God is always cursing the wicked and blessing the righteous. In our prayers, we are to unite with Him in our cry for justice as well as our hunger for His grace and mercy, for ourselves and others.

There are certain things we cannot pray for: we are not to sit in judgment on our parents, nor to curse them; they are to be judged by God, never by us. "Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness" (Prov. 20:20). God will

⁶ Leupold, *op. cit.*, 937.

⁷ Taylor, *op. cit.*, IV, 703.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 707.

never fulfil or answer a causeless curse (Prov. 26:2). Hypocritical and self-seeking blessings become a curse to those who proclaim them (Prov. 27:14).

The doctrine of irresistible grace is basic to Scripture. “And all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God” (Deut. 28:2). Similarly, Scripture teaches us *the doctrine of 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).⁹

If we want only a world of blessings, we are morally wrong and guilty. The world before the Fall was a world of blessings only, as the world after the Second Coming will be. The world after the Fall is a world under the curse, but “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. 3:13-14). The goal of the history of redemption is that there be “no more curse” (Rev. 22:3). To ask for a curse-free world is to deny that we are fallen and live in a fallen world.

Under certain circumstances, cursing is totally forbidden:

And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. (Ex. 21:17)

And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. (Lev. 24:15)

17. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

18. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. (Ps. 109:17-18)

There is a generation, that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. (Prov. 30:11)

⁹ See R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1972), 660-664.

Careless cursing and blessing are condemned (James 3:10); in matters personal as against religiously governed, we are to return blessings for curses (Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:14).

Similarly, there are limits to prayers of blessing (John 17:9; 1 John 5:16; 2 John 10-11). Very briefly, prayers of blessing and cursing are petitions to God which must be made in terms of the law-word of God. Their purpose must be in terms of God's plan of salvation and sanctification, His triumph over His enemies and His purpose for His people and the world. The prophet Isaiah had made clear the nature and destiny of Babylon, and the psalmist prayed in terms of that knowledge. Sin must be cursed, it must be judged, in order for God's blessing to flow. The vision of Revelation includes the cursing and fall of Babylon the Great as the precondition to the triumph of Christ (Rev. 18, 19).

It should be noted also that the psalmist does not declare that he shall himself undertake to judge Babylon, or to kill her little ones. He is fully aware that vengeance belongs to God, and he leaves it there, recognizing that God's law shall prevail. The unholy joy of Babylon in destroying Judea and in murdering its suckling children will be the joy also of the destroyers of Babylon. He recognizes that this judgment is ordained by God: "*O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed.*" The principle of this judgment is not only given by Obadiah but also by James 2:13: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth (or, glorieth) against judgment," i.e., mercy triumphs over judgment, but judgment is total against the merciless. Some other declarations of this principle of judgment include

Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. (Habakkuk 2:8, spoken of Babylon)

Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee: when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee. (Isa. 33:1)

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. (Rev. 13:10)

Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel. (Jer. 50:29)

For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their own deeds, and according to the works of their own hands. (Jer. 25:14)

Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense. (Jer. 51:6)

And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. (Jer. 51:24)

Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite. (Jer. 51:56)

One of God's first steps in the restoration of man after the Fall was to place his life, world, and work under the curse (Gen. 3:14-19). The curse is judgment upon sin, and all sin must be judged and condemned that man might be freed into the world of blessing. Those for whom Christ did not accept the curse cannot escape the curse. Those who shy away from any and all ideas of a curse also shy away from the blessing of God.

The psalmist was faced with evil. In terms of the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Babylon was accursed. Had the psalmist not assented to that curse, he would have shared it. Today, we must say of every sin, that it requires God's ordained judgment: murder requires the death penalty, theft requires restitution, and so on. To deny this is to place one's life under the curse. To affirm God's

judgment, and, in faith and obedience to serve the Lord, is to place ourselves under God's blessing.

Those who are unwilling to see anything accursed will see nothing blessed. A generation unwilling to recognize that some are reprobate will not know salvation either.

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