SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

In Two Volumes

by

Rousas John Rushdoony

Volume I & II

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DEDICATION

One of the problems in the church community is a stinginess with respect to the Lord's work in certain areas. Missionaries are expected to live on less than most people, despite Paul's words, never clearly translated, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour (or, literally, double pay), especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (I Timothy 5:17). Christian lawyers are often told, very indignantly, that they should work for nothing for fellow Christians; the assumption seems to be that Christian laborers are not worthy of their hire (I Timothy 5:18).

As a result, the growth of the faith is limited, especially in the theological, educational, and art spheres. Few Christians are ready to support such activities.

But there are important exceptions. An especially noteworthy one is Dr. Ellsworth E. McIntyre and the Grace Community Church of Naples, Florida. In his sphere, Dr. McIntyre is a major figure, a pioneering educator whose several schools are a delight to visit. He and his family are notable persons, people of the Christian future, exercising outstanding dominion in their fields.

The publication of *Systematic Theology*, long delayed, was made possible when Dr. McIntyre learned of the delay and, with the church, provided the generous and considerable help needed to publish so large a study. I am very, very grateful.

This book is therefore dedicated to Dr. Ellsworth E. McIntyre, his family, and Grace Community Church.

Rousas John Rushdoony

INTRODUCTION

This study is titled *Systematic Theology* because it is an effort to apply Scripture systematically to various spheres of faith and life. At the same time, the title distresses me, because too often "systematic theology" now has reference to a seminary subject taught by a member of the "Theology and Philosophy of Religion Department." As such, it is a separate subject from "Biblical Theology," "Practical Theology," and various other divisions of the subject. This kind of academic dissection and analysis may *perhaps* be necessary, but I wonder, for example, how Biblical Theology and Systematics can be separated? Is it not wrongly dividing the word of truth? Are we not suffering from too much scholarly dissection where the living word is needed?

Seminaries, for example, divide Biblical studies often into two departments, "Old Testament" and "New Testament," and, with some professors, never the twain shall meet. These men will refer questions which connect the Old and the New Testaments to the other department! Some seem more anxious about offending a colleague than speaking plainly about the word of God.

It is a serious mistake to see theology as an academic exercise. The word *theology* means *God's word*; it begins with the presupposition that Scripture is the word of God, and the duty of the theologian is to understand it *and* to apply it to every area of life and thought.

Theology belongs in the pulpit, the school, the work-place, the family, and everywhere. Society as a whole is weakened when theology is neglected. Without a systematic application of theology, too often people approach the Bible with a smorgasbord mentality, picking and choosing that which pleases them. Then, in the name of Christianity, we have interpretations of the meaning of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit which are alien to Scripture.

A modernist scholar stated recently that he went to the Bible for what would be applicable to the context of modern life; this meant that much, if not most of Scripture, was relegated to only an ancient application. This is no different from the approach of evangelicals and fundamentalists who want to limit the Bible to its salvation message; such a limitation also perverts the word.

For me theology means the total mandate of God through His word. What I have written only scratches the surface; it is an introduction to the subject, and it is written to move men to faith and action. The neglect of theology in our time is in part due to the theologians, who have multiplied the various divisions, so that, among the divisions of study have been Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, Dogmatical Theology, Exegetical Theology, Practical

Theology, and so on. The areas of study also include such subjects as Natural Theology and Speculative Theology. With the inventions of so many variations, it is no wonder that both pastors and people have lost interest in the subject and avoid it.

Clarity of doctrine and theological precision are essentials, but this does not justify turning theology into an esoteric sphere of studies for scholars. Almost all the contents of this study were delivered orally to Christian laymen and women and discussed with them.

In our time, theology has in the main left the pulpit for the seminary classroom. The Calvinistic churches retain some theology, but in a frozen and often irrelevant form. Arminian churches have largely abandoned theology, the doctrine of the triune God and His being, word, purpose, and works, to confine themselves to the doctrine of salvation. Humanism sees man as the measure of all things, but its "all things" is limited to the material universe. For Arminianism "all things" includes God. They go thus beyond humanism in this respect in that for them the concern of God and His universe is man's salvation, an amazingly man-centered and egocentric view. Our Lord, to the contrary, says, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (or, justice)" (Matt. 6:33). The churches of our time seem to believe that God exists to save man and keep him happy. Theology is therefore only studied as an adjunct to the doctrine of salvation. This turns the world of scripture upside down. How can anyone believe that God blesses this, or feels other than displeased? Are we not inviting God's judgment?

Since so many now believe that God exists to serve them, is it any wonder that they also view the church and clergy in like terms? The church and the clergy have for these people as their justification the service of man. They do not hesitate to demand time and effort from the clergy for all their needs with less concern to give their time, efforts, and money to the work of the Kingdom of God. When God's judgment comes justly upon them, they cry out, How could God do this *to me*? Their standard is themselves; their gospel is, my will be done, by God, the church, the clergy, and all men. Theology is weak today, because anthropology and psychology reign, i.e., the doctrines of man, and of his psyche. But the world is not governed by your and my will and wishes, but by the triune God and His eternal decree. Until we learn that fact, and say *Amen* to it as persons and societies, we shall only gain God's wrath and judgment. Of course, our humanistic age finds the wrath of God a remote concept; it will learn otherwise, because God is God.

The devoted work of two persons has made possible the typing into a computer, and then the proof-reading, of this work: Dorothy B. (Mrs. R. J.) Rushdoony, and Grayce (Mrs. Craig) Flanagan. Their careful attention to details, and calling my attention to statements needing clarification, has been important in improving the text. There is more, however. Some areas were

covered more specifically and at greater length because they so suggested it. I am deeply grateful. Their help in this work has been a substantial one.

I would be remiss if I do not also mention Fred and Janet Mosley. Fred Mosley (September 21, 1921 - June 26, 1977), a champion of Cornelius Van Til's works, some years before his death, urged me to write on infallibility, and the first section of this work was a response to his request.

Two sections of this work were earlier published separately: *Infallibility, an Inescapable Concept* (1978), and *The Necessity for Systematic Theology* (1979). Both of these have been used by some professors, and I am grateful to them for their kind appreciation.

Brenda (Mrs. Timothy) Vaughan has been our typesetter, and her conscientious and faithful work is deeply appreciated. Walter Lindsay has been responsible for important services in making publication possible along with assistance with the proof-reading. Pat McIntyre, Anthony Schwartz, Gary Wagner, Clara Bianci, and Marie Golart also assisted with proof-reading in the final stage.

This work was completed in August, 1984, and only now, almost ten years later, is it in print. The diskettes on which all the sections had been type-set were "expropriated" and apparently destroyed. Only the patient work of Andrea (Mrs. Ford Schwartz) enabled us to locate the back-up diskettes and re-constitute the text. Our debt to her, and to her husband, Ford, is more than can be put into words. Their work has been an exercise in practical theology for which I am deeply grateful.

Rousas John Rushdoony
Vallecito, California
March 1, 1994

I

INFALLIBILITY

1. Infallibility: An Inescapable Concept

"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass. and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." (Isa. 42:8-9)

God, in this word spoken through the prophet Isaiah, declares that when He speaks, His word surely and infallibly comes to pass. He declares moreover that He alone is God, and He will neither share nor give His glory to another. But in our day, as in Isaiah's, many question this declaration; they reduce it to religious poetry, Isaiah's rhetoric, or Hebraic imagery, and they deny to God His sovereignty and to His Word its infallibility. This denial is taking its toll of the churches, of society, and of individuals.

This toll is a very real one: the immediacy of the word is gone. Instead of the direct and inescapable word of God, a realm of cultural accretions, imagery, myth, and vagueness intervenes. A devout Christian woman who for many years had attended a church where the doctrine of infallibility was slurred over or rejected, reacted with radiant joy when, at a conference, the doctrine was set forth clearly and unequivocally. Instead of a "dullness" and "joylessness" in her faith, she now realized suddenly and happily that "the Lord is very near. Right here, His very words are speaking to me." The clarity of that faith in the infallible word gives the believer an assurance, strength, and joy in the immediacy of God. Men have lived confidently in darker eras that ours in the confidence and victory of that faith, whereas today the oppression and the fear of evil are very near to men, and the force of God's word is very remote.

The historian Friedrich Heer has described the estrangement of man from God in the thirteenth century as a result of faulty theologies:

> The sense of great joy and inward freedom which the early Church derived from its possession of the Good News (which every one could read for himself), and its sense of union with the resurrected Lord, had long since been overlaid by feelings of terror and estrangement. Men at their prayers no longer raised their arms and turned toward Christ, their rising sun, but folded their hands in the attitude of serfs, serfs of God and of their sin. Where formerly the priest had celebrated the Mass facing the people, in proof of his accessibility, now he turned his back on them and retreated to the vastness of the sanctuary, separated from the people's part of the church by a forbidding screen. Finally, the Mass was read in a tongue the people could not understand.[1]

Whenever people feel that God has no word for them, fear and terror begin to dominate society, and evil roams the streets unafraid. *If there is no immediate word from God, the immediate word of evil dominates men's lives.* Today, the vitality and the joy is again being drained out of the church, and its strength is ebbing fast. The open or the practical denial of the infallibility of Scripture is again exacting a deadly toll in society.

The doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture can be denied, but the concept of infallibility as such cannot be logically denied. *Infallibility is a inescapable concept.* If men refuse to ascribe infallibility to Scripture, it is because the concept has been transferred to something else. The word *infallibility* is not normally used in these transfers; the concept is disguised and veiled, but, in a variety of ways, infallibility is ascribed to concepts, things, men, and institutions.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a Jesuit geologist, was honest enough to speak of the "infallibility" of the evolutionary process. In speaking of the evolutionary process supposedly at work in the world, he wrote:

> To bring us into existence it has from the beginning juggled miraculously with too many improbabilities for there to be any risk whatever in committing ourselves further and following it right to the end. If it undertook the task, it is because it can finish it, following the same methods and with the same infallibility with which it began.[2]

Because of his belief in the infallibility of evolution, Teilhard could feel confidence as he faced the future. He looked forward indeed, to an evolutionary pentecost, with "the coming of the *Spirit of the Earth*":

> The atomic age is not the age of destruction but of union in research. For all their military trappings, the recent explosions at Bikini herald the birth into the world of a Mankind both inwardly and outwardly pacified. They proclaim the coming of the *Spirit of the Earth.*[3]

Teilhard's sorry trade is the infallibility of the sovereign, omnipotent God in His word for the infallibility of a blind, evolving process.

Infallibility concepts are all around us, a great variety of substitutes for the infallible word. *Democracy* is one such substitute. From ancient times its essential faith has been summed up in the Latin motto, *vox popula vox dei*, "The voice of the people is the voice of God." This new god - the people, or democracy - speaks infallibly in and through majorities. One liberal scholar, in affirming democracy, has emphasized this; Herman Finer, in *Road to*

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[1] Friedrich Heer: *The Medieval World: Europe 1100-1350.* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1961). pp. 159f.

[2] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: *The Phenomenon of Man.* With an Introduction by Sir Julian Huxley. (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1959). p. 323.

[3] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: *The Future of Man.* (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1964). See also C. Van Til, *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Evolution and Christ.* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1966). p. 147.

Reaction, has noted that "in a democracy right is what the majority makes it to be."[4] Not surprisingly, every movement towards democracy has been a direct or indirect attack on Christian orthodoxy. Because democracy has an explicit doctrine of infallibility, it is necessarily and logically hostile to a rival doctrine of infallibility, and the claims of Scripture are either implicitly or explicitly denied.

In passing, it can be noted that the philosopher Croce ascribed infallibility to the esthetic experience.

More important to us today is the Marxist dogma of the infallibility of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dr. Leo Paul de Alvarez has made an interesting analysis of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speeches. The initial attack on Stalin served an important purpose: it disassociated the new leaders from the crimes of Stalin. It was actually stated that Stalin's writings, long official dogma, contained nothing worthwhile. The attack, however, involved certain dangerous concessions. The infallibility of the dialectical process and of the dictatorship had been seriously endangered. The Marxist theory of contradictions was immediately applied to repair the damage: society always progresses through contradictions, but socialist society does not have the dangerous and evil *class* contradictions. The contradictions in Soviet society were due to the fact that people reflected backward conditions of production. Stalin's policies were correct, but the contradictions led to paternalism, to the cult of personality, and other problems. The problems of Stalinism sprang therefore out of a "rotten survival" in people's minds. Supposedly, the Party had always been alert to the problem and had struggled against it. The conclusion of this rethinking was that the errors of Stalin became the sins of the people, and the Party's infallibility was preserved. Khrushchev, in a speech of December 18, 1957, concluded:

> ...Stalin will take a due place as a dedicated Marxist-Leninist and a stalwart revolutionary. Our party and the Soviet people will remember Stalin and pay tribute to him.[5]

Infallibility has always been a basic faith in Marxist dogma, and much of the Marxist power stems from its intense belief in the infallibility of its basic faith.

This should not be surprising. For a man to live successfully, he must have an ultimate standing ground; *every philosophy is authoritarian*, in that, while it may attack savagely all other doctrines of authority, it does so from the

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[4] Herman Finer, *Road to Reaction*. (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1945, 1963). p. 60. Finer holds that if the majority had voted Hitler into power, - and he states the majority did not - then Hitler's regime would have been "the Rule of Law," *ibid.*

[5] Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Forty Years of Great October Socialist Revolution" (Report to the Anniversary Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Nov. 6, 1957), in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* IX, 45 (December 18, 1957) p. 9; cited in Leo Paul S. de Alvarez, *Sino-Soviet Ideological Relations, 1956-1957*, p. 52, unpublished ms., 1959.

vantage point of a new authority. This new authority is a basic pretheoretical presupposition which is in totality religious and which rests on a particular concept of infallibility. Every man has his platform from which he speaks. To affirm that foundation without qualification is an inescapable requirement of human thought.

It is a naive and foolish error to assume that "deliverance" from the doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture "frees" a man's mind from the concept of infallibility. Rather, it means the adoption of a new infallibility as a rival and supposedly liberating concept. Thus Rousseau, in formulating his dogmas of democracy, plainly asserted the infallibility of the general will of the people. Rousseau emphatically asserted, after developing his doctrine of the will, that "It follows from what has been said above that the general will is right and ever tends to the public advantage."[6] The infallibility of the general will as embodied in either the majority, the democratic consensus, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the folk, or an elite group is a doctrine which has dominated the world political scene in the twentieth century. War has become totalitarian because it has become the clash of infallible philosophies with mutually exclusive claims. The departure of modern man from Biblical faith has been an exodus to a new Egypt, another and an enslaving doctrine of infallibility.

Similarly, the departure of the Church of Rome from the single ultimate authority of Scripture has not been a denial of infallibility. Infallibility has rather been transferred to the church. First, it was held implicitly that the church is infallible, then explicitly so, and, with the First Vatican Council, the infallibility of the pope under certain conditions was asserted. If this infallibility should at some future date be denied, it will only be in favor of another infallibility concept.

Another infallibility concept, succinctly formulated by the Deists of the eighteenth century, is again with us. Alexander Pope declared, in his *Essay on Man*, that, "Whatever is, is right." Existentialism has once again affirmed this faith. The validity of any transcendental law, of any standard outside of and beyond man, is denied by the existentialist. For him, reality "is" and there is nothing else; therefore, what is, is infallibly right. Standards, supremely Scripture, must be challenged as opposed to this new reality, in that they are ruled out of court by a presupposition of infallibility in the existential moment.

The new left, in terms of these existentialist premises, opposes the "Establishment" as an alien standard; it seeks revolution, not in terms of any purpose or goal, but simply to overturn everything except the infallible moment. Only man's momentary antinomian will can be allowed to prevail, because it is by definition infallible.

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[6] J-J Rousseau: *The Social Contract*, Bk. II, Chap. III, para. 1.

Clearly, then, if the infallibility of Scripture is denied, it is denied only in order to ascribe infallibility to nature, to man, or to some aspect or institution of man.

But another necessity ensues. A necessary aspect of the doctrine of infallibility is the total self-consciousness of whatever or whoever is infallible.

For orthodox Christians, this means, as Cornelius Van Til has so ably pointed out, that *God is totally self-conscious.* There is no unconscious or subconscious mind in God, nor does the Almighty God sleep. He is totally self-conscious; there are no hidden potentialities in God. Man, on the contrary, is not totally self-conscious; there are hidden recesses in the mind of man, unrealized potentialities unknown to the person. Man cannot therefore fully determine what he is or what he can do. Many retired people, freed from their work, develop sometimes surprising potentialities, but no man has ever fully known himself. Solomon observed that "Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Prov. 20:24). The determination of man is not in man, nor does man even have a full self-consciousness about himself.

God, on the other hand, not only determines all things but is totally self-determined and self-conscious. There are no hidden potentialities in God, who knows Himself totally, and, therefore, when he speaks, speaks authoritatively and infallibly. An infallible word requires a totally self-conscious speaker who can speak in total knowledge of Himself and His abilities. Not surprisingly, Sartre saw this dilemma, and, at the beginning of his analysis of existential man, attacked the Freudian concept of the unconscious. What is repressed by the mind, Sartre held, is knowingly repressed in order to escape from difficulties.[7] There is much to be said for Sartre's thesis, but the reason for his attack on the subconscious in a study of ontology is what concerns us. Sartre as an existentialist frankly states that the goal of man is to be god: "Man fundamentally is the desire to be God."[8]

In the existentialist sense, "Man makes himself man in order to be God."[9] A true god, however, must have full self-consciousness, and hence Sartre finds it imperative to deny the concept of the unconscious.

Thus, *an infallible word must come from a self-conscious source*, from one who speaks in full knowledge of himself and his abilities. But this is not enough: an authoritative and infallible word requires not only total self-consciousness but also total power - *omnipotence* - in order to speak the word and then bring it to pass. The God of Scripture, who is totally self-conscious and has no hidden potentialities, declares, "I am the LORD, I change not"

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7. Jean-Paul Sartre: *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology.* (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1956). pp. 50ff.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 566.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 626.

(Mal. 3:6). This no man can say, in that both lacking perfection and having hidden potentialities, man both changes and is in need of continuing change. Man grows and regresses. God, on the other hand, does not change, and, being omnipotent, can declare His word and bring it to pass. Hence the challenge issued through Isaiah: "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." God, being omnipotent and totally self-conscious, can predict because His word is the controlling word. God's word comes out of His unchanging and omnipotent being, and *the word of God is thus of necessity infallible. The only word the sovereign and triune God can speak is an infallible word.* To deny the infallibility of the word of God is inescapably to deny the God of Scripture. When the omnipotent God speaks, His word is of necessity infallible. This is the only kind of word that God can declare. Because God is God, it is utterly impossible for God ever to speak a word which is not infallible.

Omnipotence plus total self-consciousness necessitates an infallible word. Therefore, anyone who denies the infallibility of Scripture is saying that God is not sovereign, that He can neither predestine nor predict. No prophecy can then come from God. Deny infallibility, and the only God that remains, if any, is a struggling, weak, and stammering God, incapable of knowing Himself or of issuing an eternal decree. This is not the God of Scripture.

A sovereign, predestinating, self-conscious God can declare *only* an infallible word. When infallibility then is transferred to some false god, these other attributes of God must be transferred also. Omnipotence and omniscience must then be ascribed to some new agency. Teilhard ascribed them to evolution, others to the dictatorship of the proletariat, to philosopher-kings, to the general will, or to whatever else is the new god of man and society.

Because the modern state, in all its variations, is based on Rousseau's concept of the infallible general will, it is moving steadily towards totalitarianism, seeking total power over man. Marxism openly gives us the dictatorship of the proletariat, plus total planning and control. Total planning is the statist version of predestination.

The doctrine of predestination is, of course, the doctrine of total planning and control. To hold to the eternal decree of God is to say simply that God from the beginning planned, predicted, and totally controls everything that comes to pass. The modern state, as the new god, seeks total control over man in order to speak an infallible word, in order to experiment with man and control him from cradle to grave. Planning is thus increasingly a necessary aspect of the modern state, because the modern state wants to predict, to prophecy, to control. The goal is total planning in order to prophecy, total control for total power.

Infallibility is thus an inescapable concept. What we face today is not an abandonment of the doctrine of infallibility, but its transfer from God to man, from God's word to man's word. But, Isaiah warns us, God declares, "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another" (Isa. 42:8). Thus speaks the LORD, He Who Is.

We are therefore in a state of war, war between heaven and humanism, war between the Almighty God and the totalitarian state, war between God and the scientific planners, predictors, and controllers, war between God and all those who deny His infallibility. Such a conflict is a very uneven one, and there can be no doubt as to the outcome of this war.

God will not share His glory nor give it to another. Even as the builders of the Tower of Babel were confounded and scattered, even as Pharaoh and his host were destroyed and his troops swallowed up in the Red Sea, even as God declared His judgment on Amalek - and Amalek is gone - even as Assyria and Babylon, and the empires of old, were brought down to dust, so those who today deny His infallible word and ascribe infallibility to the things of man shall be brought low by the Lord of Hosts. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). We have the infallible word of the infallible God. Let Christian men rejoice therefore, for our God is Lord of lords, King of kings, the mighty conqueror.

2. Infallibility and Immanence

The concept of infallibility, when denied to God and His word, does not disappear; instead, it is transferred to another area. Historically, as Christendom turned to Aristotle and to natural law, the concept of infallibility came into a new prominence as church, state, and school claimed it for themselves.

Within the church it developed into the doctrine of papal infallibility (and, in some cases, the divine right of presbytery, and like concepts). Although the doctrine had deep roots in scholasticism and the "medieval" church, it was not formally defined until the First Vatican Council in 1870:

> We, adhering, faithfully to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith - with a view to the glory of our Divine Savior, the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the safety of Christian peoples (the Sacred Council approving), teach and define as a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra* (that is, when - fulfilling the office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians - on his supreme Apostolical authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church), through the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, is endowed with that

> infallibility, with which the Divine Redeemer has willed that His Church - in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals - should be equipped: And therefore, that such definitions of the Roman Pontiff of themselves - and not by virtue of the consent of the Church - are irreformable. If anyone shall presume (which God forbid!) to contradict this our definition; let him be anathema.[10]

This statement has been cited, not only to illustrate the development of a non-Biblical doctrine of infallibility, but also to call attention to the fact that it is the most modest of all such claims in the modern world. Men have given undue attention to this papal authority as an example of an obsolete and authoritarian belief in the supposedly rational and scientific climate of the modern era. In this they have simply revealed their own hostility to the church. Without giving assent to this dogma of papal infallibility, let us analyze its relative modesty. P. J. Tenor has commented on the meaning of the dogma:

> For the correct understanding of this definition it is to be noted, in the first place, that what is claimed for the pope is infallibility merely, not impeccability or inspiration. In the next place the infallibility claimed for the pope is the same in its nature, scope, and extent as that which the Church as a whole possesses; nor does his ex cathedra teaching, in order to be infallible, require to be ratified by the Church's consent. The pope teaching ex cathedra is an independent organ of infallibility. In the third place, infallibility is not attributed to every doctrinal act of the pope, but only to his ex cathedra teaching; and the conditions required for ex cathedra teaching are mentioned in the Vatican decree: (a) The pontiff must teach in his public and official capacity as a theologian, preacher, or allocutionist, not in his capacity as a temporal prince or as a mere ordinary of the diocese of Rome. It must be clear that he speaks as spiritual head of the Church universal. (b) Then it is only when, in this capacity, he teaches some doctrine of faith or morals that he is infallible. (c) Further it must be sufficiently evident that he intends to teach with all the fullness and finality of his supreme Apostolic authority, in other words that he wishes to determine some point of doctrine in an absolutely final and irrevocable way, or to define it in the technical sense. These are well-recognized formulae by means of which the defining intention may be manifested. (d) Finally for an ex cathedra decision it must be clear that the pope intends to bind the whole Church, to demand internal assent from all the faithful to his teaching under pain of incurring spiritual shipwreck (naufragium fidei), according to the expression used by Pius IX in defining the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.[11]

There are thus some limitations on papal infallibility. As Fr. James F. Wathen has pointed out, "Whereas the Supreme Pontiff's authority is co-extensive

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[10] Henry Bettenson, editor: *Documents of the Christian Church*. (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1947). p. 383.

[11] P. J. Tenor, "Infallibility," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII. (New York, N.Y.: The Encyclopedia Press, (1910) 1913). p. 796.

with his jurisdiction, his infallibility is not."[12] However, the infallibility of the church flows out of papal infallibility in Roman Catholic doctrine: "The Church, as the source and cause of salvation, stands on the Papacy as a building stands on its foundation: its Imperishability derives from the Papacy, from the Infallibility of the Papacy," and the same is true of the church's infallibility.[13] On the other hand, "our notion of Infallibility should include only what we are required to believe and nothing else."[14] Wathen's arguments, as he then develops them, would be disputed by some Roman Catholic theologians, but that fact illustrates the problem: the doctrine of papal infallibility is a limited doctrine and its meaning is open to debate. Thus, while not agreeing with the most conspicuous example of a modern doctrine of infallibility, we must all the same call attention to its limitations. These limitations exist because the doctrine is to a large degree tied not only to a tradition but to a historic faith and a supernatural revelation. The restrictions imposed by that history and revelation are severe ones.

When we come to the doctrine of the infallibility of the state, the restrictions quickly disappear. The doctrine of the divine right of kings appeared when Christian doctrine still imposed some hesitation on royalist philosophy, but the claims were still very extravagant. Hume has called attention to the practical application of the doctrine in the reign of Elizabeth I of England when Parliament protested the granting of various economic monopolies to men favored by the crown:

> These grievances, the most intolerable for the present, and the most pernicious in their consequences, that ever were known in any age or under any government, had been mentioned in the last parliament, and a petition had even been presented to the queen, complaining of the patents; but she still persisted in defending her monopolists against her people. A bill was now introduced into the lower house, abolishing all these monopolies; and as the former application had been unsuccessful, a law was insisted on as the only certain expedient for correcting these abuses. The courtiers, on the other hand, maintained, that this matter regarded the prerogative, and that the commons could never hope for success, if they did not make application, in the most humble and respectful manner, to the queen's goodness and beneficence. The topics which were advanced in the house, and which came equally from the courtiers and the country gentlemen, and were admitted by both, will appear the most extraordinary to such as are prepossessed with an idea of the privileges enjoyed by the people during that age, and of the liberty possessed under the administration of Elizabeth. It was asserted that the queen inherited both an enlarging and 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

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12. James F. Wathen: *The Great Sacrilege.* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1971). p. 20.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

> 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. After all this discourse, more worthy of a Turkish divan than of an English house of commons, according to our present idea of this assembly, the queen, who perceived how odious monopolies had become, and what heats were likely to arise, sent for the speaker, and desired him to acquaint the house, that she would immediately cancel the most grievous and oppressive of these patents.
>
> The house was struck with astonishment, and admiration, and gratitude, at this extraordinary instance of the queen's goodness and condescension. A member said, with tears in his eyes, that if a sentence of everlasting happiness had been pronounced in his favor, he could not have felt more joy than that with which he was at present overwhelmed. Another observed, that this message from the sacred person of the queen was a kind of gospel or glad tidings, and ought to be received as such, and be written in the tablets of their hearts. And it was further remarked, that in the same manner as the Deity would not give his glory to another, so the queen herself was the only agent in their present prosperity and happiness. The house voted, that the speaker, with a committee, should ask permission to wait on her majesty, and return thanks to her for her gracious concessions to her people.[15]

The kings of England were "a species of divinity" (even though not always sane, nor housebroken)! Cromwell, who recognized the popular faith in kings, dismissed a proposal to place Charles Stuart (later Charles II) on the throne, saying, "He is so damnably debauched, he would undo us all....Give him a shoulder of mutton and a whore, that's all he cares for."[16] Yet, after Cromwell's death, when Charles II was placed on the throne, a trial of "the regicides" was held. The court refused to consider the case against Charles I as a traitor to the people of England in terms of the original feudal character of the throne. Instead, the modern doctrine of the divine right of kings was used to rule any and every act against the crown as morally, religiously, and legally wrong. This was clear in the opening remarks of Sir Orlando Bridgeman, Chief Baron of the Exchequer and presiding judge:

> The trial opened on Tuesday (October 9, 1660) with the presiding judge's charge to the jury. Bridgeman traced the legal position of the monarchy from the earliest times, showing that no single person or community of persons has any coercive power over the King of England; that the King was supreme Governor, subject to none but God,

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15. David Hume: *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Abdication of James the Second, 1688*, Vol. IV. (New York, N.Y.: Harper, 1852). pp. 336f.
16. Christopher Hill: *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution.* (New York, N.Y.: The Dial Press, 1970). p. 179.

> and could do no wrong, and that if he could do no wrong he could not be punished for any wrong.[17]

Related to this idea of the king's divinity was the belief in the healing power of "The King's Touch."[18]

After 1688 this concept of divine right was transferred to Parliament. Even as Bridgeman had held that Charles I could "do no wrong," so in 1946 the Attorney General of England, Sir Hartley Shawcross, M.P., declared, "Parliament is sovereign; it may make *any* laws. It could ordain that all blue-eyed babies be destroyed at birth."[19] This is an explicit assertion of Parliament's sovereignty; it is also implicitly an assertion of infallibility, since it recognizes no sovereign power or law beyond Parliament.

In the Soviet Union the issue of infallibility came to the fore in the aftermath of Khrushchev's speech of February 25, 1956, attacking the work of Stalin. This step gained the new rulers some popularity, but it raised serious questions with respect to the Marxist faith in the infallible working of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the manifestation of historical process. Second thoughts, prompted by Chinese Communist critics, led to some serious misgivings:

> If even an "outstanding Marxist-Leninist," the leader of the Party, can become a victim of these contradictions, then surely all other leaders of the Party may become similarly divorced from the actual conditions of society. And is it not possible then for the Party and the Government to become isolated from the people? These questions were not answered in the 5 April editorial, but they were answered later, and the answer was yes, indeed it was possible. But such an answer struck at the foundation of orthodox Communist theory itself, which held that no such possibility could ever occur. The Party, at least, was infallible in its knowledge of the historical process.[20]

As a result, there was some backtracking, and, in his 1957 speech on the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, Khrushchev restored Stalin to his "due place as a dedicated Marxist-Leninist and stalwart revolutionary. Our party and the Soviet people will remember Stalin and pay tribute to him."[21]

In every modern state, in varying degrees, there is a working doctrine of the infallibility of the state. There is a hesitancy about an open formulation of the concept, but it is nonetheless present. Those who hold to democracy, to the belief that the voice of the people is the voice of God (*vox populi, vox dei*), look to the people's voices in its lowest expression, in "the masses," in

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17. Patrick Morrah: *1660, The Year of Restoration.* (Boston, MASS: Beacon Press, 1960). p. 184.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 159. See also John B. Wolf: *Louis XIV.* (New York, N.Y.: Norton, 1968). p. 280.
19. Clarence Manion: *The Key to Peace.* (Chicago, IL: Heritage Foundation, 1951). p. 91.
20. Leo-Paul S. de Alvarez: *Sino-Soviet Ideological Relations: 1956-1957*, p. 34. Unpublished ms.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

minority groups, prisoners, perverts, and others who are held to be representatives of "the people" rather than of "vested interests."

Talmon has cited the opinions of Mazzini and others to illustrate the belief in the infallibility of the people:

> "The spirit of God can only descend upon the gathered multitudes. It is for them to say what they believe or do not believe." "We believe in the infallibility of the people," but "we put no trust in men." Only the totality of the individual people is God's Church. Rulers, party leaders, parties themselves may err. "The mass can never err." Individuals may often seduce and exercise an evil influence on the masses, but they can never in the last resort completely deprave or stifle man's conscience. Sooner or later the real good nature of the people re-asserts itself. And the men of conscience "are in the majority, and that majority has always the superiority of a purer sentiment, of better sense, of a calmer conscience," over those who separate themselves "from the people."[22]

After Rousseau, the belief in the infallibility of the people also meant the infallibility of an elite who can incarnate the general will of democratic society. This elite can know the democratic consensus better than the ballot box and thus are the supposed expression of the infallibility of the social order. This was the belief of the leaders of the French Revolution:

> It was to be a Committee of the most faithful and most ruthless. This was the conception underlying the regime of the Committee of Public Safety and Jacobin dictatorship, a regime designed to make the Revolutionary purpose triumph at all costs, and not to realize liberty in the sense of free self-expression; a system which replaced the principle of popular choice by the principle of the infallibility of the enlightened few in the central body acting in a dictatorial manner through special agents appointed by themselves.[23]

It should be noted that such non-Christian scholars do not hesitate to use the word *infallibility* in describing the authority of the modern state and its ruling elite. A prerogative of God has been appropriated by the state. Moreover, the state, like God, increasingly claims total jurisdiction over every area of life and an omnicompetence in every sphere. The state has become the new agency in whom man lives and moves and has his being (cf. Acts 17:28). Man now addresses his prayers and petitions to the state, which he believes to be his hope of salvation.

The school no less than the state lays claim to infallibility. An infallible organ is beyond criticism. Christians hold the Bible to be its own interpreter and thus its own standard. It is the characteristic of an infallible organ or agency that it is free from external constraint, criticism, or judgment. All of

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22. J. L. Talmon: *Political Messianism, The Romantic Phase.* (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1960). p. 258.
23. J. L. Talmon: *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy.* (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1960). p. 119.

these aspects of the doctrine have been incorporated into the dogma of academic freedom. This dogma had its origins in the "medieval" era and has since been greatly expanded. The academy, it is held, is beyond criticism by any standard extraneous to itself. Teachers and professors are ostensibly free to teach whatever they choose, in contempt of the trustees of the school, because their profession gives them an immunity. The clergy's immunity before the civil courts in earlier centuries was a very limited one. The new clergy of the schools claims total immunity from all jurisdictions, even in the face of the most ridiculous performances. Thus, in a Cranston, Rhode Island, high school, in 1972 a teacher of "an innovative social studies program called Economics and Politics in the Community," George O'Neill, invited a prostitute "to speak with" his forty pupils. In the uproar that followed, "A teacher, who asked not to be identified, said that 99% of the faculty and most of the pupils who understand the situation support O'Neill. It's a question of academic freedom."[24] The teacher can do no wrong, clearly. Examine again the claims made in Parliament for Elizabeth I, that her "prerogative was not to be canvassed, nor disputed, nor examined; and did not even admit of any limitation." Is not this the thesis of "academic freedom"? A teacher can strip herself naked in a sex education class: it is academic freedom. A professor can incite students to revolutionary violence: it is academic freedom. By virtue of their teaching office, such people are supposedly beyond criticism, and their every absurdity has some esoteric and infallible meaning which vindicates them always.

Infallibility is not an obsolete doctrine. It is very much with us. It has simply been transferred from the word of God to the word and institutions of man.

3. The Dependent Word of Man

Friedrick Nietzsche gives us a telling example of the infallibility concept and its inescapability. In Nietzsche we have a denial of the God of Scripture, and of the god of Hegel, the modern deification of history as it incarnates itself in the totalitarian state. Nietzsche is also hostile to all morality: good and evil, good and bad, must be dropped in favor of a life beyond morality. Even more, man and life must be negated, and the Superman is the one who negates all things. As Nietzsche observed, "The sight of man now fatigues - What is present-day Nihilism if it is not *that?* - We are tired of *man.*"[25]

All the same, Nietzsche *wrote*; he *spoke*, and, however much he denied all other values, he did not deny the validity of *his* word. Nietzsche waged war

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[24] "School in Uproar Over Invitation to Prostitute," in the *Los Angeles Times*, Tuesday, March 14, 1972, Part I, p. 21.

[25] F. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, 12; in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library). p. 26.

against the idea of an objective, created, and given world, and against the concomitant idea also of an objective, God-given and absolute moral order. In line with all modern philosophy, after Descartes and especially in terms of Kant, Nietzsche was emphatic in his denial of an objective and real world. The *only* world is the world of the mind of autonomous man and of the appearances his mind synthesizes. In Nietzsche's words:

> It is of cardinal importance that the *real world* should be suppressed. It is the most formidable inspirer of doubts, and depreciator of values, concerning the *world which we are:* it was our most dangerous *attempt* heretofore on the life of Life.
>
> *War* against all the hypotheses upon which a real world has been imagined. The notion that *moral values* are the *highest* values, belongs to this hypothesis.
>
> The superiority of the moral valuation would be refuted, if it could be shown to be the result of an *immoral* valuation - a specific case of real immorality: it would thus reduce itself to an *appearance*, and as an *appearance* it would cease from having any right to condemn appearance.[26]

No "things-in themselves" exist, only the knowing mind.[27]

It follows, therefore, that since there is no objective framework of reference, and no things-in-themselves, that the only error man can make is to assume that knowledge has an actual correlation with a real world which leads to an accurate understanding thereof. Knowledge is for Nietzsche the freedom of the mind from an objective reality and its ability, even as it is conditioned by things, to condition them in turn.

As a result, the more a man severs himself from God and the world as objective realities, the more clearly he speaks and, in fact, becomes *infallible*.

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche wrote of his composition of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in these terms:

> Can any one at the end of this nineteenth century possibly have any distinct notion of what poets of a more vigorous period meant by inspiration? If not, I should like to describe it. Provided one has the slightest remnant of superstition left, one can hardly reject completely the idea that one is the mere incarnation or mouthpiece, or medium of some almighty power. The notion of revelation describes the condition quite simply; by which I mean that something profoundly convulsive and disturbing suddenly become visible and audible with indescribably definiteness and exactness. One hears - one does not seek; one takes - one does not ask who gives: a thought flashes out like lightening, inevitably without hesitation - I have never had any choice about it. There is an ecstasy whose terrific tension is sometimes released by a flood of tears, during which one's progress varies from involuntary

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[26] F. Nietzsche: *The Will to Power*. (New York, N.Y.: Frederick Publications, 1960). p. 84.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

> impetuosity to involuntary slowness. There is the feeling that one is utterly out of hand, with the most distinct consciousness of an infinitude of shuddering thrills that pass through from head to foot; - there is a profound happiness in which the most painful and gloomy feelings are not discordant in effect, but are required as necessary colors in this overflow of light. There is an instinct for rhythmic relations which embraces an entire world of forms (lengths, the need for a widely extended rhythm, is almost a measure of the force of inspiration, a sort of counterpart to its pressure and tension). Everything occurs quite without volition, as if in an eruption of freedom, independence, power and divinity. The spontaneity of the image and similes is most remarkable; one loses all perception of what is imagery and simile; everything offers itself as the most immediate, exact, and simple means of expression. If I may recall a phrase of Zarathustra's, it actually seems as if the things themselves come to one, and offered themselves as similes. ("Here do all things come caressingly to thy discourse and flatter thee, for they would fain ride upon thy back. On every simile thou ridest here to every truth. Here fly open before thee all the speech and word shrines of existence, here all existence would become speech, here all Becoming would learn of thee how to speak.") This is *my* experience with inspiration. I have no doubt that I should have to go back millenniums to find another who could say to me: "It is mine also!"[28]

For Nietzsche thus, his writing was an expression of divinity, a revelation, and inspiration. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* apes in style the Bible and ancient epics; it is about as successful as Ossian and Joseph Smith.

As against "the immaculate perception" of those who want a valid scientific knowledge of things-in-themselves, Nietzsche offered the true way as "Dare only to believe in yourselves - in yourselves and in your inward parts! He who does not believe in himself always lieth."[29]

In twentieth-century existentialism this means that the only truth is existential truth, the dictates of one's own being as expressed without the influence of God, man, society, morals and mores, or anything external to the biological impulses of the man. Infallibility now means total separation from the external world, and from the past and future. History cannot be allowed to condition the existential moment.

For Sartre this means freedom from personal history. He denied Freud's idea of the unconscious, of the Id, Ego, and Superego, in favor of "a free, translucent consciousness."[30] Psychological determinism could not become for Sartre a primary factor in the mind of man. It is the free mind of autonomous man speaking in the existential moment that has true knowledge. In fact, Sartre held, "Knowledge puts us in the presence of the absolute, and

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[28] F. Nietzsche: *Ecce Homo*, "Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None," 3; in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, pp. 99-101.

[29] F. Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part II, XXXVII, in *ibid.*, pp. 133f.

[30] Hazel E. Barnes, in "Translator's Introduction" to Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*. (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1956). p. xxxvi.

there is a truth of knowledge. But this truth, although releasing us to nothing more and nothing less than the absolute, remains strictly human."[31]

Sartre and Nietzsche did not use the word infallibility, but this is what they were talking about. For Sartre, the goal of man is to become god, and this is attainable only on existential grounds, although a meaningless and futile passion even in attainment. The same is no less true of Nietzsche.

In fact, basic to the drive of modern philosophy is this goal of philosophers to become gods. As a result, modern philosophers, like the Greek thinkers, and Aristotle's pupil, Alexander the Great, have hated or avoided women as a drag on their divinity. This was emphatically true of Nietzsche, who despised marriage, and no less true of his follower, Adolph Hitler, whose life and works are echoes of Nietzsche. Nietzsche wrote:

> It is an accepted and indisputable fact, so long as there are philosophers in the world, and wherever philosophers have existed (from India to England, to take the opposite pole of philosophic ability), that there exists a real irritation and rancor on the part of philosophers toward sensuality... There similarly exists a real philosophic bias and affection for the whole ascetic ideal; there should be no illusions on this score. Both these feelings, as has been said, belong to the type; if a philosopher lacks both of them, then he is - you may be certain of it - never anything but a "pseudo".... Every animal, including *la bete philosophe*, strives instinctively after an optimum of favorable conditions, under which he can let his whole strength have play, and achieves his maximum consciousness of power; with equal instinctiveness, and with a fine perceptive flair which is superior to any reason, every animal shudders mortally at every kind of disturbance and hindrance which obstructs or could obstruct his way to that *optimum* (it is not his way to happiness of which I am talking, but his way to power, to action, the most powerful action, and in point of fact in many cases his way to unhappiness). Similarly, the philosopher shudders mortally at *marriage*, together with all that could persuade him to it - marriage as a fatal hindrance on the way to the *optimum*. Up to the present what great philosophers have married? Heracleitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, Schopenhauer - they were not married, and, further, one cannot *imagine* them as married. A married philosopher belongs to *comedy*, that is my rule; as for that exception of a Socrates - the malicious Socrates married himself, it seems, *ironice*, just to prove this very rule... So many bridges to *independence* are shown in the ascetic ideal, that the philosopher cannot refrain from exultation and clapping of hands when he hears the history of all those resolute ones, who on one day uttered a nay to all servitude and went into some *desert*; even granting that they were only strong asses, and the absolute opposite of strong minds. What, then, does the ascetic ideal mean in a philosopher? This is my answer - it will have been guessed long ago: when he sees this ideal the philosopher smiles because he sees therein an *optimum* of the conditions of the highest and boldest intellectuality; he does not thereby deny

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

> "existence," he rather affirms thereby *his* existence and *only* his existence, and this perhaps to the point of not being far off the blasphemous wish, *pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus fiam*!...[32]

In the above passage, Nietzsche also cites Buddha favorably with Buddha's contempt for life. Nietzsche is emphatically the great yea sayer to death and destruction, not to life.

Nietzsche's savage hatred of women, because the pull of sex is a reminder of humanity and of dependence, a difficult things for a would-be god to admit to, is apparent in work after work. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he gave as women's only use "recreation" for the warrior's play: "all else is folly." However, Warrior-man, or Superman, should go in to a woman only with care: "Thou goest to women? Do not forget thy whip!"[33]

This latter remark was apparently commonly used by Nietzsche before he wrote *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, because a year earlier a woman he loved intensely, but who did not return his love, Lou Salome, had Nietzsche and Paul Ree assume the place of animals in harness to a cart, while she sat in the cart with a whip![34] Moreover, Nietzsche's contempt for marriage was in part dishonest; women had repeatedly refused his marriage offer.[35] Usually this means, however, that a man has asked where he is sure of refusal, so that he can cherish a resentment against women.

A great many more philosophers than Nietzsche named have not married, and, unlike Nietzsche, more than a few have not even pretended to try. (Some have been homosexual as well.) Why this avoidance of marriage? Nietzsche has given us part of the answer. The autonomy claimed by modern philosophy from God has, as Sartre plainly states, the goal of becoming god. Now God needs no helpmeet: man emphatically does. To need a helpmeet, to be dependent on a woman, to be delighted with her, rely on her, be easily hurt or moved by her, is the mark of a man, a creature. Human dependency is in every direction, natural and supernatural, on God and man, on the earth and on air, on plants and on animals, on superiors and inferiors. Marriage in particular makes the fact of this dependency intensely personal. Feminists are under the illusion sometimes that, because Christian faith requires authority to be given to the man, the woman is placed in a position of dependence on the man, rather than vice versa. Nothing could be more wrong. On the human scene, the greater the authority, the greater the dependence, because human authority, to the extent that it increases, also increases human dependence. The dependence of a worm on the world and on other worms is far less than

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[32] Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, 7; in Nietzsche, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-108.
[33] Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part I, XVIII; in *Ibid.*, pp. 80f.
[34] H. F. Peters: *My Sister, My Spouse*. See photograph after p. 160. (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1962).
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

that of a man on the world and on other men. The greater the authority of any man, the more dependent he is on a great number of persons, things, and factors. Every increase of authority is at the same time an increase in dependency. A hermit has little authority and a minimum dependency; by separating himself from other men, he has also separated himself from authority over them. A general is of necessity dependent on more people to maintain his authority and purpose than is the private, who, having little authority, also needs others less to do his limited duties. All men are interdependent, and no man is born out of nothing, but the more man advances in authority, the more his dependence grows. The same is true of civilization: advancement means an increased dependency. Men in a backward country are less dependent on one another and on foreign trade than in a highly developed one, where specialization leads to greater interdependence as well as greater power and authority. It is an illusion of the ignorant and the foolish that independence from other men comes with increased authority. This illusion is a part of the mythology of autonomous man and his will to forsake the human condition. It is also an important factor in the ready decay of humanistic power. Human authority collapses when it denies independence. There is thus a marked difference between God's absolute and autonomous being and authority, and man's created and dependent being and authority. Man's word, moreover, is a dependent word: it depends on his oath, i.e., upon the name, authority, and fear of the judgment of the sovereign God. Epistemologically, man's word depends on the certainty and trustworthiness of God's word and world. Man's word is a totally dependent word, and God's word is a totally independent, sovereign, and infallible word, which man's word can never be. When man claims such an infallible word, he must play god and must deny independence, and his most basic personal dependence is on woman. But to deny his dependency is to deny his manhood without becoming a god. Few philosophers are as honest as Gautier's character in a novel, who cries out, "Why am I not God, since I cannot be a man?"[36]

The existentialist faith, however, stresses this goal of independence for men and women, and the result is not only a studied immoralism but a sense of infallibility and a radical self-righteousness. The modern mood is the ultimate in phariseeism as a consequence. In the various men's magazines which stress nudes, the brief interviews with the nude models almost always stress existential humanism with all its *self-righteousness*. As one such girl of 21, describing her deliverance into the new faith, declared:

> I'm discovering my own integrity in L.A., discovering that I'm really a very honest person. And I like that.

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[36] Theophile Gautier: *Mademoiselle De Maupin*. (New York, N.Y.: Modern Library). p. 91.

> I like almost everything...in fact, I love everything! I have no hang-ups about sex. With the right man and with the right, relaxed attitude, sex is the most exciting thing I know. There's got to be more to a man, of course, that just a nice body: I've been to bed with men who were incredibly good-looking and said goodbye to them the next morning not even wanting to see them again. When you're just horny and want to get laid, you find the best-looking, most virile man you can. But to get it all together, you need the body *and* the mind.[37]

For Nietzsche, the fear of *involvement* with woman was very great. For contemporary existentialism, sex, for man and woman alike, is depersonalized; it is a form of masturbation with another being, and some have held solitary masturbation to be the highest form of existential sex. Betty Dodson has praised masturbation, writing, "Socially institutionalized dependent sex is depersonalizing... Masturbation can help return sex to its proper place - to the individual." A professor, Dr. Joseph Lo Piccolo, has "written a nine-step masturbation program."[38] For many others, fornication and group sex are best without emotional involvement, i.e., when impersonal and physical in the main. However, in using and depersonalizing others, such people have only depersonalized themselves. Their pure fountain of existential infallibility is the old fountain of sin and self-righteousness. The end of Nietzsche was madness, but, as Lou Salome saw very early, his philosophy was always madness.

The dependent creature can speak only a dependent and fallible word.

4. Infallibility and Meaning

Because God is the absolute creator of all things, and because nothing exists outside of Him or apart from His creating decree, all things have their existence and their meaning from their sovereign creator, God. God, having no unconscious aspect in His being, is totally self-conscious and purposive in all His ways, so that all creation is a universe of total meaning. There is not a meaningless fact or atom in all creation, nor an event, nor any facet or aspect of anything that is not marked by total meaning. The meaning of most things elude us. We do not understand the meaning of mosquitos, for example, or the hairs that fall from our head, nor of the often unhappy events in our lives, because we tend to look for their meaning in terms of ourselves. The meaning of all things is theocentric – God-centered, not man-centered - which means that of necessity things are meaningless if we try to read them in terms of man, in terms of ourselves. We do not create them, govern them, nor more than slightly, in a limited area and manner, influence them; they are of God's

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[37] "Georgia Girl," in *Penthouse*, vol. 5, no. 10, June, 1974, p. 86.

[38] Linda Wolfe, "Take Two Aspirins and Masturbate," in *Playboy*, vol. 21, no. 6, June, 1974, p. 164.

ordination. Attempts to read the meaning of things humanistically are thus erroneous, futile, and blasphemous.

All the same, however, men insist on trying to force their meaning on history and to ascribe a totally humanistic meaning to events and things. If meaning is derived from man, then man's "creative" man is also spontaneously infallible; his every expression is an expression of original meaning. If man is ultimate, then man is creative, and his expressions have a naturally ultimate and infallible character.

It is this premise which undergirds, for example, Sigmund Freud. For Freud, the study of man's dreams was important. Dreams, being less censored than conscious thought and speech, are an expression of the spontaneous and creative mind, the *id* and the *ego*, and therefore infallible. The "truth" about man thus is not to be derived from the Bible - from a source extraneous to man - but from man's unconscious and spontaneous mind as it expresses itself in dreams. Dreams thus had a total and infallible meaning for Freud: man was to be known, and his meaning understood in terms of his dreams. Infallibility was thus transferred by Freud from God to man's unconscious mind, and meaning became an aspect of the unconscious as against the conscious mind.

For Marxism, with its doctrine of the infallibility of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialist state became the new vehicle of infallibility. Alexander Dolgun reports what other prisoners have also confirmed, that the Marxist state insists on infallibility. When arrested, Dolgun was told by his communist inquisitor, Sidorov, after Dolgun protested that the charges against him were false, "You say we have made a mistake. I tell you we never make mistakes."[39]

According to Scripture, all things have total meaning in terms of God. For humanism, all things are either meaningless, or else all things must derive their meaning from man, or from an agency of man. In terms of this, communist regimes ascribe total meaning to all things in terms of the attitudes and views of the communist state. The illustrations of this are many. For example, George Tenno was, during World War II, a commander in the navy of the Soviet Union,

> ...assigned as intelligence liaison officer with the British during the war, and often traveling on convoys bringing supplies in through Archangel and Murmansk. On his last return trip he became very friendly with the captain of the British cruiser he was assigned to. This man was promoted to vice-admiral after the war. In 1948, recalling George's fondness for a certain brand of British pipe tobacco, the vice-admiral had sent a Christmas card to Moscow, with a pouch of the tobacco. At this time George was undergoing special training. His English was excellent and he was going to be sent to the United States as a spy.

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[39] *Alexander Dolgun's Story, An American in the Gulag*. (New York, N.Y.: Knopf, 1975). p. 13. cf. p. 107.

> But the MGB decided that this Christmas message from a British vice-admiral smacked of conspiracy. They arrested both George and his wife, Natalie. For two years he was interrogated and had a very bad time. Finally he was sent to Dzhezkazgan, and Natalie to a camp in the far north, both with twenty-five years for high treason.[40]

For the communist regime, there could be no meaning except the total meaning of dialectical materialism. In terms of this total meaning, no independent, harmless act between a capitalist and a communist was possible. The Christmas card and tobacco pouch thus had total meaning as evidence of conspiracy.

In a humanistic world, because it is not undergirded by God's total meaning, either meaninglessness or man's total meaning will govern. The result is tyranny, in that man's every act is then interpreted by the arbitrary purposes of the state.

The purposes of the state, moreover, are not open and known to man as are the purposes of God by means of His infallible word. Because of the doctrine of evolution, a cosmic purpose and meaning are denied. Sociology, a humanistic principle, denies meaning, since Comte, in favor of technology. There is no good or evil in the universe, nor purpose, nor meaning. There is only the immediate and pragmatic demand of the state - utilitarian, opportunistic, relativistic, and unpredictable. Meaning is thus *ad hoc*, for the moment, if such a thing can be called meaning. It is existential, governed by the needs of the moment, and subject to no law. As a result, such a demand or act of state or of man is infallible: it is beyond appeal. The Marquis de Sade insisted that every act of perversion, crime, or violence was an infallible act, required by Nature, or by the biological urge of the moment. There could thus be no condemnation of any act of existential man, nor any law over man. The only offense for Sade was Christianity, with its insistence on an infallibility apart from man and his biological urge.

For the modern state, infallibility is similarly existential. The needs of the moment dictate the law of the moment, against which there is no law. The infallibility of the existential state is a logical development of all forms of Hegelianism - Marxist, Fascist, and democratic. The moment alone is real, and the moment is total and infallible. There is no other god than the moment, and the actor who seizes the moment is its infallible prophet.

There is thus no defense against humanism and its tyranny apart from the infallible word of God and an unwavering stand in terms of the sovereign and total decree of the triune God of Scripture.

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[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 338f.

5. The Canon of Covenant Law

A sovereign, omnipotent, and omniscient God can speak *only* an infallible and inerrant word. Because of the very nature of His being, God's *every word* is an infallible and inerrant word. Man can speak only a tentative word, because he cannot infallibly predict, govern, or determine the future. Man's every word is thus a tentative statement, even when he speaks of his own existence. Descartes' *cogito, ergo sum* - I think, therefore I am - was delivered as an assured and inerrant starting point for man. Here was an infallible starting point for man which was ostensibly an autonomous one, free from the supposed problems of God's inscriptured word. Descartes began with the fact of sheer existence; he assumed that thinking by this supposedly autonomous "I" or person was sound, objective reasoning, a tremendous act of faith and contradicting the obvious fact of man's total depravity, his twisted reasoning, and his subjective perspective. Moreover, the fact of sheer existence and some kind of thinking did not establish any grounds for his presupposition of autonomy. Descartes' existence and thinking were derivative and conditioned factors, so that, instead of being a starting point, they were themselves a chain of consequences. Moreover, why should Descartes' *thinking*, his *cogito*, have priority over his parent's *cogito*, and that of any possible son? If it be said that thinking or reason in all men is capable of that which Descartes ostensibly accomplished, then the autonomy of Descartes' reason is denied in favor of a Reason common to all men, or some Power behind that common Reason. Then too, Descartes' assured starting point proves to be a very tentative one indeed, and a very great act of faith. If the autonomous mind is the starting point and is ultimate, then what common ground is there with any other mind? Other minds are then reduced to aspects of our own experience and as creations of our own sovereign mind.

Fallible man can speak only a fallible word; man the creature can utter only a limited and tentative word, however much he may strain after a self-created certainty. Man's words are many and various; our minds change over the years, as do our tastes and perspectives. Even in heaven or in the new creation, man's word will be a limited word and always restricted to that which God chooses to have man know (Deut. 29:29).

God's word is of necessity not only infallible, but it is a binding word. Every word of God is law, because it in some sense binds man, is authoritative over him, or declares infallibly what God has done in the history of His covenant dealings. To limit the law to the Pentateuch is a serious error; in antiquity, the words of a king were binding words. Much more so, the words of God are binding words. They are law.

The Bible, in fact, is divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New (or renewed) Testament, witnessing to the two great stages of covenant

history. The Bible as a whole is God's covenant word or law, His declaration of the history and nature of His covenant.

A covenant book is thus a canonical book: it is the rule of faith, its law. The books of the Bible are canonical because they are covenantal. If our view of the covenant is antinomian, then we have neither a covenant nor a canon, only a book for vaguely spiritual and moral counsel. It is then not in essence an infallible word.

While Scripture has many words, it is in essence *one word*, and is so spoken of in Deuteronomy 4:2. With the close of the canon, the *words* now stop Rev. 22:18-19), and the one, unified word remains. Judgment is promised in Revelation 22:18-19 to all who add or detract from the one word, because an altered covenant law is no longer the law itself but a human substitute for the law.

Thus, where the law is denied, the canon soon becomes a "problem," and discussions ensue about the value or place of this or that portion of Scripture. Because antinomianism breaks the link between the ideas of an infallible canon, which is covenant, law, and gospel, all in one, a sovereign God whose salvation is not the destruction of law but the declaration of the righteousness of His law in demanding atonement, and in requiring of the atoned that "the righteousness of the law...be fulfilled" in them (Rom. 8:4), antinomianism quickly becomes weak and flabby in its use and defense of Scripture. It has no sovereign word from the sovereign God, only a beautiful story and some touching appeals by a begging god. Scripture gives us no such word. The answer to the Great Antinomianism is clear cut: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). It is that *every word* that man must hear, believe, and obey. It is the infallible word, and there is not another kind of word from God.

Infallibility is an inescapable concept and fact; it is the locale of infallibility which is in question. The canon or rule of life and faith is either from God or from man. It is either the canon of covenant law, or it is the canon of man's word as law.

6. The Command Word

A very common opinion today holds that the Bible is inspired where it speaks of faith and morals, but fully a product of its times where it touches on matters of history and the sciences (or the natural world). We are thus told by many that they are genuinely orthodox even while denying the historicity of Genesis 1-11, the historicity of Jonah, and various statements which seem to set Scripture at odds with modern science. The Bible, they say, is infallible where faith and morals are concerned, but history and nature are outside its province.

The recent origins of this opinion are neo-orthodox and Barthian. The roots, however, go back into neoplatonism and its contempt of material reality and finally into ancient Persian dualism. Implicit in this doctrine, called *inspiratio fundamentalis*, is a division of reality into two spheres. Van Til has observed, with respect to this theory,

> This theory appears very attractive to many serious-minded Christians today. In the first place, it fits in with the common distinction made by modern thought between religious and scientific truth. It is commonly held that the two are quite distinct from one another. Science is then supposed to deal with the spatio-temporal world, while religion deals with the moral and spiritual values that are thought of as being independent of spatio-temporal facts. In the second place, if one accepts the theory of fundamental inspiration, one can let Biblical criticism have its own free course; it is then maintained that all the religious truth taught in Scripture remains untouched even if criticism should prove the non-historicity of many of the facts recorded in Scripture.
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> With respect to this theory it ought to be observed at once that it is itself a part of the whole non-Christian scheme of interpretation of life. In the first place, the whole distinction between religious and historical truth is absolutely false from a Christian point of view. The resurrection of Christ is an historical fact and upon it, together with other historical facts, the truth of the religion of Christianity depends. Redemption has been historically mediated. It was in history, by historical persons, that sin was committed. It was therefore also in history, by the Son of God assuming a human nature and paying the penalty for sin on the cross, that sin is removed. We need, therefore an authoritative interpretation of the once-for-all significance of these redemptive historical facts. There is no Christian religion apart from history.
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> Here again, Barth and his school are on the side of Modernism. Barth, as well as the Modernists, is virtually indifferent to the historicity of the facts of redemption. That is, the real significance of redemption, according to Barth is ideational rather than historical. In the incarnation, Christ only touches history as a tangent touches a circle. Redemption is, according to this point of view, a process by which men are taken out of the historical and made something super-historical. It is no wonder that, with such a conception of history, Barth and his school are indifferent to Bible criticism, and ridicule the theory of an infallible Bible.[41]

Such a doctrine in effect raptures a man out of history even while he is in it. It makes the faith non-historical and hence irrelevant. For all such, it is not only history and nature which are outside of God, but also faith and morals ultimately.

The reason is simply the doctrine of God implied in this theory. God does not speak infallibly regarding history and nature, we are asked to believe. Such a God is not sovereign, nor is He literally then the maker of heaven and

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[41] Cornelius Van Til: *An Introduction to Theology*. Vol. II. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1947). pp. 147f.

earth and the determiner of all history. He is a figure outside of creation, giving moral and religious counsel to an alien world.

Not surprisingly, the advocates of this theory are uniformly antinomian. If they profess to honor God's law, it is on a selective basis: laws against murder, but not necessarily capital punishment for murder, laws against adultery, but not the death penalty for it; laws against theft, but no laws for restitution; and so on. Such a principle of selective obedience is not obedience to God but rather obedience to our own selective and superior reason and conscience. Instead of a sovereign God, we have a sovereign man. Scripture is reinterpreted to remove its offense, while still used to substantiate man's claims to be the humble and obedient servant of God.

If God is indeed our Lord, and maker of heaven and earth, then He can speak only infallibly about nature and history. His word is then a binding law, and the operating premise of man in every sphere of life and thought. Our eschatology will then reflect His lordship. An infallible word which deals, as the Bible plainly does, with history and nature implies the manifest duty of man to exercise dominion in those spheres in the name of God.

The Bible is a command word. We are regularly told by antinomians that God, for example, does not require us to tithe any longer; rather, He supposedly wants our free-will gifts only. Of course, any decision to tithe involves man's will also, and his free exercise thereof, but the tithe makes clear, as the whole law does, what the will of God is, and what our duty is. We can obey or disobey, but to set the terms of obedience, and the nature of the obedience, by our will is to deny God's sovereignty and His sovereign claims over us.

Because the Bible is a command word, it is not designed nor does it speak to satisfy our curiosity, but rather to declare God's purpose and law, and to command our faith in and obedience thereto. The command word of a sovereign God can only be an infallible word, and a law word. The Bible does not seek a rational man's assent, because this rational man is a myth. It speaks to a fallen and depraved man whose need is the word of life, and the way of life, Jesus Christ, and the law of that life and person.

A command word is an impossibility for the *inspiratio fundamentalis* doctrine: its god cannot speak such a word. To say then that we believe one aspect of Scripture - its teachings concerning faith and morals - but not another - its teachings concerning history and science - is to deceive ourselves and to lie to God. By setting ourselves up as judges over what is true and untrue in His word, and by ruling Him out of nature and history in any sovereign sense, we deny that He has *any* infallible word for man in any sense. Man lives in nature and history; he acts in nature and history. If man is more active in nature and history than God is, then it is the word of man which rules us, quite logically. Such a God can only tell us to *leave* the world, not

how to exercise dominion over it. The word of man then becomes the command word for history and nature.

7. Infallible Man

Salvation is a concern common to all political theorists and activists, because the world as it exists is obviously not right. Political theories are thus presented as plans of salvation, although they are not labelled as such. Basic to all non-Christian political thought since Plato is the attempt to save man by political efforts on the part of man through the state. God and the supernatural are ruled out as inadmissable: what saves man must come from man.

This means statist power. Since an authoritative, binding, and saving word from God is ruled out, it means an authoritative word from man. That word must be the Right Word, the binding word. Rousseau raised this question at the beginning of *The Social Contract*:

> However strong a man, he is never strong enough to remain master always, unless he transform his Might into Right, and Obedience into Duty. Hence we have come to speak of the Right of the Strongest, a right which, seemingly assumed in irony, has, in fact, become established in principle. But the meaning of the phrase has never been adequately explained. Strength is a physical attribute, and I fail to see how any moral sanction can attach to its effects. To yield to the strong is an act of necessity, not of will. At most it is the result of a dictate of prudence. How, then, can it become a duty?[42]

Man needs a standard, a criterion for Right, Duty, and Justice. What the sovereign God of Scripture had once provided needed now to be succeeded for Rousseau by a new sovereign with a new word. This new sovereign was for Rousseau "the body politic," or the state, i.e., the state as the totality of its people. It is the people who are sovereign, but the people in social contract, organizing a state. By definition this sovereign power is the inerrant voice of the people:

> Now, the Sovereign People, having no existence outside that of the individuals who compose it, has, and can have, no interest at variance with theirs. Consequently, the sovereign power need give no guarantee to its subjects, since it is impossible that the body should wish to injure all its members, nor, as we shall see later, can it injure any single individual. The Sovereign, by merely existing, is always what it should be. But the same does not hold true of the relation of subject to sovereign. In spite of common interest, there can be no guarantee that the subject will observe his duty to the sovereign unless means are found to ensure his loyalty.[43]

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[42] Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "The Social Contract," Book I, Chapter III, "Of the Right of the Strong," in Sir Ernest Barker, editor: *Social Contract, Essays by Locke, Hume and Rousseau.* (London, England: Oxford University Press, (1947) 1958). p. 244.

[43] *Ibid.*, "Of the Sovereign," Bk. I, Chap. VII, p. 260.

Here we have the exaltation of the state into the truly Grand Inquisitor of all history: the state is infallible, but the people are not, and means must be found to "ensure the loyalty of the people." In Rousseau's words, "it may be necessary to compel a man to be free." Freedom in this sense is the freedom of the "political machine" to fulfil its goals.[44] Rousseau stresses this again and again: the state incorporates and incarnates the general will, which is infallible; the individual will cannot set itself against the general will. "The general will is always right and ever tends to the public advantage."[45]

There can be no freedom for anyone or any institution from this omnipotent, indestructible, inerrant, and infallible general will. The church must emphatically be brought into submission to it. Like Hobbes, Rousseau demanded that "all should be brought into a single political whole, without which no State and no Government can ever be firmly established."[46]

Rousseau's state is a corporate and mystical body. It is a merger of the Christian ideas of the church and of God to constitute a divine-human order on earth. The political order was converted by Rousseau into man's new God, Savior, and church. Infallibility was thus transferred from God and His word to the general will and its political order.

Rousseau's legislator is thus one who "must, in every way, be an extraordinary figure in the State. He is so by reason of his genius, and no less so by that of his office. He is neither magistrate nor sovereign. His function is to constitute the State."[47] This great man who lays down the foundations for the democratic state which incarnates the general will is a man-god who has "no contact with our nature" and is something of a god, or, if more than one, gods. The experts who thus create this new social order are, like Plato's law-giver and Machiavelli's founder prince, more than ordinary human beings:

> In order to discover what social regulations are best suited to nations, there is needed a superior intelligence which can survey all the passions of mankind, though itself exposed to none: an intelligence having no contact with our nature, yet knowing it to the full: an intelligence, the well-being of which is independent of our own, yet willing to be concerned with it: which, finally, viewing the long perspectives of time, and preparing for itself a day of glory as yet far distant, will labor in one century to reap its reward in another. In short, only Gods can give laws to men.[48]

Here we see the genesis of the new gods, the intellectuals and the scientific socialist experts. We cannot understand the arrogance of the intellectuals and

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44. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
45. *Ibid.*, "Whether the General Will Can Err," Bk. II, Chap. III, p. 274.
46. *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, Chap. VIII, p. 429.
47. *Ibid.*, Bk. III, Chap. VIII, p. 292.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 290f.

the scientific experts unless we realize that modern political thought has called them into being as the new gods of creation.

Rousseau required "a purely civil profession of faith," i.e., faith is the state as lord rather than in the God of Scripture. "Any man who, after acknowledging these articles of faith, proceeds to act as though he did not believe them, is deserving of the death penalty."[49] The state is the order of salvation. Hence, "anyone who dares to say 'Outside the Church there can be no salvation,' should be banished from the State."[50]

Rousseau's ideas, despite all their contradiction, met with a ready response because man's faith was now in man as incarnated in the state. Condorcet saw the future as a happy road of progress, because the West, meaning the humanistic thinkers of the West, had discovered "simple truths and infallible methods."[51]

John Stuart Mill, in *On Liberty*, presented the individual as sovereign, over himself and over his own mind at least. Herbert Spencer held that every man has the freedom to do all that he wills, provided that he did not infringe on the same freedom of any other man.

Infallibility in all this was not denied. It was transferred from God and His word to Nature and the laws of nature, and then to the state or to individual man. Spencer's future society is a millennial picture, not unlike Marx's perfect communism. The new man lives then in a new estate made possible by the new freedom of the true state. For Spencer, the new infallibility was in the evolutionary process.

The new infallibility has had its prophets. Claude Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte each saw himself as the inspired prophet of a new age for mankind. Saint-Simon wrote of "the voice of God" issuing "through his mouth," and of himself as the messiah of the new creed.[52] Comte saw himself as both the new prophet and pope of the post-Christian era. More than that, he saw himself as being identical with the Great Being or God, i.e., Humanity and its general will. Rousseau's legislators were asserting their presence! Mazzini saw himself also as mankind's prophet-savior, although he also identified the messiah with the whole people of the nation which moved into the new age. Hegel asserted the infallible nature of the new state and its absolute power. Proudhon, affirming man's absolute liberty, declared that man must remake himself by defeating and killing the God of Scripture. Only then could man realize himself.

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49. *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, Chap. VIII, pp. 437f.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 439.
51. Dante Germino: *Modern Western Political Thought: Machiavelli to Marx.* (Chicago, IL: Rand, McNally, 1972). p. 164.
52. Frank E. Manuel: *The Prophets of Paris.* (Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, (1962) 1965). p. 142.

In more recent years, the plain-speaking of these earlier humanists is gone, but the presumption and faith still remain. Skinner is no less Rousseau's god-man than Comte, and the same is true of countless other scientists and intellectuals.

In brief, infallibility is *not* a doctrine limited to theological studies. It is a fact of contemporary life, with the new gods claiming for themselves that power which properly belongs only to God.

Therefore, any discussion of infallibility which confines itself to a discussion of what theologians have said is blind to the problems of our time. The new infallibility doctrine confronts us in art, politics, and the sciences. Failure to challenge these rivals of God and enemies of His word and kingdom is faithlessness and incompetence. To sit idly by while these new doctrines of infallibility parade their pretensions and to assume that a Sunday morning assertion concerning Scripture suffices is cowardice and desertion.

8. The Infallible Act and Word

At the very heart of the doctrine of infallibility is the aseity or self-being of God. God's every word and act is infallible, not because it meets some standard of accuracy and truth and passes that test, but because God's word is the ultimate word, and there is nothing beyond God whereby we can judge, test, or prove God's word. God is emphatic: "I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45: 14, 18, 21, 22). Not only are all things made by Him (Gen. 1:1, John 1:3), but all things can be truly understood and tested only in terms of His word.

There is nothing outside of God to determine God or to condition or affect any word or act of God. Whatever God is, does, or says is ultimate, absolute, and infallible, because He is God, "and there is none else." God is not governed, predestined, nor is He influenced, by anything outside of Himself.

Every effort therefore to *prove* infallibility implies another standard, and it undercuts the infallibility of God and His word. Our purpose thus is not to prove infallibility but rather to strip men of the evasions which obscure the doctrine. It is an inescapable doctrine. Man denies it to God only to assert it for himself. The pretensions of man's "doubts" must thus be exposed, and its claims confounded.

God's word, being an uninfluenced and self-determined, or God-determined, word is the only pure word, the only word which is beyond circumstances. Our words are circumstantial, motivated by the needs of the circumstance or situation, but God's creative word creates history and all circumstance and also His written word then governs all history and circumstances.

When man therefore denies God, man seeks to achieve his own infallible word and act, the gratuitous words and act which are beyond circumstances.

This means an unmotivated word and act. This means thus living beyond causality, i.e., escaping from the matrix of creation into a situation of self-transcendence. Hence the proliferation of senseless, causeless crimes, of what one psychiatrist called "rebels without a cause."

Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), called by Shattuck "the impressario of the avant-garde," was a champion of the gratuitous act, "l'acte gratuit," as the means to human freedom. Uncaused wickedness was for him (as for the Marquis de Sade and others) a liberation, because uncaused wickedness manifests a purely disinterested act, unmotivated evil. Because such an act is performed only to satisfy a totally personal whim, it becomes a free, uncaused, and therefore divine, act. In that act the perpetrator becomes a god. Because the act has no external reference, and no relationship to the situation, to gain or loss, to good or evil, it is ostensibly a pure act, a free act, or an infallible act or word.

Apollinaire thus found the opportunity to set forth this faith in pornography. In *Onze mille verges*, the hero is a presentation of this liberation by pure evil. (God being good, the anti-god finds his "deity" in pure evil.) His hero, Mony, after a life of frightful evil, is sentenced to death. He then rapes savagely a twelve-year-old girl who decides to yield her virginity to the condemned man. Following this act, Mony strangled the little girl, after gouging out her eyes, while she screamed hideously. Already under death sentence, he had nothing to fear, and his act was thus pure evil, uncaused evil.[53]

In terms of this, the rise of "senseless" crimes becomes more understandable. The "pure" or uncaused act of evil is a declaration of independence from God and man. It is a denial of the limitations of creatureliness and an affirmation of autonomy. Such an act of pure evil becomes a necessary act whenever a man seeks to demonstrate his independence from God and man: it is his "necessary" escape from the act conditioned by God's requirements and man's demands and pressures. The nemesis of this pure act of evil is its necessity: God's every word and act are totally and absolutely self-caused; God never needs to prove Himself. The man whose passion it is to become god must work to effect his pure act of evil, and it can only be a sporadic act. The rest of his life is governed by creaturely necessities which finally overwhelm him: he must eat, sleep, live in a world of supplies provided by others, and, finally, he dies. Thus, his "pure" act of evil is a necessary and occasional act, and it bears the stamp, because of its necessity and its nature of rebellion against God, as anything but a pure and free act.

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53. Roger Shattuck: *The Banquet Years, The Arts in France, 1885-1918.* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books (1955) 1961). pp. 304f.

However, the man whose passion it is to become god tries only the harder to become capable of the pure act and the pure word. The rise of pornography is basic to this quest. Because God declares that His word is the good and the holy word, the anti-god muse pronounce the evil and the profane word. Modern pornography, beginning with the Marquis de Sade, and coming into its own after World War II, is a religious concern. It is man's attempt to declare a pure word describing a pure act.

In pornography we have, *first*, a radical concern for lawlessness. The appeal of pornography is its far-out violation of moral law. The more intense the separation from God's law, the more successful is the pornography in this new perspective. The greater the distance from the moral and the decent act, the greater the supposed freedom, and hence the actual pleasure. *Second*, in pornography there is no concern for other people. The interest is in self-gratification and self-expression. Thus, just as the radical violation of God's law proclaims a supposed independence from God's law, so the radical contempt for the sexual partners indicates a supposed independence from other people. The sexual partner thus cannot be loved: the partner is used and hated.

Dr. Robert Stroller, a professor at the U.C.L.A. School of Medicine, has written in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* that, except for a few rare individuals, most human sexuality is generated by hostility. People are least loving when "making love."[54] This is clearly true of modern existential man. He cannot love another person, because autonomy and the passion to be god require an independence from love and the dependence love creates. Hence, what modern man calls love is really sexual exploitation.

But even sexual exploitation establishes the fact that the exploited is *needed.* Hence ultimate sex becomes solitary sex - masturbation. A socialist magazine thus presents masturbation as the basic aspect of women's liberation. Classes in how to masturbate are held for women, with a textbook on the subject, and the entire class masturbates as directed. We are told that "Masturbation is one of the few acts going that can truly stand alone, and it requires only a quorum of one."[55] E. Shorter has shown that masturbation is in the main a modern phenomenon.[56] It is a product of the world of Descartes, the world in which man is ostensibly autonomous and is his own universe. In such a world, solitary sex, dependent not on a partner but the individual's imagination and body alone, becomes ultimate sex. Pornography is in essence masturbatory literature; when it leads to any sexual act involving others, it is still a totally self-centered act.

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54. "Is Sex Neurotic?" in *Time*, January 3, 1977, vol. 109, no. 1.
55. Mopsy Strange Kennedy, "The Sexual Revolution Just Keeps on Coming," in *Mother Jones*, December 1976, vol. I, no. 9, p. 25.
56. Edward Shorter: *The Making of the Modern Family.* (New York, N.Y.: Basic Books, 1975). pp. 76, 98, 102, 114-116, 251.

Third, pornography is concerned with exploratory sex, with discovering the potentialities for still more lawless forms of sexuality, and it derives its pleasure from such "discoveries" and acts. The anti-god must have unlimited potentiality, and hence no boundaries can be placed on the form that the sexual act exploits. The pages of such publications as *Penthouse* report continually on the ostensible ecstasies of new devices, new forms of lawlessness and perversion, and new reaches of the pornographic imagination in sex.

Many of these letters and accounts are to be taken as fiction, although by no means all of them. In any case, the intent is the same. By formulating and expressing their evil imagination, they are finding an ostensible freedom in the pure word, the lawless, the uncaused word. More and more, the forms of devised pornographic evil depart from anything which can be called a physical sexual urge. This adds to their pleasure. They become thereby a purer evil and an uncaused act, the gratuitous and pure word expressed by letter or book. Such writings, as examples of the pure word, become like a Bible to many millions, who read them eagerly in order to gain stimulus to soar into their own realm of the pure word, if only in imagination, or the pure act in performance.

Profane language meets a like purpose. Profanity is less and less what it once was, an outburst of anger or frustration. Such profanity is caused by an event and is not free. Modern profanity and obscenity are increasingly uncaused and gratuitous. For many people, the more causeless and outrageous the situation, the better the obscenity. Thus one young man, supposedly an artist but in reality a social parasite, walked up to a middle-aged woman coming out of church, whom he had never seen before, and told her that what she needed for salvation was liberation. You can be free, he told her, if you copulate with me on the grass, or else open up my fly here and now and suck me. If not, you will be a slave to your mythical God and to middle-class hang-ups, he added. He defended his words on the grounds that he was promoting true religion - freedom for man - and took off before the police were called; there was nothing "dirty" about his words, he insisted, and it was her reaction which was "dirty": his was the pure and liberating word.

Enough has been said to indicate that man's attempts at infallibility have social consequences. The provincialism of the church, whereby it regards the doctrine of infallibility as something having reference only to the Bible, is a deadly one. It is a tacit denial of the sovereignty of God. Because God is sovereign, there is nothing in all creation which can be understood in anything other than theological terms. All reality is inescapably a theological fact. There is no valid interpretation for anything except in terms of God and His infallible word. Every non-Christian category of thought is thus either a falsification or misapplication of God's word, or an attempt to use God's meaning while denying God, and it is thus an anti-word. Because every

unbeliever is an antichrist, so ultimately every word of the unbeliever becomes an anti-word, a word against God and His meaning, which is the only meaning. It becomes a word in defiance of God, a word declared to establish man as his own god. It is this that finds expression in the ideas of the pure act and the pure word of the anti-Christian man.

9. The Infallible Movement

One of the more interesting statements by Sartre is his declaration that for existentialism "all human activities are equivalent." Because there can be, for existentialism, no valid outside determination of man, and man must be freed from all influences of religion, society, family, and school, from past and future in order to have full freedom and sovereignty in the present moment, all things are equal, because all things are equally meaningless. For existentialism, Sartre holds, "it amounts to the same thing whether one gets drunk alone or is a leader of nations." The only valid goal is to be truly free from all outside determination and to be fully self-conscious as an autonomous being. In terms of this goal, it is likely that "it will be the quietism of the solitary drunkard which will take precedence over the vain agitation of the leaders of nations."[57] The leader of nations will be influenced by people and events; the drunkard will be the better existentialist, because he will be influenced only by his own desire to drink.

The existential moment is the present as lived by man when he divorces himself from the past, from men and society, and from all considerations of God and good and evil. Such a man, having "recognized" his freedom, will be beyond good and evil ostensibly. He will live in the existential moment beyond judgment, because the existential moment is always infallible.

What existential man wills and does is of necessity infallible, because no legitimate standard is held to exist which can judge man and declare any variations from his actions to be mandatory. The necessary act and the infallible act is what existential man does. Beyond him, there is by definition nothing. Existential man says in effect, I am the man-god, and beside me there is none else.

The same applies to every thought and word of existential man: what existential man thinks and says is infallible because there is no standard, law, or God for him to rule that anything he thinks and says is not inerrant. The self-expression of existentialist man is thus an infallible expression. Infallible man speaks an infallible word which is also for him the only word in the universe.

The moment is always infallible, and because existential man refuses to bow down to God, time, history, and society, he lives without reference to the

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[57] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Being and Nothingness*. (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1956). p. 627.

past and future in an eternal now. God's eternity is beyond time; existential man's "eternity" is the moment, the eternal now.

Guillaume Apollinaire, barely twenty, wrote portions of a novel in which he had a character declare, concerning the coming new man:

> On my arrival on earth I found humanity on its last legs, devoted to fetishes, bigoted, barely capable of distinguishing good from evil - and I shall leave it intelligent, enlightened, regenerated, knowing there is neither good nor evil nor God nor devil nor spirits nor matter in distinct separateness.[58]

This emphasis on the ultimacy of the moment has led to what Kenneth Keniston has called the cult of the present. In this faith, the here and now is everything. Experience divorced from eternal standards of judgment, activity and adventure for their own sake, and a heedlessness about the future mark this cult of the present. There is a search for total meaning in the present, but this total meaning eludes existential man. Drugs are very important to existential man, because drugs provide the Nirvana of the moment. Attempts to suppress the drug traffic are failing, because narcotics represent too basic a need for moderns. They provide an escape from God and society, from reality, from past and future and from time itself for existential man. Narcotics provide the illusion of an eternal now and feed the sense of infallibility, the sense of being a god.

This quest, in the true spirit of existentialism, is both a search for meaning and "the desire for self-expression." However, as Keniston notes, "this is rarely a desire to remedy wrongs or to reform society."[59] Sartre is not true to his existentialism in his social concern: he is closer to the leader of nations than to the drunkard.

This search for the infallible moment by existential man is a failure. The denial of God's world of meaning means, not a new meaning, but no meaning.

> Yet characteristically a philosophy of absolute freedom, based on a denial of any necessary relationship with the past, is usually a philosophy of the absurd; the signs of this freedom are not joy and triumph, but nausea and dread; and its possessors are not the creators but the Strangers and Outsiders of the universe. Few men, young or old, ordinary or extraordinary, can live contentedly, much less joyously, without some relationship to time other than total freedom.[60]

No man is able to make or be his own universe. The existentialist's infallible moment thus proves to be a step into hell. The goal of existentialist man is "to have no other law but mine." This means rejecting God, man, and nature,

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[58] Roger Shattuck: *The Banquet Years.* p. 253.

[59] Kenneth Keniston: *The Uncommitted, Alienated Youth in American Society.* (New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace and World, (1960) 1965). pp. 182f.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

because nature, as God's creation, has "a thousand beaten paths" all leading up to God.[61]

The infallible moment is thus an illusion, but it is an illusion which is central to the life of modern man. It is a concept which has had widespread influence among supposed Christians. It is thus necessary to cut the ground out from under rival doctrines of infallibility in order to leave fallen men - both those outside the church and those within - without excuse.

Moreover, we should remember that the charismatic movement, with its emphasis on "revelations" and experience, has in many cases deep inner links with existentialism. The periodic rise of charismatic movements in history is closely linked with the prevalence of the cult of the present.

10. Who Speaks the Word?

As we have seen, the doctrine of infallibility is not restricted to the Bible. Man is in all his ways and in all his being the creature of God. Every category of his life and thought is determined and conditioned by that fact. Man is therefore God's covenant-keeping man, or, in a revolt, is a pretended god who seeks to reproduce God's being and life in his own person. Man will therefore in his rebellion seek to establish his independent word as the sufficient word. His autonomous word is said to be beyond good and evil, because his word establishes what is good and evil for himself, and for the moment only. Not even the word of existential man can bind him.

In analyzing the question of the infallible word, we must recognize that, in essence, there are three possible answers to the basic question of the ultimate and necessary word. How do we know, and what is the source of authority? Who speaks the binding and infallible word, in brief? We can answer, *first*, that man alone speaks the word; *second*, that God and man are both capable of speaking the creative and ultimate word; or *third*, that God alone speaks creatively, authoritatively, and infallibly.

The *first* view holds that man alone speaks the infallible word. There is said to be no God, or, if God exists, He is a God who remains outside of man's purview. He is not God over man and universe and is an outsider to it. Man thus has no standard beyond himself. For an existentialist such as Sartre, God is by definition no problem to his philosophy, but other people are. How can men, each seeking to be a god, tolerate one another? In a world of rival gods, conflict is inescapable. Sartre offers "inter-subjectivity" as the answer, but this possibility is not developed into anything other than a hope.

Man as god, speaking the infallible word, cannot speak the word of knowledge concerning creation. Since he has no authoritative standard other

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[61] Jean-Paul Sartre: *No Exit, and Three Other Plays*. (New York, N.Y.: Knopf Vantage Books, (1946) 1955). p. 122. These lines are from the play, *The Flies*.

than himself, he must have an exhaustive knowledge of all reality before he has any knowledge at all. Because he has denied that reality has any God-given law and order in and over it, he must examine that reality totally before he can pronounce a word of knowledge concerning it. As a result, no knowledge is possible.

Nietzsche, in declaring his independence from God, was forced thereby to deny all knowledge, and the idea of truth. In the end Nietzsche annihilated everything, including himself. Man became an island in a shoreless sea, hearing no voice but his own and committed to suicide. Since life itself could not be a criterion for Nietzsche, he had to reject the life force itself finally as an alien standard and good. Suicide was thus his ultimate counsel.

To deny God is ultimately to deny man, life, knowledge, and everything else. God is the only creator and sustainer of all things: when He is denied, everything is denied. The result is a world without meaning, only total negation.

Few people have realized this more clearly than Karl Barth. As a thoroughly modern man, he was in principle opposed to the sovereign God of Scripture, who alone speaks authoritatively and creatively, and whose every word is therefore an infallible and inerrant word. Barth belonged to the world of Descartes; for him the God of Scripture was anathema. On the other hand, Barth was horrified by the abyss opened up by Nietzsche, or, more accurately, by Feuerbach and the whole tradition of modern thought. When man alone speaks, then man is doomed. The world of suicide opens up, and the apocalypse of modern man in a worldwide conflict. Barth wanted neither God alone nor man alone, neither the word of God nor the word of man. Barth's hope was for something in between, something which would give man his Cartesian freedom and autonomy to speak the authoritative word in the name of God. God would thus provide the insurance policy to undergird man's word. For Barth, therefore, God is very important, not in Himself, but as a foundation for man's freedom. God is for Barth a limiting concept, not the sovereign and omnipotent being.

The result was the *second* possible answer, i.e., that God and man are both creative, and both speak creatively in Scripture. The word of God is here in the Bible, but it is a hidden, subjective word, appearing only in the divine-human encounter. It is not God in Himself that interests Barth; if such a God exists, He is unknowable. He is not a matter for belief or unbelief. He is not our concern. Only a relational concept of God exists in Barth, a God whose function it is to underwrite man. The liberal theologian Wingren is right: "In Barth's theology man is the obvious center. The question about man's knowledge is the axis around which the whole subject matter moves." He adds that this is very plainly manifested in what Barth has to say about God's law.[62]

Barth's concern was not salvation: he was too much a universalist for that. His concern was with saving the possibility of knowledge. His man is modern man, man in epistemological crisis, not Biblical man. Barth's man is without a Biblical doctrine of sin; rather, he is modern man, who has a problem establishing how he can know, and who has a desire for knowledge without responsibility.

The Bible for Barth is simply a means whereby man can establish his own word in the name of God; it is not the infallible word of the God whose law is binding upon man. It is man's word for Barth which must be spoken and must be heard. But, as Wingren notes,

> Man without means of contact with God is not the kind of man described in the biblical writings. This man without means of contact with God is the modern, atheistic man for whom the question of knowledge is the one essential question whenever the conception of God is discussed.[63]

For Barth, sin is the impossible possibility, a notion which makes formal use of the doctrine of sin but preserves man in his autonomy and freedom. Man and God have one being for Barth. Man's fall thus is not from something ordained by the absolute God, but from himself. Salvation is not new life but new knowledge, and it is in essence a rise in the scale of being. Barth's language is one of encounter and correspondence, not atonement and salvation.

Rudolf Bultmann tried also to preserve man from the abyss of self-deification. His answer was to de-mythologize Scripture to gain the true word. He began by declaring that the scientific worldview must be strictly accepted. Anything which purports to come from the eternal realm is strictly mythological. By de-mythologizing Scripture, we can then recognize that realized eschatology is its true message. Man's religious quest must not be directed to a fixed point outside himself but to himself and his own awareness and certainty. As Wingren comments,

> In regard to the concept of guilt we have established that a peculiar "egocentricity" dominates Bultmann's thinking on this point. This is due to the influence of Heidegger. Guilt is lack of self-realization, just as salvation is self-realization. Human life (*Dasein*) has fallen, but it has fallen exclusively from itself. When man searches and chooses among the possibilities which meet him in the hour of decision, he is seeking his own existence.[64]

Where does God come into the picture for Bultmann? The modern worldview of science prevails; the supernatural and the beyond are ruled out, and man is autonomous, his only hope being himself. Having done this,

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62. Gustaf Wingren: *Theology in Conflict, Nygren, Barth, Bultmann.* (Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg Press, 1958). pp. 34f.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 131f.

Bultmann appeals to security in "the unseen beyond, in God."[65] But this is the very God he has ruled out! Bultmann then turns on science and technology as the true demons who give man a false sense of security, when man's true state should be no security whatsoever. Like Tillich, he affirms as the Protestant Principle a perpetual insecurity, i.e., a perpetual anxiety neurosis, and a St. Vitus' Dance in no man's land.[66]

Bultmann does not want the God of Scripture nor His infallible world. He "de-mythologizes" it in order to strip God of all authority. It is man's word which he upholds, but, like Barth, he sees suicide inherent in man's word, so he then de-mythologizes man. How do we then have knowledge? Man's word is undermined to a degree, and God's word radically so. Our knowledge, which, as for Barth, is our justification, comes by de-mythologizing! As Bultmann wrote:

> Indeed, de-mythologizing is a task parallel to that performed by Paul and Luther in their doctrine of justification by faith alone without the works of the law. More precisely, de-mythologizing is the radical application of the doctrine of justification by faith to the sphere of knowledge and thought. Like the doctrine of justification, de-mythologizing destroys every longing for security. There is no difference between security based on good works and security built on objectifying knowledge. The man who desires to believe in God must know that he has nothing at his own disposal on which to build this faith, that he is, so to speak, in a vacuum. He who abandons every form of security shall find the true security.[67]

Biblical man, who is not in Bultmann's vacuum, believes that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). God, as the only security, is never abandoned by Biblical man. But Bultmann's man finds his security in himself: God and "the unseen beyond" provide him with an insurance policy and prevent man from collapsing into meaninglessness, or so Bultmann hopes. His God and man are really one: "The question of God and the question of myself are identical."[68] This is not pantheism: Bultmann's God is not real enough for that; Bultmann's God is a limiting concept.

Barth and Bultmann do not rescue knowledge; they do not give us an authoritative and infallible word. Rather, in their views God is dissolved, and man is left in a void. All views which deny the sovereign God lead to what Cornelius Van Til has so aptly described as an "integration into the void."

The *third* possible view is that only God speaks authoritatively and creatively, whereas man speaks analogically. Man thinks God's thoughts

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65. Rudolf Bultmann: *Jesus Christ and Mythology*. (New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958). p. 40.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40, 42, 65.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

after him. God determines man, eternity, time. Man's role is to do God's will, to understand all things in terms of the word of God. It does not destroy history to make eternity determinative (as Reinhold Niebuhr claimed), any more than our inability to walk up the side of a wall destroys our ability to walk. Man is not God, he is God's vice-gerunt, called to obey God and to work out the implications of the image of God in that obedience.

Van Til has spoken of the Cainitic wish that there be no God. Instead of yielding to the Cainitic wish for the death of God, we work of the premise of the absolute God in His inscriptured word. The Cainitic wish seeks to eliminate God, and instead it eliminates meaning and man. Man dissolves himself into the void of meaninglessness whenever he seeks to dissolve God.

Those whose theology is informed by the second approach do not preach a Biblical doctrine of salvation. They preach psychology or self-salvation. Those who hold to the sovereign and triune God of Scripture have the sure and infallible word of God to proclaim. It is the word upon which all words must be founded.

11. The Word of Dominion

Van Til has described very clearly the basic issue and area of conflict between Biblical and modern thought:

> That issue may be stated simply and comprehensively by saying that in the Christian view of things it is the self-contained God who is the final point of reference while in the case of the modern view it is the would-be self-contained man who is the final point of reference in all interpretation.
>
> For the Christian, facts are what they are, in the last analysis, by virtue of the place they take in the plan of God.[69]

Man's thinking, however abstract, has a personal frame of reference. Thus, whatever conclusions man may come to with respect to the cosmos and life, it is one by which a person is the ultimate point of reference. Van Til, has shown us plainly the implications of this:

> In the last analysis every theology or philosophy is personalistic. Everything "impersonal" must be brought into relationship with an ultimate personal point of reference. Orthodoxy takes the self-contained ontological trinity to be this point of reference. The only alternative to this is to make man himself the final point of reference.[70]

In order to maintain himself as the ultimate point of reference, fallen man must deny the word of God. For God to speak an infallible word means that

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[69] Cornelius Van Til, "Introduction," in Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield: *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible.* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948). p. 18.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

God is the ultimate point of reference and the ultimate Person and authority. For man to have the freedom to be that authority and point of reference means that of necessity the infallible word of God must be either openly denied or its authority nullified by reinterpretation. The word of dominion must be preserved for man.

Van Til has described the marks of this fallen man, the covenant-breaker and champion of man's word as against God's word. *First*, this would-be autonomous man "thinks of himself as the ultimate judge of what can or cannot be." As he interprets facts or events, he allows no other word to interpret, govern, or predict history. *Second*, this lawless man denies that God, if He exists, can control and determine any and all phenomena. There can be no word of authority, dominion or predestination from God. *Third*, it is held that "man's thought is, in the final analysis, absolutely original." If there is any determination or interpretation in history, it is by man. *Fourth*,

> The facts of man's environment are not created or controlled by the providence of God. They are *brute* facts, uninterpreted and ultimately irrational. The universe is a *Chance* controlled universe. It is a wholly open universe. Yet, at the same time, it is a closed universe. It is so in this sense: it cannot be what Christ says it is, namely, created, governed, and redeemed by him. In this one respect the cosmos is closed - there can be no such God as the Bible reveals. This is the universal negative of the open-minded men of philosophy and science.[71]

Fallen man strips God from the universe and denudes it of law and meaning in order to be free to play god therein, and to issue his own law and meaning. Man can speak only the word of dominion in an empty universe, a cosmos awaiting man's spirit to move over it and to provide it with form and meaning. Man therefore wills that the cosmos be a chaos so that its order will become the product of his own life-breathing word. Man does not approach reality in any spirit of neutrality: he approaches it either as God's covenant-keeping man or as a covenant-breaking man whose will it is to be his own god. There is thus inescapable conflict as to who speaks the word of dominion, the infallible word which is the ultimate point of reference. Van Til has written:

> In saving us *from* sin, Christ saves us *unto* his service. Through the salvation that is ours in Christ by the Spirit, we take up anew the cultural mandate that was given man at the onset of history. Whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we want now to do all to the glory of God...
>
> The cultural mandate is to be fulfilled in our handling of the facts or events of our environment. Man must subdue, to the service of Christ, the earth and all that is therein. As the Christian constantly does so, he is constantly conscious of the fact that he is working on God's estate. He is not himself the owner of anything, least of all himself. He is the bondservant of God through Christ. Therein lies his freedom. Those

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[71] Cornelius Van Til: *The Protestant Doctrine of Scripture*. DenDulk Foundation. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1967). p. 13.

> who still think of themselves as owners of themselves and think of the world as a grab-bag cannot properly evaluate the situation as it really is. Unbeknown to them, they too are working on God's estate.[72]

As usual, Van Til puts his finger clearly on the basic point. Man was created for God's service, to be His priest, prophet, and king and to make of this earth God's developed and glorious kingdom. This calling is basic to man's nature. Fallen man does not abandon this calling. Instead, he seeks to convert it to his own perverse goal, to establish the kingdom of Man with man as god and as the ultimate point of reference. The beginning of that revolt is the question, "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1). The authoritative and infallible word, the word of dominion, the tempter held, is not from God but from the creature. The task of exercising dominion and subduing the earth will be made easier, he held, if man begins by denying God's word and asserting his own word as the word of knowledge and the word of dominion. By reserving the tree of knowledge to Himself, God reserved dominion to Himself. God declared thereby that the interpretation of facts and the moral character of all things was determined by His word. God's word is the word of dominion because His is the creative word. Having made all things, He has established the character, meaning, and purpose of all things. Good and evil are determined by His being and purpose, so that the ultimate point of reference in all things is God and His word, the binding word and the word of dominion.

The tempter's belief was and is that the creature, in order to fulfil his calling to dominion, must exercise it independently, i.e., that the image of God in man requires man to be god. Man must therefore become his own source of the word of dominion; man must declare that things are good and evil insofar as they serve or do not serve man's purpose and glory. Man must begin the construction of his true kingdom, the kingdom of Man, by declaring that he himself is the tree of knowledge, the source of the word of dominion. It is not the triune God out of whom the river of life proceeds, and who is the source of the tree of knowledge (Rev. 22:1-2), but man himself.

Note that Van Til points out, "In saving us *from* sin, Christ saves us *unto* his service." Arminian salvation serves fallen man; it "frees" him supposedly from the consequences of the fall to pursue his own independent way in building the kingdom of Man. But salvation is not merely fire insurance, and preaching which stresses heaven and hell as motives for salvation is clearly humanistic and serves the interests of fallen man. It is worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). The call to salvation is a word of command from the sovereign God to cease from our self-service and self-worship and to serve and worship Him. It is the word of dominion which rescues us from the evil and anarchy of the kingdom of Man to the service of the kingdom of God.

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[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 1f.

Thus, wherever this creation mandate (or cultural mandate) is ignored in preaching and in the plan of salvation, it should not surprise us that the infallible word is subtly replaced or altered into the word of man. Fire insurance establishes no responsibility.

As a result, while Harold Lindsell's very able and conscientious defense of the infallible word is to be commended, the history he recounts should not surprise us.[73] Men whose idea of salvation is a self-serving one will soon have only a self-serving word. They can tolerate no other word.

This is exactly what we see. If the world is not to be viewed as God's kingdom, God has no dominion word and law for it; then man's dominion word is the answer. If there is no dominion word of sovereign grace in salvation, then there is no dominion word for any realm.

12. The Word of Flux

The infallible word for humanism cannot be an unchanging word; it is an essential aspect of the new faith that the infallible word must be a changing word, the word of flux.

This faith was very early formulated in the United States by Octavius Brooks Frothingham (1822-1895), a champion of the Religion of Humanity. Frothingham declared,

> The interior spirit of any age is the spirit of God; and no faith can be living that has that spirit against it; no Church can be strong except in that alliance. The life of the time appoints the creed of the time and modifies the establishment of the time.[74]

Frothingham held that, *first*, the true god is humanity, and his spirit is "the interior spirit of any age." This means that, like Rousseau's general will, the spirit of the age is the voice of god, *vox populi, vox dei*. For Frothingham, humanity is in essence one and "has but one life." This one life is "the common pulse" of any age, and "to be alienated from humanity, to have no share in the common vitality is death."[75] *Second*, this common pulse is the infallible will, voice, and word for that age. Thus, for any man, church, or state to disregard that living, infallible word is death. *Third*, this infallible word is exclusively a contemporary word, infallible for the present, and no more. Every new moment creates its own "creed of the time" and re-orders life in terms of that infallible "spirit of the age," but it cannot bind the future, which has its own voice and creed. *Fourth*, each new word must modify "the establishment of the time." Church, state, family, school, and everything else must be changed continuously in terms of this infallible word.

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[73] See Harold Lindsell: *The Battle for the Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976).

[74] O. B. Frothingham: *The Religion of Humanity*. (New York, N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1875. Third edition). pp. 7f.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

In one form or another, this faith confronts us on all sides in the modern age. John Dewey, for example, denied the validity of any faith which accepted a body of "intellectual propositions" on the authority "of revelation from on high." Any formal, unchanging creed was for him untenable. Faith for him was a tendency toward action. To adhere to any body of doctrine based on an external authority was for Dewey a "distrust in the power of experience to provide, in its own ongoing movement, the needed principles of belief and action." To look to something external to man and his experience for authority was anathema to Dewey's dogmatic position. Instead, he held, "Faith in its newer sense signifies that experience itself is the sole ultimate authority."[76]

This deification of man's private and collective experiences has led in our time to a new dogmatism. Parents, teachers, and youth reject any reasoning, preaching, or stand which does not give priority to experience. They declare to those who disagree, "You don't know anything about life, because you haven't experienced" this or that. Women declare that no man can condemn abortion, because men do not experience childbirth. Homosexuals insist that people who condemn homosexuality have no right to do so: until they rid themselves of their "hang-ups" and undergo the experience "without prejudice" (i.e., favorably), they supposedly have no right to judge. I heard a prominent theologian declare that we could condemn no sin unless we too had experienced it! The standard thus is experience.

For Dewey, any faith based on the supernatural was a philosophy of escape, and "Philosophies of escape have also been philosophies of compensation for the ills and sufferings of the experienced world."[77] Dewey's great indictment of the Bible as God's revealed and infallible word is that it is a supernatural word, "and the supernatural signifies precisely that which lies beyond experience."[78] Experience is Dewey's yardstick. In terms of experience, he rejects moral codes based on religious supernaturalism. They are for him meaningless, because they lack the infallible vocabulary of experience. "Contrast with such ideas [of religious supernaturalism], deeply imbedded in all Western culture, gives the philosophy of faith in experience a definite and profound meaning."[79] If your eyes and mind fail to light up in terms of this definite and profound meaning of the philosophy of faith in experience, it is clear that you have not shared Dewey's own religious experience and mystical trust.

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[76] John Dewey, in Albert Einstein and others: *Living Philosophies*. (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, (1930) 1941). p. 21.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[79] *Idem.*

How is it "now possible to put trust in the possibilities of experience itself"? Dewey is inviting us to come to the altar of humanistic religion, and his altar call is a simple one:

> The answer to this question supplies the content of a philosophy of experience. There are traits of present experience which were unknown and unpossessed when the ruling beliefs of the past were developed. Experience now owns as a part of itself scientific methods of discovery and test; it is marked by ability to create techniques and technologies - that is, arts which arrange and utilize all sorts of conditions and energies, physical and human. These new possessions give experience and its potentialities a radically new meaning.[80]

Today Dewey's faith in scientific experience is less well received. The anti-technological temper of humanism in the 1970s rejected Dewey's trust in science, but it has by no means altered or dropped his faith in experience as ultimate. It has simply given a primitivistic view to experience and has stressed raw, unpremeditated experience rather than scientific experience.

Dewey's philosophy tended to require this shift. The thrust of Dewey's faith was hostility to any idea of fixity or law outside of man. Change he saw as the essence of experience. Valid experience meant a total commitment to unprincipled change, i.e., change ungoverned by any word or standard external to man and his experience. Change was feared, Dewey held, because it was seen as "the cause of disorder, chaos, and anarchy. One chief reason for the appeal to something beyond experience was the fact that experience is always in such flux that men had to seek stability and peace outside of it."[81]

For Dewey, it was wrong to "search for *the* meaning of life and *the* purpose of the universe. Men who look for a single purport and a single end either frame an idea of them according to their private desires and traditions, or else, not finding any such single unity, give up in despair and conclude that there is no genuine meaning and value in any of life's episodes." This quest for a universe of meaning must be replaced with a purely humanistic and experiential "plurality of interconnected meanings and purposes."[82]

At this point an ironic fact takes over in Dewey's thought. Dewey was very much a part of the modern intellectual tradition and its contempt for the bourgeoisie. The term *bourgeoisie* has become so great a catch-all for liberal and radical anathemas and spites that its definition is almost impossible. However, it does mean in essence an exploitive middle class, prizing its own experience of freedom and holding a materialistic outlook. Only one aspect of the older bourgeois is missing from this description - its productivity, something detested by the liberal tradition. However, this productivity apart, nothing more nearly approximates the liberal-caricature of the bourgeois than

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80. *Ibid.*, pp. 23f.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

these intellectuals themselves, their children, John Dewey, and the products of his educational philosophy. We live today in the world of the humanistic bourgeoisie, a generation for whom its own experience is ultimate and for whom self-satisfaction goes hand in hand with a contempt for everything that challenges self-satisfaction.

It must be noted that Dewey hoped that experiental man would combine knowledge and social needs with his life of experience:

> I would suggest that the future of religion is connected with the possibility of developing a faith in the possibilities of human experience and human relationships that will create a vital sense of the solidarity of human interests and inspire action to make that sense a reality.[83]

This represents a radically unrealistic hope and a senseless confidence. Having made experience ultimate, how could Dewey expect man, who thereby renounced God, to give way to his neighbor? If God cannot take priority over our experience, how can another man? If "experience itself is the sole ultimate authority," and men are taught so, how will they then be persuaded to give way to society and the state? Dewey tried to depreciate the individual and his consciousness; he tried to make the true domain of experience the collective experience of the Great Society. However, having made the individual the new ultimate, he could not then persuade him to surrender his ultimacy to the state, a more jealous god than the God of Scripture. Having made man's experience ultimate, he was asking the new god, man, either to commit suicide, or, at the very least, to castrate himself. The results have been very different.

According to the old Greek myth, the god Uranus was castrated by his son Cronus. Cronus was later in turn dethroned by his son Zeus. Each god being his own law in Greek humanism, each was in turn subject to overthrow of the next moment in time and its new god. The same is true of the world of John Dewey and of all humanists. Sartre was set aside as the voice of yesterday by the generation he instructed, and Dewey's generation despised the pedestrian and old-fashioned sense of order and responsibility Dewey imbibed from his Christian heritage.

When men deify themselves and their experience, they forget that they thereby provide the intellectual apparatus for a newer god to destroy them in the name of flux, in the name of the newer infallible word of the moment - themselves. The result is the perpetual war of the false gods, a war between the generations, and a war within the generation.

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[83] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

13. The Word and History

The continuing effect of Platonism and neoplatonism on the church has had a deadly consequence on its view of Scripture. In this view, there are two substances of diverse natures which make up reality - ideas (or spirit, mind, form, or soul) and matter. These two are in an uneasy union in history. In varying degrees, thinkers in this tradition see spirit or ideas as basic, higher, and superior, and matter as lower and inferior. For some theologians in the Thomistic and Arminian traditions, the fall affected man's body, not his mind, so that whatever error may occur in the mind is a product of the body and its corrupting influence.

Such a view is clearly hostile to Scripture, which sees man as a unity, totally God's creation. Man, instead of being of two (or three) substances, is of one only, namely, created being. The difference is not between Spirit (God, and, in part, man) and matter, but between the uncreated being of God and the created being of man and the universe; man's problem, therefore, is not matter, his body, and materialistic concerns, but sin, his rebellion against God and His law.

Because of the Greek influence on the thought of the church, there was a depreciation of history. If it is the realm of the spirit which is basic, then a concern for the world of matter represents a lower and less spiritual (and hence less worthy) concern. It is a popular humanistic myth to declare that history began with the Greeks, and with Herodotus. On the contrary, it began with Scripture, and in Israel. The Greek historical writings are in essence anti-historical; they represent in embryo what later became explicit in Hegel - the imposition of an idea on history. The idea does not belong to history any more than spirit belongs to matter: it makes something out of history. In Herodotus' case, we miss the point of his books if we fail to see that they are written *against* time and history. He began Book I, *Clio*, with the words, "This is a publication of the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, *in order that the actions of man may not be effaced by time....*"[84]

Biblical history, however, sees the world and time as God's creation, and as "very good" (Gen. 1:31). The problem is not time or matter but sin which alters man's moral nature. Time and history are intended by God to be the arena wherein covenant man exercises dominion, subdues the earth, and extends the kingdom of God into every realm of life and thought. Jesus Christ restores man to this calling. Time and history do not efface the actions of men, as Herodotus held, but, to the contrary, give opportunity and scope for the actions of godly men to manifest the glory of God's rule and realm by means of faith and obedience to God's law.

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[84] Henry Cary, translator: *Herodotus*. (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1879). p. 1.

The church very early became a prodigal son, however, preferring the husks of Greek philosophy to the riches of the Father's house. The implications of adopting the Greek view of mind and body were enormous for Biblical study and interpretation. In Father Vawter's words,

> It was all too easy to press the analogy to the conclusion that the literal meaning of a text - 'the flesh' - was not only not the reality of the Scripture but might even be a hindrance or at best an irrelevance to its 'soul' the spiritual or allegorical sense that lay hidden beneath it. It is surely not by chance that where allegorism flourished not only in practice but as an ideal, such philosophy as existed to provide a framework for systematic thought was platonist.[85]

Unfortunately, Vawter falls prey to the same kind of thinking. Such thinking is endemic to the church. Among fundamentalists, it means that "the true meaning" of the law is a spiritual and allegorical one, hidden in the colors of the tabernacle furnishings, the number of animals sacrificed, and so on. This is in line with Jerome's interpretation of Ecclesiastes; for Jerome, it was a counsel to asceticism and thus a manual for those who chose to remain virgins. Mention of food and drink in Ecclesiastes Jerome saw as referring to Christ's body and blood. Again, when, in the feeding of the multitude, Christ bade the hungry crowd to sit on the ground, Jerome saw this as a command to trample down the fleshly pleasures of the world.[86]

Wherever the material world is depreciated, such view of Scripture will proliferate. Since there is either no meaning, or only a limited meaning, to the material realm for such people, they will seek the true or higher meaning in a "spiritual" realm, in allegories, forced typologies, and the like. When my *Institutes of Biblical Law* was first published, more than a few churchmen held it to be a disaster, because it materialized what Christ had come supposedly to spiritualize. I was repeatedly told, by telephone and in person, that the Old Testament represents a lower and hence materialistic revelation and a plan of salvation, and hence the emphasis on law, whereas the New Testament gives us a spiritual and higher way than law, namely, faith and love life in the Holy Spirit in an antinomian sense.

The Second Vatican Council gave us an interesting sight: papal infallibility was not dropped, but Biblical infallibility was shelved. The truth of Scripture which is without error was limited to whatever is "for the sake of our salvation." This inerrant truth is not to be found in the Bible as such. In Vawter's words,

> Moreover, as the *relatio* for the finished schema made clear, the Biblical truth proclaimed by the Council to be free of error is not simply isolable in propositions and expressions. It is both the word and deed of God: the whole of salvation history.[87]

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85. Bruce Vawter: *Biblical Inspiration*. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1972). p. 46.
86. See J.N.D. Kelly: *Jerome*. (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1975). pp. 151f., 224.

The word of God thus becomes a non-historical word; it is an existential word, an experience, a spiritual moment. Just as the church is for Vawter the continuation of the incarnation, so for him also the true word of God is a continuing spiritual experience:

> Is it not proper to think of Biblical inspiration in this way, as continuing to reside in the belief and understanding of the communities of faith, perpetuated by the same spiritual life by which they live and following the natural laws and structures which the Spirit has assumed? If we may so think, then perhaps we have a final enunciation of what is meant by divine condescension and adoption of the words of man, in the full context of the people of God.[88]

Vawter is a modernist, and his words are an amazing witness to the pride of man. For modernism, the incarnation is not a literal union of God and man, and the Bible is in no literal sense the written word of God. However, what is not true of Christ becomes true of the church: it is the living, present incarnation, a continuous incarnation. Again, what is not true of the Bible is true of the communities of faith, in whom, "in the full context of the people of God," the inerrant word resides in their belief and understanding. For Vawter, "the final quality" of Scripture is in this "dynamic" continuation of the word:

> The same principles may serve to justify the final quality that we would like to ascribe to inspiration, that is, what we have termed its permanent and dynamic character, responsible for the continued power that the word has to evoke response in the believer. Without denying the obvious once-for-allness involved in the literary fixation of the Bible, we must at the same time acknowledge that it is the continuous reinterpretation of the Biblical word in the life of the believing community that constitutes it effectively God's word to man. By inspiration we should understand not only the spiritual influence responsible for the Bible's origins but also that which sustains it as a medium of speech.[89]

Such a view is in line with the existentialism of Barth and Tillich. It needs no sovereign and absolute God who speaks the necessary and infallible words; rather, it cannot tolerate such a God. As a result, it rules such a God out of history in any necessary and determinative sense. History must be man's realm. Without God, however, history soon loses meaning: it becomes the world of brute factuality, of meaninglessness and purposeless events. Preaching becomes psychological in content, geared to the existentialist needs rather than to the will of God. It therefore disposes of God and history and is gradually forced into the private universe of man's mind: there, in that narrow confine, the infallible word of the new god speaks to the echo chambers of empty man.

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87. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-148.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 169f.

The Shepherd of Hermas is a very poor guide to Scripture, but this early writing from the church, dating perhaps before A.D. 140, still reflects an interesting view of Christ: "This great tree which covers plains and mountains and all the earth is the law of God which was given to all the world. And this law is the Son of God, who has been preached to the ends of the earth."[90]

Because the Bible is the infallible word of God, it sets forth the righteousness of God in His law. Because Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, He is also the law of God in person. If we deny God, then we deny the word, the law, and the incarnation. There is then no literal, very word of God in history nor for history. God being silent, man therefore speaks. In his speaking, man may mask his nakedness and clothe himself in Scripture, but it is still man who speaks, and his word is nothing.

14. The Infallible Word

Dr. Cornelius Van Til has called attention to the fact that Jesus Christ used the terms *law* and *Scripture* as synonymous. Citing Psalm 82:6, our Lord called it *law*. "This proves that the term 'Law' was, for Jesus' purpose, identical with Scripture as a whole. And of this Law, or Scripture, Jesus then says that it cannot be broken. It is therefore the final court of appeal."[91]

If God be God, then His every word is of necessity law, because His every word is the authoritative and ultimate word. There is no word, law, power, or standard beyond God by means of which God and His word can be judged.

Van Til makes this clear in the course of his discussion of the righteousness of God:

> With the righteousness of God we signify the self-consistency of the divine Being. God is a law unto Himself. He is the absolute self-existent personality and therefore, at the same time, absolute law. God does not have a law, but is law. His self-conscious activity regards with absolute complacency the eternal rightness of relationship between the various aspects of multiplicity that are found with the divine Being. He cannot and does not tolerate any subordination of any one aspect of His Being to any other aspect of His Being. The attributes and the persons of God are all on a par.[92]

It is therefore destructive of the Biblical doctrine of God to oppose or exalt one aspect of God over or against another. We cannot oppose grace and law; men may do so, but in God's being they are in unity and not in subordination to one another. Similarly, in God's being love and justice are not contraries but equal aspects of His being and are in essential unity. To say "God is love"

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90. Graydon F. Snyder, translator, editor: *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 6, *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Similitude VIII, 3. (Camden, N.J.: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1968). p. 119.
91. Cornelius Van Til: *An Introduction to Theology*, II. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1947). p. 144.
92. *Ibid.*, II, p. 214.

(I John 4:8) is scriptural, but it denies Scripture if we mean therefore that in God love is more basic than law, justice, jealousy, wrath, grace, or any other attribute of God's being. Thus, when Scripture contrasts any of these terms, it either has reference to man's use of them or to man's relationship to them under God's economy.

Van Til illustrates this by reference to II Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The contrast here is not between grace and law, nor a materialistic dispensation versus a spiritual one. "The 'letter' as spoken of by Paul, refers not to Scripture as a whole, but refers to 'the ministration of condemnation,'" that is, to the Pharisaic externalism. Thus, "the contention....that the Bible was never meant to be taken as a book that should be interpreted literally" is invalid.[93]

The misuse of Scripture condemned by Paul was not a faithful obedience to the literal meaning of Scripture but a reinterpretation of that meaning in terms of man's word, will, and thought. We must, on the contrary, "make Scripture the standard of our thinking, and not our thinking the standard of Scripture."[94]

It is to the advantage of apostate man to deny or wrongly divide the word of God. If the Bible is reduced to a non-literal meaning and made anything other than the very word of God, the result is a very different kind of God. God then has no sure and certain word because God Himself is an uncertain and unrealized being. Those who pretend to exalt God by declaring Him to be unknowable and hence unnameable are thereby undermining the deity of God. Greek philosophy, for example, assumed the utter unknowability of God. As Van Til observes, "An apostate man has every reason for teaching the unnamability of God. If God is unnameable then he cannot name anything in the world. Only if God is unknowable can man think of his own knowledge as autonomous."[95]

God can be named, but not by man. For man to name God means that man's autonomous mind establishes the categories of definition. The definitive and ultimate word is then the word of man. For man to define God would mean that man would then classify God in relationship to himself and would understand and judge God, as well as to name Him, in terms of man's infallible word. This is at the heart of the evil of idolatry. Some forms of idolatry seem, superficially examined, to be very noble; some, in fact, show the influence of Biblical thought. At heart, however, idolatry defines God, whether by word, graven image, picture, or philosophic thought, in terms of man's autonomous mind and man's defining and creative word.

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93. *Ibid.*, II, p.136.
94. *Ibid.*, II, p. 210.
95. Cornelius Van Til: *Christ and the Jews*. (Nutley, N.J.: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968). p. 8.

The people of Israel wanted, in the person of Moses, a definition of God: What was His name? By this they meant a definition of God in terms of man's requirements and being. God refused to so name Himself. In terms of man, He is beyond definition, because He is not to be defined by anything external to Himself as a criterion over Himself, but in terms of His own Being. Scripture defines man in terms of the image of God; hence, apostate man is fallen man: he has fallen from God's norm. Of a contemptible sinner, we say, "He's not much of a man," because man is not defined by his own existence. We cannot name, define, or know God in terms of anything external to Himself, and hence we cannot judge God, because God and His word are the criterion of all judgment. We can truly say of a man, "He's not much of a man," but we can never so speak of God, that He is not much of a God.

As a result, God answered Moses, not as Israel would have wished, but by declaring Himself to be God: that was His name, He Who Is, the self-existent one.

> And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations (Ex. 3:14-15).

This means, *first*, that man cannot name or define God: God names Himself, I AM THAT I AM. Where man does any naming, as Adam was required to do in Eden (Gen. 2:19-20), it is either as a covenant-keeper, working to understand the world under God and in terms of God's purpose as creator, or as a covenant-breaker, seeking to establish the meaning of creation in terms of man's autonomous and ultimate word (Gen. 3:5).

Second, God defines Himself by His self-revelation. The naming, defining, knowing word is thus the word of God. Man's word, when autonomous in intent, is unable to create reality or impose its own determinative meaning on reality. All things having been made by God, serve and obey His word and purpose.

Third, this means that Scripture is the necessary word. God makes Himself knowable and all creation knowable by means of His sovereign and infallible word. God's word is the word of salvation, but it is also the word of knowledge, basic to epistemology. It is the word of law, love, wrath, grace, justice, judgment, and more. It is the word which establishes the meaning of life, time, and history.

Fourth, God's word is the unchanging word. He is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). He declares, "For I am the LORD; I change not" (Mal. 3:6). He is the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." As He was then, He is now and forever. "This is my name for ever."

His word is thus the infallible word, because He is the absolute and omnipotent God, whose every word is truth.

Fifth, God then made clear to Moses that He did not answer to Moses or to Israel: they answered to Him. Hence, Moses had to "go" at God's command, and Israel had to stand up to Pharoah in terms of God's requirement that Israel must serve God, not Pharoah (Ex. 3:16-20). Israel could serve neither Pharoah nor itself: it must serve the Lord, and if Pharoah (or Israel) stood in God's way, He would stretch out His hand and smite him. This is no less true today. The Scripture is not a problem to be resolved by man, nor a mere subject for research and speculation. It is God's infallible command word: we either obey it or are condemned by it.

15. Moloch Man and the Word of God

As we have seen, every philosophy has either explicitly or implicitly an infallible word. This infallible word is in some sense man's word (Gen. 3:5), man as the pretended god of creation. This claim to infallibility is masked behind scientific and philosophical jargon, but it is still there. As Tyrmand notes with respect to communism,

> In order not to fall into utter ludicrousness, communism conceals its infallibility behind the inviolability of the laws of history and the class struggle, of which it calls itself the sole binding discoverer and interpreter.[96]

Implicit claims to infallibility are as old as history and go back to the fall of man. The rabbis of old made the voice of the rabbi the voice of God and gave it priority over Scripture, i.e., over the Torah. Thus we read in 'Erubin 21b the declaration,

> My son, be more careful in [the observance of] the words of the Scribes than in the words of the Torah, for in the laws of the Torah there are positive and negative precepts [and the penalties vary]; but as to the laws of the Scribes, whoever transgresses any of the enactments of the Scribes incurs the penalty of death.[97]

In terms of this principle, to be a rabbi, and to have a seat on the Sanhedrin required a particularly subtle mind and legal ability. Rab Judah is cited as declaring, "None is to be given a seat on the Sanhedrin unless he is able to prove the cleanness of a reptile from Biblical texts."[98] Such methods of judgment are very much with us in our contemporary American courts!

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[96] Leopold Tyrmand: *The Rose Luxemburg Contraceptives Cooperative, A Primer on Communist Civilization*. (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1972). p. 64.

[97] Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein, editor: *The Babylonian Talmud, Sedar Mo'ed*, II, 'Erubin 21b. (London, England: The Soncino Press, 1938). p. 149.

[98] *Ibid.*, *Seder Nezekin*, III. Sanhedrin 17b. p. 87.

We have in the same treatise an example of this use of law in dealing with the law of giving one's seed to Moloch. The knowledge of the meaning of this law of Leviticus 18:21 is excellent. Moloch means king, *melech*; the vowels of the word *bosheth*, shame, are introduced to make *melech* into *molech*, or *moloch*. The Talmud states,

> R. Hanina b. Antigonus said: Why did the Torah employ the word Moloch? To teach that the same law applies to whatever they proclaimed as their king, even a pebble or a splinter.[99]

Whatever a man makes king or lord over himself is a Moloch: this can be an idol, the state and its ruler or king, or himself. Modern statism is clearly a form of Moloch worship, and state schools receive the sacrifice of children from parents who are lawbreakers before God.

However, like modern churchmen, the rabbis could find "legitimate" grounds for breaking the law while retaining their "innocence" through legal technicalities. Thus, we are told,

> He who gives of his seed to Molech incurs no punishment unless he delivers it to Molech and causes it to pass through the fire. If he gave it to Molech but did not cause it to pass through the fire, or the reverse, he incurs no penalty, unless he does both.[100]

We can understand why our Lord condemned all such interpretations, declaring, "Full well ye reject [or frustrate] the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

The purpose of all this, from ancient times to the present, with rabbis, judges, communists, theologians, and pastors, is to substitute man's word for God's word. The goal is *action in history*, the development of the kingdom of Man rather than the kingdom of God. *The word of God is frustrated and rejected by any teaching or interpretation which does not lead to the action required by God.* Whether or not we profess, as did these rabbis, the Scriptures to be God's infallible word is meaningless, if with our interpretation, teaching, and preaching we frustrate or reject the action commanded by God. Thus, the net result is the same, whether we frustrate God's word in the life of man by means of modernism, dispensationalism, or antinomianism. We have today over 50 million adults in the U.S. who profess to believe in the Bible from cover to cover. They claim to believe every word of it and obey very little of it, on supposedly good "evangelical" grounds. The good news of the gospel now is interpreted to mean that God does not mean what He says!

But Williams is right: "A man cannot reject any word of God without in principle rejecting every word of God."[101] We must therefore say that most

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99. *Ibid.*, III. Sanhedrin 64a., p. 438.
100. *Ibid.*, III. Sanhedrin 64a. p. 437.
101. Norman V. Williams: *Verbal Inspiration*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1955). p. 18.

churchmen today have in principle rejected every word of God. Their reasons are as false and godless as those of the ancient rabbis.

Hillel set aside the law of the Sabbath year by means of a legal fiction. A certified agreement that the creditor could claim his due was substituted for the remission of debt and the law of return in the Jubilee year. The same kind of legal fiction is employed by churchmen today, in the name of Christ.

The infallible word of God is not an abstract or a theoretical word. It is God's commanding word. It requires us to believe and obey Him and His word. It declares to covenant man, This do, and ye shall live (Deut. 8:1). The word is given, not that man might have fire insurance, nor, though it is the word of salvation, is it given primarily for man's salvation, but rather that God's purposes be fulfilled or put into force. All the priorities of Scripture have to do with God and His kingdom. We are to seek "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," and only then will our own needs be met by God (Matt. 6:33). These priorities must govern our lives and our prayers, as the Lord's Prayer makes clear, for it *begins and ends* with God's kingdom:

> ...Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven....For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (Matt. 6:9-10, 13).

If the word of God does not lead us to faith, prayer, and action in terms of these priorities, then, like the rabbis of old, we are using the word of God to mask another word, our own word. We may profess to believe the infallible word of God, but it is our own "infallible" word which lurks behind the facade of faith.

The doctrine of the infallible word is thus not simply an ecclesiastical doctrine. It is basic to life. To limit the Scripture to the role of a church book is to deny it and then to substitute man's word as law for everyday life.

The infallible word is a silencing word: it silences the pretensions of Man and summons men and nations to hear God's word, and then to speak, act, and govern in terms of it. God declares through Isaiah,

> Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment (Isa. 41:1).

When the Lord speaks, "let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20), because His word alone is the infallible and governing word, the word of truth. Therefore, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD" (Zech. 2:13).

His word is the determining word: "it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). Such a word cannot be shelved; man can be, have, and will be shelved by the judgments of God, but His word endures and stands in

judgment over them. Because the word of God is the word of life, it will lead either to faith and action, or to judgment and death.

The infallibility of Scripture is thus more than an academic question. At heart is the question, who is God, man or his Creator? And who shall issue the command word for the whole of life, thought, and action, God or man? It is an order to the false rabbis in the pulpits, and the would-be gods in pews and podium, to abdicate, *for God will be God.* Let Moloch man beware.

16. Infallibility and the World of Faith

In the April 7, 1967, issue of *Time Magazine*, an article on "East Germany" spoke of the heir apparent to the communist dictator of East Germany in these words:

> Ulbricht obviously cannot last forever as East Germany's leader. His heir apparent is a pretty good copy of the original. He is Erich Honecker, 54, a Communist since his youth, whose philosophy is more or less summed up in two of his more famous statements: "The party has never erred," and "The only book worth reading is Stalin's *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.*"[102]

For a time, I carried that clipping with me in my travels, citing it to clergymen and seminarians in conversations. The constant reaction was one of indifference. No relationship between Honecker's faith in the infallibility of the Communist Party and the theological doctrine of infallibility was seen by any.

I became thereby freshly aware of the extent and depth of our saturation with the world of Kant, Barth, and Niebuhr. In this perspective, the world has two kinds of factuality. On the one hand, there is the realm of brute factuality in the physical and historical world, and, on the other, the realm of faith, myth, and ideas, where facts are facts of faith, not of history. For such people, *infallibility*, like the virgin birth and the resurrection, is a fact of faith, not of history. These two realms of faith and history have a meeting point, after Descartes, in the autonomous mind of man. The mind of man is the controlling and creative agent which gives "reality" to both realms, and the reality of these two very different worlds exists in the mind of man, which alone give both of them reality and meaning.

The roots of this concept are older than Kant and Descartes. They go back at least to the ancient Greeks and their concept of two alien substances, matter and ideas. The two substances have become more and more separated since then, so that the realm of ideas (or, the world of faith) now touches only the realm of matter in the mind of man.

[102.] "East Germany," *Time Magazine*, April 7, 1967, p. 26.

As a result, the theological mind has isolated theology more and more from the world of matter and action into the world of faith. Marxism seeks the imposition of the realm of ideas onto the world of matter. It seeks to remake the world of matter, the kingdom of Necessity, into the kingdom of Freedom, a realm ruled by the idea.

Except where influenced by Marxism, however, modern theology seeks to separate itself from the kingdom of Necessity and to develop in "purity" the kingdom of Freedom, or of Faith. A major wing of modern theology is fundamentalism, which is Arminian or neo-Thomist in theology, and rationalistic in apologetics. Its answer is the rapture, the escape into the world or realm of faith, and then the supernatural union of the two hostile realms in the millennium.

Because the two realms are seen as *naturally* alien, the relationship between the two requires some special act. For the fundamentalists, it is the second coming alone which can bridge the gap between faith and history. A supernatural act is required. For the Barthians and others, there is no supernatural act *of God*, but there is a similar act in the mind of man whereby the two alien worlds, the irreconcilables, meet by the will and grace of autonomous man.

For this reason, Honecker's statement does not interest the clergy. They do not live in a unified creation but in a metaphysically rather than morally divided world. They do not see God's word and creative will as the inescapable factor in every area of life, so that no fact or interpretation can exist outside of God. No idea or fact exists apart from the triune God. Man, by his desire to be his own god, determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5), does not create a new realm of being; he does not add a single metaphysical fact or idea to creation. Man's attempt is a moral fact: it is an immoral act of rebellion against his Creator, the covenant God.

In that rebellion, man misuses God's creation, including himself. Men change the truth of God into a lie (Rom. 1:25); they do not create new truths or new facts. They attempt rather to pervert God's creation into a witness for their denial of the Creator.

Having denied the sovereign and triune God, and having denied that man must live by *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God* Matt. 4:4), they insist that man's hope is man himself, and the word of man. Hence, they declare, "The party has never erred," man is infallible, Power to the People, and much, much more in the same vein.

The issue is the word of God, or the word of man. Whose word shall prevail? If we limit the word of God to the realm of faith, we have denied it. The word of God is His infallible word and law for the whole of creation, for every man. His word is the binding word for every realm, and His law governs all things. Any man who attempts to build a theology on any other

foundation than the sovereign and triune God whose word governs all of creation "is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:49).

II

THE NECESSITY FOR SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

1. The Necessity for Systematic Theology

Last Saturday, while travelling to Los Angeles, I listened on my car radio to an evangelist broadcasting from the other end of the country. While claiming to preach the word of God as a Bible-believing Christian, he preached a faith I could not recognize as Scriptural, nor the God I hear speak in the Bible. This man assured his converted and unconverted listeners that "God is *always* on your side." He also spoke of God as our "Daddy" in heaven, rich in resources and eager and anxious to help us if we only would allow Him to do so. I could not recognize in what he preached the sovereign God of Scripture nor anything that resembled His commanding word, the Bible. The evangelist was a humanist who was using, or trying to use, God as the greatest possible resource available to man; central to his thinking was man and man's needs. He lacked any systematic theology of God; instead, there were traces in his brief message of a theology of man as the true center and the god of things.

Very briefly, systematic theology says that God is God. It declares that, because God is sovereign, omnipotent, all-wise, all-holy, and knows from eternity all that He ordains and decrees, therefore there is no hidden possibility or potentiality in God, but that God is both fully self-conscious and totally self-consistent. Only with such a God is systematic theology possible. Wherever faith in the sovereignty of God declines, there too systematic theology goes into an eclipse.

The word *systematic* in systematic theology means, among other things, first, that it is a comprehensive, unified statement of what Scripture as a whole teaches about God. The revelation of God in Scripture is brought together in summary and comprehensive form, and the results of Biblical theology, the exegesis and analysis of Scripture and its meaning, are organized and set forth.

Second, the word *systematic* means that the totally sovereign God, who does not change (Mal. 3:6), is truly knowable. He is always the same. Men change character, grow and regress, but God is always the same, totally self-consistent and absolutely sovereign. Only about such a God is a systematic word possible. This is why modern theology cannot produce systematics. Karl Barth's position was a denial of the possibility of systematics. Thus, he wrote,

> But it is not "the Almighty" who is God; we cannot understand from the standpoint of a supreme concept of power, who God is. And the man who calls "the Almighty" God misses God in the most terrible way. For the "Almighty" is bad, as "power in itself" is bad. The "Almighty" means Chaos, Evil, the Devil. We could not better describe and define the Devil than by trying to think this idea of a self-based, free, sovereign ability....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.[1]

Barth's God is not the God of Scripture who declares, "I am the Almighty God" (Gen. 17:1). Barth's God is a limiting concept, the product of a man's imagination. Barth gives us only a systematic exposition of his unbelief; he cannot give us a systematic theology of the God of Scripture.

Similarly, Haroutunian held that systematic theology was impossible, because such a doctrine of God cannot do "justice to the complexities of human life."[2] The center of Haroutunian's theology is human life: the God of Scripture cannot in any degree nor in any sense impinge on the sovereignty of autonomous man. Hence, for him systematic theology is an illusion,[3] because the God of systematic theology is by definition excluded from all consideration.

Third, systematic means that the presupposition of theology is not the mind of autonomous man but the sovereign God of Scripture. Systematics, no more than apologetics, seeks to prove God and His existence; rather, it presupposes the triune God as the only ground and means of reasoning and proof. As Van Til has so excellently demonstrated, "All the disciplines must presuppose God, but at the same time presupposition is the best proof."[4] On any other presupposition, if logically applied, no proof is at all possible, because all reality is reduced to brute factuality, as Van Til has shown.[5] Instead of brute and meaningless factuality, all the universe gives us God-created factuality only, and hence the necessary presupposition of all thinking is the triune God.

Fourth, as Van Til has always stressed, systematics denies the concept of neutrality. There are no neutral facts, no neutral thoughts, no neutral man nor reason. All men, facts, and thinking either begin with the sovereign and triune God, or they begin with rebellion against Him. Systematics affirms that God; the denial of systematics is a denial of God.

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1. Karl Barth: *Dogmatics in Outline*. (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1949). p. 48.
2. Joseph Haroutunian: *First Essay in Reflective Theology*. (Chicago, IL: McCormick Theological Seminary, 1943). p. 10.
3. *Idem.*
4. Cornelius Van Til: *An Introduction to Theology*, vol. I. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1947). p. 3.
5. See R. J. Rushdoony: *By What Standard? An Introduction to the Philosophy of Cornelius Van Til*. Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, (1958) 1974); and R. J. Rushdoony: *The Word of Flux*. (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1975).

Fifth, systematics is necessary if men are to think intelligently and logically. Without the concept of systematics and the God it sets forth, we cannot hold to a rational and understandable universe nor to any meaningful order therein. Unregenerate man's reason and logic operate against the background of chaos and a meaningless void, so that reason and logic are in essence more than irrational: they are absurd. Systematics not only makes reason reasonable, but it declares that there is a necessary and meaningful connection between all facts, because all facts are the creation of the sovereign and omnipotent God and are thus revelations of His purpose and order. The idea of preaching the whole counsel of God is only a possibility if systematics is a reality. Otherwise, there is no necessary and real connection and unity in the word of God, and we have instead a developing, changing word and plan under different dispensations. We have then a fragmented word, not a whole counsel which is a necessary and authoritative unity.

Thus, without systematics there is no word of God, and, indeed, no such God as His revelation in Scripture sets forth. We have then another god with an occasional word which is made up of flashes of insight, and of superior powers to man, but no absolute, almighty, and sovereign God whose every word is infallible, and whose revelation manifests the only possible system of truth. This living God declares, "I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 46:9). There is no other God, no other truth, no other possibility, system, or meaning outside of Him. He is God the Lord.

2. Causality and Systematics

The Greeks no less than Biblical thought held to the idea of causality, but with a difference. The Greek concept of causality was closely tied to its belief in potentiality. All being was held to be full of potentiality, so that new developments in being were always possible. Luke tells us, in Acts 17:21, "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new things." The *new* was very important to these Greek philosophers, teachers, and students: it was an indication of the next step in being perhaps, a glimpse into the areas of possibility. As Van Til notes,

> They believed in "the mysterious universe"; they were perfectly willing therefore to leave open a place for "the unknown." But this "unknown" must be thought of as utterly unknowable and indeterminate.[6]

For Greek philosophy there was no determined character to the created universe because they did not believe in the absolute, sovereign, and predestinating God. Their idea of causality thus simply held that there was a

[6] Cornelius Van Til: *Paul at Athens*. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1954). p. 6.

connection between contextual events, but it denied that any sovereign person, plan, and decree created and determined those events.

Much later, as a result of Christian influence and scholarship, the idea of natural or physical laws developed. This concept held that, whether in physics, chemistry, biology, or any other area of study, certain patterns of connection indicated an over-all law which necessitated a determined pattern of events. This presupposed a universe, not a multiverse, and a fixed and predetermined law governing all creation. The Greeks could see ideas or patterns within creation, but no fixity or necessary and continuing pattern.

On Greek terms, therefore, a systematic theology was impossible. At best, any system noted had to be tentative and temporal, not eternal and binding. Thus, as the Greek mind faced the early church, it had one basic idea which had fixity: it held that systematics must be by definition ruled out and an open universe retained. New potentiality had to be allowed, and no eternal decree permitted.

Thus, the Biblical doctrine of the incarnation was ruled out, because it meant that eternity determined time, and God controls history. It meant that the two ultimate substances for Greek thought - mind and matter - were alike created and absolutely controlled by God. For the word to become flesh meant that the Greek idea of being was invalid, and that its philosophy was unsound, because it rested on a false premise with respect to being and potentiality. Tertullian saw this clearly, and, in *On the Flesh of Christ* (III), declared,

> Since you think that this lay within the competency of your own arbitrary choice, you must needs have supposed that being born was either impossible for God, or unbecoming to Him. With God, however, nothing is impossible but what He does not will.[7]

For Tertullian, there is a necessary and systematic logic and coherency to all God's works, so that his idea of causality and potentiality is not grounded on the Greek idea of being and a developing potentiality but on the sovereign, unchanging, and triune God. As a result, Tertullian declares, "What is written cannot but have been."[8] When the Scriptures speak, it is infallibly: it is the absolute God whose every word is truth who speaks that word. There is no possibility outside of God, nor is there any hidden or unknown potentiality within God: He is totally self-conscious and totally determines all by His perfect will. The strength of Tertullian's argument is that he grasped, however defectively applied at times, the necessary systematics of Biblical theology.

Greek thought combined with Christianity could at best give only a tentative systematics, and at heart it carried a denial thereof. Wherever

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[7]. Tertullian, "On the Flesh of Christ," III, in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. XV, *The Writings of Tertullianus*, vol. II. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1874). p. 167.
[8]. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

theology began with the God of Scripture, however, it confronted the world of the pagans with systematics.

In the second century, Tatian, schooled in Greek philosophy, turned to Christianity when he grasped the fact that it provided a systematic theology and therefore a coherent view of all things. However weak Tatian was in some areas of thought, his grasp of this fact, the necessity of systematics, is telling. Tatian wrote of his conversion from Greek philosophy through a reading of "barbaric" (Biblical) writings thus:

> And while I was giving my most earnest attention to the matter, I happened to meet with certain barbaric writings, too old to be compared with the opinions of the Greeks, and too divine to be compared with their errors; and I was led to put faith in these by the unpretending cast of the language, the inartificial character of the writers, the foreknowledge displayed of future events, the excellent quality of the precepts, and the declaration of the government of the universe as centered in one Being. And, my soul being taught of God, I discerned that the former class of writings lead to condemnation, but that these put an end to the slavery that is in the world, and rescue us from a multiplicity of rulers and ten thousand tyrants, while they give us, not indeed what we had not before received, but what we had received but were prevented by error from retaining.[9]

The government of the universe centered in God, Tatian found to be the foundation of both intellectual and personal freedom. It meant spiritual and material freedom, and it also meant intellectual freedom from the dead-ends of Greek philosophy. As against the conclusions of such philosophy and pagan religions, Tatian declared,

> But we are superior to Fate, and instead of wandering demons, we have learned to know one Lord who wanders not; and, as we do not follow the guidance of Fate, we reject its lawgivers.[10]

Tatian saw that the results of Christianity include a new life, faith, law, and society. Having another lawgiver, the Christians live in terms of another law than do the pagans.

The determination of history is not from time, but eternity. "Our God did not begin to be in time: He alone is without beginning, and He Himself is the beginning of all things."[11] As against the cyclical view of history, Christians hold to God's purpose, culminating in the resurrection of the dead.[12]

For Tatian, the creation of all things by God requires the government of all things by God's law. Accordingly, he declared,

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9. Tatian, "Address of Tatian to the Greeks," ch. xxix, in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, III, *The Writings of Tatian and Theophilus: and the Clementine Recognitions*, (1875). p. 34.
10. *Ibid.*, ch. ix, p. 14.
11. *Ibid.*, ch. iv, p. 8.
12. *Ibid.*, ch. vi, p. 10.

> On this account I reject your legislation also; for there ought to be one common polity for all; but now there are as many different codes as there are states, so that things held disgraceful in some are honorable in others. The Greeks consider intercourse with a mother as unlawful, but this practice is esteemed most becoming by the Persian Magi; paederasty is condemned by the Barbarians, but by the Romans, who endeavor to collect boys like grazing horses, it is honored with certain privileges.[13]

Quite rightly, Tatian saw all things at stake in the doctrine of God, i.e., in that Biblical view which required systematics. The doctrine of the sovereign and triune God means that there is a necessary order in the universe, that all things are inter-related and have a common key to the meaning, that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and also one law in the universe. Events do not reveal the hidden potentiality of being but manifest purposes of the sovereign God. Man does not make and adapt laws to meet the new leaps in being but applies the revealed law of God to all of life. Causality is personal in essence, since all things are the handiwork of God the Lord. Causality is not, as with the Greeks, the impersonal and blind outworkings of a being rife with unrealized potentialities.

If we deny the possibility of systematic theology, we deny the God of Scripture. We are then on the road to denying not only theology but all knowledge, because factuality has been denied its created meaning and its purpose.

3. The Systematics of Common Life

It is commonplace in our time to stress the irrationality of man. In a very real sense, this is a valid assertion, if we view man from the perspective of some standard of reason we hold to be necessary and true. For the Christian, the humanist is irrational, whatever form his rationalism takes, modern, classical, Hindu, Buddhist, or any other form. For the modern humanist, all non-humanists (i.e., all who are not modern "scientific" humanists) are thoroughly irrational. Each and every one, however, is rational in terms of his basic presupposition. Man's reasonings work out the implications of his faith, so that a man's reason applies the yardstick of his faith to all things and is in essence a religious activity.

In this sense, we must affirm that men are highly rational, but that their reasonings are warped, because their religious premise is warped. All reasoning rests on a religious premise of faith with respect to reality.

Moreover, because man is created in the image of God, even in his fallen estate he remains aware of the implications of that image within him. He seeks to create, however, his own principles of knowledge and order, so that

[13] *Ibid.*, ch. xxviii, p. 33.

fallen man remains dedicated to the principle of systematics. Although by denying the triune God man has denied the foundations of systematics, he remains an incurable systems builder. He denies the validity of systematics to God in order to attempt to build a systematics of being.

Man is a creature whose life is an outworking of his faith. In terms of that faith, man is logical and systematic in the basic thrust and direction of his life. Man lives in terms of what he believes, and his life is the logical and rational development of certain religious presuppositions.

A telling illustration of the logic of the common man appears in a study by G. G. Coulton. According to Coulton,

> In modern Sicily, among the poorest classes, an executed criminal is a saint. Pitre has noted that men pray "in the name of the holy gallow-birds." This is perfectly logical. The crowd has seen a man publicly executed after partaking of the holy wafer, which would not be given to him unless he had just confessed and been absolved. His soul is, at that moment, unquestionably on the right side of the balance; next moment he is launched into eternity. By all ecclesiastical logic you are more certain of that man's final salvation, after due purification in purgatory, than of the most saintly liver whose last moments had been less convincing; therefore the Sicilian vulgar pray for help to the souls of the holy gallow-birds.[14]

This logic may make the theologians wince, but the fact remains that the logic of these Sicilians is faultless, if their premise be granted.

Thus, in Hindu thought the religious concern is "not with a relationship between man and God, but with the realization of the nature of the self."[15] It should not surprise us therefore that Hindu life is marked by a radical egoism and an unconcern for the sufferings of others. This is not because Hindus have something lacking in their make-up, but that they are logical and rational terms of their faith.

Similarly, Gautama, or Buddha, the Enlightened One, called for the middle way of non-involvement in life. The resultant unconcern of Buddhism with social problems is a necessary consequence of this faith. The Jain doctrine that all matter is possessed of life leads to pacifism, vegetarianism, and non-violence, but not to love, mercy, and charity. The goal is not compassion but a disentanglement from the pain and misery of life. The activism which Mahatma Gandhi and other imported into Hindu life was borrowed from the West; it will survive and thrive only to the degree that Hinduism is altered and dies. The logic of common life requires a simple connection between faith and life, a systematic connection. The sophistications of intellectuals who attempt to breed hybrids do not endure.

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[14] George Gordon Coulton: *Ten Medieval Studies*. (Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1959). pp. 192-193.

[15] Ainslee T. Embree, editor: *The Hindu Tradition*. (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1966). p. 50.

Moreover, where systematics is absent, a vacuum does not develop; another systematics replaces it. Thus, in the churches, many ministers never preach the whole counsel of God, or if they do, they do so in a wooden and inadequate manner. The result is that few people in the church are ever exposed to the Christian systematic theology. Their pastors are one-text or one-theme preachers, proclaiming salvation and little else, unless it be ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church. In the absence of a systematics grounded on Biblical theology, most Christians function in terms of the logic and presuppositions of their humanistic and statist education. *Without systematic theology, God cannot be central in the lives of ministers and members.* The church cannot flourish on alien foundations, and it has not. It is not enough to proclaim adherence to the infallible words, or to the five points of Calvinism, if such an adherence is not grounded on systematic theology. Without systematics, we have smorgasbord theology and religion, and it is quickly replaced by another faith because of the logic of the common life. Van Til is right:

> Non-indoctrinated Christians will easily fall a prey to the peddlers of Russellism, Spiritualism and all of the other fifty-seven varieties of heresies with which our country abounds. One-text Christians simply have no weapons of defense against these people. They may be able to quote many Scripture texts which speak, for instance, of eternal punishment, but the Russellite will be able to quote texts which, by the sound of them and taken individually, seem to teach annihilation. The net result is, at best, a loss of spiritual power because of a loss of conviction. Many times, such one-text Christians themselves fall prey to the seducer's voice.[16]

Moreover, as Van Til points out, "The unity and organic character of our personality demands that we have a unified knowledge as the basis of our action."[17] If this unified knowledge is not provided by the theologians, it will be provided by someone else. Human action requires that unified knowledge. Man's being requires a systematics, and he will either live or die in terms of it. His faith will lead him to action or inaction, to suicide or life.

Thus, systematics cannot be avoided. The only question is, which systematics? Every non-Biblical system has collapse built into it. It rests on false premises, leads to false conclusions, and cannot give a valid and rational interpretation of the nature and purpose of life and the world.

A systematic theology derived from Scripture is widely denied today as an impossibility. The reason for this is that such deniers are concerned rather with affirming another system, such as a systematic anthropology, man as creator of his own essence and lord of his own being. Such attempts, however, are a futile passion. Only a Bible-based systematics can stand and is valid.

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16. Van Til: *An Introduction to Theology*, I, p. 6.
17. *Ibid.*, I, p. 5.

4. The Coherency of Scripture

There can be no systematic theology if the God of Scripture is not a coherent unity, and if His word is not a coherent whole. An incoherent God, who has elements of unrealized potentiality in Himself and who cannot speak a necessarily infallible word, is incapable of being either the foundation of any systematic theology or of being God. Thus, those who find in Scripture only flashes of insight, and a sometimes incoherent movement toward realization, see no God at all. They are simply mining a vast deposit of earth in the hopes of finding a few nuggets of gold in all that void.

Systematics requires that we recognize the necessary connection between all aspects of Scripture and all forms of Biblical doctrine because there is a unity in the Godhead which makes for a unity of meaning. We must thus see that there is a necessary unity between predestination, circumcision, and baptism.

Predestination is the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in relation to all His works. All things were made by Him in terms of His sovereign purpose and counsel, and the totality of His work was determined from all eternity by no other consideration than His own sovereign will. Hence, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism,

> Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?
>
> A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. (Eph. 1:11; Acts 4:27, 28; Ps. 33:11; Eph. 2:10; Rom. 9:22, 23; 11:33)

Circumcision was the covenant sign of membership. All males were circumcised as infants on the eighth day (Gen. 17:9-4). To refuse to circumcise meant a departure from the covenant. Why the circumcision of babes? If children could not understand what the covenant meant on the eighth day of their lives, how could they then be covenant members?

Circumcision witnesses to the sovereignty of God's electing grace. To baptize or to circumcise a child of eight days means simply that it is not the child's choice, not act of faith, nor personal decision that makes for salvation. It is not the act of circumcision or baptism which saves a child, but, rather, the act is a witness to our faith that salvation is not an act of man but of sovereign grace.

The secondary factors, man's duty to rear his children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), are very real. They cannot be neglected. But the early age of circumcision and then of baptism witnesses to the sovereignty of grace.

To hold that infant baptism is not the coherent principle of doctrine, in terms of predestination and circumcision, is to undercut sovereign grace and to deny the validity of systematics.

Similarly, the common failure to relate infant baptism to predestination is again an evidence of a lack of systematic theology. Infant baptism is commonly practiced for traditional and ecclesiastical reasons. All kinds of far-fetched attempts at justifying it doctrinally are advanced, some of which seriously undercut God's sovereignty and give power and determination to the church and its sacrament instead. Bitter reactions against such perversions are understandable and to a degree healthy, but we cannot therefore undercut the sovereignty of grace in salvation.

The sovereign God does not require the age of discretion or understanding to save a man. Infants and idiots can be and often are, by sovereign grace, made a new creation. The marks of grace are not the marks of man's understanding but rather the handiwork of the sovereign and gracious God. While the learned and mighty planned the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the children in the Temple cried out, "Hosanna to the son of David" (Matt. 21:15-16). If, as we are told, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9), it is clear that the regeneration of babes is no problem to Him.

No doctrine of Scripture exists in a vacuum, or in isolation from any other doctrine. The unity of doctrine rests on the unity of the Godhead. Systematic theology is the affirmation and declaration of that unity.

Without systematics, and by denying systematics, to cite an extreme example, some Hindu thinkers have used Christ and the Gospels as aspects of Hinduism. By denying the sovereign God of Scripture and His infallible word, they have been able to abstract Christ and the Gospels from their context and to place them in an alien one. In the process, of course, Jesus Christ ceases to be Himself, and the Gospels become alien documents. By denying in full the systematics of Scripture, such Hindus are reducing Christ to a datum in their world, as one fact among many. A Christianity without a systematic theology differs from these Hindu constructs only in degree, not in kind.

5. The Limits of Systematic Theology

Systematic theology must be rigorously Biblical. Its purpose must be the development and organization of Biblical theology. What the Scripture manifests as revealed history, prophecy, law, and wisdom, systematic theology sets forth in systematic form.

Systematic theology cannot be speculative. Speculative theology is a departure from Biblical faith, whether it presents itself as Reformed, Arminian, Scholastic, modernist, dialectical, or anything else. Speculative

theology begins, not with an act of faith in the triune God, but with presumption and an implicit denial of faith. Basic to speculative theology is the assumption that human logic can penetrate into the recesses of eternity and into every corner of the mind of God to draw certain "necessary" conclusions. These conclusions rest, not on Biblical theology, but rather on the conclusions of human logic. Logic has its good and proper functions, but the mind of God so exceeds the mind of man that it must be said that man's logic cannot go beyond its appointed and temporal task; man's mind and logic can never play Peeping Tom into the mind of God, who declares to man, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD" (Isa. 55:8).

As an example of this, we have in Calvinism three schools of thought with respect to election. *First*, there are the supralapsarians, for whom the decree of election takes precedence over the decree of creation. *Second*, the sublapsarians see the decree of election contemplating man as fallen, and then God, out of the fallen mass of humanity, chooses to predestine some to eternal life. *Third*, the infralapsarians saw the election as at one and the same time to creation, the fall, and the redemption. The sublapsarians have in the main prevailed and have held that infralapsarianism in effect denies the vicarious atonement, and supralapsarianism has reprobation precede sin in the decree. A little thought makes clear the amazing audacity of all three, each of which presumes to read the mind of God and chart the structure of His reasoning, as though the processes of God's mind are comparable to man's. All these positions assume a time sequence in God's thinking, a blasphemous assumption. All three positions involve a blasphemous presumption on the part of the mind of man and a projection of human thought processes into the mind of God. This kind of thinking began with the rise of Calvinistic Scholasticism. Since then, many an able and godly theologian has felt duty bound to comment on lapsarianism as one of the great exercises of theology, but, by the grace of God, not too many have developed any great enthusiasm for it. All the same, the plague of lapsarians is still with us.

Another example of speculative theology is the argument about the birth of the soul, an argument which comes down to us from the early church. How is the soul of the baby in the mother's womb brought into being? *First*, the Pre-existents held that, at the beginning of creation, God created the souls of all men, which are only united to bodies at the time of their conception or birth. Justin Martyr and Origen espoused this doctrine, which was later condemned in A.D. 540 by the Council of Constantinople. Its pagan origin was obvious, and its condemnation deserved. The poet William Wordsworth, in the ode, "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," espoused it, as did other Romantics.

Second, the Creationists insisted that every rational soul is from God by an immediate act of creation. Pelagius and others adopted this view, because it

separated the soul of man from the fall of Adam and left only the body as an heir to the fall. As a result, while seemingly exalting the creative power of God, this view actually exalted man and made him innocent and capable of self-salvation. In modern philosophy, Leibniz had creationist ideas.

Third, Traducianism held that both soul and body were generated by the parents through the normal process of sexual reproduction. The Augustinians, Lutherans, and Calvinists have been Traducianists in the main and have given the doctrine the flavor of orthodoxy. Clearly, Traducianism does not have the glaring defects of the other two positions, but this is not enough to give it a clean bill of health.

The argument about the generation of the soul rests, *first*, on presumption. Man professes to know the details of God's creative method and speaks with confidence about the mind of God when he cannot express his own will and mind with clarity or certainty. The argument is illegitimate and presumptuous.

Second, the argument rests on an alien religion, Hellenism, and its view of mind and body as two separate and alien substances. Traducianism comes closer to bringing them together, but it has not challenged the premise of the argument, the presupposition of two differing substances. The difference in being for Scripture is not between mind and body, or soul and matter, idea and form, but between the uncreated being of God and all created being. The whole point of this argument of speculative theology is, like all speculative theology, illegitimate.

In Genesis 3, in the temptation of Adam, and in Matthew 4:1-11, the temptation of our Lord, Satan presents himself as one who can read the mind of God. This is the *first* great premise of the temptations, Satan's assurance that he knows and can declare the mind of God. "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1). Satan offers the true reading of God's mind. *Second*, Satan invites man, the first Adam and the last, and all men in them, to read the mind of God, to become speculative theologians, in effect. Only so can they deal successfully with God and prosper themselves. The invitation of Satan to man is to let his mind soar into contemplation of the hidden thoughts of God. "God doth know" (Gen. 3:5) certain things, and Satan declares that, with some logical speculation, man can know the same.

The fallacy of speculative theology is the fallacy and sin of Satan's plan and plea. Man is required to read the revelation of God, to read the word of God, not the mind of God apart from or beyond the word. For man to know the mind of God requires a mind equal to God. The revealed word of God, which truly sets forth God's righteousness and holiness, assures us that God is true to Himself. There are no contradictions in His being, so that we can fully trust His word. Man, however, as a creature, and, more, as a fallen creature and thus doubly limited, does not know himself or his world fully or

truly. How then can he presume to know not only the mind of God but every jot and tittle thereof? What man is summoned to know is the revealed word of God, and himself and creation in terms of it.

Speculative theology is not only presumptuous but also barren. Its rise leads to the impotence of the church. Its false premises lead to false conclusions, and to a departure from reality, and hence from the task of theology. It was Origen, a speculative theologian, who castrated himself. That act has its symbolic meaning. Speculative theology, because of its destructive nature, is the castration of theologians who embrace it. Origen began with bad theology - Greek theology with its belief in two substances. His flesh was giving him sexual problems. The answer was simple: off with the offending flesh! To his dismay, lust continued. His bad theology had made him doubly impotent, and irrelevant as well.

6. Abstract Theology

For fallen man, it is this world which is the real world. Anything beyond the world of time and space is for him simply an idea or an abstraction. Because fallen man regards the physical universe as the real world and usually the only world, anything which may be necessary to posit as existing beyond this world is by comparison limited, ghostly, or unreal. It becomes a limiting concept, a myth, a rational abstraction, or something similar.

At the same time, the "reality" of the physical universe is enhanced or increased by absorbing into it whatever is necessary to make of the cosmos a self-sustaining unity. The idea of *Nature* is the great example of this fact. Nature is seen as a complexus which is a self-sustaining objective order with its own inherent power and workings. The world-view of the Deists, despite many alterations of the framework, is the basic view of Nature in ancient and modern thought. Nature is the sum total of all reality and yet somehow not only a unity but a corporate thing possessing its own inherent or native law, development, or structure. But this Nature so commonly invoked is merely an immanentist substitute for the idea of God. *Nature* is a collective noun, used to sum up all physical reality; to ascribe any law, structure, development, or power to that collective noun is to indulge in myth-making.

There is, however, an urgent necessity for such myth-making in anti-Biblical thought. To accept Nature as merely a collective noun means that law, structure, development, and power can then be understood only by reference to another world. The God-idea then becomes more than a limiting concept and an abstraction and becomes a necessity. If, however, we retain this anti-theistic point of view to any degree, to that degree our theology becomes *abstract theology*, because our essential or primary reality is not God but Nature. We may even believe God is not dead but "real," but He will

only be real enough to snatch us out of this world, not to govern and predestine both us and the world.

We also have many who will affirm predestination and the sovereignty of God formally, but abstractly, because in practice their theology remains abstract.

To be specific, how can anyone affirm the sovereignty of God concretely and realistically, without opposing and denying the sovereignty of man and the state? If we affirm God's sovereignty but do not challenge humanistic doctrines of sovereignty from the pulpit and pew, in the home, the Christian school, the voting booth, and the halls of Congress, and elsewhere, we are either denying our profession of faith or affirming a two-worlds theory, i.e., that God is sovereign in the supernatural realm, but Satan governs and triumphs in space and time. We are then not Christians but Manichaeans.

Similarly, to affirm predestination by God and to assent to socialism in any form is to say that there are two realms of predestination: God predestines the soul, and the state predestines the physical and natural life of man by its planning and control.

Again, if we hold to an abstract form of systematics, we will talk about atonement without seeing that, apart from Christ's atonement, man will seek atonement by sado-masochistic activities. As a sadist, he will attempt to lay his sins upon other people, and as a masochist he will attempt through self-punishment to make self-atonement. Politics, religion, marriage, and all human relationships will manifest sadistic or masochistic activities wherever men are without Christ. For the pulpit to preach Christ's atonement without seeing its very practical consequences of deliverance from sado-masochism, and the results of a society which is dedicated to sado-masochistic works of atonement, is to hold to a Manichaean or an abstract theology.

The result of such an abstract systematics is the radical irrelevance of the churches which profess it. The fact that, in the United States of the 1970s, well over 50 million adults profess to believe in Jesus Christ as born-again believers, and yet the nation drifts more strongly into the ways of humanism, is indicative of the extent to which theology has become abstract.

An abstract theology is only formally or technically systematic. Systematic theology must of necessity deny, because God is sovereign, that there are any neutral facts, or any areas of neutrality. All factuality is God-created and God governed and interpreted. *All facts are therefore theological facts*, and every area of life, thought, study, and action is a theological concern. Education, politics, science, the arts, the vocations, the family, and all things else are theological concerns. A theology which does not involve itself in every area in terms of the sovereign God and His infallible law-word *cannot* be systematic: it is merely abstract.

Thus, it is not enough for theology to say that the whole world was ordained and created by God, but also the whole of history and all things therein. None of it is ordained or predestined to manifest the viability of autonomy for the world, for man, or for Satan. There is no independently functioning person, thing, or realm.

Thus, we must avoid the error of abstraction. It is the mark of little or no faith. God is not real for those who preach an abstract theology, or, if real, He is remote and pale in their thought.

Similarly, those who immerse their theology into history have no transcendental and sovereign God. Thus, the modernists see only the world of "Nature" as the real world. Hence, for them the only real god is a god who is totally immanent, fully a part of the cosmos. The result is the death of theology and a turning to sociology.

Both the immanentists and the abstractionists deny, to all practical intent, the living God. Both stress heavily the poetic and metaphoric nature of Scripture and its language, because talk of a *jealous God* makes God all too real and vivid. We are therefore always cautioned by such men that, when God declares,

> Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them [images], for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Ex. 20:5-6),

we must understand that the language is anthropomorphic and to be seen as figurative, designed to teach. Is this so? Exodus 34:14 is more emphatic: "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD whose name is JEALOUS, is a jealous God." St. Paul speaks of idolatry in any degree as something which provokes God to jealousy (I Cor. 10:22). By abstracting jealousy from God, we also abstract every other aspect which indicates personal response, so that love and hate in God are replaced by formal and technical responses. God fades steadily into an abstraction. We can no more comprehend the jealousy of God than we can His predestinating counsel and decree, but we must accept God as He is in His revelation in Scripture, not as He is smoothed out and reinterpreted by philosophers and theologians. If we allow their ideas about the sovereign and jealous God to govern us, we have an abstract god, and an abstract god is no god at all. Again, a god we can comprehend is no god at all: he is no bigger, if as big, than we are. The God of Scripture we cannot comprehend, for as He declares, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts then your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). We can know Him truly in His revelation, and every "fact" about God is totally consistent with every other, but we cannot comprehend Him or know Him exhaustively. Abstract theology seeks

to reduce God to the dimensions of man's mind. Lapsarianism, as we have seen, is an example of this. Lapsarianism seeks to penetrate the mind of God and to chart its workings; it ends up with a minimal god who is reduced to the level of man's logic and to the temporal nature of man's thought.

The roots of abstract theology are in Greek philosophy, with its belief in the ultimacy of ideas. Abstract theology makes God over into the great Idea, in whom all ideas reside in one coherent and intellectual whole. This, the god of the theologically minded intellectuals, is not the living God of Scripture but an abstraction. If we bow down before an abstraction, we bow before an image created by the mind of man, and we are idolaters.

7. Systematics and Possibility

We have seen the dangers in speculative theology and in abstract thought. It is necessary now to look briefly at another manifestation of the same kind of evil - the question of *possibility*.

In many theologies, a whole world of possibility exists apart from God. In fact, some professors and sometimes pastors delight in raising hypothetical questions relative to possibilities outside of God's decree. Thus, a favorite seems to be, "What would have happened if, after Eve submitted to the tempter, Adam had refused? What would God have done then?"

Similarly, the Scofield Bible notes manifest the same mentality. Thus, we are not told that Jesus, in His Triumphal Entry, entered Jerusalem as the Messianic King, but rather that He made a "public offering of himself as King," and, being rejected, the cross became necessary.

All such thinking involves an implicit denial of the God of Scripture. The premise concealed in these ideas is that the God revealing Himself in the Bible does not exist. If God is indeed God, then *all possibility* exists in terms of His sovereign decree, and there is no possibility outside of God. To imagine a fall involving only Eve, or a possibility with regard to Christ's entry other than that God ordained and brought to pass, is to deny the sovereignty of God. God is not then in control of history, but man and chance govern it.

All factuality is God created and God ordained. Nothing exists apart from His creation and purpose, and every fact in creation is totally created, governed, and directed by the sovereign God. Even more, every aspect of history, every moment of time, and every event therein is of God's ordination. This total predestination extends to the very hair of our heads (Matt. 10:30), and to every atom of all creation. There is no existence, potentiality, or possibility outside of God's ordination.

To affirm any possibility outside of God is to affirm the ultimacy and sovereignty of chance. It means that God is not sovereign, and that a vast and unlimited reservoir of possibility exists outside of Him. This great reservoir

of possibility can at any moment limit, undercut, or alter God's purposes and deny His deity.

Those who raise the question, "What would have happened if, after Eve submitted to the tempter, Adam had refused? What would God have done?" are indignant when I object to their supposedly harmless theological exercise. But what they have done is to insist on the ultimacy of chance and its priority to and superiority over God. Chance events can impede, alter, or destroy God's purpose, and sovereignty is clearly conveyed to the great god, chance.

Some theologians, who claim to believe in systematic theology, still affirm the idea of possibility outside of God. Clearly, all non-Reformed theologies, and humanists, affirm such a doctrine of possibility. Why? Is it not in fact a fearful destiny for man to be taken out of God's sovereignty and providence and placed under chance? However "hard" a doctrine predestination may be, it still places us under God's total government and in a universe of total meaning. The affirmation of any possibility apart from the decree of God, on the other hand, places us in a meaningless universe, and in the context of senseless events. Why do men choose such a faith and defend it passionately?

The answer is that, *whatever the cost*, this view of possibility gives man autonomy over God. In a graveyard, the living man is king over all, and man the sinner prefers a graveyard without God to the Garden of Eden with God. Chance reduces his universe to senselessness, but man becomes god over this chaos.

James Daane, in *A Theology of Grace* (1954), holds that it was finally and ultimately in Adam's power not to sin. Only so, he holds, can we hold to any genuinely Christian faith which preserves man from sheer determinism. Such a position clearly contradicts Scripture - such verses as Ephesians 1:4,5 - and denies that, before the foundation of the world, we were *predestined* unto salvation. It would reduce God to playing a situation-ethics type of game, *reacting* to man rather than creating and governing man.

Moreover, to speak then of free will is wrong on several accounts. Among other reasons, *first*, men like Daane insist on viewing man's freedom in an absolute sense. But man is a creature, and his freedom is a creaturely and limited freedom. Man does not choose his own nature, time and place of birth, sex, aptitudes, or anything else in this direction. Because he is a creature, not God, and not the first cause, man's freedom is a limited, derivative, and secondary freedom. Man's freedom is the freedom to be the man God created him to be, not the freedom to be a god. Moreover, his creaturely freedom differs in terms of his estate, i.e., the states of innocence, the fall, grace, and glory each gives man a differing form of creaturely freedom.

Second, free will cannot exist in a vacuum. If the sovereign God of Scripture be denied, the alternative is a world of chance and meaningless events in which freedom has no meaning. In the Greco-Roman world of the

early church, the pagan thinkers who affirmed the free will of man against the church fathers also ended up with no freedom at all. In their universe, as C. N. Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture* makes evident, freedom could not exist. The forces of the environment, hostile, fortuitous, and alien to man, overwhelmed man. Freedom cannot exist in a world of chance and anarchy; freedom presupposes planned movement in an orderly and purposeful world.

Third, we have here two alien views of possibility. Those who oppose the sovereignty of God insist that possibility means simply a vast, meaningless, undirected, and fortuitous realm of erupting events, i.e., a universe of chance. They are insistent that possibility be linked with chance, even though such a concept of possibility reduces history and the universe to chaos. Possibility thus becomes the product of accident rather than necessity. The mentality of the gambler is a faith in the sovereignty of accident and chance; the mathematical odds against him are meaningless. In fact, the "long shot" appeals to him most because, believing as he does in chance, he must affirm the result which best expresses the idea of chance. Reasoning with him on the facts of the matter will not work, because reason is ineffectual where the faith is not in reason but in chance.

On the other hand, for a Christian possibility is not linked with chance but with necessity, and both possibility and necessity are inseparable from the decree of God. No possibility exists outside of God's decree. Because God is God, He is the source of all possibility, and nothing can alter or delay His decree.

Thus, the question about Adam, and the possibility of Adam's continued innocence, is invalid and immoral. It presupposes something other than God as ultimate, namely, chance. The foundation of all systematic theology must be, not abstract nor speculative theology, but Biblical theology and the sovereign God of Scripture. Anything else gives us finally another religion.

8. Systematics and Proof

On May 2, 1977, television viewers had an opportunity to see the film, *The Search for Noah's Ark*. The producers of the film had as their intention the presentation of the evidences for the historicity of the Biblical account in order to convince the unbelieving of the truth of Scripture.

On the following morning, in a barber shop in Angels Camp, California, two or three men discussed the film. They were conservative Americans, with an old-fashioned American and Christian rearing, but without faith. They were agreed that the film "proved" that Noah's Ark is actually on Mount Ararat and that the story of Noah was in some sense true. Did this convince them that the Bible is true, and that the God of Scripture is the living and sovereign God? Far from it. Rather, it convinced them that scientists, like

orthodox Christians, are trying to force a rigid system onto the universe and thus will not allow for the reality of a vast realm of mysterious and chance events. Their conclusion was very simple: "If Noah's Ark is true, so are flying saucers." Having begun with the premise of a universe of chance, with all factuality a product of chance, the "evidence" for Noah's Ark was for them a telling "evidence" for their own presuppositions.

I thought, as I talked with the barber, that no more telling illustration of the truth of Dr. Cornelius Van Til's apologetics can be imagined. Unless we begin with the sovereign and predestinating God of Scripture who is the Creator and determiner of all things, we cannot have any conclusion which will see the "facts" of Scripture as God-created, God-ordained, and God-governed facts. For all who begin with alien presuppositions, the "facts" of Scripture will be either myths or else "evidences" of a universe of chance. Their reality as facts will be as brute factuality, not God-interpreted factuality.

A few years ago, I clashed with a university professor, whose work is exclusively with graduate students, and whose reputation is international as a scholar. He became more than a little angry at my statement that the universe is totally rational because the absolutely rational God stands behind it and is the Creator and predestinator of it. The universe, he insisted, has only "a thin edge of rationality," man, and is apart from man nothing but irrationality and chance. Again, I was reminded of Van Til, who writes,

> The modern man is in the first place a rationalist. All non-Christians are rationalists. As descendants of Adam, their covenant-breaking representative (Rom. 5:12), every man refuses to submit his mind in the way of obedience to the mind of God. He undertakes to interpret the nature of reality in terms of himself as the final reference point. But to be a rationalist man must also be an irrationalist. Man obviously cannot legislate by logic for reality. Unwilling to admit that God has determined the law of reality, man, by implication, attributes all power to chance. As a rationalist he says that only that is possible which he can logically grasp in exhaustive fashion. As an irrationalist he says that since he cannot logically grasp the whole of reality, and really cannot legislate for existence at all, it is chance that rules supreme.[18]

The meaning of man's revolt against God, his original and basic sin, is his will to be his own god, determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). The implication of this is that man, in order to establish himself as god and as the source of meaning and interpretation, is reduced to legislating all meaning out of the universe in order to establish himself as god. Only by emptying the universe of all meaning can man then declare himself to be the determiner and source of meaning. The world of man alone provides "a thin edge of rationality" in the universe. The world of man, however, gives us then a world

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[18] Cornelius Van Til: *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976). p. 174.

of competing gods, and we have the bloody horrors of the twentieth century, the wars of the would-be gods.

Legislating all meaning apart from man out of the universe means exactly that. Nietzsche demanded a world beyond good and evil; Dewey as educator called for a world beyond grading, beyond truth and error. Walter Kaufmann has called for a world beyond guilt and justice. No criterion, law, norm, or standard beyond the man-god can be allowed to exist.

Van Til has pointed out that, "There must be absolute truth if there is to be even the possibility of error."[19] If we deny that absolute and sovereign truth, and if we allow even an atom to exist in independence from it, then we have denied the sovereignty of God and created a realm of escape from good and evil, truth and error, and from guilt and justice. And if an atom of matter, or a single moment of time, can escape from, or step out from under, the absolute decree and government of the triune God, then all things else can readily do the same. To cite Van Til again,

> Unless we presuppose the doctrine of temporal creation and the complete control of all things in the universe by the providence of God, God is confronted by that about which he cannot legislate by means of his thought. In particular, since on the idealist assumption man is not created by God, the mind of man can initiate that which is new and unpredictable by God. God will wonder and hope that the laws of logic will somehow control reality, but he cannot assure the fact that they will. These laws are then independent of his nature.[20]

Systematic theology is thus impossible unless we begin, *first*, with the absolute predestination of the sovereign and ontological Trinity, and, *second*, the doctrine of creation. Only so is God the Lord. Only then can we declare that there is a system, a law, and a structure to all things. The choice is not between some law intermingled with a doctrine of chance, miscalled freedom, on the one hand, and the doctrines of "rigid Calvinism" on the other, but simply between God and chance. If an iota of chance is allowed into the universe, then God's sovereignty is denied, and God is not God.

Moreover, we cannot allow the apostate definition of freedom and "free will" to stand. For men in revolt against God, language is an instrument of warfare, to be used in the war against God. Freedom is therefore defined as correlative to chance. It is held to mean independence from structure and law, and is in essence unpredictability. The meaning of freedom thus is made identical with insanity, but this does not describe it adequately, because "insanity" has a structure and pattern to it, and the various forms of insanity are classified and named. Freedom is equated with a radical independence from all law and compulsion. But such freedom does not exist, because the universe is not a world of chance, nor are all events in total isolation from all

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

other events. Brute and isolated factuality does not exist. Every person, thing, or event has in the background a vast complex of causes, influences, conditioning factors, and forces which have produced that person, thing, moment, or event. Its freedom is to be what it is, and what God ordained it to be. Compulsion is that which interferes with the matrix of convergent causes. I am a servant of God, and whatever interferes with my calling, or tries to prevent it, is compulsion to me. I am predestined by God, and therein is my freedom. I am not under nature, nor am I the creator of man. If a tyrant seeks to prevent me or hinder me in my obedience to the Lord, that is compulsion, and it is tyranny. Tyranny means in origin rule apart from God's law. God's law, in the form of both predestination and Biblical law, is to me *freedom.*

Not only do truth and error have meaning because God is the absolute truth and the sovereign and predestinating Lord, but also freedom and slavery have meaning only because God's sovereignty is the source of all meaning and prediction. Apart from the sovereign God of Scripture, no meaning and no system is possible. Systematic theology thus alone gives us any ground for faith, God, life, and meaning. Apart from Him, we have nothing and can prove nothing. Apart from the sovereign God of Scripture as our presupposition, the search for Noah's Ark readily becomes a "proof" of chance and of flying saucers. The end of all non-systematic apologetics is absurdity.

9. Practical Systematics

Every man's life is governed by an implicit systematic theology, by certain presuppositions which form a coherent whole and govern his thoughts and life. I have, over the years, worked and talked with a great variety of peoples, of differing races (American Indians, Negroes, Europeans, Asiatics, Latin Americans, North Americans, and others). It is the great myth of the modern intellectual that only he is capable of intelligent, logical thinking. Implicit in his arrogant faith is the assumption that wisdom began with him and his kind. Apart from the intellectual, it is held, and before him, men were and are "primitives," and their thinking is mythical and pre-logical. One can counter by pointing out that no greater myths have ever been created by the mind of man that those of modern man. Some of these myths are: evolution; the natural goodness of man (or, at worst, his neutral nature); and the myths of origins and of history this faith leads to; modern anthropology and its myths concerning man's nature and society; the myth of salvation through politics and education; and much, much more.

The intellectuals to the contrary, men are everywhere logical and systematic in their thinking. The problem lies not in their thinking but in their presuppositions.

Our Lord declares, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.... Wherefore by their fruit ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:17-20). What our Lord insists on is the unity of man's being: "A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). Pastors and psychologists are all too busy trying to convince us that this logical sequence is not true, that a good tree can, in fact, produce evil fruit, or that men can "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles" (Matt. 7:16). A fig tree may produce a light crop, but it will not produce thistles, nor will it bear any other fruit than its own.

Creation as God made it was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Because of sin, it became fallen. By virtue of Christ's redemption, it is being restored. Its goal is an eternal and glorious estate.

In each of its fourfold estates, man and the creation can never depart from God's sovereign purpose. The Creator is a unity; God is one. In each estate, man manifests a systematics which is either a declaration of God's sovereign word and purpose or is a manifestation of man's imitation of God. The redeemed man can sin, *hamartia*, i.e., miss or fall short of the mark, but he is still aiming at and moving toward that mark. He is not guilty of *anomia*, lawlessness, and cannot commit this sin if he is regenerate. If, however, he is persistently missing the mark, it means that he is actually not regenerate but lawless, anti-law. In I John 3:4, we are told that, "Whosoever committeth sin [i.e., practices and abides in sin, *hamartian*, continually] transgresseth also the law [*anomian*]: for sin [the continual practice of sin *hamartia*] is the transgression of the law [is lawlessness, *anomia*]."

A polytheistic religion fathers a polytheistic psychology. The polytheism of Greece led to a dualistic and triparite psychology of man. Practically, this meant that Socrates could be regarded as a man of virtue although a homosexual. Such a judgment is impossible from a Biblical perspective. Man does not have a being of diverse origins held together by a paradoxical tension. In Greek thought, man has in him two differing kinds of being: form (or idea, mind, spirit) on the one hand, and matter on the other. Each has its own entelechy, its own nature and destiny. In addition, for Greek thought man is subject to a variety of forces and influences, astronomical and terrestrial, which also shape his life and character. As a result, a man could do evil and still be good "at heart." A radical division was possible between man's faith and life, his ideas and actions, his moral principals and his immoral practice. Because of this disparity of nature, man could not be effectively judged: the criminal in act could be a saint at heart.

The influence of this Greek and polytheistic psychology is still dominant in the life and "spirituality" of the church. Its practical effect is to turn Christianity into a polytheistic cult. It involves a radical denial of the doctrine of creation, and, in church circles, we can see that, where the doctrine of creation is underestimated, neglected, or bypassed, psychology takes

precedence over all else in preaching. Understanding man, especially sinful man, becomes a problem. Instead of the simple test of God's law, as our Lord requires it in Matthew 7:15-20, we have instead the conversion of man into a mystery who cannot be judged. He is a product of his environment; he is a grand mixture of good and evil; he is both saint and devil, and so on. He is everything except a creature who is either a covenant-keeper or a covenant-breaker.

The logic of polytheism, its "systematics," creates a view of man which requires the radical destruction of the Christian perspective. An education rooted in evolutionary theory, as statist education is, will produce an alien world and life view.

Thus, in one sense, only Biblical faith can have a systematic theology, because it alone sets forth the sovereign and omnipotent God whose rule and power are total. All creation is a unity, because He is a unity. All logic, material things, and all things else have the coherence of His creation decree and purpose. Every departure therefrom is suicidal (Prov. 8:36). Only Biblical religion can present the systematics and unity of all creation, because it alone is the word of the triune God who is Lord over all. Thus, no other religion or philosophy can develop a valid systematics, and all must, in the long run, deny the validity of systematics.

Man, however, is created in the image of God. He may consciously affirm an anti-God faith; he may deny the possibility of systematics and call it an illusion. He will, all the same, inescapably act in terms of the "systematics" and logic of his unbelief. He cannot say, because of his polytheism, that one segment of life has meaning, and another none. He cannot close the door to any area of his life and keep out the dark from his supposedly lighted closet. The logic of his unbelief permeates the totality of his life.

The image of God in man answers to the reality of God, His decree, and His creation purpose. St. Paul makes this clear in Romans 1:17-20:

> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifested in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

First, St. Paul makes clear that *all* men know God; they know the truth of God and "the invisible things of him." Because they are created in God's image, and because their own being, as is all creation, is revelational of God, the knowledge of God is inescapable knowledge.

Second, men "hold the truth in unrighteousness." They suppress or misapply it, because they are determined not to acknowledge or to know God.

Their problem is sin, not a lack of knowledge. As a result, the framework of faith, its systematics, is held by men in unrighteousness; it is misappropriated and misapplied.

Third, because men everywhere have this inescapable knowledge of God, their problem is not unbelief in the sense of an inability to believe intellectually, but rather unbelief as a moral resistance to an obvious and overwhelming fact. All men *know* the truth of God's revelation; "the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). The unregenerate, however, resist God and suppress the knowledge of God, because they are determined to be themselves gods (Gen. 3:5). Thus, while all men everywhere know the truth of God, they refuse to acknowledge God. Their unbelief in God is an insistence on their own ultimacy. Unbelief in this sense is not lack of knowledge but moral warfare and revolt against the sovereign God.

Fourth, this means that Paul, when he declares, "The just shall live by faith," (and Habakkuk earlier, Hab. 2:4), means something more than mere belief: *faith is saying Amen to God.* It is bowing down to His sovereignty and lordship, and it is living by God's decree and providence, not by man's. Faith thus is saying Amen to God's "systematics" and denying our own as sin and as a pretentious impossibility. Man's systematics is a ladder resting on nothing and reaching out into a cosmic void. But man, created in God's image, cannot escape the mandate of that image. His entire life should be a pilgrimage and a calling to develop the implications of the earth in terms of knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion under God, to move toward that "city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). The Bible provides man with the blueprint for that city in its law. The systematics or building plan is entirely of the Lord. Man cannot abandon the necessity for that city: it is a God-created, God-ordained necessity. In his sin, however, man perverts that calling. He substitutes his own pseudo-systematics and declares, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11:4). But the broken systematics of man has no foundation in reality; it has no metaphysical and moral roots and is thus an illusion.

Systematic theology is not an attempt to systemize scattered ideas or truths found in Scripture, but is rather a setting forth of the inescapable unity of God's being, His revelation, and His purpose. A false systematics sees the need for a synthesis of scattered and vague ideas; in the "systematics" of unbelief, a few facts are rescued out of an ocean of brute factuality to provide a practical or existential logic and system for living. True systematics presents the inescapable unity, order, and design of God's being and creation.

In the false systematics, we can be told, as some lecturers have done, that Biblical eschatology gives us various, diverse, and random perspectives, so that we cannot speak of Biblical eschatology, but must rather speak of Biblical eschatologies. The unity and coherence of Scripture is denied in

favor of a new principle of unity and coherence, man. Sartre denies the unconscious and holds to the self-consciousness and self-coherence of man. The implication of such a position is that the world is incoherent, and God, if He exists, is also incoherent.

To *cohere* is to stick or hold firmly together, to be logically coherent. God is coherent and infallible. Man, St. Paul makes clear, is morally incoherent; he knows God but denies God because man is in rebellion against God. Man suppresses the truth of God, which he knows in every atom of his being, and then tries to reproduce the systematics of that inescapable knowledge in terms of his own being rather than in terms of God.

Only Biblical theology can set forth a true systematics, but every humanistic theology will work to re-create a new systematics out of man's being. When men like Haroutunian attack the idea of a systematic theology, it is simply an attack on the systematic theology of the God of Scripture.[21] Implicit in all such attacks in a summons, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11:4). Theirs is a systematics of nothing, and its destiny is confusion (Gen. 11:7-9).

10. Faith

One of the curses of the church is its lust for respectability. The scholars of the church look to the scholars of the world for approval and status. They look at the wealth and the buildings of the humanistic university and, in their hearts, long for the imprimatur of the fallen world. For them, the millennium begins when the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, or *Saturday Review* speak well of their books; but this happens only when these scholars crucify Christ afresh.

This hunger for respectability is as old as the church. It meant in earlier days rephrasing the gospel in the language and thought of Greek and Roman philosophy, and the result was another gospel, or, at best, a compromise and perversion of the word of God.

This deeply rooted hunger for respectability, and peace with the enemy, explains too the hatred toward those who will not compromise. Dr. Cornelius Van Til's uncompromising apologetics has earned him the hostility of the compromisers. Those who lust for respectability resent deeply the work of a man who makes clear that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." They refuse to admit the possibility that "whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). As a result, they rephrase the problems of theology in order to concede to the world the validity of its "problems"; they give respectability to unregenerate man. Instead of being a sinner, whatever the university degrees he carries, they portray him as a man

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21. Joseph Haroutunian: *First Essay in Reflective Theology*. (Chicago, IL: McCormick Theological Seminary).

with honest intellectual problems which deserve weighty philosophical and theological considerations. These compromisers insist that man's problem is intellectual unbelief, i.e., a question of knowledge, rather than a matter of sin.

But St. Paul witnesses powerfully and plainly against this heresy. In Romans 1:17-20, Paul declares:

> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness: Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Paul tells us, *first*, that *the knowledge of God is inescapable knowledge*. We are told this again and again in Scripture. It is plainly set forth in Psalm 139, in Psalm 19, and elsewhere. It is the obvious implication of the doctrine of creation. God having created all things, all things are revelational of Him and manifest His purpose and glory. Because God is totally the Creator, no other hand being present in creation, all things are totally revelational of Him: they can reveal nothing else other than God their Maker. As the psalmist, David, declares, "If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Psalm 139:8). Not even hell, the habitation of the devil and his cohorts, and of the fallen and reprobate dead, can witness to anything other than the triune God.

It is this fact of creation that constitutes the common ground between all men and the point of contact: all men *know* God, although only the redeemed *confess* Him. Van Til writes,

> It is only when we begin our approach to the question of the point of contact by thus analyzing the situation as it obtained in paradise before the fall of man that we can attain to a true conception of the natural man and his capacities with respect to the truth. The apostle Paul speaks of the natural man as actually possessing the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:19-21). The greatness of his sin lies precisely in the fact that "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God." No man can escape knowing God. It is indelibly involved in his awareness of anything whatsoever. Man *ought*, therefore, as Calvin puts it, to recognize God. There is no excuse for him if he does not. The reason for his failure to recognize God lies exclusively in him. It is due to his willful transgression of the very law of his being.
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> Neither Romanism nor Protestant evangelicalism can do full justice to this teaching of Paul. In effect both of them fail to surround man exclusively with God's revelation. Not holding to the counsel of God as all-controlling they cannot teach that man's self-awareness always presupposes awareness of God.[22]

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[22] Cornelius Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith*. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955). p. 109.

Man's problem is not unbelief in the sense of ignorance, but unbelief in the sense of a refusal to obey God, because man insists that it is his freedom to become his own god (Gen. 3:5).

> 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.[23]

Men suppress the truth in unrighteousness; "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen,...so that they are without excuse." Men cannot think on any other terms than God's; they misappropriate that truth and attempt to use God while denying Him. Their knowledge and sciences depend upon the truth of God, but they insist on a world of brute and meaningless factuality while developing their learning on the concealed premise of God's eternal counsel, decree, and order.

Second, Paul clearly does not mean by faith a rational assent or belief. Habakkuk 2:4 tells us that "the just shall live by his faith." This does not mean belief as mere acceptance of a proposition. For Habakkuk, it meant that the righteous man, in the midst of judgment, invasion, and devastation, lived and acted on the presupposition that this was the work of the righteous God who required him to live and obey Him in the face of all things. The righteous are those who rely on God's word and act on it. So too Paul means by faith, not rational assent, but saying Amen to God, obeying His every word (II Cor. 10:3-6), and acting on God's truth and law. Sin is rebellion against God and the transgression of His law. Faith is trust in God, a total reliance on Him, and the obedience to His word which God requires.

Now the point of all this is that a systematic theology which presupposes that unbelief (a lack of faith) means ignorance (a lack of the knowledge of God) will be alien to Scripture. It will presuppose a non-creating god, even though it may affirm the doctrine of creation, because its god is alien to this world. Such a god, not having made the world, can only introduce knowledge of himself into the world as something alien, a novelty to the world. His "revelation" would then provide a curiosity, not a necessity, because it would not be basic not constitutive of the nature of the universe. We could then be interested in, or believe in, such a god in the same way that we are interested in okra: it may or may not be to our taste, but it is not relevant to our life unless we choose to make it so.

Anti-presuppositionalist theologies and philosophies reduce God to the level of okra. He ceases to be the inescapable truth of all things, knowledge

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

of whom men cannot eradicate, however much they suppress it. Knowledge of Him is so inescapable that, if men silence the witness within them and in their midst, "the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40).

Faith means saying Amen to, and relying totally on, the triune God with all our heart, mind, and being, and acting on and in terms of the reality of God and His law-word in every area of our lives. If faith is reduced to, and believing on Christ becomes, a mere assent to knowledge or to reality, then antinomianism becomes a logical necessity. There is then no inescapable link between faith and works. On the contrary, to say then that we are saved by faith logically means that we are saved without any necessity for works ensuing. The doctrine of the "carnal Christian," who is "saved" but is still totally godless in his life, is a logical consequence of such a "faith only" doctrine.[24]

The presuppositions of such a view of faith and belief are not Biblical but Hellenic. The Biblical doctrine presupposes the unity of all created being under the triune God and His counsel. Hellenic thought holds to the division of reality into form (mind, ideas) and matter. The two are alien substances, co-existing paradoxically and in dialectical tension. The realm of faith is then the realm of ideas - of the spirit - and not of matter, works, and law. The gap between the two is not readily bridged and, at best, only artificially so.

There is then, let it be noted, no systematics in the life of man. A man whose being is made up of two alien substances, or possibly three, has no necessary and systematic unity in his being. There is then a war between his members which is metaphysical, whereas the inner warfare which Paul describes is moral. The Hellenic idea of man sees a contradiction between man's constituent parts which is metaphysical and inescapable; it is a necessary and continual war as long as man is in a body. Paul's warfare is moral and subject to defeat or victory. Man is at war with God, his Maker; this warfare is one in which every atom of his being is involved, but, because every atom of his being is God's handiwork, man's total being wars against himself. The Holy Spirit too witnesses to God's truth, which his unregenerate and fallen nature, his flesh, resists.

The "Pauline" warfare is not anti-systematics, because it speaks of a war which sets forth the totality of God's claims and the radical and far-reaching nature of God's system of truth. The unity of man's being witnesses, despite its moral revolt, and even in its moral revolt, to the unity of God's truth. It is a witness to systematics.

If, however, every man is his own god, and this is a metaphysical fact, then the only unity of truth is a purely internal one. Each man is his own self-defined and self-created system. We have then a multitude of self-enclosed

[24] For a critique of the carnal Christian doctrine, see Arend J. Ten Pas: *The Lordship of Christ.* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1978).

and isolated systems which are existential in nature. When philosophy abandoned the God of Scripture, it abandoned systematics, and, after many vain attempts at creating a system apart from the triune God, finally abandoned the traditional discipline of philosophy as irrelevant. Metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and every other area became relics of the older philosophy, except in existentialism. The existentialist followed the logic of Kant and reduced the world to the mind of man, and, within that world, a moment by moment systematics now became possible. The world was radically reduced, but its unity was restored.

When we speak of *believing*, and of *faith*, in terms of the word of God, then we are in that unified field of consequences and relationships which makes a systematic theology inescapably obvious. If we lack that Biblical perspective, then we will follow an anti-Biblical model, and usually that of classical Greek philosophy. Scholasticism saw salvation from such a perspective, and, as a result, the developing unity it posited led finally to existentialism. In the interim, more and more initiative slipped into man's hands, so that faith came to be redefined. Aquinas strove valiantly to be faithful to Scripture, but his presuppositions were Aristotelian. He insisted on the unity of faith and works, but faith was defined as an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth and motivated therein by an act of will moved by the grace of God. In that act of intellect, as in the act of will, it is not the sovereign God whose eternal decree governs, but a first cause which is linked together with man as the determiner. The implicit dialectic of nature and grace works to disunite faith and will; faith as an intellectual assent is not a total reliance on and acting in terms of God and His word; and the sovereignty of God as the first cause is not the same as the sovereignty of the absolute Lord and Creator, who makes and predestines all things. Behind Thomas Aquinas stands another and an existential loyalty derived from Aristotle: "The human soul is incorruptible" (*Summa Theologica*, I, Q 75, art.6). Here speaks, not Genesis 1 and 2, but Hellenic philosophy: the soul is pure form or idea, and hence incorruptible. At the end of this presupposition stands Sartre; at the beginning, the tempter and Genesis 3:1-5.

Protestant evangelicalism, however, is also Scholastic. It sees the soul as something separate from the body, and posits the old division common to all sons of Plato and Aristotle. "Faith alone" thus does not mean, for all such, justification by God's sovereign grace and predestinating decree, but rather the separation of faith and works. *Faith* then stands for man's sovereign will, and man is summoned to come forward and believe in Jesus and to accept Christ's offer of salvation. Christ becomes the petitioner and pleader before man the sovereign. But if man is sovereign, then he is his own savior, and both the tempter and Aristotle, and Sartre as well, are vindicated. It is man's task then to save himself and to develop his own systematics, moment by moment. Truth then is a do-it-yourself proposition, and it is as meaningless as man.

11. Systematic Anthropology

Faith and belief in Scripture mean hearing and obeying the word of God; they mean, not mere intellectual assent, but the submission, the reliance on and the development and reshaping of our whole being in terms of God's law-word.

Paul makes clear that unbelief is not a lack of the knowledge of God but a refusal to submit to God's lordship and authority our of unrighteousness (Rom. 1:17-20). Man rejects God's authority and lordship in favor of his own (Gen. 3:5); this is unbelief in the Biblical sense. The consequence of this revolt against God is the perversion of man. Homosexuality is presented by Paul as the burning out of apostate man (Rom. 1:27, burned *out*). The life of the reprobate man is a life of hatred against all authority (Rom. 1:29-32). The reprobate hate God, they hate parents, they boast of themselves, and they are implacably hostile to all authority.

Then Paul makes clear why there can be no word and no salvation from man. *First*, both God and fallen man have a word, a system, and a plan of judgment. In Romans 2, Paul contrasts the judgments of the ungodly, and their inherent plan and system, with the judgments of God. Man the sinner presents himself as the judge, but Paul says, "Therefore thou are inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest" (Rom. 2:1). Man apart from God, whether in or out of the church, is under judgment. Man under God is man living in terms of God's word and in faithfulness to God's law: "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Rom. 2:25). Status before God is on God's terms only: it begins with sovereign grace, and reveals itself by keeping God's law.

Second, man's system and word are products of depravity, not wisdom. "There is none righteous, no, not one," and, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10,12). Their words spring from a poisoned well. "Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips" (Rom. 3:13). Paul cites verse after verse from the Old Testament to sum up God's judgment on man. Every system of thought devised by man is thus from a poisoned well and under judgment. This is especially true of Phariseeism, which uses the law, interpreted to mean humanistic goals, as a means of justification. But no man is justified by works; no man earns an independence from God by his own actions (Rom. 3:20-30). Salvation brings freedom, not from God, but from judgment and reprobation. The redeemed are now free from sin and death, the consequence of their own system (Gen. 3:1-5), and are totally under God's dominion and law. Hence, faith does not make void the law: "God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31). The law is now established over and in us as God's way and an aspect of His system and eternal decree.

What Paul makes clear is that, because of his depravity, there is no tenable system from fallen man. Fallen man simply works out the implications of his depravity in his life (Rom. 1:24) and in his thought (Rom. 1:21-23).

Man's system is in essence the tempter's thesis in Genesis 3:1-5. *First*, there is no sure word of God ("Yea, hath God said?"), and no assured decree of predestination (Gen. 3:1, 4). Man lives in an "open" universe, and the potentiality of man is the essence of that openness. The limitless potentiality and actuality of God make the universe, totally open to God, a closed realm to rebellious man. For the universe to be open must mean, fallen man holds, that the limitless potentiality must be transferred to man. The system replacing God's eternal and foreordained decree is man's potential and existential decree.

Second, logically, this means that man, not the Lord, is god. Hence the culminating point of the temptation is that man "shall be as god" (Gen. 3:5). A new government, god, and law shall prevail. This requires a systematics of man, a systematic anthropology. Instead of systematic theology, we are given a systematic anthropology. As a result, the mind of man becomes a matter of great concern. The psychology of man gains great attention from humanism, because the ultimate point of reference, potentiality, and coherence is the supposedly autonomous mind of man. Primitive tribes, perverts, mental defectives, criminals, children, and adults - all varieties of men - are painstakingly studied in order to give man the raw materials for the new systematics. Not surprisingly, modern anthropology began with Charles Darwin. As Dampier stated it, "It is hardly too much to say that modern anthropology arose from the *Origin of Species.*"[25]

Politics becomes the practical sphere of action of every systematic anthropology, because it is through politics that man seeks to apply the humanistic decree of predestination to man and the world. Basic to the idea of systematics is the fact that is has inherent in it the element of necessity. For the orthodox Christian, things are ordered by God and have in and behind them the necessity of God's decree. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). This necessity is not only in their own lives, but in all things, for, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

The goal of systematic anthropology, modern politics, is to substitute the decree of man for the decree of God. More than one humanistic group and society have looked to the ant hill and the beehive as the model state: all things exist by order and plan. So, it is held, should man, but the source of the

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[25] Sir William Cecil Dampier: *A History of Science*. (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1944). p. 303.

plan must be man himself. Man must remake himself and his world in terms of his own autonomous will.

Theological writings in the modern world are thus political writings, and the most influential preaching in the modern era is political speaking. In the 1970s, the United States has seen an American President, Carter, disavow any Christian influence on his decisions, while professing to be a "born-again Christian," and at the same time affirm a humanistic doctrine of human rights with religious zeal. The systematic anthropology of Carter, and of other self-professed Christians politicians, is a very clear one.

It is thus a serious error on the part of churchmen to look for modern challenges to the systematic theology of Biblical faith from church sources only. Such challenges, however real and important, do not represent the main challenge. Systematics has on the whole left the church for politics. The political thought of Soviet theoreticians is rigorous in its attempts to be systematic, and Western political theorists are no less dedicated.

It is, moreover, a requirement for systematic theology to place every area of life and thought under the jurisdiction of God the Sovereign and His law-word. Polytheism openly posits many gods and hence many jurisdictions. As a result, a particular god could be escaped by leaving his jurisdiction. Hence, the Syrians of old held of Israel, "Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they" (I Kings 20:23).

We find, however, similar opinions in many church circles. Christianity and the state must be kept strictly separate (a very different idea than the separation of *church* and state; the one posits a religious and theological division, the other an institutional one): Other churches insist on seeing the state as exclusively secular and hence under reason, not Scripture. Thus, we are told by a Lutheran, in a review of a work by F. A. Schaeffer,

> Similarly, one finds in the author a typically Reformed desire to structure government according to Biblical and even Christian principles. He would like to see the Bible made the lawbook of the land, if not literally, at least indirectly. He describes with approval Paul Robert's mural *Justice Lifts the Nations*, with Justice unblindfolded and pointing her sword downward toward a book which is written "The Law of God," and adds: "To whatever degree a society allows the teaching of the Bible to bring forth its natural conclusions, it is able to have form and freedom in society and government." While we indeed recognize the Scriptural truth that "righteousness exalteth a nation" (Proverbs 14:34), we must affirm that human reason, the natural knowledge of God's law, and the power of the sword - not the revealed word of God - are basic principles for secular government.[26]

[26] C. Kuehne, cited from the *Journal of Theology* (CLC). June, 1977, in *Christian News*, 10, 30 (July 25, 1977).

To hold that there is one kind of faith and obedience in the church, and another in the state, is hardly in agreement with Scripture!

The systematic anthropology which manifests itself in politics links to itself modern science, i.e., post-Darwinian evolutionary science, as the basics of the new faith. Scientific politics is to provide the new decree of predestination, the new source of authority and power, the new decree of election and probation. Failure to see this fact means irrelevance to the triune God and His word. It means that we have a neoplatonic church theology which holds its doctrines in abstraction from the real world, from that unity which constitutes the God-given creation. The more that neoplatonic faith abstracts itself from the context of the material world, the clearer and the higher its ostensible spirituality. Neoplatonic religion will thus produce an abstract theology in which irrelevance is a mark of purity. Its doctrines will become neoplatonic ideas, and the church will become a monastery or convent, a place where withdrawal from the context of the world is a virtue.

The modernist, however, will seek relevance, but again on platonic terms. Marx, after Hegel, saw the Idea or world spirit as dominating the historical process, so that History became the Idea. The state is the Idea in time, and hence the relevance of the particulars is denied in favor of the Idea, the State. The ruthlessness of modernist social action in condemning capitalists, fundamentalists, Calvinists, White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, "fascists" (all their opponents), and others speaks of a contempt for the *matter* of History as against the Idea, the State.

Even more than systematic anthropology, systematic theology must include law, politics, work and calling, the arts and sciences, and more. There are no limitations on the sovereignty of the triune God, nor on His jurisdiction. To mark off systematic theology as an area having the church and its doctrines as its province is to manifest polytheism. Universality or catholicity is the mark of God's kingdom, but modern man has surrendered it to philosophy first and now to the state. This surrender is sin and heresy.

Not until systematic anthropology is replaced by a truly systematic theology can churchmen call themselves Christian.

12. Inevitable Systematics

Religion will always govern a man's world, and it will do so systematically. Man works continually toward a systematics to express his faith. He seeks that systematic expression of faith in life and thought, in art, science, architecture, sexuality, politics, and all things else.

Urban construction is an expression of a world and life view. Schneider has described this fact in urban planning, in the works of Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Kublai Khan, Peter the Great, Stalin,

Kubitschek (Brasilia), Louis XIV, the two Napoleons, and others. Of some cities he wrote:

> The ancient cities...usually excluded everything that grew naturally, and this is true even now of many Oriental cities. One might be tempted to call this the logic of city building: man does not care to see anything save what he himself has created. It appears most strikingly in St. Peter's Square in Rome.[27]

The absence of natural space and trees was not accidental: it was planned. Only man's creation was to appear.

In other areas, the emphasis is on a totally controlled nature, formal gardens, man-trained shrubs and trees, and a park which manifests man's hand at every turn.

The 1960s saw a war against all restraints on man by either God or man. A consequence of this form of humanism was a hostility against culture, development, or utility in the natural realm, and the ecology movement resulted. Man does not want the slightest snail troubled, because he rejects any and all interference with his own life style.

Man's religion is a working concern: it works steadily toward systematizing his life and world in terms of man's presuppositions. The regulations of an age are expressive of the faith of an age, and its concept of ultimacy. The unity of God's creation is an aspect of our inescapable knowledge of God (Rom. 1:18-21). Men cannot long tolerate a schizophrenic or double-minded state: they work to resolve the conflict of principles even when it means a major inner and outer tension and battle. There are distances in the universe, but no watertight compartments divide reality into unrelated realms. One of the constant problems of scholarship is this tendency to isolate data in terms of areas of study, so that determination is seen in terms of one's area of specialization. Momigliano has rightly observed, with respect to studies in the history of ancient law, that "A wrong interpretation of economic or religious facts can easily lie at the root of a wrong interpretation of legal facts, and vice versa."[28]

Religion will always govern a man's world; it will do so systematically, and it will provide the unifying principle to make all things cohere one to another. This is a function of religion, to provide coherency, but a false religion, instead of providing coherency and systematics, will result in confusion. The reason for this is, as Van Til has shown, that "No sinner can interpret reality aright."[29] He begins with a false premise, a misplaced doctrine of ultimacy, and he proceeds systematically to false conclusions. By

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[27] Wolf Schneider: *Babylon is Everywhere: The City as Man's Fate.* (New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Com., 1963). p. 222.
[28] Arnaldo D. Momigliano: *Studies in Historiography.* (New York, N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1966). p. 243.
[29] Van Til: *An Introduction to Systematic Theology, p. 92.*

making himself ultimate, the sinner begins and ends with a falsehood. His false premise means that every aspect of his being is corrupted by that falsehood, and every act and thought is similarly affected and infected. Van Til cites this same effect in the life of Satan:

> Scripture tells us that Satan and his hosts were created perfect. Satan originally tried to dethrone God and has tried this throughout the ages. Yet, in the nature of the case, he can never succeed in doing this. God would not be God if he could be dethroned. Accordingly, Satan's knowledge appears as false. He has made and continues to make logical deductions about reality that are untrue to reality. Satan managed to have Christ crucified in order to destroy him. Did he not know that by the crucifixion of Christ his own kingdom would be destroyed? So we see that though, on the one hand, Satan's power of ingenuity is great, he constantly frustrates himself in his purposes: he is constantly mistaken in his knowledge of reality.[30]

Since the fall, man continues to think systematically, but from a false premise. He will commonly think logically, but from a false starting-point. He premises his every use of the law of contradiction on a contradiction: he holds it in abstraction from the ultimacy of the triune God, the Creator of all things, including the mind and the logic thereof, as though a law could exist in a chaos. Instead of applying the law of contradiction to his own irrational efforts to prove or to judge God, he should apply it to his own proud presuppositions and condemn himself as illogical.

When man denies the fact of creation and of the fall, he asserts thereby the ultimacy and the normalcy of himself and the world. If the world is not the creation of God, so that creation can be dated, the world is ultimate. If it is ultimate, it is normative, because there is nothing then beyond man and the universe to judge them. The errors of philosophy in the past have stemmed, Calvin declared, from this assumption of normalcy.

> Hence proceeded the darkness which overspread the minds of the philosophers, because they sought for a complete edifice among ruins, and for beautiful order in the midst of confusion. They held this principle, that man would not be a rational animal, unless he were endued with a free choice of good or evil; they conceived also that otherwise all difference between virtue and vice would be destroyed, unless man regulated his life according to his inclination. Thus far it had been well, if there had been no change in man, of which as they were ignorant, it is not to be wondered at if they confound heaven and earth together. But those who profess themselves to be disciples of Christ, and yet seek for free will in man, now lost and overwhelmed in spiritual ruin, in striking out a middle path between the opinions of the philosophers and the doctrine of heaven, are evidently deceived, so that they touch neither heaven nor earth.[31]

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 91f.

Such an assumption by philosophers leads to the claim of autonomy for the mind of man, so that the normative is what man says and does. Van Til adds further,

> Moreover, according to Calvin, the primacy of the intellect as taught by the philosophers, in virtually denying the fact of sin, therewith in practice always denies the Creator-creature relationship. For man to ignore the fall is always tantamount to ignoring his creation. It is the proper part of the creature to subject himself to God; it is the part of the sinner to refuse such subjection.[32]

Presuppositions are like roads; as long as we are on a particular road and travelling, it will lead us to a particular destination. To go elsewhere, I must take another road. To speak of the systematics of all things is simply to say that given presuppositions about what is ultimate will lead to given conclusions. Modern man has tried to make reason creative; the freedom of reason would then be its power to create a new reality, declare new presuppositions, and create new conclusions in terms of man's autonomous reason and powers. But man's mind is religious and therefore logical. It is a created mind, the handiwork of the triune God, and therefore its processes, even in man's fall, are totally governed by the eternal decree of God and the necessary logic of His creation.

On the other hand, God thinks and creates out of nothing. There is nothing outside of God to govern, influence, or in any way condition His mind and activity. The *language* of God is thus, like God Himself, eternal and unchanging. The British sociologist, Basil Bernstein, has rightly observed, "If you change the culture, you change the language."[33] The languages of man change as man changes.

Man rebels against changes which come from outside of himself, changes required by God's constitution of things, and strives instead for self-created changes which will set forth his own creative power and ultimacy. The more radically thus that a culture stresses the ultimacy of man, the more radical will be its attempts to create self-made changes, to be totally revolutionary in the humanistic sense. The given and inherent systematics of all things must be replaced by the new systematics of man. The reality of the old order must be negated and the reality of man's new order affirmed.

Systematics is thus at work because of this impulse in every area of life, to create religiously and therefore politically, educationally, theologically, philosophically, economically, and in every other way a new system for man, a new and necessary world order.

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[31] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. I, Ch. XV, VIII, vol. I. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). p. 215.

[32] Van Til: *op. cit.*, pp. 33f.

[33] Maya Pines: *Revolution in Learning: The Years from Birth to Six.* (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, (1966) 1967). p. 192.

Man, however, cannot create or think out of nothing. All the building blocks of his systems are borrowed from God's world. The systems builders, such as Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Barth, Moltmann, and others, give us to a degree a novel world, a new arrangement, but the building blocks are old ones; they all have a history, and the steps of their edifice are readily traced. The essence of modernism was well stated in the last century by Octavius Brooks Frothingham (1822-1895), who wrote:

> The interior of any age is the spirit of God; and no faith can be living that has that spirit against it; no Church can be strong except in that alliance. The life of the time appoints the creed of the time and modifies the establishment of the time.[34]

Existentialism stresses more fully this call for total dependence on self-existence, but, like all things else, it manifests its history clearly. It has a given existence and essence in terms of that history, and behind that history stands God's eternal decree.

Thus, although humanism seeks to offer a new word and a total word, its systematics is made up of broken and borrowed fragments of another order, and it cannot escape from God's order because it cannot escape from itself.

The Christian thinker, on the other hand, does not reject God's word, world, nor God's ordered course of growth in history. He builds on that inheritance, knowing that, at his best, he is simply a step in a glorious unfolding, a fallible and small step, but an ordained one. Not only are the marks of such thinkers as Anselm, Calvin, the Westminster Standards, Berkhof, and especially Cornelius Van Til very obvious in my writings, but, even further, my writings presuppose them all and are simply a supplement of observations and developments, hopefully one stairway riser in the construction of a magnificent structure, the kingdom of God.

The lightning flashes, the thunder crackles, rumbles, and rolls, and the rain falls onto a thirsty ground, to nourish and bless it. Behind that sequence, which brings bread and drink to our table, stand influences and causes from the solar system, and behind them all the providence and government of God. There is an order, a systematics, in the falling rain and the sprouting seed, and in the life of all living things. Moses in Psalm 90 speaks of this order in all things, and declares in awe, "LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."

Systematics is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a glimpse into the nature of life and of God's order and purpose. It is in our mind and our blood, and our denial of it is our own suicide and disaster.

Systematics and its presuppositions of a rational order governed by the eternal decree of God cannot be limited to "theological matters" (i.e., to the

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[34] O. B. Frothingham: *The Religion of Humanity*. (New York, N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1875. Third Edition). pp. 7f.

formal discussions of classroom theologians) without risk of a Hellenic presupposition of two substances. When reality is divided into mind on the one hand and matter on the other, two diverse and ultimate substances, then the order of the mind is a different things than the order of matter. One substance may lack order and meaning, or, one substance may seek to impose order on the formless realm of the other, or, again, both may have their own inherent order or lack of it. In such a perspective, the order of physics is alien to the order of logic.

In the Biblical perspective, instead of form (mind) and matter, we have the uncreated being of God, and the created being of the universe. The order of all things comes from the mind of God, and His eternal decree orders and ordains all things. We have then no sharp line of division between physics and ethics; the fall of man affects the ground beneath man's feet (Gen. 3:14-19), so that the whole of creation awaits its own release from the fall into the glorious liberty of the children of God through Christ (Rom. 8:19-23). Physics and ethics have a systematic connection and inter-relationship in terms of Scripture. The fall affected man and the universe. Deuteronomy 28 tells us that there is a necessary and essential connection between man's faith and obedience and the material things of his existence, to the very fall of the rain and the fertility of the soil. Given the doctrine of creation, this is necessarily so. Failure to see that connection and unity stems from a faulty or a false systematics.

When man attempts a new word and a new systematics to replace God's word and decree, man must struggle to impose his decree on an alien world. Let us grant for a moment, for the purpose of visualizing the humanist's predicament at its best, that the world has evolved out of nothing and is a realm of brute factuality. Man then faces an ocean of non-meaning and in effect declares, Let there be meaning, because I shall, by science, education, politics, and other means, decree my meaning and impose it on the "universe." Man then seeks to create a world, not out of nothing, but out of an alien something, racing against time and eternal death. This task is impossible enough, but how much more so is it impossible when we recognize that the world has an inescapable and necessary meaning in terms of its Creator, who alone governs and sustains it. The attempt by man to impose his word on God's universe, and to replace God's order with a man-made system, is sin, insanity, and death.

13. Neoplatonic Systematics

In the world of ancient Greek philosophy, reality is made up of two alien substances - mind (or ideas, forms) and matter. Instead of the division of Christian thought between the uncreated being of God and the created being of all else, the division is between mind and matter. In all forms of

neoplatonism, this Hellenic division prevails, and it is basic to the way modern man regards himself.

It is basic also to intellectualism. The intellectual may philosophically reject Greek dialecticism, but in practice he applies it. The world for him is divided between the men and the realm of ideas, and the men and realm of practice and work. The modern university thus perpetuates a Greek faith by its implicit faith that the realm of ideas represents a higher realm than that of practice. Much of the hostility of the intellectuals to capitalism, technology, the life of the middle classes, to manual labor, and much, much more stems from the unacknowledged premise that the life of ideas represents a higher stage of being. This sense of superiority is implicit in academicians, writers, the press, and in all members of the intelligentsia.

Our concern, however, is more specifically with the seminary, a modern institution for the training of the clergy. The modern seminary is too often a neoplatonic institution through and through. Its concerns are ostensibly Christian; they are in reality ecclesiastical and neoplatonic. We cannot begin to grasp the reason for the faltering life of the church apart from that fact.

A very obvious indication of this neoplatonic division in the life of the seminary appears in its curriculum. The seminary curriculum is divided between two kinds of subjects or courses, the academic and the practical. This is at once a plain indication of the radically neoplatonic life of the seminary. Moreover, there is no question as to which side has prestige. The academic is held in high respect; the practical is regarded with very low esteem and is seen as a concession to the requirement of church life. Students view the practical courses as a nuisance, as they usually are, and fail to see that the academic courses are equally wretched.

The division between the academic (the realm of ideas or the mind) and the practical (the realm of practice and matter) is plainly Hellenic and neoplatonic. There is no hint in the Bible of any such division. The Bible does not speak often of "the wise" (or, "ancients"), as in Ezekiel 7:26; Jeremiah 18:8, but the reference is to a class of rulers, *elders*, men who ruled by the law of God. The modern division in the seminary is not of Biblical origin.

The presupposition of all Greek philosophy was in an ultimate impersonalism. The highest kind of thinking was abstract and impersonal, on the assumption that such thinking was closer thereby to reality. In terms of this alien tradition, the seminary, in its academic courses, adopts an abstract and critical analysis as the "key" to learning. Students are rigorously trained in this intellectualistic approach to the text of Scripture, to apologetics, systematics, and all things else. Our Lord gives an emphatically different perspective: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). Knowledge and practice are inseparably united: they cannot be divided, because life is not divisible into two constituent kinds of being.

Very simply stated, as God gave His word to the prophets of old, He did not divide it into a spiritual and a practical word. The word is not segmented into one section for Christian scholars to meditate over, and another for others to act on. There is no abstract and intellectual word as against a practical word. Merely to suggest such a division is to make apparent how ridiculous an idea it is. Where God declares Himself to be the eternal and sovereign Lord, the Creator, it is in order to assert His authority and to make clear His power to command. Thus, in Isaiah 45, we have many declarations with regard to God as Creator. We are told by God, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil; I the LORD do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). This text has been the object of much intellectual discussion: Is God the author of sin? What does He mean by creating evil? How shall we translate the word rendered evil? The word *create* is in the Hebrew *bara'*; does this make God the author of sin?

Is not the point of the text rather to stress the incredible arrogance and insanity of sin, of disobedience to God? We are not asked to probe into the mind of God with respect to the mysteries of God's absolute sovereignty and man's responsibility for sin. We are rather required to hear and obey. God demands of the disobedient and the rebellious:

> Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou, or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? (Isa. 45:9, 10).

The goal God has in mind He very plainly sets forth:

> Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 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, and every tongue shall swear (Isa. 45:22, 23).

The seminary approaches this word blasphemously. In the academic segment of its neoplatonic lives, it subjects this word to an historical analysis. Was this word indeed written by "First Isaiah" or "Second Isaiah," or some later Isaiah? What was the historical situation which governs and conditions the text? What religious and mythical allusions are there in this chapter? The text is studied in *abstraction*, as though God were not speaking to the scholars. As for the plain mandate of God's word, let us leave that to the practical courses. There, the student can study, again with alien premises, the working life of the Christian community. Moreover, the practical departments will make their neoplatonic bows to the realm of the spirit. Is preaching to be taught? We must be *expository*. The text is to be analyzed and carefully expounded, and the preacher becomes a dissector of the Bible. Preaching becomes an anatomist's dissection report out of the laboratory. We are told that expository preaching at its best is exegetical. Now exegesis means to set

forth the meaning of the text; but is it exegesis if it is done with neoplatonic presuppositions, so that we contemplate an abstraction?

Thus, one very prominent and very able seminary professor cited as a model expository sermon, clearly exegetical, the following outline for Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth":

I. What things were originated (the heavens and the earth).
II. By Whom they were originated (by God).
III. When they were originated (in the beginning).
IV. How they were originated (by creation).

This professor, whose name out of respect I omit, because he was a superior man, all the same gives us a "model" sermon for providing information. But Christian preaching does not provide information in abstraction. God's word never speaks to satisfy our curiosity but to command us. God declares the facts of creation so that we might know our place therein, our calling, and His mandate. God's word is a declarative word, the Christian preaching must be a declarative word. Exposition-exegesis smacks of the classroom, of the seminary and its neoplatonic divisions, dissections, and abstractions.

The systematics of neoplatonism is thus very clearly set forth in the curriculum of the seminary. On the one hand, we have Old Testament and New Testament departments, and church history and theology-philosophy departments. The seminary scholars are located here. Their favored students are prospective scholars, future professors, and they tend to regard the everyday life of faith as somewhat removed, and as belonging to that other realm of the seminary, the practical departments. To give some degree of hollow prestige to the teaching of churchmanship, missions, preaching, and the like, these departments are given such high-sounding names as "Departments of Practical Theology." The plain implication of this common designation is that the more prestigious departments of theology are impractical. The truth is that both kinds of theology are impractical and neoplatonic. The various departments of impractical theology never really satisfy the Christian hunger of students, despite their prestige, because they are abstract and unrelated to God's reality. This is one reason why student after student in seminary testifies that he dries up spiritually, losing his cutting edge and vigor. The contact with life is lacking, and thus the subjects become impractical and irrelevant. The student tends to starve in a land of potential plenty. In my youth, when more pastors were still scholars, one of the sad facts was that many of these orthodox men were great experts in Ritschl, who was suddenly obsolete, as Karl Barth began to command attention, and the focus of their theological training was thus out of kilter.

What shall the prospective pastor do? Turn to practical theology? But practical theology departments are just as impractical, and the student, if he

does not turn his back on the seminary, is made over into a warped and fragmented man.

The very gap - and often tension - which exists between the faculty members of the two branches of the seminary is evidence of the failure of the seminary, and of its neoplatonism. The "practical" men are normally taken from the pastorate; they are good at public relations, promotions, financing, pulpiteering, and the like, and sometimes fuzzy on doctrine. The scholars on the faculty are at best judiciously tolerant of these men: the seminary, after all, is dependent on the churches. At worst, the practical men are regarded as a necessary evil, to be suffered but not allowed too much place in the curriculum. The scholars are usually self-consciously removed from practical considerations.

The fact that Calvin and Jonathan Edwards were pastors, as were Augustine, Athanasius, and others, is to modern scholars merely an *historical*, not a *relevant*, fact.

What has the seminary done to the life of the "church?" The Christian synagogue has become progressively more and more under the influence of the "practical" interests, as the neoplatonic dialectic collapses. The academic departments become more and more abstract. The scholars draw closer, not to the church, but to other scholars. Seminary accreditation is now held to be a necessity. Reformed and evangelical scholars seek fellowship with other scholars, often irrespective of theology, in scholarly organizations and societies. They write, not for the thoughtful believer, but for other scholars. (Almost all evangelical and Reformed scholarly works are written with a non-existent modernist audience in mind; most are thus pathetic in their futility. They seek to "prove," not to declare.)

The systematics of neoplatonism works to break the dialectic tension between mind and body and to establish their implicit dualism. Because of this, the seminary works to create, with each generation, a more and more irrelevant type of religion, with neoplatonic eschatologies of retreat and withdrawal.

But in neoplatonism, despite the presence of the two substances, *one* is superior, the spiritual. It is the higher realm. The higher realm for the scholars is the ideational. For the "practical" men, and for the church members, it becomes the "spiritual," the charismatic, the emotional, and the "heart" realms of activities of "love." In both cases, the wholeness of God's word, and its materiality, becomes lost.

The modernist senses this loss, and he adopts the other half of the dialectic, the material. As against a non-Biblical spiritual religion, he adopts a non-Biblical materialistic religion. In either case, antinomianism prevails, and humanism is triumphant. The faith becomes irrelevant to God and life.

An excellent example of the academic abstraction is the book by Jack Rogers, editor: *Biblical Authority* (1977). The "problem" of Biblical authority is discussed. Typically, for the seminary mind, or the academic mind, all articles of faith are essentially *problems* for scholarly analysis. Infallibility and inerrancy are discussed, often in abstraction from one another, and generally in abstraction from the doctrine of God. The results are exercises in irrelevance and futility.

Critical analysis is basic to the life of scholarship, and to humanism. Its presupposition is the ultimacy of judgment by the autonomous mind of man. Kant developed criticism as a formal tool, but, before him, the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment had proclaimed "the omnipotence of criticism."[35]

Criticism is neither rationalism nor empiricism in essence: it is anti-theism. It is intolerant of any fixed body of truth, or of any unquestionable fact (i.e., God, the infallible and inerrant word, six-day creationism, etc.). Criticism's certain word is the critical and analytic word of the critic. It calls for the endless dissection of every challenge to the omnipotence of criticism. It is a demand for the right to question everything, and to declare criticism as man's compass rather than God's word.

Anselm of Canterbury declared, "I believe so that I may understand." His starting point was faith in the triune God and His word, and then the searching Christian analysis of all things in terms of that word.

Critical analysis has roots in Abelard's, "I understand, in order that I may believe," but the latter half of that statement is false, and the first, deceptive. In reality, the submission of Christian faith is alien to that premise. The goal is, "I criticize, that I alone may stand."Its hidden premise is the autonomy of the critic, and his ultimacy.

Critical analysis can never see the relevancy of the word of God to the world because it fails to see God and His word as living and relevant. The goal for critical analysis is more analysis, and more criticism.

I am often told by members of the scholarly fraternity that my own writings, and the position of Chalcedon, are interesting, but that I need to enter into scholarly dialogue and into the world of critical analysis in order to be relevant! This statement is often made with courtesy and friendliness, by persons who want my work to gain "prestige."

But the goal of ideas is not criticism but action. Christian analysis determines the relevancy of ideas and action to the word of God and works to enhance the vitality of the relationship of thought and work to God and to His word. It works under mandate, not in a scholarly limbo. And this, of course, is the predicament of the modern seminary: it is in neither heaven nor hell, but in limbo, and it is irrelevant to God's word and world.

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35. Peter Gay: *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. The Rise of Modern Paganism.* (New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967). p. 145.

14. The Goal of Systematics

A society under the influence of neoplatonism will seek to be spiritual, or, in revolt, to be materialistic. Both goals are illusory, because spirit and matter can never be isolated, and the whole man is involved in his every activity.

In Marxism, we have the revolt from idealism, i.e., the reign of platonic ideas, to materialistic determination. Of course, the extent to which Marx abandoned neoplatonism is questionable: he is clearly an intellectual heir of Plato.

In spite of this, Karl Marx did succeed because he broke clearly with one aspect of the older tradition, the reign of criticism. Again, it is true that a new kind of criticism, Marxist in form, replaced the older humanistic standard of criticism, but, all the same, Marx was openly hostile to the entire philosophic tradition of humanism when he declared, in his eleventh of the "Theses on Feuerbach," "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."[36]

According to Marx, idealism rests on the primacy and determining power of mind or ideas, whereas in reality, he insisted the prior and determinative factor in history is not mind but matter. Ultimacy for the idealist is in ideas; for the materialist, it is in matter. As a result, Marx interpreted history in terms of the processes of production. Civil society in its various stages and institutions is the outcome of material forces. This is also true of all theoretical products and all forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, and so on. To hold otherwise, Marx insisted, is "idealistic humbug." For Marx, "not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history, also of religion, of philosophy and all other types of theory."[37]

For the open or implicit idealist, ideas are ultimate, and therefore, whether the idealist is an empiricist or a rationalist, criticism is basic. Critical analysis is the necessary application of the principle of ultimacy, man's autonomous mind, to the problems of man, time, and history. With the decline of Christian faith, philosophy became powerful in history, beginning with the Scholastics, renewed by Descartes, and culminating in Hegel, for whom the rational is the real. The *philosophes* could with reason speak of the omnipotence of criticism, because the basic faith of the day ascribed it to critical analysis.

Marx dethroned the primacy of ideas, and the older form of humanism. Philosophy accordingly lost its preeminence to sociology and to politico-economic theories. These were philosophies and ideas, to be sure, but ones which asserted the priority and ultimacy of the material. The joy of Marx and Engels over the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* is

[36] Karl Marx and Friedrick Engels: *On Religion*. (Moscow, U.S.S.R.: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955). p. 72; K. Marx and F. Engels: *The German Idealogy*, pts. I, II. (New York, N.Y.: International Publishers, (1947) 1960). p. 199.

[37] Marx: *The German Ideology*. p. 29.

understandable. Darwin accepted meant the acceptance of a mindless universe, and hence the inevitability of materialistic determination.

Mechanism was rejected by Marx. His is a *dialectical* materialism: he is still in the tradition of Greek dialectics. The idea now was transformed into an opposing force in history, formidable, but predetermined for destruction because the material must triumph. Both practice without theory, and theory without practice, were rejected. Ideas were not abandoned for mechanism. They were retained, but grounded in matter.

Biblical faith, on the other hand, denies the ultimacy of both mind and matter and declares both to be aspects of God's creation. There is thus no determination by either mind or by matter. The omnipotence of criticism is denied, as is the determination of all things by material forces. God being sovereign, omnipotent, and ultimate, all things are determined by Him, from all eternity. The Christian's approach to the world is not in terms of criticism, nor revolution, but in terms of God's regenerating power. Like the idealist, the Christian is interested in interpretation, but not the interpretation of critical analysis. God's interpretation of all things is set forth in principle by His enscriptured word. It becomes the duty of the covenant man to see all things in terms of that word. But, like the Marxist, he cannot regard interpretation as a goal in itself: his purpose must be to *change* all things through Christ.

Thus, Christian faith, if it rests in sterile and isolated intellectualism, is false to its premises. The same is true of ecclesiastical activism in the social realm. In both cases, there is a denial of the fact that Biblical faith gives us a world and life view. Basic to Scripture is the fact that it is the word of the Sovereign and Creator of all things, so that neither idealism nor materialism can do other then deny Him. The expression of Christianity is neither in ideas nor in action, in neither criticism nor revolution, but in faith and obedience.

Nehemiah is a good summation of the Biblical faith. When his enemies saw his efforts, they at first derided them as a joke; later, they treated them as a threat. Nehemiah had two choices. He could have entered into dialogue with his enemies, to persuade them of the innocence of his efforts and to gain their good will. He could have dropped all efforts at reconstruction in favor of a rigorous policy of defense and offense, of dealing with the enemy directly and immediately. He did neither. Nehemiah and his men labored with their weapons girded on their sides. They rejected both criticism and dialogue on the one hand, and revolutionary action on the other, in favor of godly reconstruction, and God blessed them (Neh. 4).

Systematic theology cannot be simply an exercise in thinking, and a systemization of Biblical thought. It must be thinking for action in terms of knowing, obeying, and honoring God by fulfilling His mandate to us. It

cannot be in abstraction from battle. It is related to what happens in church, state, school, family, the arts and sciences, the vocations, and all things else.

Systematic theology is thus far more than a course in the seminary curriculum the purpose of which is to organize the student's ideas about theology. Systematics presupposes an ordered knowledge because God is absolute order, and God requires that man, created in His image, bring all things within his province, including man himself, into line with God's order and purpose. The Bible is a manual for dominion under God: it declares God's word and requirements, and it summons man to obey. The Bible gives us God's marching orders for creation. Systematic theology cannot content itself with organizing information. The incarnation is at the heart of our faith. The incarnation of God the Son is a unique event, but its implications are universal. What God requires of man and the earth must be embodied in all our lives and activities, in all that we are and do, or else we deny the word, and the God who gave the word.

We began by stating that systematics says that God is God. To say that God is the Lord means that we are to be totally under the absolute government of His word, because we are totally His creation, and our redemption is totally His work, and a manifestation of His sovereign grace. No theology, and no preaching, can faithfully set forth the God of Scripture without making fully clear His absolute ownership of us, so that we, our lives, callings, families, substance, and time must be totally commanded by Him. This is, of course, the task of all theology, and of all preaching. What systematics does is to set forth in particular clarity the unity, particularity, and order in the word of God in order better to arm the man of God. Systematics works to strengthen epistemological self-consciousness by striking out against the inconsistencies of smorgasbord religion. It works to uproot alien presuppositions and to clarify the Biblical mandate. Systematics, however, stresses not man but God, so that man's sin, his calling, and his future are seen, not in terms of man's hopes and needs, but in terms of God's purpose and order. Because man is a sinner, he is man-centered. He seeks to make the universe revolve around him and his needs. Man-made religions reflect this orientation. Their goal is the fulfillment of man, and God is a resource in that purpose. Systematic theology, however, must work to restore perspective to religion, to give it its necessary God-centered focus, in brief, to let God be God.

Because theology has so often become abstract, or materialistic, it overlooks the plain words of Scripture:

> Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Eccles. 12:13-14).

This is an unpretentious goal, but it is the Scriptural one. St. Paul makes clear the same setting aside of the world's ways and wisdom, declaring,

> For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness: but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe....God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence (I Cor. 1:18-21, 27-29).

15. Systematics and Lordship

The goal of systematics is to declare that God is the Lord: He is King over all creation. "The LORD is King for ever and ever" (Ps. 10:16). "Yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever" (Ps. 29:10); "he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved" (Ps. 47:2-4). A faithful systematics declares, "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.....Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations" (Ps. 145:3,13).

With this in mind, let us glance briefly at the life of a churchman and politician, a man very clearly superior to most churchmen and politicians. He is a tither and a loyal, hard-working church member. He is also a Mason, and his memoirs of life on Capitol Hill indicate no mandate to apply Biblical requirements to law, politics, and much else in every man's working life.[38] He can relate President L. B. Johnson's stories about flagrantly illegal voting with the same relish as Johnson, and with no sense of the obscene travesties on the life of the republic. Moreover, he can cite the words of Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, a blend of Deism and modern humanism, and Churchill's faith in man, with no apparent sense of their radical contradiction to Biblical faith.[39] In all of this, however, he is like millions of other churchmen who feel that a very "simple" faith is satisfying to God. Of course, the clergy are even worse. Christian scholars and clergymen, who should know better, have often objected to me, "What's wrong with humanism?" Many pride themselves on

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[38] William "Fishbait" Miller, with Frances Spatz Leighton: *Fishbait: The Memoirs of a Congressional Doorkeeper.* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977). pp. 25, 251, 411, 414f., etc.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 387f., 397.

anti-systematic and smorgasbord approaches to religion. None of this is possible where God is indeed God, where His lordship is confessed and applied to the totality of our lives.

The goal of any religion, faith, or philosophy is a universal one. If it be true, it must be true for all times and places. Even hedonistic, relativistic humanism calls for the same universalism. Williams, who affirms "the truth of hedonistic individual relativism,"[40] holds, "If maximum individual long range satisfaction makes duty for decent people, it does so for rascals also. It does so for all conscious organisms. The principle is universal."[41] The humanists, who have the sorriest "grounds" for asserting a universal faith, are all the same succeeding because of their consistency of faith, their insistence on their universality of principle.

Churchmen are meanwhile faltering and failing because of their lack of any universal application. By their affirmation of the triune God, the churchmen should, more than anyone else, insist on the catholicity and universality of Christian faith and Biblical law. Very early, however, it was precisely this factor which was abandoned. Pierre Boyle (1647-1706), first a Protestant and then a Catholic, but in essence a Cartesian, actually held that there is no necessary connection between religion and morality, a belief that brought him, in his day, much hostility. Now, more are ready to believe that atheists are not moved to a new ethical premise by their unbelief. Churchmen too often reject the idea of necessary connections between ideas and action, faith and life, and principles and things.

To reject or under-rate such a necessary connection is to deny God, implicitly or explicitly, and to affirm a universe of chance connections. In a Darwinian world, of course, it follows that connections are either products of chance or are man-made. If man-made, then systematics is anthropology. No divine decree is then permitted, because God then becomes the inescapable Lord and God, not man.

The whole point of David's psalms (as of all Scripture) is that God as Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, is the necessary connection between all things. David can therefore declare, "The eyes of all wait upon thee: and thou givest them their meat in due season" (Ps. 145:15). Our Lord declares that God the Lord is the governing and necessary connection in the life and death of a sparrow, and in man's life as well, to the very number of hairs on his head (Matt. 10:29-31).

Baumer, in discussing the rise of political absolutionism in the modern age, rightly sees absolutism as "closely identified with the idea of sovereignty."[42]

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[40] Gardner Williams: *Humanistic Ethics*. (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1951). p. 41.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[42] Franklin L. Baumer: *Modern European Thought: Continuity and Change in Ideas, 1600-1950*. (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1977). p. 98.

When sovereignty was transferred from God to the political order, absolute power began to accrue also to the state. We can add further that universality or catholicity was also necessarily transferred to the state as an aspect of sovereignty. Not surprisingly, this has led to demands for a one-world state. The feebler concept of the medieval church, catholic and mildly absolutist, has given way to modern totalitarianism. Marxism, Fascism, and the democracies each dream of a world state, catholic or universal, sovereign, and absolute. This is the ancient dream of Babylon the Great, of Babel. It will not be answered or dissolved by piecemeal and non-principled opposition.

Against the systematics of the humanistic world order, we must declare the systematics of a theology faithful to the triune God and His infallible, inerrant word. The systematics of humanism is in self-contradiction: it is false, destructive of itself and man, and vapid. But if churchmen have no systematics, they cannot counter the reigning evil: they have disarmed themselves.

When Paul wrote, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16), he meant indeed that his calling from God was an urgent and mandatory one, but he meant far more. *Necessity* (*ananke*, that which must or needs be) means the total necessity of God's word and His government. It is inclusive of all reason, determination, and meaning. The totality of God's decree, providence, and calling placed a *necessity* upon Paul. The *necessity* is theistic, cosmic, and personal. Today, the determination in necessity is essentially and often exclusively personal. A thing is *necessary* because we deem it so. Systematic theology must affirm that the Lord God is the necessary cause, connection, will, power, and action in all things. Anything short of that is not theology but anthropology. Anything short of that must abandon the psalmist to sing praises to man; the power and necessity are then ascribed to man. But David declares,

> Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding (Ps. 47:6-7).

This is the task of systematic theology: to sing praises to God the Lord with understanding.

16. The Search for a Master Principle

One of the persistent problems which haunts human thought, and philosophy and theology in particular, is the search for a master principle, a universal, and sometimes a particular, in terms of which all things can be understood. The history of human thought gives us a succession of master principles and ideas, and a remarkable variety of them. These include yang and yin, karma, kamis, ideas or forms, mathematics, evolution, the existential self, and much, much more.

The quest for a master principle is in essence anti-Biblical and is destructive of Christianity. Its influence through the centuries has been to misdirect Christian thought and to lead it into alien and destructive channels. Not until we rid ourselves of this futile quest can we begin to think Biblically. Unfortunately, all of education, virtually, is committed precisely to this quest, and it is the essence of humanistic education to seek a master principle. That master principle was once viewed as more or less transcendent, and was sometimes even named "God"; now it is seen as immanent and, even more, as entirely the product of man. In any case, it is anti-Biblical and is destructive.

No master principle or idea exists in, behind, or beyond the universe. There is, rather, the Master Person, the triune God. Between an abstract master principle or idea and the totally personal God an unbridgeable gap exists. An idea is an abstraction; the triune God is totally personal, real, and concrete.

But this is not all. Because the being of God is not complex but simple and unified, all aspects of God are equally God. There is no aspect of God which represents the principle of deity, whereas other aspects are peripheral and secondary. God is totally God in all His being.

Thus, to view one aspect of God as representing the essence of His nature and/or deity is to isolate that one aspect as God over God. We cannot view God's sovereignty, His oneness, His tri-unity, His omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, grace, holiness, righteousness, His power to create, or anything else, as alone the essence of His being. God is God in all His being, and to exalt one aspect over others is to make that abstracted and abstract idea a God over God.

The same is true when we approach the Bible. If we try to probe and reach a word behind the word, i.e., a master principle which is beyond the word, we see the word as an interesting surface or clothing which veils the idea or the master principle. We then seek an abstract word and deny the actual word. In Gnosticism, this very strong belief in master principles and ideas led to the treatment of the Bible as a code book pointing beyond itself to a realm of ideas.

This bald Gnosticism is a very minor aspect of our times, but, more sophisticated in form, the same impetus governs education. The "higher" the education, the more impersonal and abstract the learning. Critical analysis seeks to penetrate beyond the real and the personal to the to the abstract and the impersonal as somehow the truth about things.

In its crudest form, this error has been commonplace to the sciences (but as a product of philosophy and theology). The world has been reduced to mathematics, to a machine, to matter, to atoms, to evolution, and the like. In my student days, when dead and pickled frogs were brought in for dissection, the professor stated that, in the course of our dissection and reading on the

anatomy of the frog, we were to master everything significant to be known about the frog. One girl, P.D., in humor rather than earnest, quipped, "But this frog is dead!" The professor, not at all amused, replied with an expression common to the 1920s and 1930s, "Life is an epiphenomenon." Life and consciousness were seen as irrelevant by-products; the abstraction from life was reality!

Thus, for the modern university and seminary, the wisest are those who can think most abstractly. The more they reduce reality to ideas, the greater their learning and status, and the deadlier the consequences for the church and for society. The quest for an impersonal abstraction is a quest for nothingness, and those who seek it become themselves nothing, and an encumbrance on society.

Abstraction (Latin *ab*, from + *trahere*, to draw) means the separation of a quality, idea, aspect, or principle from a total object; its rests on the premise that the best means of understanding the total object is by means of an abstraction of its quality or principle. *Analysis* comes from Aristotle, and his *analytics*; analysis considers all aspects on a par in order to isolate the key aspects for purposes of knowledge, i.e., for abstraction. The goal of analysis is to isolate, to dissect. Man the thinker (of abstract principles), having analyzed, isolated, and abstracted, then, after Kant, plays God by means of synthetic judgments which view the world as will and idea. Truth becomes what man abstracts by analysis and puts together by his logic. Such a truth is not only abstract: it is, finally, a mental construct and no more.

An education which begins with the faith that the living God is a person, not an abstraction, and that all creation is a personal fact brought forth by the totally personal God, will seek to further the practical implications of that truth. It will work to further knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion. It is not an accident that only out of Christian cultures have science, technology, and agriculture developed to a considerable degree: the concreteness of our faith requires it. The hostility to abstractness appeared clearly in the "Preliminary Principles" of *The Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, 1788, chapter I, article IV:

> That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness; according to our Savior'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.

The humanist, however, believes in *pure* education, i.e., even when vocational it is abstract and seeks to reach abstract principles. In its greatest

purity, it is learning for learning's sake, but not because truth is the object of learning, but because man can best realize his potentialities by developing his grasp of abstractions. The result is that, the more learned the man, the more commonly he is incompetent in the world of concrete things and peoples. He can handle abstractions but not reality, unless somehow he can reduce it to abstractions.

Thus, in a small city, with only a single Negro family, moderately successful, popular, accepted, and at ease, a civil rights administrator for an area, a college graduate, sought to analyze the local situation in terms of sociological abstractions. The fact was that the family was godly, hard-working, and personally a pleasure to know, but this fact did not constitute a valid abstraction for understanding "race relations" in that community. This simple incident pinpoints the problem. The humanist seeks an abstraction from the facts to understand the facts. The Christian seeks the Creator of all facts as the means of understanding the facts. The humanistic Biblical commentator tries to analyze the situation of a Bible passage historically, then to abstract from that an idea which will account for the facts. The Christian sees God as the source of the word, the situation, and the history, and sees that totally personal God at work in all things.

Men seek to project a master principle or idea into the heavens as the truth about things. However sophisticated the apparatus and intellectual ingenuity of such thinking, it remains *idolatry*. The search for a master principle or idea is an attempt in reality to deny the living God and to create an idol. It is comparable to Aaron's idolatry; Aaron created a golden calf, but, when confronted by Moses, tried to say that the idol came out of the gold and fire as a product thereof: "And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (Ex. 32:24). Master principles and ideas, from the Greeks to the present, are like Aaron's golden calf: they are fashioned by men but supposedly appear miraculously as self-generated facts. But they are man-made idols and abstractions.

Systematic theology cannot be systematic abstractionism and idolatry. The personal and living God requires a faith which bears fruit, good fruit, and moves from faith to live in terms of establishing knowledge, righteousness or justice, holiness, and dominion in every area of life and thought. Godly education must be the same: it arms the people of God for battle, victory, and dominion.

Anti-Biblical education abstracts ideas from reality and scholars from the world of wholeness and action. Christian education and systematic theology immerses the godly into that world and requires an accounting of God's people. When God called His covenant people Israel and gave them the Promised Land, that land was not a safe harbor but the main highway of the ancient world. Israel could be faithful or apostate, but it could not be abstract.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1-7:29) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) do the same with the New Israel of God.

17. Abstractionism

We began by calling attention to the alien principle of abstraction as truth. Because Greek philosophy saw ultimate truth as an abstraction, as an idea, not a person, truth and knowledge required for them the process of abstraction. Truth is a distillation from the material context of reality. To know the truth about things meant not getting behind or beyond things, but getting to the heart of things, to what lies beneath the surface, person, or thing. According to Plato, in his *Republic*, Socrates held:

> Unless a person can strictly define by a process of thought the essential Form of Good, abstracted from everything else; and unless he can fight his way as it were through all objections, studying to disprove them not by the rules of opinion, but by those of real existence; and unless in all these conflicts he travels to his conclusion without making one false step in his train of thought, - unless he does all this, shall you not assert that he knows neither the essence of good, nor any other good thing; and that any phantom of it, which he may chance to apprehend, is the fruit of opinion and not of science; and that he dreams and sleeps away his present life, and never wakes on his side of that future world, in which he is doomed to sleep for ever?[43]

To grasp the influence of this pagan principle, let us see its application in everyday life by countless churchmen. We are told very often that we cannot judge or know someone unless we know that person's "heart," and only God knows the heart. I have heard this said of a variety of offenders - homosexuals, in one case a rapist, tale-bearers and slanderers, and so on. The Bible gives us some very concrete ways of knowing people: "....by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). What do these people do? They insist on abstracting the heart or essence of a man from the totality of his life and actions. The end result, in any Christian sense, is that all men are in the practical sense unknowable, because their heart or essence is something radically different perhaps from the actual and concrete fact of their lives.

The abstractionist has an abstract doctrine of man; the historical man is not the heart-man or essential man supposedly. The Bible requires us to regard the historical man as the real man. We cannot abstract an idea from the man and call the idea true or essential man. A man defines himself in his historical existence and in terms of God's word. God who created man provides the standard for the judgment of man, and it is the historical man, the whole man, who is judged, not an abstraction.

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[43] John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughan, translators: *The Republic of Plato.* (London, England: Macmillan, 1935). pp. 534, 535.

The Greek mind in theology goes to the Bible to abstract an *idea* about God. The tools this Greek mind uses can be outwardly Biblical: ideas such as sovereignty and the covenant can be abstracted from their Biblical context, as can the doctrine of man, to create an alien principle. (Thus, James Daane continually requires theologians to do "justice" to his abstract doctrine of man. In Thomism, it is an abstract doctrine of God.)

But God has already given us His word. That word is emphatically concrete. We cannot reject the concreteness of Scripture as anthropomorphic language; rather, God's concreteness of language sets forth the totally *personal* nature of God and His creation. Attempts to defuse and denature that radically personal character of revelation are deformations thereof.

Gardner Williams, in his *Humanistic Ethics*, cited Plato's words on abstraction with approval as an "important truth." He thus summoned thinkers to *define* the good.[44] For Williams, "...the supreme being is the ultimate reality or substance of the universe": it is "structured energy" and "the collective whole of all independent being, upon which everything else in the universe depends for existence."[45] This supreme being is thus impersonal and is for Williams both the collective whole and an abstraction of that whole, in that is it impersonal energy. The necessity of abstractionism for Williams is thus inescapable. To understand reality means to pursue a necessary process of abstraction.

For the Christian thinker, however, such a process takes him away from God and is a denial of Him. When John declares that Jesus Christ is the declaration of the Father, and that grace and truth *came* in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:17-18), he makes clear the vast gap between Greek philosophy and the Bible. For truth to *come* in the person of Jesus Christ, and to be fully expressed in His person (John 14:16), goes totally against Greek philosophy. The Logos, word, meaning, or structure of the universe, says John, is not an abstraction: it is the person of God the Son.

Systematic theology thus cannot be abstract: it must be Biblical, and the Bible is personal, concrete, and historical. But to do justice to history, and to avoid turning history into a meaningless shadow against the void, it must be seen as the creation of the personal and triune God. Time is real because eternity is real. Neither time nor eternity is shadows and abstractions.

Thus, when Ezekiel (35:2) declares that God commanded him to prophesy against Mount Seir and its people, it is a word from God to a concrete people in history, who are to be judged by the eternal and ever-living God for their sins. God's concern about man's sins in any and every age is an historical concern rooted in His eternal decree and His purposes therein.

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[44] Gardner Williams: *Humanistic Ethics*. (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1951). pp. 20f.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

Abstractionism soon loses its hold on both time and eternity, because it seeks a truth behind and under both of them. But we cannot go behind or beyond God: we must go to Him in His word. The concreteness of that word is offensive to fallen man, because it is too clearly the personal word of the personal God. But there is no other word.

18. Seminary Systematics

The presupposition of critical analysis is the autonomy of human thought. By means of rational and scientific analysis, free of presuppositions, man can supposedly arrive at the truth. Critical analysis thus, *first*, assumes an objective and autonomous stance on the part of man, an assumption which is pure myth, not reality. *Second*, critical analysis denies the fact of the fall as basic to the life and mind of man. Man's status as a fallen and sinful creature, a covenant-breaker, radically alters all his thinking and conditions his presuppositions. To suppose that such a man can give us an impartial and unbiased conclusion is to deny the fall and assume that man is a god. *Third*, critical analysis denies the religious foundations of human thought and sees man as essentially rational rather than essentially religious.

For a Christian to pursue critical analysis is to assume an anti-Christian intellectual stance which will progressively undermine his theological profession. Church seminaries and colleges, eager to gain academic respectability (and the lust for academic respectability is the major cause of intellectual whoredom), regularly lose their professed faith because their methodology requires another religion, humanism. Having begun with critical analysis, they regularly wind up in bed with the humanists.

Christian analysis, on the other hand, denies, *first*, that man can have an objective and an autonomous stance. Man is either a covenant-keeper or a covenant-breaker, and, in either case, a creature and hence never autonomous or objective. *Second*, the fall of man has clouded and twisted the mind of man. Not even the redeemed man, since he is far from perfectly sanctified in this life, is able to give an untainted analysis. Only as man seeks to think God's thoughts after Him in faithfulness to God's word, can man begin to know and understand the truth as God created it and declares it. Such valid knowledge as the ungodly gain will be wrenched out of context and given an alien meaning. *Third*, Christian analysis will always affirm that religious presuppositions govern the life and mind of man, so that man's faith will always condition his life and thought.

But what does the seminary do, i.e., the evangelical or the Reformed seminary? Almost invariably, for example, as it approaches the Graf-Wellhausen theory, it will do so from the perspective of critical analysis. The earnest and scholarly critique which follows will ably pinpoint the contradictions and errors of the documentary hypothesis concerning the

Pentateuch, but, at the same time, while gaining various local battles, it loses the war. It presupposes as valid a viciously false approach. It treats unbelief as an honest intellectual problem, whereas it is in reality a moral and a religious problem. If the Bible is true, then, whether a man is a male prostitute or a cynical critic of the Old Testament text, his is a moral and a religious problem, not an intellectual question. Intellectual problems are internal questions *within* a system. A covenant-breaker has one kind of intellectual problem, and a covenant-keeper another. The intellectual problems are then questions of development, understanding, and growth within a faith and a framework, but man's presence within that framework is a religious and a moral decision.

To adopt the methodology of unbelief is to accept the presuppositions of unbelief and to surrender the faith that the intellectual problems of man as a creature have their roots in a religious and moral decision.

The seminary and college with a false moral basis will soon go astray. The battle-line is shifted from the moral to the intellectual realm to accommodate the enemy. A false systematics then undergirds the curriculum.

The seminary, thus, will endlessly analyze the theories of the adherents of the Graf-Wellhausen myth. Instead of teaching the Bible, it will be dealing with "problems" in terms of critical analysis. *It will grant moral validity to the enemy's objections and objectives.* The student majoring in either Old or New Testament will know much about what the enemy has to say, but he can leave seminary and be unable, in an ordination examination, to name four minor prophets, spell Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Habakkuk, name the Ten Commandments, or do other like elementary things. (These are actual illustrations, from examinations.) It stands to reason that he cannot summarize the main points of Romans, I Corinthians, Haggai, or Jeremiah. He can, however, discuss ably the Graf-Wellhausen theory, so that, as a pastor, he has a good bag of stones to feed Christ's flock.

If the student is a theology major, it is unlikely that he will leave the seminary with a full reading of any great theologian. He may be "Reformed," but it is unlikely that he will have read Calvin's *Institutes*. A course in Calvin, the church fathers, Luther, Van Til, or any other like thinker is very unlikely. But he will get courses on the current theological idiot of the covenant-breaker's church. After all, must he not have a box-full of serpents for Christ's flock?

Am I saying that it is wrong to study Barth, Moltmann, and the like? Not at all, for the specialist, *provided* he has had a firm grounding in sound theology and in good theologians first of all. Does he know, for example, Calvin's *Institutes*, the various relevant works of Van Til, and the like? If not, he is wasting his time and defrauding God's people. *If* he knows his Bible, and *if* he is thoroughly grounded in sound theology and *Christian*

presuppositional analysis, then he can profitably deal with the enemy's thought, and effectively cut out the ground from under the opposition.

Again and again, reform movements within the church have gone astray, and the reforming seminaries all too quickly are proud of their respectability and accreditation by the enemy. Their scholars write learned studies dissecting the enemy by means of critical analysis, and then wind up, inch by inch, yard by yard, in the enemy's camp. All too readily they become themselves the cultured despisers of God's humble believers and the enemies of Christ's flock. By means of the methodology of critical analysis, they move into an alien systematics and begin to war against the household of faith.

The necessity for a truly Biblical systematic theology is thus an urgent one. If we do not view all things in terms of the triune God and His word, then we deny Him at point after point.

19. Anti-Abstractionism

The idea of God or some substitute for it keeps cropping up in anti-Christian and atheistic philosophies. A world without God is a world empty of meaning, direction, purpose, and reason. Man's attempts to provide a rational center and purpose prove finally absurd: death and unreason conquer all.

As a result, men resort to the idea of God in some form in order to preserve the freedom of man. Man needs a backdrop of meaning in order to develop his own meaning. Karl Barth, for example, saw clearly the radical emptiness of the universe of any meaning wherever Biblical faith is denied. Barth wanted two very different things: *first*, the freedom of man from God to be his own lord and lawmaker; *second*, the full insurance of the doctrine of God against the abyss of meaninglessness. Accordingly, he affirmed the Biblical doctrines as limiting concepts to keep back the void, provide the insurance of meaning, and thereby give man the freedom to function in a universe of ostensible meaning. Like all such efforts, Barth's attempt was a failure.

Such attempts are not new. Paul warns Timothy of the infiltration of the church by traitors who would be outwardly of the faith but in reality alien to it (II Tim. 3:1-4), and he concludes by stating that all such have "a form of godliness, but [are] denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:5).

To illustrate this fact, a seminary professor savagely criticized a student, D.C., for taking Biblical law seriously. I suppose, he said with contempt, you actually believe Deuteronomy 21:18-21 and would have a rebellious and delinquent son executed. The student answered Prof. D. thus: Let us not go into the question of the present validity of the law requiring the death of incorrigible delinquents and criminals. Let us assume for the moment that the

law was dropped at the cross. Are you implying that, between Moses and Christ, for 1500 years or so, God did not require this law, which you find disgusting and contemptible? Prof. D., who claims to be orthodox, held that the law was merely a teaching device, not intended to be taken seriously or literally!

How then does one read any of God's law? How do we take "Thou shalt not kill"? and "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? (Deut. 5:17-18). For Prof. D., the law is not real, because his god is not real: both the law and his god are limiting concepts. A universal principle is affirmed as a limit, not as a fact. God becomes a fence man builds in order to protect man's universe from unreason: He is not the living God of Scripture, who "is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29), but man's own limiting notions projected on to the universe, or into the future.

In a brilliant analysis of such thinking among contemporary Protestant and Roman Catholic thinkers, Greg Bahnsen has pointed out that for these men "revelation rests upon a subjective and man-centered fulcrum." For these men, "God is the future - whatever it should eventuate." G. Baum has declared, "The doctrine of God is the Good News that humanity is possible." (Here the emphasis on the limiting concept as a guarantee of human possibility is very open.) God is man's future, what humanity can become if it uses its political strength to plan for the future. "Man must be the new source of predestination through politics."[46]

It is not, however, the modernist theologians alone who use the Biblical God as a limiting concept and as a facade for their humanism. The same attempt is common to many evangelicals and to Reformed men as well, as witness Professor D. and others like him. For these men, the Holy Spirit becomes the new limiting notion. He is detached from the "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). This is a major denial of the faith. A partial word is one in which man's word hides behind the facade of God's word. If I say that "Thou shalt not kill," and "Thou shalt not commit adultery" are God's word, but that "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Ex. 20:13-16) are culturally conditioned words to be read as such, or that the sexual laws of Leviticus 19 are also culturally conditioned, then my word is made more important than God's word, and then I am the determiner of which word is the word of God for me; I then pass judgment on God as god over God. But this is blasphemy and unbelief.

If I likewise determine apart from the every word of God and faith in and obedience thereto what constitutes "the Spirit-filled life," then I have raised my spirit into the office of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. This, however, is exactly what most advocates of "spiritual Christianity" have

[46] Greg L. Bahnsen: "Future and Folly," in *The Chalcedon Report*, no. 97, (September, 1973), pp. 2-4.

done. In the name of Christ and the Spirit, they have made their spiritual experiences a part of the life of God.

Abstractionism in religion reduces God at best to a wise counsellor, who gives us a beautiful and an inspiring word, and raises man to the center of the stage as the reality of being. Man's word is then the determinative word, and man is the living power.

The Bible, it cannot be repeated often enough, was not given to man to be an inspiring word, but *the command word.* It is not intended to please man, but to declare to him what he is in himself, and what he must be in the Lord. The Bible is inspired, not inspiring; it is infallible, because it is the word of God. But, for the abstractionist, the Bible is often a gauche book which must be spiritualized and read symbolically in order to be made palatable.

The Bible forbids us to make any reduction or abstraction. We can neither add nor subtract from God's one word, either in our faith and obedience, or in our textual transmission of Scripture (Deut. 4:1-2). This command is repeated in Revelation 22:18-19; now, there is a conclusion to the words of that one word.

But this is not all. Scripture requires us to take the totality of God's given word. It also requires us to come to Him with the totality of our being. All forms of self-mutilation are forbidden to the priests of God (Lev. 21:1-5): God requires the service of the whole man. This law applies also to all men: all mutilated men are barred from the privileges of the community (Deut. 23:1). Such a man may become a believer and be assured of his eternal security in Christ (Acts 8:26-40), but the rule of the kingdom belongs to whole men and requires the wholeness of life. The Christian faith cannot be abstracted into a corner of life which is separated from the rest and is called the religious or the spiritual realm. The religious realm is the totality of things.

A systematic Biblical theology will thus find it impossible to limit the religious realm to the ecclesiastical domain. God is totally God and Lord: the universe is totally under Him and His law-word. A systematic theology which is faithful to the living God will thus speak to the totality of man and his life.

It will be systematically and faithfully Biblical. To depart from Scripture is to depart from the living God. It is the word of God which reveals God, not the word of man. Therefore, "Hear ye the word of the LORD" (Jer. 2:4), not the abstractions and words of man. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22).

III

CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

1. Creation and Holiness

In the modern era, theology has been marked by a division between modernist theology and ecclesiastical theology. Modernist theologies are governed by the spirit of the age and are marked by a belief that truth is a discovery of man in every field, including religion. Truth, moreover, has no absolute validity; it is an existential truth, one relative to the age and the spirit of the times. Since the universe is evolving and is in process, so too man and truth are in process, and no truth exists in abstraction or separation from the universe. Man therefore cannot seek or know truth except in the existential context. For Oliver Wendell Holmes, "truth was the majority vote of that nation that could lick all others."[1] Most modernists would not state the case so crudely, but in essence truth is derived from the general will of mankind.

Ecclesiastical theology, the doctrine of the worshipping institution, has been ostensibly the theology of the word of God. If, however, the word of God, Scripture, is viewed with alien presuppositions, then that theology expresses not Scripture but the word of man. Modernism sees the universe as a self-generated process; truth is then the direction of that process, and it too is self-generated, or can be man-created and man-developed. For ecclesiastical theology, truth is Jesus Christ. But truth, or Jesus Christ, is then seen as the process of abstracting God's people out of an alien world into a fortress church as a stage on the way to heaven. While the universe is said to be God-created, it is seen as on an alien course, so that the believer and the universe part company and seek divergent directions. Since Darwin, and his view of a universe of struggle, amoral and purposeless, this separation of Christian faith from the context and direction of history and the world has been aggravated. But, as Berkhof stressed, the doctrine of creation is emphatic "that God is the origin of all things, and that all things belong to Him and are subject to Him."[2] In fact, the doctrines of creation and providence require us to view God's purposes concerning man and the world as a unity. God made the world and man (Gen. 1,2); both are fallen, and both are predestined for redemption, re-creation, and a new creation with the general resurrection (Rom. 8:18-23; I Cor. 15:12-58, etc.). The original commission or creation mandate to man, to subdue the earth and exercise dominion over it (Gen. 1:26-28), is restated *after the Fall* to Noah (Gen. 9:1-

[1] Francis Biddle: *Justice Holmes, Natural Law, and the Supreme Court.* (New York, N. Y.: MacMillan, 1961). p. 46f.

[2] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1946) 1976). p. 126.

7); it is at the heart of the covenant (Gen. 9:17). Abraham and his seed are called for this purpose, and obedience to the law is given to Moses as the means of dominion, whereas sin undermines dominion and brings judgment and damnation (Deut. 28; Lev. 26). The commission to Joshua again sets forth this mandate (Joshua 1:1-9), and the Great Commission from the greater Joshua, Jesus Christ, applies it again to *all the world* (Matt. 28:18-20). The commission or mandate to the first Adam in Eden was for all the world also, and Eden was the pilot plot where man was to learn, under God, how to subdue the earth. The last Adam, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:45-47), sends out His people into *all the world* with the command to "teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19). This means not only converting and baptizing them but "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20), and this includes the law (Matt. 5:17-20; Luke 16:17). The doctrine of providence tells us that God is mindful of and includes in His government, concern, and eternal plan the sparrow, the hairs of our head, and the flowers of the field (Matt. 10:29-30; 6:26-34). *The whole of creation,* Paul tells us, awaits expectantly the general resurrection (Rom. 8:19-23). Just as the earth, while not conscious, responds to gravity, and the flower turns towards the sun, so the ground beneath our feet, the stars overhead, and all living creatures, are governed in their being by the coming event, their new or renewed creation at Christ's coming. Calvin affirmed this fact in his comments on Romans 8:21, while warning against speculation about the details of this simple affirmation:

> It is then indeed meet for us to consider what a dreadful curse we have deserved, since all created things in themselves blameless, both on earth and in the visible heaven, undergo punishment for our sins; for it has not happened through their own fault, that they are liable to corruption. Thus the condemnation of mankind is imprinted on the heavens, and on the earth, and on all creatures. It hence also appears to what excelling glory the sons of God shall be exalted; for all creatures shall be renewed in order to amplify it, and to render it illustrious.
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> But he means not that all creatures shall be partakers of the same glory with the sons of God; but that they, according to their nature, shall be participators of a better condition; for God will restore to a perfect state the world, now fallen, together with mankind. But what that perfection will be, as to beasts as well as plants and metals, it is not meet nor right in us to inquire more curiously; for the chief effect of corruption is decay. Some subtle men, but hardly sober-minded, inquire whether all kinds of animals will be immortal; but if reins be given to speculations where will they at length lead us? Let us then be content with this simple doctrine,–that such will be the constitution and the complete order of things, that nothing will be deformed or fading.[3]

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[3] John Calvin: *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 305.

I find, when I cite Calvin's statement, that most ecclesiastical theologians find his words repellant and disconcerting: they seem to prefer an empty new creation, devoid of all things save man! Scripture indeed speaks of the destruction of the old creation (Isa. 34:4; Rev. 6:14; II Peter 3:10-13), but it also speaks of the great regeneration (Matt. 19:28), and of the "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). It is a neoplatonist horror of matter which leads to the exclusion of the material universe from the new creation and the general resurrection; Scripture gives us another perspective (Rev. 21:1-22:5). Calvin, on the other hand, sees animals, plants, and metals as a part of God's creation, His eternal purpose, and His providence and new creation. This means that man cannot view his life here, nor in the world to come, in abstraction from the world he lives in. God's law governs his relationship to that world, and God's creation mandate or commission requires man to establish a dominion over all things in terms of God's word and purpose. Biblical holiness is thus not a neoplatonic spirituality, and abstraction from material concerns, but a dominion in and over material and spiritual matters in terms of God's law. Holiness involves a relationship to God, to our own being, to other people, and to the world around us in terms of God's law and His creation mandate. It means that we are always before God in word, thought, and deed in very practical and mundane matters. The Bible is clear that holiness comes with faithfulness to God's law in the routine affairs of life. The laws of holiness are thus very specific.

> 1. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
> 2. Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.
> 3. Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.
> 4. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourself molten gods: I am the LORD your God...
> 9. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.
> 10. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.
> 11. Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.
> 12. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD...(Lev. 19:1-4, 9-12)

The laws of holiness deal with our sexual life, our hair and our beards, our fruit-trees, and our sanitation. *Because God's purpose in time and eternity encompasses all of creation, His law similarly encompasses all of creation.* If we take the doctrine of creation to be literally what God says it is in Genesis 1, then we will take His law equally seriously as a part of God's mandate and commission for the godly man, in Eden and in Christ.

The doctrine of creation is the affirmation and presupposition of the total word of God. Since God made all things, governs all things, and includes all things in His eternal decree, purpose, and eschatology, then no godly living is possible in abstraction from creation nor apart from God's law.

The doctrine of creation means that *holiness* "without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14), is not a matter of neoplatonic abstraction and spirituality, but of faith, and the obedience of faith to the law of God. It means our relationship to God and to His creation in terms of His mandate and law. The definition of holiness does not change between Leviticus and Hebrews, because God does not change (Malachi 3:6), and the doctrine of creation does not change.

2. The Goodness of Creation

In a very beautiful and moving paragraph, Calvin, commenting on Romans 9:14 and predestination, said:

> The predestination of God is indeed in reality a labyrinth, from which the mind of man can by no means extricate itself; but so unreasonable is the curiosity of man, that the more perilous the examination of a subject is, the more boldly he proceeds; so that when predestination is discussed, as he cannot restrain himself within due limits, he immediately, through his rashness, plunges himself, as it were, into the depths of the sea. What remedy then is there for the godly? Must they avoid every thought of predestination? By no means: for as the Holy Spirit has taught us nothing but what it behooves us to know, the knowledge of this would no doubt be useful, provided it be confined to the word of God. Let this then be our sacred rule, to seek to know nothing concerning it, except what Scripture teaches us: when the Lord closes his holy mouth, let us also stop the way, that we may not go farther.[4]

Calvin's "sacred rule" should be ours also. All too many men are bold where God's word is concerned, to dispute it or set it aside, when they are unable to govern even their wives or their children. Whether we deal with predestination, providence, or creation, or any other aspect of Scripture, the limits of our thought must be governed by God's word.

This means that the pagan mentality must not intrude on our Biblical perspective. Thus, for the Hellenic mentality, the superior, true, and valued world was the realm of ideas, of mind or spirit, whereas the realm of matter was formless, meaningless, and barren of value unless dominated for a time by forms or ideas. Ideas or forms thus were *the good,* and matter was held to be good only to the extent that ideas governed and formed it. In neoplatonism,

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[4] John Calvin: *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948.) p. 353f.

this led to a depreciation of material things, to asceticism, and to a studied impracticality in mundane affairs.

The Bible gives no ground for such an approach. God is the creator of all things, visible and invisible, physical and spiritual, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him" (Col. 1:16). *All things*, "every thing," Scripture makes clear, was created "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

The Fall gives us no warrant for downgrading one aspect of creation and exalting another. Man is fallen in all his being, so that his mind and body, reason and will, eye-sight and insight, are all equally affected by the Fall. If to be "spiritual" is a virtue, then Satan, as a totally spiritual being apparently, would be supremely virtuous!

The Bible is clear that, in and after the Fall, God is still totally Lord over all creation, and that He rejoices in it. Revelation 4:11 declares, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. 11:36). God, in speaking to Job, describes the majesty of His creation; as against a view which made man the measure of events, God declares that He is the measure. His purpose is theocratic, but it includes therein all His creation and manifests His joy therein, a joy shared by the angels of heaven:

> 4. Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.
> 5. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?
> 6. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;
> 7. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7)

But, some will object, this has reference to creation *before* the Fall. However, most of what God declares to Job about His creation has to do with the world *after the Fall,* as, for example, God's delight in behemoth:

> 15. Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.
> 16. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.
> 17. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.
> 18. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.
> 19. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

20. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.
21. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.
22. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.
23. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.
24. He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares. (Job 40:15-24)

Who or what is behemoth? Some have identified him with the wild buffalo, the mammoth, and the elephant, most perhaps have seen him as the hippopotamus.[5] When I was a student, this passage was cited by a scholar in amused cynicism: how simple-minded to believe that God rhapsodized about an elephant, or some like monster-animal! (No doubt, he felt that a professor is alone worthy of God's joy!) More than a few theologians have agreed: the medieval rabbis, some heretics, Eucherius of Lyons, Gregory the Great and most of the church fathers, Luther, and many more since. They have held that Behemoth is "a symbolic representation of *Satan.*"[6]

The text, of course, gives no ground for such an opinion. Rather, man's egocentricity and his neoplatonic tendencies make it difficult for him to believe that God can enjoy His creation, the hippopotamus, when he has man to enjoy! The opinion seems prevalent that it should be the chief end of God to glorify man and to enjoy him forever. But God the Lord identifies behemoth, or the hippo, as "the chief of the ways of God." (Clearly, no theologian could have written the Book of Job: he would have placed more dignified tastes and appreciations in God's mind!) In Proverbs 8:22, we find the same expression in Hebrew used to describe Wisdom as "the first of God's creative acts before the formation of the world."[7] This means simply that the Lord uses the same expression to describe his creative joy in the hippopotamus as in describing God the Son.

Let us recall Calvin's beautiful words of wisdom and seek neither to deny what God says, nor to know more than He chooses to reveal concerning Himself. What we *are* told makes clear God's delight in His creation. His purpose from all eternity is the regeneration and the restoration of all things through Jesus Christ (Rom 8:19-23; Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:21, etc.)

The doctrine of creation thus militates against a man-centered perspective. Darwinism and the theory of evolution have fostered humanism and a radical anthropocentricity. In such a perspective, God does not exist, and all of the world is an accident; man is the sole light of reason in an empty universe.

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5. Burton L. Goddard: *Animals and Birds of the Bible.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., n.d.) p. 24.
6. John Peter Lange: *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Job.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, reprint of 1874 printing). p. 620.
7. Marvin H. Pope: *Job.* (The Anchor Bible, Third Edition. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, (1965) 1974). p. 324.

Such a humanist may talk about conservation, and the protection of our natural environment, but he lacks the moral imperative for a sensible view. He as god plans to either use or protect what he determines needs to be done. His moral roots are shallow and egocentric.

God's care extends to *all* His creation. As Nehemiah 9:6 makes clear: "Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and *thou preservest them all.*" Solomon declares, "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Eccl. 3:11). God's wisdom is in and behind all of creation (Prov. 3:19; Isa. 40:12, 26-28; 45:7,12,18; 48:13; Jer. 10:12; 51:15-16; Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:6; Zech 12:1; Acts 7:50; 14:15; etc.) Many psalms celebrate God as creator (Ps. 8:3; 19:1; etc.).

All this makes clear that charnel house theology is not Scriptural. Too many theologians, past and present, have seen the material aspect of creation in revolting terms. More than a few have been ready to describe man as excrement.[8] Many humanists have shared this view, and the Transcendentalists were very much prone to it and sought to elevate themselves above matter. In the early 1950s, a very prominent clergyman enjoyed declaring dramatically to congregations and to conference groups: "In God's sight, you are all dung!" According to Scripture, God can be angry with man, and He can and often does delight in man (Job 1:8;2:3), but he does not regard man as excrement but as a creature, fallen or redeemed, made in His image (Gen. 1:26) and hence an aspect of His glorious creation. Moreover, David, inspired of God, tells, us, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Ps. 139:14).

The Fall is not normative nor eternal, but God's creative purpose is. To sing mournfully of change and decay is not godly. Change or time is God's purpose for the development of His Kingdom and man's exercise of dominion. It is in time that man is redeemed and re-orders his life and world in terms of God's word. Decay is an aspect of the Fall, but it also prepares the way for those things which can neither decay nor be shaken (Heb. 12:27-28).

Charnel house theology, however, veers towards neoplatonism and Manichaeanism in its contempt for the world. It identifies holiness, not with God's law, with faith and obedience, but with pointless spiritual exercises. In this it is closer to yoga than to Scripture.

Moreover, charnel house theology refuses to face up to and spiritualizes into meaninglessness all passages of Scripture which speak of the triumph of God's Kingdom and covenant people in time. For example, Isaiah 2:1-4

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8. See Dan Sabbath and Mandel Hall: *End Product, The First Taboo.* (New York, N. Y.: Urizen Books, 1977).

speaks of a glorious world peace; Isaiah 65:20 speaks of a restored longevity before the end of the world. Jeremiah 31:33-34 describes a world so thoroughly under Christ's dominion through His people that evangelism is no longer necessary, "for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Isaiah 19:18 declares that even in the strongholds of God's enemies, typified by Egypt, five out of six shall be the Lord's. Micah 4:1-7 is a vivid account of world peace, every man rejoicing under his vine arbor and fig tree.

Instead of a charnel house, the Bible sees creation as manifesting God's majesty and glory (Ps. 19:1-6). The response of the psalmist, David, to all the glory of creation is to find his own God-ordained place therein by faith and obedience, and he turns joyfully to "the law of the LORD" (Ps. 19:7-14).

We cannot without sin despise God's creation nor the majesty of the material, which, like all of God's works, manifests His glory (Rom. 1:20). To despise God's creation is to despise its maker, the Lord of Hosts.

3. Creation and Providence

Under the influence of paganism earlier, and since the time of Hegel at least, because of the dogma of evolution, many people see the universe as a cold, mechanical, and empty force. Vitalism has seen a tendency and a moving force in the universe, but it is non-personal and essentially mindless. It manifests direction and purpose in retrospect, as a result of chance and blind urges, not as a self-conscious and decreed will.

In such a world-view, the universe has produced man, together with a billion and one other things, but is unconscious of man and indifferent to him. Tomorrow, a wandering star, asteroid, comet, or some other cosmic body may mindlessly destroy the earth and man. Those who would hold that such an accident is unlikely or impossible ground their opinion, not in some absolute purpose and plan, but in a theory of electro-magnetics and other impersonal and mindless forces.

Humanistic man thus faces a blind and cold universe which is not truly "alive" and is most certainly destined for cosmic death and collapse. In such a cosmos, man is clearly alone. A universal conflict of interests prevails, and, because no absolute and universal mind and purpose binds all things together, all things are in tension, if not in struggle or at war. William Butler Yeats, in his poem, "The Second Coming," summarized the modern mood tellingly:

> Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

In a world in which "things fall apart" by nature, man too falls apart.

In the empty and meaningless world of modern thought, the doctrine of providence has become remote and has receded even from the mind of the

ostensible believers. To be "scientific" means to view reality as a cold business of weights and measures which is best known by scientific instruments rather than Scripture. Science is contrasted to religion, as though science represents an intelligent and realistic view of things, whereas religion offers merely the blindness of faith. Of course, *all* thinking rests on pre-theoretical presuppositions, so that faith is the foundation of science as much as of "religion." Modern scientific theory is the outworking of a humanistic religion, not of observation or testing. It is a manifestation of faith, not reason, so that the conflict between "science" and Christianity is a religious war, not a battle between science and superstition.

Churchmen, however, as well as men generally, have been heavily influenced by the Hegelian-Darwinian perspective. As a result, churchmen may profess to believe the Bible from cover to cover, but in practice they move as though the world belonged to Darwin rather than to the triune God. Even where men are deep in religious experiences, they are commonly remote to the providence of God and to His government and law. Not surprisingly, in import many theologies see the government of God as withdrawn from the world, as though creation could exist or continue for a second apart from God's sovereign decree and government.

Because God and His providence are remote to modern churchmen, they see immediacy and relevancy in preaching in experimentialism, not theology. This means more emphasis on being born again, a product, rather than on the objective fact and cause, God's work of atonement and justification, on His sovereign act of electing grace. Too doctrinal a sermon is held to be remote because God is seen as remote. If a doctrinal sermon is preached, it is abstract, because God is seen as abstracted from this world.

The Reformation saw a very strong and heavy emphasis on objective doctrine. At the same time, the Reformers were strongly and intensely involved in the social and political scene, and in the cure of souls. All this was seen as intimately and radically related. In the 17th century, we can see the rise of introspection, the emphasis on the psychology of conversion as against the theology thereof, and the emphasis on the subjective as against the objective, infiltrate the church. The older objective approach came to be regarded in time as dead orthodoxy and "Scholasticism." While some elements of Scholasticism are here and there discernible, usually this accusation means that the objective facts of God's nature and revelation are given priority over subjective perspectives and experiences. Certainly the common charge that the Westminster Standards are "Scholastic" is evidence not of any truth with regard to those documents but to the strident subjectivism and/or existentialism of the critics.

The doctrine of creation requires us logically to have a God-centered and objective world-view. In a lonely universe, with man as the sole thinker, man can become subjective, because he is the only intelligent point of reference.

All else is at best a blind order, or perhaps a blind accidental order, and he alone can tell that tale, understand the universal meaninglessness and the cosmic surd. Meaning then is obviously subjective. In such a world-view, meaning *requires* subjectivity, because meaning cannot exist elsewhere by definition. Relevance in every area of life means subjectivity. If as modern philosophy holds, the world is man's will and idea, then to abandon subjectivity is to abandon relevance, meaning, and truth.

If, however, the doctrine of creation is exactly what Genesis 1 declares it to be, then subjectivism is a delusion. Any primary emphasis on my thinking, my logic, or my experience is then an emphasis on a delusion. But the reality of things is God's absolute and objective creation. Not only then is a subjective emphasis a delusion but it is the delusion of sin.

If an evolutionary and subjective world-view prevails *i.e.*, if the subjectivism of modern philosophy and modern life and religion prevails, then it logically follows that the government of all things is not upon God's shoulders but man's. We then have humanism and the belief in the sovereignty and ultimacy of man. In religion, this means that man can say *no* to God and can reject God's efforts to redeem man. Man in his sovereign free will can bar the door to God's plans and purposes. In such a perspective, no consistent doctrine of providence is possible. For the non-Church humanists, some vague "purpose" or direction in evolution can be assumed by faith, *i.e.*, that it is upwards, evolution and not devolution. That future course, however, is at best problematic, and it may mean the elimination of man as another kind of dinosaur.

A strictly Biblical doctrine of creation not only logically requires an objective rather than subjective world-view, a theology rather than an anthropology, but it also requires a high doctrine of providence. Isaiah tells us of the Messiah, "the government shall be upon his shoulder...Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:6,7). The God who is totally the Creator of all things is also totally the determiner and the governor thereof.

Providence, the Greek word *pronoia* (Acts 24:2), sums up in a word God's government, guidance, care, and purposive direction of all His creation. *Pronoia* means literally "perceiving beforehand" and is thus closely related to foreknowledge and predestination. However, foreknowledge and predestination stress God's direction in history of the acts of all men and of all natural phenomena. The purpose of providence is to effect God's eternal purpose in creation, and it does so infallibly, so that all things move to their determined end, to set forth God's purpose, justice, and holiness. This means, as Grintz has pointed out, "hence there is a connection between providence and the principle of reward and punishment."[9]

As Grintz points out, paganism held to a fixed order in the universe which was above the gods. The gods were themselves products of the universe, not its governors. Providence means rather God's unlimited and total control over all creation and also *His personal relation with all men*, and with all things, without exception. It means, moreover, that "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

God's providence is *cosmic:* it embraces the whole of creation. It is *national*, in that it controls the destinies of all nations, peoples, tribes and tongues. It is *personal*, extending to every man in every age of history. It is *natural*, in that it includes the flowers and grass of the field, and the sparrow. It is *total*, because He is the sovereign Lord and Creator.

As Grintz notes, "It can be said that the entire Bible is a record of divine providence, whether general or individual."[10]

In Psalms and in Proverbs, the doctrine of providence is set forth with respect to the details of our lives and actions. Proverbs 16:33 declares: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD." Nothing is outside God's government and providence. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21:1). All things are governed by God's providence in terms of God's objective and holy purpose, not in terms of man's subjective judgments and pleasure. Man's pleasure comes, in any true sense, in enjoying and glorifying God, Who is ever mindful of His own, and Who is the eternal Judge of all things. Thus, Solomon counsels,

> Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. (Eccles. 11:9)

This means that, because God is the Lord, there is no inconsequential act in all of creation. Romans 8:28 makes clear that God uses every event to His own good purpose, so that even man's wrath and evil shall praise Him, *i.e.*, work to God's purpose and glory (Ps. 76:10). As a result, God's purpose can never be frustrated, and all things work together for evil to them who deny the Lord:

> Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou has done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint. (Lam. 1:22)

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[9] Yehoshua M. Grintz, *"Providence,"* in Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 13, 1279. (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica, Keter Publishing House, 1971).
[10] Ibid., p. 1280.

> For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. (Obadiah 15)
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> 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)

Because the universe is a universe of total meaning, and that total meaning is entirely the ordained purpose and decree of the absolute and sovereign God, the covenant people of the Lord have a glorious assurance in the face of all struggles, adversities, and attacks:

> No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. (Isa. 54:17)

Clearly, only where the doctrine of God's providence is an essential aspect of a man's life is a true sabbath possible. A man may cease from his labors, but he cannot rest in the Lord until or unless he relies firmly on God's providence.

4. The Joy of Creation in Providence

One of the problems in the life of the Christian synagogue or church is the dualism between the pulpit and the classroom. Theology tends to be coldly abstract, so that the very thought of dealing with "The Joy of Creation in Providence" would impress most theologians as a homiletical subject, for pulpit preaching, rather than for systematic theology. It is apparently felt that joy has no place in their theologies. On the other hand, the pulpit has its own kind of abstractionism, in this case not rational, as with the theologians, but emotional. Too much preaching is full of sweet nothings, exhortations designed to promote the life of the institution, and an absence of systematic Biblical, theological exposition.

Just as neoplatonism divided the world wrongly between the spiritual and the material, so too many churchmen divide reality into a world of abstractions on the one hand, and a world of feelings on the other. Supposedly, the "common man" is beyond the ability to grasp the rational and the intellectual, whereas the theological mind places itself as supposedly beyond the sway of the emotional, and the partisan sweeps of feelings. But man, unless self-warped or culturally conditioned to a false self-evaluation, does not have two beings or two natures but one. His emotional and intellectual grasp of things is not a divided thing but is one form of cognition. Man's thinking and feeling are a unity, even under the layers of warping and

false self-evaluation. A man's aptitudes, capability, or sterility are in evidence in all his being.

Thus, to have a grasp of the meaning of providence is a matter not only of godly logic but also of godly joy. If for us providence is only a matter of logical ideas, then joy too is a concept and no more. If, however, providence is for us the reality of God's total government, then our life in terms of that faith is one of joy.

In Psalm 47 we have a beautiful, moving, and profound insight into the joy of creation in providence:

> 1. O clap your hands, all ye people (or, peoples); shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
> 2. For the LORD Most High is terrible (or, the LORD is Most High and terrible); He is a great King over all the earth.
> 3. He shall subdue (or, subdueth) the people under us, and the nations under our feet.
> 4. He shall choose (or, chooseth) our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved (or, loveth).
> 5. God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
> 6. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
> 7. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.
> 8. God reigneth over the nations (or, heathens): God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
> 9. The princes of the people (or, peoples) are gathered together, even (or, to be) the people of the God of Abraham: For the shields of the earth belong unto God: He is greatly exalted.

This psalm celebrates the absolute Kingship of God over all the earth, over all nations. It refers generally to the conquest of Canaan, and to all the victories of God's people over the enemies of God. The inheritance of the covenant people is ordained and chosen by God, even as the judgment of all covenant-breakers is of His choosing and determination. The Lord never stands idly by: He is the total determiner of all things, and He celebrates His victories on behalf of His people before all the world, in all the display of a conqueror subduing all enemies. God's people rejoice in all this, knowing that God is King over all peoples, and He shall, in His own time, subdue them all to His service and glory. The rulers and the peoples of the earth all belong unto the Lord as His creation and possession. In His providence, God proves Himself to be the King of all the earth. As Leupold noted, "whoever the mighty ones on the earth may be, here called 'rulers of the earth,' they 'belong to God,' are under his control, whether they know it or not, whether they acknowledge it or not. So all things are under his absolute dominion."[11]

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[11] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms.* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959). p. 373.

Psalm 19 celebrates God's providence in creation. All of creation, including man and man's world, is under God's providence. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork." (Ps. 19:1). The way for man to realize the joy and peace of that providential majesty is by "the law of the LORD," which is perfect, "converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7).

The modern humanists, in and out of the church, are often critical of the doctrine of providence. Why, they ask, does so much evil prevail in the world if God's government is so wise and good? Their question betrays them. Evil prevails not so much in the world around us as in man. It prevails in the world because the very ground is cursed for man's sake (Gen. 3:17; Lev. 26:21-43; Deut. 28:15-26, etc.). But God's providence uses even man's greatest sin to redound to His glory and purpose (John 11:47-53).

The humanist and the Christian here hold radically different positions. The humanist holds either to the natural goodness of man, or else to his moral neutrality. The cause of evil is thus in forces outside of man or extraneous or unessential to him. Evil is thus either a stage on the road to maturity, or else it is an environmental factor. For some, no evil at all exists. In this perspective, evil is outside of man and therefore supremely in the great outsider, God. God is seen as the disturber of man's peace, and freedom from God is viewed as an essential step towards man's liberation.

The Christian cannot agree with the humanist's assessment of man. For him, man in Adam is fallen and unregenerated and therefore the source of sin and evil. We cannot, however, give the same priority to the doctrine of the fall which humanists give to their doctrine of man. *First*, man is not the ultimate, and, *second*, the fall is not man's normal estate but his deformation. *Third*, the humanist, depending on his particular line of reasoning, will say on the one hand that man's environment is basic and conditions man, and, on the other hand, that man is his own ultimate and lord. Both perspectives are wrong and false. Man is responsible, but God is the ultimate determiner of all things, so that, as against the humanist's emphasis on man and the environment, ours must be on God and His providence. We cannot keep the argument in the realm of anthropology: because God is the Lord, it is to the doctrine of God and His providence that we must turn to counter the humanistic emphasis on man, however man may be viewed.

Thus, the doctrines of creation and providence make clear that the universe cannot be understood in terms of itself, and the same applies to man. It is a creation, and it is therefore the handiwork and revelation of its maker, the triune God. It is not only a created rather than a self-generated realm, but it is a governed rather than a self-governing realm.

Hence the joy of creation is providence. Creation moves in terms of an absolute and fore-ordained decree of predestination. It is neither haphazard

nor purposeless but determined and unerringly moves to God's ordained end and under His total direction. God is never the loser, nor are His covenant people because of His providential ways (Rom. 8:28). Hence, Paul can say, "Rejoice" (Phil 4:4). Nehemiah's word still stands: "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10).

5. Neoplatonism and Providence

A major force in the undermining of faith in providence has been the spiritualizing influences in the life of the church which can be summed up as neoplatonism. For neoplatonism, as, for example, with Plotinus, reality is in Platonic terms seen as made up of two alien substances, spirit and matter. Man's spirit or soul is a part of the World-Soul, and man must transcend the things of this world and seek union with the One, the World-Soul. The more intelligible and rational reality becomes, the more spiritual and divine it is, because it has risen above the dark and meaningless realm of matter.

Medieval and modern mysticism is obviously very neoplatonic. So too is Hegel's philosophy and its heirs, from Marx to Dewey. For the modern heirs of Hegel, the idea or Spirit is now man, who must impose his mind on a mindless world if that world is to have any meaning. For the mystic, providence can exist only as a way provided for the soul to flee from or rise above this world into "God" or the World-Soul. For the sons of Hegel, providence is man's rational imposition of a pattern or government on the chaos of life and the world; providence is thus then not an aspect of God's rule but of man's government. The modern state is thus a welfare state, another way of saying it is a providential state. The modern state and its agencies are earnestly and intensely concerned that total providence become a living reality in the life of man. In large measure, the politics of the modern state is the politics of providence, because the modern state is less and less under a politics and a polity but rather manifests a theology of the state as the new god on earth.

The first paragraph of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "Of Providence," declares:

> God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least (Neh. 9:6; Heb. 1:3; Psa. 135:6; Matt. 10:29,30,31; Acts 17:25,28; Matt. 6:26,30; Job, chapters 38-41), by his most wise and holy providence (Prov. 15:3; II Chron. 16:9; Psa. 145:17; 104:24), according to his infallible foreknowledge (Acts 15:18), and the free and immutable counsel of his own will (Eph. 1:11; Psa. 33:11), to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy (Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:17; Psa. 145).

Because it refuses to recognize God as the Lord, this is exactly what the modern humanistic state seeks to do, to "govern all creatures, actions, and

things, from the greatest even to the least," by the state's "most wise and holy providence," by means of its total government.

In the trials of Christian Schools and churches in the 1970s on, by state courts, it was clear that, to the state officials, the remedy for all problems is the providence or total government of the state. By definition, for them the state is the answer, all-wise and all-holy. Evidences of radical lawlessness in the state schools, and a break-down of learning, could not shake their faith. For them, the answer to all problems is the total government of the state. Men must have providence; if they will not have it from God, they will seek it from the state or from themselves.

Most evangelical churchmen have not followed the route of either the mystics or the statists. Their neoplatonism has been a "spiritualization" of the Bible. The Old Testament supposedly represents a lower and more materialistic dispensation of law and nation, and the New Testament a higher dispensation of grace and the church. This means that man must now rise above God's law into a "higher" way and be more "spiritual" than Abraham, David, Isaiah, and other Old Testament saints.

Such a position withdraws providence into a government, not of dominion, but of purely spiritual goals, restricted to saving souls and to preserving them from the evils of a materialistic world. Evil, however, is not metaphysical: it cannot be made a property of matter. Evil is a moral fact, and man's total being is involved in sin. The redemption of man is not merely of one aspect of his being but of the whole man, and it culminates in the resurrection of the dead.

The goal of providence is not merely to preserve the convert from harm or evil in this world, although it can include such a rule. Many saints, however, are slaughtered like sheep by their and God's enemies (Rom. 8:36). Providence is not man-centered but rather God-centered. The Westminster Larger Catechism, no. 18, made this clear:

> Q. What are God's works of providence?
> A. God's works of providence are his most holy (Psa. 145:17), wise (Psa. 104:24; Isa. 28:29), and powerful preserving (Heb. 1:3), and governing all his creatures (Psa. 103:19; Job, chapters 38-41); ordering them, and all their actions (Matt. 10:29,30; Gen. 45:7; Psa. 135:6), to his own glory (Rom. 11:36; Isa. 63:14).

The focus is on God's glory and His purposes, on God's Kingdom and sovereignty, not on man. God's providence is God's total government for His own purposes and glory, and man and the universe were created to serve that purpose, not to be served by it, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36).

When churchmen withdraw providence to a government of the soul's progress, they create a vacuum in the world at large. The whole of creation

requires providence: if God's providence be denied, alternate doctrines of providence are created.

Pietism, by withdrawing God's providence to the soul's progress, prepared the way for Hegel and for the doctrine of a world-spirit evolving a man-centered providence. Darwin applied Hegel's evolutionary doctrine of providence to biology: the universe, a product of mindless chance, had by the miracles of chance variation evolved to its present state. Other thinkers, from Marx, John Stuart Mill, Dewey, and on to the present, saw the logical conclusions. Man must now control evolution to bring an *intelligent* providence, not an accidental one, to bear on biology and society. This requires playing god with the life, society, and government of man. It means abortion, and attempts to create life, and to clone. It means a totalitarian state whose providence or total government must control "all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least." The state now seeks to create a new man, either out of the old man, or out of new materials, and to govern its creation absolutely or providentially.

This attempt of statist humanism cannot be challenged by a church under the influence of neoplatonism. It then denies God's total government or providence.

Only as the Christian community again sets forth God as the only creator and Lord, and therefore the absolute governor of all things, can it displace by faith and battle the humanistic providential state. It will then triumph, because it will work in terms of God's providence, not man's.

6. Creation as Revelation

St. Paul, in Romans 1:20, declares of God, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." The whole of creation, including man, is revelational of God. As David says, "The heavens declare he glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Ps. 19:1).

The question then is, does man have ears to hear, and eyes to see? Nothing can be seen or heard by a man who shuts his eyes and stops his ears. In other words, God's revelation of Himself in creation (as in Scripture) is not a problem of knowledge, or an epistemological problem, but rather a moral problem. Man does not choose to know, and consequently he does not know. This knowledge of God, however, is revealed in all of creation, including the mind, life, and body of man, so that it is *inescapable knowledge*. Men react to this knowledge, which wells up in all their being, by trying to cap it, to suppress it, or to hold it down (Rom. 1:18). That inescapable knowledge of God thunders out in all creation, but man busies himself with himself, his work, talk, and noise, trying vainly to drown out that revelation.

We must beware then that our theologies do not join the anvil chorus that seeks to suppress God's revelation. Too often our interpretations become an impediment to the word of God.

An American theologian of the early 19th century, Marcus Smith, spoke of the revelation of God's goodness in creation and noted:

> But lest my candor should be called in question, I must notice some objections to the goodness of God. The two cases which require the most particular notice, are the venomous, and voracious animals. These properties in animals, must be referred to design, because their animal structure, their instinct, and adaptation, are such as prove, that they were intended for poisonous, and voracious animals. Why the fangs of vipers, the stings of wasps and scorpions? And why the talons and beaks of birds of prey? Why the structure of the shark's mouth, the spider's web, and the numberless weapons of offence, belonging to different tribes of animal and insects?[12]

It can with justice and truth be answered that the world as we see and know it is not the world God created (Gen. chs. 1 and 2); it is a fallen world, and every aspect of it, while clearly manifesting God's purpose, goodness, and order, also manifests the fall. The future of this world is to be redeemed (Isa. 65:17-25), so that, both in time and in eternity, it will be a new creation. The beginning of that new creation was the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The larger question still remains: why was it so ordained that we have the kind of world we do? We can argue that, within the total framework of creation, all things have their place and function, although we may be ignorant of much about each fact or thing. I like neither rattlesnakes, gophers, nor squirrels, all of which and more, including deer, coyotes, and other large animals, abound around my home. Each has its permanent or temporary place in the economy of creation.

But to say so still evades the basic question, because the ecological answer is still humanistic in a sense. If not man-centered, it is creation-centered. The purpose of creation cannot be comprehended in terms of an inner balance, however real such a thing may be. Creation is not a self-created, self-contained entity: it is God's handiwork and serves God's purpose. The meaning of creation thus transcends creation. Neither man nor the rest of creation can be understood in terms of itself. The yardstick by which man and creation can be measured and judged is not man nor creation but the Lord. I can no more pass judgment on the meaning of creation than I can pass judgment on the fact of God's sovereign election or predestination. Paul in Romans 9:17-24 makes clear that the clay cannot challenge the potter's right or power to shape it to his own desires and purposes.

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[12] Marcus Smith: *An Epitome of Systematic Theology.* (Rensselaerville, N. Y.: Jonathan Leavitt, 1829). p. 35.

Man therefore must recognize that creation is God-ruled and God-centered, theocratic and theocentric. For man to expect the rattlesnake to move or exist in terms of man's purpose is as insane as for man to believe that he is a god and himself the determiner of what constitutes good and evil. This, however, is precisely what original sin means (Gen. 3:5).

Man's function is not to judge himself by his own standards, but only by the Lord's (I Cor. 11:31). Paul denies the validity of man's judgment and adds, "yea, I judge not mine own self" (I Cor. 4:3). The word of God is the yardstick, and man's calling under it is to exercise dominion (Gen. 1:26-28). It is very clear that God delights in His animal creation, for example, as Job chs. 38-41 makes clear. It is equally clear that God's purpose includes the limitation and sometimes elimination of wild animals as man's dominion is extended (Deut. 7:22). Obviously, God delighted in the creation, not only of behemoth (Job 40:15ff), but the dinosaur, but God's predestination has led to the elimination of the dinosaur apparently, apart from man.

God's calling for man is not to intellectual abstraction nor to mindless toil but to dominion, to subdue the earth under God in terms of knowledge, holiness, and righteousness (Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; Rom. 2:14,15; Ps. 8:6-8, etc.). The neoplatonic division of man's work between abstract intellectualism and mindless labor is not Biblical nor sound. It does violence to man and to creation and is ambivalent, going from the ungodly exploitation to the ungodly worship of the created order. Biblical law strictly governs man's use of the earth, of trees, and sanitation, and establishes rules for warfare which limit man's use of trees (Deut. 20:19f.). Biblical law has led many generations of men to govern their actions in terms of God's requirements. Humanists are prone to call attention to infractions, failing to cite the sin (humanism, the worship of man's will and of man's way) which led to the infractions.

It is well to remember, in an age of total war, that men like Charlemagne had respect for God's creation, and for the accomplishments of men under God. Kings and noblemen commonly regarded the results of man's labor as things to be respected. Cities were called "gold" because they represented work unto dominion which should not be despised. When Charlemagne besieged Narbonne, he saw the beautiful workmanship of its walls and towers. He then forbad the use of destructive siege engines and took Narbonne the hard way, with scaling ladders.[13]

In such a perspective, man sees the earth as the Lord's, and man as a steward (Ps. 24). Thrupp reminds us that, in the medieval era, "Wealthy merchants sometimes referred to their fortunes in their wills as 'the goods that our lord hath lent us,' and left sums of money to charities as a matter of

[13] Sylvia L. Thrupp: *Society and History*. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1977). p. 75f.

course." Some rich men felt it to be their duty to visit the sick, and those in prison, and to be a counsellor to widows and orphans.[14]

Where creation is seen as God's revelation, it is then obviously God's possession and is governed by God's law. At every point, where we deal with God's revelation and possession, we deal with the Lord. Most men, however ungodly, are somewhat circumspect and cautious when in another man's house and in his presence, especially if he be a superior and with an obviously greater and overwhelming power. Where man recognizes creation as God's revelation and possession, his conduct in and his use of creation is markedly different. He then stands always knowingly in God's presence and before God's enacted word whose only interpreter is God Himself in His infallible and enscriptured word. How man then deals with himself and with creation is indicative of how he regards God Himself. Life is a wealth and grace (I Peter 3:7) from Almighty God, and to be always regarded as such. It is a created and enacted word from the King of Kings.

Thus man is, in all his being, revelatory of God, whether he chooses to be or not. But man has a positive need to reveal God in all his thoughts, ways, and activities for the health of his being. The psalmist rightfully declares that God is the health of our countenance (Ps. 42:11; 43:5) and the God of our life (Ps. 42:8).

7. Calvin on Providence

The great theological commentary on the doctrine of providence is John Calvin's. Very clearly, he saw the necessity of setting forth the relationship of the doctrines of creation and providence. Calvin wrote:

> To represent God as a Creator only for a moment, who entirely finished all his work at once, were frigid and jejune; and in this it behooves us especially to differ from the heathen, that the presence of the Divine power may appear to us no less in the perpetual state of the world than its first origin...because, unless we proceed to his providence, we have no correct conception of the meaning of this article, "that God is the Creator;" however we may appear to comprehend it in our minds, and to confess it with our tongues.[15]

Providence is inseparably linked in Scripture to creation. For Calvin, providence is not a universal mechanical operation, but "a particular providence sustaining, nourishing, and providing for everything which he (God) has made...All the parts of the world are quickened by the secret inspiration of God."[16] Providence is opposed by Calvin to fortune and fortuitous accidents. It is purposive, holy, and righteous.

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[14] Ibid., p. 19f.

[15] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). Book I, ch. XVI, I; vol.1, p. 217.

[16] Ibid., I, p. 218.

> But whoever has been taught from the mouth of Christ, that the hairs of his head are all numbered (Matt. x. 30), will seek further for a cause, and conclude that all events are governed by the secret counsel of God. And respecting things inanimate, it must be admitted, that, though they are all naturally endued with their peculiar properties, yet they exert not their power, any further than as they are directed by the present hand of God. They are, therefore, no other than instruments into which God infuses as much efficacy as he pleases, bending and turning them to any actions, according to his will.[17]

Calvin's doctrine of the very "present hand of God" in providence exerted a great influence on Puritanism.

For Calvin, God's providence is both general and particular, so that he sees "every year, month, and day is governed by a new and particular providence of God." God's omnipotence is "a power constantly exerted on every distinct and particular movement," Therefore,

> the faithful should rather encourage themselves in adversity with this consolation, that they suffer no affliction, but by the ordination and command of God, because they are under his hand. But if the government of God be thus extended to all his works, it is a puerile cavil to limit it to the influence and course of nature.[18]

God's providence is fully particular: it extends to the every detail of our being and lives. There are no accidents in creation. We are therefore in every situation in the hand of God, so that his people "may securely repose in his protection, to whose will are subject all those evils which can be feared from any quarter."[19] Hence, we are forbidden to look to the stars, or in any way "transfer the government of the world from God to the stars."[20]

Calvin is emphatic that providence is particular, and not mechanical; it is not only foreknowledge but also *action*. God is not a ruler "in name only":

> First, then, let the readers know that what is called providence describes God, not as idly beholding from heaven the transactions which happen in the world, but as holding the helm of the universe, and regulating all events. Thus it belongs no less to his hands than to his eyes. When Abraham said to his son, "God will provide," (Gen. xxii. 8) he intended not only to assert his prescience of a future event, but to leave the care of a thing unknown to the will of him who frequently puts an end to circumstances of perplexity and confusion. Whence it follows, that providence consists in action; for it is ignorant trifling to talk of mere prescience. Not quite so gross is the error of those who attribute to God a government, as I have observed, of a confused and promiscuous kind; acknowledging that God revolves and impels the machine of the world, with all its parts, by a general motion, without peculiarly directing the

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17. Ibid., Section II:II, p. 219.
18. Ibid., Sect. II, III; I, p. 220f.
19. Ibid., Section III; I, p. 221.
20. Ibid., Section III; I. p. 222.

> action of each individual creature. Yet even this error is not to be tolerated, for they maintain that this providence, which they call universal, is no impediment either to all the creatures being actuated contingently, or to man turning himself hither or thither at the free choice of his own will. And they make the following partition between God and man; that God by his power inspires him with motions, enabling him to act according to the tendency of the nature with which he is endued; but that man governs his actions by his own voluntary choice. In short, they conceive that the world, human affairs, and men themselves, are governed by the power of God, but not by his appointment.[21]

Such a view, said Calvin, makes God ruler "in name only."

We cannot begin to comprehend the reason for the strength, militancy, and power of Calvinism and Puritanism apart from Calvin's statement of the doctrine of providence. The failure of modern Calvinism has been due to its indifference to this doctrine. But then Calvinism without the doctrine of providence is not Calvinism but an abortion.

Calvin applies the doctrine to the weather: "not a drop of rain falls but at the express command of God."[22] To understand how faithfully Biblical Calvin is in his formulation, we have only to look at a few of the many texts he cites and expounds:

> He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. (Ps. 147:9)
> Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! (Ps. 113:5,6)
> The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD (Prov. 16:1)
> Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way? (Prov. 20:24)
> O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23)
> Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. (Matt. 10:29)

These and many like verses come readily to Calvin; they are the lifeblood and fabric of his faith. For him, nothing is fortuitous nor a product of chance.

Calvin draws a sharp distinction between providence on the one hand, and fate, fortune, and chance on the other. The latter are the outworkings of a blind and mechanical nature. Calvin, it should be noted, was fully aware of mechanistic and naturalistic thinking; such philosophies existed among the ancient pagans and were in his day and earlier gaining a fresh currency. From the standpoint of a non-theistic faith, "the world revolves at random." We then have either a blind chance or a blind necessity, fortune or fate. With

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[21] Ibid., Section IV., vol. I, p. 222f.
[22] Ibid., Section V; I, p. 226.

Augustine, Calvin "excludes any contingence dependent on the human will." Nothing happens "independently of the ordination of God; because it would happen at random." No cause outside of God governs God, and "the will of God is the supreme and first cause of all things, because nothing happens but by his command or permission."[23]

While providence may seem fortuitous to us, it is not, and Calvin boldly stated the case, declaring that "the order, reason, end, and necessity of events are chiefly concealed in the purpose of God."

> Let us suppose, for example, that a merchant, having entered a wood in the company of honest men, imprudently wanders from his companions, and, pursuing a wrong course, falls into the hands of robbers, and is murdered. His death was not only foreseen by God, but also decreed by him. For it is said, not that he has foreseen to what limits the life of every man would extend, but that "he hath appointed bounds which he cannot pass" (Job xiv. 5). Yet, as far as our minds are capable of comprehending, all these circumstances appear fortuitous. What opinion shall a Christian form on this case? He will consider all the circumstances of such a death as in their nature fortuitous; yet he will not doubt that the providence of God presided, and directed fortune to that end. The same reasoning will apply to future contingencies. All future things being uncertain to us, we hold them in suspense, as though they might happen either one way or another. Yet this remains a fixed principle in our hearts, that there will be no event which God hath not ordained. In this sense the word *chance* is frequently repeated in the book of Ecclesiastes; because, on the first view, men penetrate not to first cause, which lies deeply concealed.[24]

Man experiences the present and the future in suspense. Because creation is particular, the suspense is as real as the predestination of things and as providence. In a world of chance or fate, man is of no account; blind chance or blind necessity prevail. This mechanical necessity is absent in providence. In Calvin's words,

> What God decrees must necessarily come to pass; yet it is not by absolute or natural necessity. We find a familiar example in respect to the bones of Christ. Since he possessed a body like ours, no reasonable man will deny that his bones were capable of being broken; yet that they should be broken was impossible. Hence, again, we perceive that the distinctions of relative and absolute necessity, as well as necessity of consequent and of consequence, were not without reason invented in the schools; since God made the bones of his son capable of being broken, which, however, he had exempted from being actually broken, and thus prevented, by the necessity of his purpose, what might naturally have come to pass.[25]

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[23] Ibid., Section VIII; I, p. 228f.
[24] Ibid., Section IX; I. p. 229f.
[25] Ibid., Section IX; I, p. 231.

Calvin is concerned lest men view providence with Hellenic eyes and assume that "God amused himself with tossing men about like tennis balls." As a result, in Chapter XVII of Book I of the *Institutes,* he writes on "The Proper Application of This Doctrine to Render it Useful to Us." Calvin is not interested in speculative theology but in a theology for godly living. Thus,

> As the minds of men are prone to vain subtleties, there is the greatest danger that those who know not the right use of this doctrine will embarrass themselves with intricate perplexities. It will therefore be necessary to touch in a brief manner on the end and design of the Scripture doctrine of the Divine ordination of all things. And here let it be remarked, in the first place, that the providence of God is to be considered as well in regard to futurity, as in reference to that which is past; secondly, that it governs all things in such a manner as to operate sometimes by the intervention of means, sometimes without means, and sometimes in opposition to all means; lastly, that it tends to show the care of God for the whole human race, and especially his vigilance in the government of the Church, which he favors with more particular attention. It must also be observed, that, although the paternal favor and beneficence of God, or the severity of his justice, is frequently conspicuous in the whole course of his providence, yet sometimes the causes of events are concealed, so that a suspicion intrudes itself, that the revolutions of human affairs are conducted by the blind impetuosity of fortune; or the flesh solicits us to murmur, as though God amused himself with tossing men about like tennis-balls.[26]

Such a view springs from sin, and from a false faith, as that of Agamemnon in Homer, who says, "The blame belongs not to me, but to Jupiter and Fate." Such a view turns the moral universe upside down. It leads to fatalism also. Calvin cited the view of those who said that, if God has ordained the moment of our death, then all caution is absurd. The end of such an impersonal view of things is to view all crimes as virtues, "because they are subservient to the ordination of God."[27] But God's providence is not an abstraction, nor a mechanical operation outside of us. The universe is not a single cause, but an absolute cause, God, and a multitude of second causes in all creation. A man's crime can never be abstracted from a man and reduced to something existing only from eternity: "the providence of God ought not always to be contemplated abstractly by itself, but in connection with the means he employs."[28] It is God's providence, yet we and the world around us are fully a part of it. In the Stoic view of Fate, man is the helpless pawn of an impersonal and mechanical force. In the Biblical doctrine of providence, man in all his being is a part of God's providential ways, and that without compulsion.

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[26] Ibid., ch. XVII, I, I, p. 232.
[27] Ibid., ch. XVII, section III; I, p. 237.
[28] Ibid., ch. XVII, section IV; I, p. 238.

We therefore see ourselves as God's instruments, as Joseph did in Egypt, and, like Joseph, we look behind the immediate evil wrought by men, his brothers, to see the very immediate hand of the Lord. "Yet at the same time a pious man will not overlook inferior causes."[29]

Providence means thus a total meaning to life and history, and a victorious meaning. It means also that we are delivered from anxiety, dread, and care.[30]

Without this faith in providence, the mainspring of Christian power and action is gone. God becomes remote, and His government an eternity away. With the doctrine of providence, God and His government, ruling and reigning from the throne of heaven, are still closer to us than we are to ourselves. Then the providential government of God is in the very marrow of our bones, the hairs of our head, and the thoughts of our being. Providence is then in our actions and in the grass beneath our feet, and the sparrows around us. Then too "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28) not only in God but in His providence as a total part thereof. Without a lively faith in providence, man is an outsider in the universe. With it, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

8. Naturalistic Providence

An important argument in Calvin's discussion of providence concerns Pharaoh. God's predestination and providence are tied very closely to man's will in contradiction to fatalism and mechanism. In Exodus 7:3, God declares, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart," and in Exodus 8:15 we are told that Pharaoh "hardened his heart." Calvin discusses this at length, stating in part

> Some elude the force of these expressions with a foolish cavil–that, since Pharaoh himself is elsewhere said to have hardened his own heart, his own will is stated as the cause of his obduracy; as though these two things were at all incompatible with each other, that man should be actuated by God, and yet at the same time be active himself....The whole may be summed up thus; that, as the will of God is said to be the cause of all things, his providence is established as the governor in all the counsels and works of men, so that it not only exerts its power in the elect, who are influenced by the Holy Spirit, but also compels the compliance of the reprobate.[31]

Calvin is fully aware that the mystery of predestination, providence, and human responsibility is beyond the scope of man's mind after a point, but it is a sin for men to "reject a truth which is attested by plain testimonies of Scripture, because it exceeds their comprehension."[32]

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[29] Ibid., ch. XVII, section IX; I, p. 243.
[30] Ibid., ch. XVII, section XI; I, p. 246.
[31] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). Book I, ch. XVIII, sec. II; I, p. 255f.
[32] Ibid., I, XVIII, section IV; I, p. 262.

It should be noted that Calvin's discussion of providence is the conclusion of Book I of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "On the Knowledge of God the Creator." It is a statement of the meaning of the confession, in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Calvin's doctrine of the triune God became a battle-standard for some generations, whereas today it is the faith of men who are on the side-lines of history. The difference lies in part in eschatology, and in part in the doctrine of providence. Where the doctrine of providence is an article of faith and life, God the Lord is a *very present* God. Where men see themselves in the total context of providence, predestination is not a cold and remote plan but a totally present help and assurance of God's presence, protection, and overruling meaning. No man who believes in providence is ever alone. He is always totally enveloped by the totally personal God and a world of totally personal facts created, predestined, and providentially governed by the Lord.

This is another way of saying that there is no brute factuality. Cornelius Van Til has, in his various writings, called attention to the Biblical doctrine of creation and its implications. All factuality being God-ordained and God-created, no fact is meaningless, and all have their meaning in the plan and purpose of God. Calvin gave this doctrine a practical emphasis, as witness his words in 1554, in one of his *Sermons From Job*. "Since God loves us, we shall never be confounded; and so far are our afflictions from preventing our salvation, that they will be turned to our help, for God will take care that our salvation shall be advanced by them." The French Confession of Faith, 1559 A.D., expresses this same faith;

> I. We believe and confess that there is but one God, who is one sole and simple essence, spiritual, eternal, invisible, immutable, infinite, incomprehensible, ineffable, omnipotent; who is all-wise, all-good, all-just, and all-merciful.
>
> II. As such this God reveals himself to men; firstly, in his works, in their creation, as well as in their preservation and control. Secondly, and more clearly, in his Word, which was in the beginning revealed through oracles, and which was afterward committed to writing in the books which we call the Holy Scriptures.
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> VIII. We believe that he not only created all things, but that he governs and directs them, disposing and ordaining by his sovereign will all that happens in the world; not that he is the author of evil, or that the guilt of it can be imputed to him, as his will is the sovereign and infallible rule of all right and justice; but he hath wonderful means of so making use of devils and sinners that he can turn to good the evil which they do, and of which they are guilty. And thus, confessing that the providence of God orders all things, we humbly bow before the secrets which are hidden to us, without questioning what is above our understanding; but rather making use of what is revealed to us in Holy Scripture for our peace and safety, inasmuch as God, who has all things in subjection to him, watches over us with a Father's care, so that not a hair of our heads

> shall fall without his will. And yet he restrains the devils and all our enemies, so that they can not harm us without his will.[33]

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) also speaks plainly and beautifully on providence:

> Question 27: What dost thou understand by the Providence of God?
> Answer: The almighty and every where present power of God, whereby as it were by his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.
>
> Question 28: What does it profit us to know that God has created, and by his providence still upholds all things?
> Answer: That we may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and for what is future have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from his love, since all creatures are so in his hand that without his will they can not so much as move.[34]

The Westminster Confession and Catechism, previously referred to, give even more attention to the doctrine. The French Confession says of our enemies "that they can not harm us without His will," and the Heidelberg Catechism joyfully affirms that "since all creatures are so in his hand that without his will they can not so much as move." For these men, man is always enveloped by the supernatural providence of God.

What happened to this faith in providence? Beckwith gives us an important key to the later development and decline of the doctrine: "Orthodox Protestant scholasticism later made belief in providence a mere part of natural theology thus depriving it of its real Christian significance."[35] European thought moved into the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment, and Nature replaced God as the determining power. Theologians followed suit and naturalized providence, so that it became an aspect of the cosmic order of Nature. Calvin had attacked mechanistic views; these now prevailed. A naturalistic view of providence made God remote and man very much alone. The difference between being in the hands of the totally personal God and in the processes of a cosmic machine are very great!

The result was in effect a return to Greek philosophy, which spoke of "divine providence" at times but meant by it a cosmic and impersonal order. The Greeks and Romans could offer discourses on "divine providence" in high-sounding terms, but its practical consequences in their lives was a moral paralysis. Their doctrine of divine providence left them enmeshed in a multiplicity of natural causes ordained by and far-removed from the gods or

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[33] Philip Schaff: *The Creeds of Christendom, III.* (New York, N.Y.: Harper, (1877), 1919). p. 359f., 364.
[34] Ibid., III, p. 316.
[35] C. A. Beckwith: *"Providence," in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religions Knowledge.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1969). Vol. IX, p. 309.

Fate. Thus, their very doctrine of providence left them far-removed from any immediacy to heaven or the gods.

In political theology, this doctrine meant that the Roman Empire surrounded man with a multitude of laws, regulations, and bureaucrats, so that a vast network circumscribed man. The emperors could come and go at times, as assassinations and intrigues altered the divine center at the top, but the network still went on. The divine providence of the pagan world produced a mediatorship of countless political guidelines, laws, and bureaucrats who became the political providence of man.

The naturalization of providence in the modern era has had a like effect. In Scripture, God in His providence is always immediate, and His hand is in every event. The sparrow does not fall because a cosmic machine is in operation but because our *Father* brings it to pass (Matt. 10:29-31). Where Christ speaks of providence, He does not suddenly become abstract in His language: He describes our *Father's* way with us. God's providence is not mediated by natural laws; it is personal and immediate. As we have naturalized our doctrine of providence, so too we have politicized our lives and made the state the mediator of providence and care. The difference between the God of Scripture and the welfare or providential state hardly needs describing.

9. Providence and Historiography

The historical writings of J.H. Merle d'Aubigne (1794-1872), a church historian, still enjoy a very wide audience, but it is definitely a "mistake" to refer to them in the presence of a modern scholar, whether of the church or out of it. The result will be either a cynical comment concerning d'Aubigne or a pained embarrassment that anyone should regard him as a good historian. Why? The reason is that in d'Aubigne there is, *first,* an absence of critical analysis in approaching history but rather a joyful faith, and, *second,* d'Aubigne at all times sees God's providence at work in history, whether it be in victories or defeats. Sentences like these abound in d'Aubigne: "The divine word had hardly lighted one torch, before that kindled another." "God's action was not limited to one spot." Of the great movement in the 16th century at Oxford and Cambridge into the reformation and the faith, d'Aubigne wrote

> Now, in every place, in the parsonages, the universities, and the palaces, as well as in the cottages of the husbandmen and the shops of the tradesmen, there was an ardent desire to possess the Holy Scriptures. The *fiat lux* was about to be uttered over the chaos of the church, and light to be separated from darkness by the Word of God.[36]

[36] J. H. Merle d'Aubigne: *The Reformation in England.* (London, England: Banner of Truth Trust, (1853), 1962). Vol. I, p. 239f.

From the standpoint of the modern scholar, what is wrong with d'Aubigne? The question can be easily answered, and at length, but we shall summarize only a few central objections. *First*, d'Aubigne writes as a man of faith, not as an "objective" scholar. There is no pretense of a non-partisan approach in d'Aubigne. Where men believe in the autonomy of man and his reason, they will hold that man's reason can impartially sift all facts, subject them to an unbiased critical analysis, and determine the truth. D'Aubigne will have none of this. He is unabashedly a Christian, and he believes that the truth is predetermined by God and His word.

Second, there is a great breach over the issue of causality. For the modern scholar, causality is naturalistic. Hence, there is an endless sifting of data to establish the determination of events. Where are the causes of events, in economic conditions, political events, plagues, the weather, or like matters? Modern historiography loses itself in an endless search for causes. But the secondary causes, however important, are so numerous that, at any one point in history, millions of causes come to focus on the historical moment. We can agree that men like d'Aubigne sometimes paid too little attention to the many natural causal factors in events, but in another sense, they did not. They may have neglected some of these natural causal factors, i.e., the economic, the climatic, etc., but not the constant total cause, God. They saw history as God's providential government. They were thus better equipped to see the importance of natural causal factors than are modern historians, because modern historians, seeing an ultimate meaninglessness in history, steadily erode the meaning of all causes and events. Modern historians are thus apostate sons of d'Aubigne and his kind; in time, they will be unable to write history, because history will be for them no more than myth.

The modern scholar increasingly is of the opinion that any hint of a cosmic meaning, i.e., a God-ordained and totally providential meaning, is illegitimate and constitutes bad historiography. To illustrate, in *The Foundations of Social Order* (1968), I described with zest and relish the death of Arius, and called it "a providential conclusion." That I should repeat that story and call it providential distressed some students and scholars, who saw it as typical of a serious defect in me! To read history as an old-fashioned believer in providence was for them evidence of a lack of critical analysis! But if God is as He describes Himself in Scripture, how else can Scripture and history be read?

Nahum 1:2-8 simply state, not as strongly as some verses of Scripture, a fact stressed in all the Bible, i.e., that the very weather manifests constantly God's providential government:

> 2. God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

> 3. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.
> 4. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.
> 5. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.
> 6. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.
> 7. The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.
> 8. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

To "spiritualize" such passages is to render them meaningless; they tell us that in all things we are dealing directly and being dealt with by the providential hand of God. God is not a remote God whose universe and its laws stand between us and Him.

The Deism of the 18th century, with its absentee landlord God, eroded the Biblical doctrine of God and His providence. Predestination has thus stood alone as a stiff and mechanical doctrine about the clockwork of the Great Watchmaker, who wound the clock at creation and will check it at the Second Coming. Deistic Calvinism is thus sterile and impotent. It has the form of the faith but lacks the power thereof (II Tim. 3:5).

Since the rise of Deism, providence has receded from theology and from life. Men no longer feel surrounded and upheld by the living God. Rather, they stand in a lonely universe, and God, if they believe in Him, is very remote. Prayer has accordingly become still and cold, because the God prayed to is afar off.

The Puritans were not without their faults, but they prayed to the very real and providential God, as witness this prayer of Minister Miles for rain:

> O Lord, thou knowest we do not want Thee to send a rain which shall pour down in fury and swell our streams and sweep away our haycocks and fences and bridges; but, Lord, we want it to come down drizzle-drozzle, drizzle-drozzle for about a week. Amen.

Again, note the prayer before the Battle of Monmouth of the Rev. Israel Evans, chaplain of General Enoch Poor's Brigade:

> O Lord of Hosts, lead forth thy servants of the American Army to battle and give them the victory; or, if this be not according to Thy sovereign will, then, we pay Thee, stand neutral and let flesh and blood decide the issue.[37]

The theology of these prayers can probably be criticized. What cannot be gainsaid is that for Miles and Evans God was very real, very personal, and

very near. They saw Him as the Providential Father, ever mindful of His own. Without that faith, prayer is an empty exercise.

10. The Unity of Our Faith

The unity of God's being and revelation is clearly set forth in all of Scripture. The doctrines of our faith are necessary aspects of one another and manifest the fact of the simplicity and unity of God's being. The doctrine of creation means that God, having created all things by His fiat word, is the sole determiner and predestinator of all things. God absolutely governs all of His creation, and this means providence. But such a God can only speak an infallible word, because His word is the only free, unconditional, omnipotent, and omniscient word.

Our Lord tells us that "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26), but one thing is spoken of, with respect to God, as *impossible*, as outside the realm of all reality, i.e., for God to lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; Luke 21:33; Mal. 3:6). Christ declares to the Father, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The psalmist declares,

> Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is truth. (Ps. 119:142)
> Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth. (Ps. 119:151)

Moreover, it is a wooden and pedestrian approach to the Bible to discuss its infallibility in terms of one or two texts such as II Timothy 3:16-17, as though such formal statements constitute the extent of Scripture's references to infallibility or inerrancy. The assumption of such a position is implicit or explicit in Scripture from end to end. Thus, in Isaiah 42:8-9, we are told

> 8. I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.
> 9. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isa. 42:8-9)

God declares the absolute *certainty* of His word, and He declares the future to set forth that fact. Generations before Cyrus' birth, He names, calls, and appoints Cyrus to an ordained task (Isa. 45:1ff.) He grounds this assurance in the fact that He is the Creator: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me" (Isa. 45:5; cf. vv. 6-10). He declares that He can be asked of things to come and declare them infallibly (Isa. 45:11). God ordains that the wealth of the ungodly nations shall enrich His covenant peoples (Isa. 45:12-17). No other God can save (Isa. 45:20), because only the Lord is the Creator, predestinator,

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[37] Richardson Wright: *Grandfather was Queer, Early American Wags and Eccentrics from Colonial Times to the Civil War.* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1939). p. 284.

and providential governor. No salvation is secure unless the savior is absolute lord of time and eternity whose every word is truth, and infallibly so, and who controls absolutely all time and eternity. Any god who cannot do all these things can offer only a conditional salvation which can be lost tomorrow, or a century later, when his control slips a little. To tamper with any of these doctrines is to tamper with all.

Our present concern is with the doctrine of providence, but it is necessary to see that no doctrine stands alone. They are all a part of the simple coherency of God. To cohere is to agree, and every attribute of God agrees with and is a part of every other, and all make up together the one simple being and nature of God.

Man in the state of glory will have the coherency of a creation, but we lack it now. Even in the state of glory, man's word will only be a certain word because he will live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). Here and now, man's word is an uncertain word: he can neither predict nor control his own future, let alone the world's. Hence the necessity of moving always, in all planning, in terms of the qualification, "the Lord willing." Moreover, there is no coherency in fallen man, and a very limited degree of coherency in redeemed man. We are full of differing opinions, attractions, and desires, both good and bad, and these reflect the lack of coherency or agreement in our being. Paul states the problem of incoherency in its dramatic form:

> 19. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
> 20. Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Rom. 7:19-20)

We are a bundle of inheritances from the past and of desires generated by the present. God's unity of simplicity and His coherency rest in the fact that there is no aspect of God's being derived from any other source nor prior to God in any respect (I John 1:5; Jer. 10:10-12). Not even on a creaturely level can man ever approximate this unity of simplicity which is the Lord's.

The unity of God's being manifests itself daily in our lives and times in His providence. By this we know that God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves, and ever mindful of us. The doctrine of providence banishes chance and blindness from our world and abolishes the specter of meaninglessness. As the Belgic Confession of Faith, in Article XIII, "The Providence of God and His Government of All Things," says so clearly:

> We believe that the same good God, after he had created all things, did not forsake them or give them up to fortune or chance, but that He rules and governs them according to His holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without His appointment; nevertheless, God neither is the Author of nor can be charged with the sins which are committed. For His power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible that He orders

> and executes His work in the most excellent and just manner, even then when devils and wicked men act unjustly. And as to what He does surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire into farther than our capacity will admit of; but with the greatest humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God, which are hid from us, contenting ourselves that we are pupils of Christ, to learn only those things which He has revealed to us in His Word, without transgressing these limits.
>
> This doctrine affords us unspeakable consolation, since we are taught thereby that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the direction of our most gracious and heavenly Father; who watches over us with a paternal care, keeping all creatures so under His power that *not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow can fall to the ground without the will of our Father*, in whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded that He so restrains the devil and all our enemies that without His will and permission they cannot hurt us.
>
> And therefore we reject that damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God regards nothing but leaves all things to chance.

When we weaken, deny, or under-rate the doctrine of providence, we weaken the whole of Biblical faith. Moreover, when we weaken or fail to teach, believe, and rely on this doctrine of God's providence, we are thereby pushing the Lord away from us. We make Him remote to our daily lives and concerns and hence less relevant. We thereby leave God out of our lives and become working Arminians or humanists, however much we may profess a full-orbed faith.

No one doctrine can be given precedence over another except in the historical sense, i.e., creation precedes salvation in history. On the other hand no doctrine can be neglected without thereby undermining all other doctrines. The much neglected doctrine of providence thus needs to be restored to its rightful place in the life of faith.

11. Providence and Prayer

A frequent objection raised by many to the doctrines of predestination and providence is that such doctrines render untenable and impossible any concept of responsibility and prayer. If God predestines and totally governs all things, then how can man be held responsible for his actions, and what need is there then for prayer when God ordains all things absolutely?

This is a very logical argument and an unanswerable one only if we insist that the limits of logic and of possibility are what Aristotle and humanism in any form conceive them to be. This we can never grant, for then no doctrine of Scripture stands, and we must logically reject the whole of it. Creation, the triune God, the doctrine of predestination, providence, atonement, and much, much more constitute impossibilities in terms of the logic of humanism. When, however, our views of reality, possibility, and logic are governed, not

by our very limited and fallen minds but by Scripture, then we can, although by no means exhaustively, realize that the possibilities of reality are the possibilities of God, not of man. "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26), but with man all things are neither possible nor comprehensible.

The Bible plainly affirms predestination, providence, and prayer, and therefore so too must we. As Calvin plainly pointed out, prayer is a privilege, and it is also a commandment;

> And in the first place, when he (God) enjoins us to pray, the commandment itself implies a charge of impious contumacy, if we disobey it. No command can be more precise than that in the psalm: "Call upon me in the day of trouble."...it is evident that all those who turn their backs on God, or do not directly approach him, are not only guilty of disobedience and rebellion, but also convicted of unbelief; because they distrust the promises...[38]

In the *Institutes*, Calvin devoted a long chapter, equal to a small book, to prayer, and he began and ended with an emphasis on providence, declaring:

> It is certainly not without reason that our heavenly Father declares, that the only fortress of salvation consists in invocation of his name; by which we call to our aid the presence of his providence, which watches over all our concerns; of his power, which supports us when weak and ready to faint; and on his goodness, which receives us into his favor, though miserably burdened with sins, in which, finally, we call upon him to manifest his presence with us in all his attributes.[39]
>
> If, with minds composed to this obedience, we suffer ourselves to be governed by the laws of Divine Providence, we shall easily learn to persevere in prayer, and with suspended desires to wait patiently for the Lord; assured, though he does not discover himself, yet that he is always near us, and in his own time will declare that his ears have not been deaf to those prayers which, to human apprehension, seemed to be neglected.[40]

For Calvin, the central exercise of faith is prayer, not because prayer takes priority over obedience to God's word but rather because it is a summation of the exercise of faith. The man of faith and obedience is the man of prayer.

Calvin saw four "rules" of prayer. *First*, in prayer our heart and mind set aside all other matters and give themselves over to conversation with God. *Second*, in asking, we must truly feel our wants and believe that the Lord is the supplier thereof. This means a faith in God's absolute government, for otherwise we will look to ourselves to supply our needs. To be prayerless means to be without faith in God, and it manifests a trust in ourselves as our self-supplier. *Third*, this means divesting ourselves of all vain-glorious thoughts. It is man's desire to be his own god (Gen. 3:5) which leads him to

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38. John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* Bk. III, ch. XX, xiii, vol. II, p. 110f.
39. Ibid., Bk. III, ch. XX, ii; vol. II, p. 94.
40. Ibid., Bk. III, ch. XX; Vol. II, p. 167.

war against rather than communion with God, and it is this same spirit of autonomy which makes man prayerless. *Fourth*, we are prayerless unless we believe that God can and will supply our needs.

Calvin, in setting forth these "rules" of prayer, warns against limiting God to them. God, after all, did hear the prayer of an ungodly man who was under judgment (I Kings 21:25-29). Prayer is in the name of the Lord. Solomon said, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). That great Name, manifested to us, is Jesus Christ, God our Savior, and therefore we pray in His name, "in Jesus Name," since God is under no obligation to honor our name or any petition. We are a judged, meritless people, saved only by sovereign grace through Jesus Christ. Our only mediator is Jesus Christ, and our only legal status before the throne is in His Name. Hence, all prayer is in Jesus' Name, save the Lord's Prayer, where we simply join in and echo the prayer of Jesus Christ as the new and true Adam. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray in His words and as members of His body. All prayer to God is thus through Jesus. As Calvin noted:

> It is certain that from the beginning no prayers had been heard but for the sake of the Mediator. For this reason the Lord had appointed in the law, that the priest alone should enter the sanctuary, bearing on his shoulders the names of the tribes of Israel, and the same number of precious stones before his breast; but that the people should stand without in the court, and there unite their prayers with those of the priest. (Ex. xxviii.) The use of the sacrifice was to render their prayers effectual. The meaning, therefore, of that shadowy ceremony of the law was, that we are all banished from the presence of God, and therefore need a mediator to appear in our name, to bear us on his shoulders, and bind us to his breast, that we may be heard in his person; and, moreover, that the sprinkling of his blood purifies our prayers, which have been asserted to be otherwise never free from defilement.[41]

So important is prayer to God that His very temple is called a "house of prayer" (Isa. 56:7). Prayer is thus very important in God's sight.

The focus of prayer, as our Lord teaches us in the Lord's Prayer, is the Kingdom of God, and our place and service therein, our provision, protection, and deliverance. "In a word, all our prayers ought to be such, as to respect that community which our Lord has established in his kingdom and in his family."[42]

It is obvious, from Calvin's teaching, how closely providence and prayer are allied and united. All God's providential workings and government have as their goal the glory of His Kingdom. Similarly, at the center and heart of all prayer must be that which the Lord's Prayer sets forth as the heart's cry of true prayer:

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41. Ibid., Bk. III. ch. XX. xviii; vol. II, p. 121.
42. Ibid., Bk. III, ch. XX, xxxviii; vol. II, p. 419.

> 9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
> 10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:9-10)

If we postpone that Kingdom to heaven, or separate it from our daily work and duties, then we have seriously altered the purpose and vitality of our prayers. The holy urgency of God's Kingdom is then replaced with our trifles. This does not mean that our trifles have no place in prayer, but their place is in terms of the priority of God's Kingdom. Apart from post-millennialism, that urgency is altered and replaced.

God's providence has as its goal the Kingdom of God. True prayer has as its great cry, "Thy Kingdom come!" Prayer, said Calvin, takes us into the very "presence of his providence." Thus, the more we grow in grace and prayer, the more deeply our daily lives move in terms of the providence of God. This means that we self-consciously become agents of His government: we become the governed of God, instruments of His word and Spirit, who exercise dominion with holiness, righteousness, and knowledge. The Spirit prays within us (Rom. 8:26) in terms of these things, so that the Spirit and our heart cry out, "The Kingdom come!"

Providence, prayer, and the Holy Spirit then work in our hearts to the joy of our being.

St. Paul proclaims judgment on the enemies of Christ with great confidence: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema. Maranatha" (I Cor. 16:22). Maranatha means, "Our Lord has come!" The Ruler is now putting all things under His feet by conquest although God the Father has already put all things under Christ's feet by right of power and authority (Ps. 8:6; I Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22). "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. 2:12).

12. Creationism and Prayer

To be prayerless, we have seen, is to claim autonomy from God. The prayerless man trusts in his own resources to deliver him from all problems and difficulties, and, as a result, if he prays at all, his prayer is lifeless and formal. His prayer is a duty, not a necessity.

Whenever a man is ruled by a spirit of autonomy, he is then capable essentially of self prayer only. He worries, frets, and cudgels his brains in order to ferret out the secret of salvation within himself. Our Lord spoke to the heart of all anxiety when He said, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (Matt. 6:27). Autonomy is marked by anxiety. Existentialism thus has much to say about the role of anxiety in the life of man, because anxiety is the mark of autonomy. Anxiety seeks to do what only God can do, to perform miracles and to govern by acts of providence the

course of human affairs. Worry and anxiety are the marks of prayerlessness; they mark the man who seeks to be the master of his own fate, and the captain of his own soul. All too many anxious people and chronic worriers try to pass themselves off as superior and sensitive souls when they are in fact godless ones. The alternative to prayer is anxiety and worry.

To be prayerless is to regard ourselves as autonomous, and to believe, implicitly or explicitly, in our autonomy is to deny the doctrine of creation. Scripture is clear that the triune God made all things by His sovereign word in six days (Gen. 1). The doctrine of creation is clearly tied to prayer. The *practical* denial of creationism is to be prayerless. To be prayerful is a *practical* affirmation of faith in creationism and the Creator.

Because we are God's creation, the whole of our being, and all our days, past, present, and future, are inseparable from His sovereign decree, purpose, and word. When we deny that He is the only Lord and Creator, we deny that He can be the governor and the redeemer of our lives. We then separate ourselves from life. The penalty for sin is death (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23). To seek autonomy and independence from God is to hate God and to love death (Prov. 8:36). It is the essence of sin to declare that man is his own god, knowing or determining for himself what constitutes good and evil (Gen. 3:5). On the other hand, the redeemed of God know themselves to be God's creation and re-creation, the Lord's possession and his handiwork. Instead of seeking independence, they manifest rather by prayer and the totality of their faith, obedience, and life their dependence upon God. Instead of being prayerless, they are prayerful.

How then shall we pray, as the redeemed of the Lord? All too many manuals stress the essential ingredients of prayer, citing praise, thanksgiving, petition, and so on. Their emphasis is sound but also unwise. By stressing the formal components of prayer, they lose the essence of prayer, *i.e.*, *dependence* and *communion.* Where there is dependence, there will be praise, thanksgiving, petition and more. Where there is communion, God's Kingdom, word, and Spirit will be crying out in all our being. How then do we grow in dependence and communion?

Paul instructs us clearly in these things:

> Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Phil. 4:6)

> 14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.
> 15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.
> 16. Rejoice evermore.
> 17. Pray without ceasing.

> 18. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (I Thess. 5:14-18)

First, of all, anxiety or carefulness is forbidden. The alternative to anxiety is true prayer, *always* to make our requests known unto God in prayer, with supplication and thanksgiving. Paul speaks in the imperative: Stop being anxious...Pray.

Second, prayer and trust in God go hand in hand with an obedience to His word. This means dealing plainly with the unruly or disorderly, warning them from God's law. The faint-hearted are to be encouraged. The weak are to be supported, not by sweet words but by godly counsel. We are to be patient and long-suffering toward all men. This means being governed by God's word and not rendering evil for evil unto any man, but rather that which God requires, *good*. The *good* can only be defined in terms of God's law-word, never by humanistic standards, or piecemeal pastiches of the Bible.

Third, we are to "rejoice evermore," or, at all times, because ours is the victory in Jesus Christ which overcomes the world (I John 5:4). The Lord makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, for the called of God (Rom. 8:28). We must therefore rejoice as the people of victory. This means that in everything we give thanks, as God requires, because in everything the Lord has a glorious purpose at work, however painful and ugly the moment.

Fourth, we are to pray without ceasing, or, unceasingly. What does this mean? Certainly not long prayers, for our Lord plainly condemns this "much speaking" (Matt. 6:7). It means rather the practice of prayer as constant communication with the Lord. To illustrate: when I am with my wife, we talk constantly, sharing our ideas, reactions, delights, and concerns. Our conversation does not start and stop: it is continual, although there can be time gaps of many minutes in between words. So too with prayer. The heart of prayer is dependence and communion. If we enjoy that dependence and communion, we pray at all times, sentence prayers, or more than a sentence or two. Each new experience, problem, thought, or situation we share with God. Sentence prayers run something like this: As we face a difficult person, we ask, Lord, give me grace to deal patiently and wisely with this person. In a trying crisis, we ask: Lord, I don't know the answers; please, help me, and give me wisdom. In a happy setting, we thank Him; if something delights us, we share it with Him and thank Him for it, and so on. We move continually in dependence on and communion with the Lord.

In this dependence and communion, our Lord who made us continually renews us and we grow in holiness. Then too our more formal praying becomes more vital. Our continual private sentence prayers are intimate and colloquial. Instead of lessening the dignity and respectfulness of formal

praying, it enhances it, because our private sentence prayers have made us intensely aware of the majesty and glory of God.

Moreover, we pray best in God's own words, and hence the necessity of Scripture reading to prayer. We pray best, for prayer is communication, when we ourselves hear God speak through His word. If someone does not speak to us, we cannot long speak to him, and if we refuse to hear God in His word, how can we hear or be heard in prayer?

The Psalms thus are basic to the life of prayer. Here the Holy Spirit has spoken in and through the lives of God's saints, and here He speaks to us today, and in us if we make them our daily prayer.

We are not autonomous: we are God's creation. If we are not in dependent communion with Him, we are dead men.

13. Providence, Faith, and Piety

In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord warns against Pharisaic piety as a practical distrust in God's providence and salvation. In Matthew 6, we have the heart of this warning.

The three characteristic marks of Jewish piety in our Lord's day were almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Our Lord does not ask us to set aside these activities. Rather, He exposes the falsity of pietism which seeks self-styled holiness and a man-centered focus of sanctity rather than the Kingdom of God. False piety has man in focus; true piety seeks the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. False piety trusts in its own works rather than God's providence; true piety knows that God's providence ordains and rules in all things and rests therein. Because true piety rests in the fact of God's providential government, it works in faith and is not anxious about the morrow (Matt. 6:34).

Matthew 6 can be analyzed thus: *First*, in vv. 1-4, almsgiving is discussed; *second*, our Lord speaks of true prayer in vv. 5-15; *third*, He then turns to fasting in vv. 16-18; then, having touched on the three marks of Jewish piety, our Lord makes clear that piety cannot be focused on the life of man but only on the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness (vv. 19-34).

It is necessary now to see the focus our Lord gives to piety as He touches on the traditional focus thereof. *First*, as he cites almsgiving or charity, He makes clear that, as we practice it, we do so in terms of a "reward." We are not autonomous men; we do not live in a vacuum. All that we do has a framework of internal-external references. Causes have effects, and effects constitute rewards. If the cause of our charity is a desire for self-righteousness, self-improvement, or social betterment, then our reward is in the approval of men. We then "trumpet" our work in order to gain the rewards of publicity and public approval.

If, however, our cause is God's grace and law, then the effect is the practice of stewardship and charity with a view to furthering God's Kingdom. Then we take to heart Paul's words to Timothy: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). It falsifies Scripture to limit "rightly dividing" (or *thotomeo*) to teaching Scripture faithfully. The word means to cut straight, and it is used in the Septuagint in Proverbs 3:6 and 11:5 for directing one's path or way of life in conformity to the Lord. When our charity is in terms of God's Kingdom and word, we do it, not to be seen of men, but unto the Lord, Who sees what is secret from men and rewards us openly.

Second, our Lord turns to prayer, and His concern is with private prayer even as He gives the Lord's Prayer as a model of all prayer, public and private. Charity must be in terms of God's Kingdom, in obedience *to God*, and hence it is "secret," *to God*. The same is true of prayer. It is in the closet, with the door shut, not literally, but in the sense that we shut out the world from our communion with the Lord. We pray, not to affect or impress men, but to *petition* God. There are a number of words translated into English from the Greek and Hebrew as "prayer," and "pray." They mean to beseech, to desire, to petition, to intercede, to bend or bow, to meditate, to ask, to wish, whisper, pour out, and so on.

We do all this, knowing, as our Lord says, that "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (v. 8). What we *need* cannot be ours unless first of all we know our need and beseech the Lord for its fulfillment. We pray therefore, not only for what God knows we need, and in terms of His Kingdom and grace, but by His Spirit and in His prescribed manner. The Lord's Prayer tells us what the approach and focus in prayer is. God is in heaven: the focus of creation is thus not in man's needs and wishes but in God's purpose and plan for us, and our needs and petitions must have the focus of God's Kingdom. Hence, His Name is holy, set apart, and sacred. Since our prayers are to God, in the Name of Jesus, they must begin and end as something holy, set apart, and sacred, and our heart and mind must be given over to that holiness. The goal is simply stated: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (v. 10).

Because we are creatures, our prayers become exercises in hypocrisy and pretension if we fail to ask for creaturely needs. As a result, immediately after the focus of the Kingdom is so magnificently set forth, our Lord tells us that God is mindful of our creaturely needs, and we are told to pray for them: "Give us this day our daily bread" (v. 11). Then comes the petition, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (v. 12). The words debts and debtors (*opheilema, opheiletes*) mean a legal debt, and a legally bound debtor. Forgive (*aphiemi*) means remission. The reference is to Leviticus 25:8-17, the law of the Jubilee. Christ is our Redeemer, and the people of the Kingdom obey His laws of debt, both with respect to actual debts and also with respect

to trespasses (vv. 14-15). To pray as creatures means moreover to recognize that we need God's help and grace in trials and temptations, and we pray for His deliverance. We pray in all these things mindful that the Kingdom, power, and glory are the Lord's, and we must find our peace and joy therein and say Amen, So be it, to the Lord and His Kingdom.

Third, with respect to fasting, our Lord again requires that, where religious fasts by individuals are concerned, they must be "in secret." If we fast, it must be to center our minds more freely on God and His prayer, and for greater concentration in prayer. If we publicize our fasting, we are seeking rather to draw near unto men rather than the Lord. Fasting cannot be used to impress men with our religiosity, neither can it be an excuse for depriving one's husband or wife of sexual relations (I Cor. 7:5). The one who fasts must appear as one who does not fast (v. 17f.).

In brief, the acts of piety are to be as private as the sexual relationship of husband and wife, or their purely personal conversations and discussions. The publication of the private affairs of a marriage is offensive; so too is any publication of those acts of piety wherein we serve God's Kingdom or seek His favor.

Fourth, our Lord deals more extensively with the focus of piety. Where our treasure or value is, there too is our heart (vv. 19-21). An evil heart will treasure false values, and its whole life will be geared to evil (vv. 22-23). No man can serve two masters or two gods (v. 24). Hence, the necessity for an unreserved faith in God our Creator and Redeemer. Anxiety must be replaced by trust. God's providential care of His creation is total and covers the birds, and also the flowers of the field. It does not therefore by-pass man, who is created in His image. God's providence is total (vv. 25-32). We should therefore seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Then we move in pace with God's providential rule, and He adds to us all those things we need. Hence, we must daily cope with the evil of the day in terms of God's word, cease from anxiety, and serve God with all our heart, mind, and being (vv. 33-34).

True piety thus lives in terms of God's law-word and providence rather than man's works and resources. True piety replaces anxiety with faith, and a publicizing reliance on man with trust in God.

Jewish piety was not without anxiety, and hence our Lord's indictment of it as a piety of "taking thought" or worrying. Modern piety often adds anxiety to the works of "faith" as though anxiety means a sensitive faith and moral concern. We have today the age of aspirin, of migraine headaches, indigestion, ulcers, drugs, alcoholism, and tensions, all marks of distrust and rebelliousness, and all masquerading as sensitivity. Ours is an age of anxiety because even among churchmen providence is remote and vague. But where

the doctrine of providence is not the life-blood of man, we have, not faith, but anxiety.

14. Providence and the Sabbath

The Sabbath means *rest*, and Hebrews 4:1-11 speaks of entering into God's rest as the meaning of the Sabbath. What does this mean? The church has over-stressed the Sabbath as a day of worship and under stressed or neglected it as the day of rest. The Sabbath is indeed a day of worship, as every day must be. On the Sabbath, of course, our worship is more than personal or familial: it is also communal (Heb. 10:25). Our salvation is more than a simply personal fact: it is a Kingdom fact, and we must manifest our citizenship therein by worshipping together and by applying God's law-word to every area of life and thought. Salvation is not a solitary fact.

But, even more than a day of worship, the Sabbath is a day of rest. The church has indeed stressed rest, but superficially so. Rest does involve a cessation of work activity. We must indeed say that a *first* requirement of the Sabbath is to cease from work. This is an elementary and a necessary requirement, and Scripture is emphatic on this point, not only in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:9-11; Deut. 5:12-15), but throughout the law (Ex. 23:12; 31:13-17; 34:21; 35:2-3; Num. 15:32-36; Lev. 19:3,30; 26:2; etc.). The Sabbath is thus very literally and very seriously a day of rest from work.

Second, the Sabbath means not only a cessation of work where our vocation or duties are concerned, but also work in the sense of planning. To enter into God's rest (Heb. 4:5) means that we cease from the management of our lives and rest in the omnipotence of the God who rests in His works (Heb. 4:10). Taking thought, or being anxious, about the morrow (Matt. 6:25) is refusing to rest in the Lord. It is a denial of the fact that our Sabbath rest is in Him, in His atonement, and in His government (Isa. 9:6-7). Taking a physical rest on the Sabbath is thus empty formalism if we remain fretful and anxious, and if we spend the day planning our days as though the government were upon our shoulders. The rich fool was a man who assumed that the future depended upon him and his planning (Luke 12:16-21).

Third, obviously, to enter into God's rest means more than no work. That the rest means in part the Promised Land is clear; it also means heaven, and the new creation. It also means our regeneration, our birth into the new creation, Christ's Kingdom. The Sabbath thus is inseparably linked with salvation. To enter into God's Sabbath is to enter into the Kingdom of God, to be a new creation, and it means that our salvation is not our work but Christ's work. The Sabbath thus is a type of salvation and of the Kingdom of God. Many hymn writers have beautifully described this fact: John Newton (1774) wrote

From our worldly cares set free,
May we rest this day in Thee.

And continued,

Here afford us, Lord, a taste
Of our everlasting feast.

Charles Wesley (1763) called it the "Type of that everlasting rest the saints enjoy in heaven." William Walshaw How (1871) called attention to the day of creation, the day of Christ's resurrection and our redemption, and the day of Pentecost as all setting forth the meaning of the Sabbath. Isaac Watts (1719) stressed the Sabbath as a day of victory:

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

Christopher Wordsworth (1862) called it the new day for the heavenly manna to fall, and a day of rest in grace. It is also, as some hymn writers have seen, a day of instruction in the doctrines of grace.

Fourth, to rest in the Lord means to trust in His providence. If we recognize in very truth that the government of all things, including our lives, is upon His shoulders (Isa. 9:6-7), then we will indeed rest in the Lord. All fretfulness and anxiety is either a denial of God's providence or a distrust thereof. All too often we in practice act as though we are sure that the government of our lives and the universe would be better managed if it were in our hands. This is the practical meaning of fretfulness and anxiety. We prefer our planning to God's predestined plan, and we assume that somehow God is either forgetful of us or none too intelligent in His planning and providence. It is, however, we pretended gods who are the idiot gods, and all wisdom, power, majesty, and government are the Lord's.

Paul and his fellow-workers tell us that those who enter into God's rest cease from their works (Heb. 4:10). That is, they do not work nor plan nor continue in anxiety; rather, they obey the commandment, "be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). The alternative to entering into God's rest, in ceasing from labor *and* anxious planning, fretfulness and worry, is unbelief or disobedience (Heb. 4:11).

The word translated as "unbelief" in Hebrews 4:11 in the King James Version is rendered as "disobedient" in many modern versions. In the Greek, it is *apeitheia*, obstinate, unpersuadable, refusing to be persuaded. The alternative to the true Sabbath or rest of and in the Lord is thus a refusal to trust in Him or to believe that His providential government of all things is alone all-wise, all-righteous, and all-holy.

Where there is no lively belief in the Sabbath as the day wherein we rest in God's providence, then we have there a dreary and formal Sabbath, a restless one. We have then a restless society outside the church and a stagnant and impotent one within, because neither believer nor unbeliever moves in terms of God's perfect ordination and government of all things.

The state then seeks to be the source of providence, or else every man functions as his own providence. Fretful and peevish men burn up their energies in anxious labor and frenzied recreation, trying to control the world around them and within them, and to provide themselves with a happiness which comes from things and activities but is not nor can be their peace of being.

Without providence as the presupposition of all their thinking, men can neither rest nor work effectually. To have no faith in providence is to have no faith in the Lord. It means to be unbelieving and disobedient; it is the restlessness of men who have no faith. Of such the Lord says;

> But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
> There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. (Isa. 57:20-21)

15. Creation, Providence, and Responsibility

J.S. Mackenzie, in his *Manuel of Ethics* (London, 1900), declared, "To be free means that one is determined by nothing but oneself." Such a freedom, however, can only be ascribed to God. Mackenzie in effect posited a necessary aseity for man, so that man could be freed from all determination external to himself.

From ancient times to the present, such a view of man has been repeatedly popular, although arising in different contents and cultural traditions. It has had competition, however, from another tradition. Just as Mackenzie represents one extreme, so too does *Karma* represent another. For the doctrine of Karma, all acts have a necessary and inescapable link to the past and to the future. There is an inexorable chain of causes and effects, so that, instead of man being one who is determined by nothing but himself, as with Mackenzie, man becomes nothing but a brief and fleeting focus of consequences. We may call him a person, but he is really only a moment in a chain of causality, a step, not a determiner.

In a sense, these two doctrines represent an antithesis. However, to hold so is to overlook a central fact: both absolve man of responsibility. If man is determined by nothing but himself, he is responsible to no one; he therefore cannot be judged by an external law or standard. He is then his own god and law. He is his own universe and causality, and none can judge him. However, if man is simply a link in the chain of Karma, then he again is beyond criticism because he is beyond responsibility. As a product of Karma, he is no

more than a consequence of a multiplicity of causes, and he bears a burden not of his making. He is a victim, and hence not responsible. Both positions thus mark man as a covenant-breaker who refuses to acknowledge his sin *before God.*

In both positions, moreover, a fundamental principle of polytheism appears, "gods many and lords many." In Mackenzie's view, every man is his own god; in the doctrine of Karma, the multiple and accruing causes become the many gods. In either case, man denies responsibility.

The doctrine of creation, however, sets forth, among other things, two facts which make man fully responsible. *First*, man is God's creation. The universe and man move, not in terms of an abstract, impersonal, and inexorable causality, but in terms of God and His law. The common doctrine of causality, because of its Greek origins, depersonalizes causality, which is seen as a part of the blind world of matter. This doctrine of causality has great affinity to Karma, and, like it, presupposes some kind of ultimate other than the sovereign and absolutely personal God of Scripture. A depersonalized causality is nonsense: it is a myth and a delusion. *Second*, man is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), so that, by virtue of that image, he is a responsible creature who has a secondary power of determination. He is not a god, but neither is he a passing link in a chain of consequences. He is man, a responsible creature, and hence, in his fall, under God's moral judgement (Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 3:10-19). His creatureliness is an inescapable fact, as well as his creation in God's image. Similarly, the doctrine of providence has major implications with respect to man's responsibility. The Stoics used the word *providence* as a synonym for nature, necessity, and fate; it was non-personal and no more than a causal nexus. Thus, despite the use of the term *providence*, the Stoic doctrine was closer by far to *Karma* than to Scripture.

The Biblical doctrine of providence gives us the personal and triune God whose government totally comprehends all things. This means, *first*, that because it is a universe of personal facts that surround us, and the personal God, our response and actions cannot be impersonal: they are always personal and moral. Neither we nor creation are abstractions, nor is the movement and nature of things a product of blind necessity. We live, move, and have our being in God and His universe, in a moral context at all times (Acts 17:28) so that we can never escape moral decisions nor moral responsibility. Man was no sooner created than he was confronted by the necessity for moral decisions (Gen. 2:16-17). The moral choice placed before Adam was not something imposed by God on Adam but an inescapable fact of creation and providence. Since God has created man and all things else, and God's absolute and total government rules providentially in and through all things, moral responsibility is an inescapable part of the constitution of things. There is no neutral, non-moral corner in all of creation. God's total providence is His absolute wisdom, holiness, and righteousness in action. Man's life is thus not

in a vacuum but in a moral context and continuum. Not even death provides the sinner an escape from this moral universe.

Such a view is not acceptable to paganism and humanism, nor to the neoplatonists in the church. In Deuteronomy 23:12-14 we have a law wherein God requires even an army on the march to practice sanitation where defecation is concerned. The neoplatonist is not averse to state laws on sanitation, but he wants God to remain "spiritual" and above and beyond such matters. He thus turns over a vast area of ultimate responsibility and providence to the state. Biblical law makes such a view heresy.

Second, the doctrine of providence means that, at every moment, every man confronts the living God. His response, whether for good or evil, is a personal and a moral response. Man is inescapably a responsible creature.

In Proverbs, we have a strong emphasis on God's sovereign and predestinating government, as witness Proverbs 16:4 and 20:24, but this goes hand in hand with a strong stress on man's moral responsibility (Prov. 20:11,17,23, etc.).

God is the living God. So Jeremiah's words, "the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation" (Jer. 10:10). We cannot isolate morality from religion without denying both in any Biblical sense. God is the Lord, and nothing is outside or beyond Him, so that in all things we are face to face with the living God and His government.

For the ungodly, whatever order, rule, or providence that may exist in the universe is an impersonal, abstract, and *exterior* fact and government. For us, because God is our Lord, it cannot be seen as such, and is in fact never such for any man. Providence for us means a universe of total and personal meaning which becomes our life and world by the adoption of grace. We then move in the light of God's providence and grace as responsible covenant-keepers. We have a place then in that total government, a meaning, goal, and calling. Responsibility for us is then not a chore but the key to a world of knowledge, holiness, righteousness, and dominion under God as His image bearers.

16. Creation, Providence, and Eschatology

David, faced with enemies, an uncertain future, and costly moral choices, prayed earnestly:

> 1. Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.
> 2. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.
> 3. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.
> 4. Shew me thy ways, O LORD: teach me thy paths.

> 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. (Ps. 25:1-5)

Man, having been created not only by God but in the image of God, lives in terms of an inescapable purpose which is basic to his being. Man was created to serve and glorify God and to become a working citizen of the Kingdom of God.

Man thus has a given nature by virtue of his creation. This nature the fall cannot alter. The fall is a moral, not a metaphysical, fact. Fallen man cannot evade the nature of his being. He is God's creature, created in God's image. His moral rebellion against God does not alter man's being; *it simply perverts the goals thereof.* Thus, to state the matter theologically, fallen man substitutes for God's eschatology his own man-centered one.

Eschatology is defined by the dictionary as the branch of theology which "treats of death, resurrection, immortality, the end of the world, final judgment, and the future state." The root of the word is *eschatos*, last. This definition is accurate yet limited. Eschatology is much more than a concern about the end, or the last times. Eschatology sets forth *the goal* of man and history and is thus inseparable from *purpose*.

Eschatology is thus a very intensely practical concern. Questions such as, Why am I here?; What is the meaning and purpose of life?; What should we do, and why?; and, How will it all end?; all have to do with eschatology.

The eschatology of fallen man is humanistic, man-created and man-centered. It seeks to give meaning to an otherwise meaningless world, to establish a thin edge of meaning against chaos and the void. Not surprisingly, humanistic eschatologies end in despair. Having no doctrine of theistic creation, man for them begins and ends in the void. Again, having no doctrine of providence, their brightest eschatological hopes operate against the frustration of brute and meaningless factuality. Often, on borrowed, Biblical premises, humanistic eschatologies will flourish briefly. Thus, the belief in progress was a secularized version of the doctrine of providence, and it flourished for a time on that borrowed capital. In time, of course, it was apparent that any belief in progress, without the presupposition of the God of Scripture, is rootless and futile, and the faith has waned accordingly.

Humanistic eschatologies regularly appear as the great hope of fallen man, but, in due time, they give way to defeat and despair. Socialism, the state, statist education, sociology, psychotherapy, and much more have been eschatological instruments, designed by fallen man to usher in the humanistic millennium. These are neither the first nor the last of such instruments. Certainly, the sexual revolution and existentialism have been eschatological and their promises extravagant at times.

Man requires a valid goal: the image of God within man mandates his being and requires man to move in terms of God's ordained purposes. Augustine,

out of his own experience, saw this, as he made clear in his *Confessions*: "Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee." Francis Thompson, in "The Hound of Heaven," made the same point, which, of course, was first set forth by David in Psalm 139.

Creation has a purpose, and that purpose is God-ordained and is written into the being of all creation, so that all of creation, organic and inorganic, moves in terms of that purpose. Paul, in Romans 8:19-23, makes this clear. Any deflection from that eschatological goal, from that purpose, is death. Sin, as the deflection of man from God's eschatology to a man-made one, is thus clearly death. Creation is thus inseparable from eschatology.

The same is true of providence. All of God's providence moves in terms of His glorious and eternal purpose. Thus, the declarations of eschatology cannot be separated from the affirmations of providential care which Scripture sets forth. For example, in Psalm 34:7, we read, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," and in Psalm 91 we have a moving account of God's providential care of His Son, Jesus Christ, and of us in Him: "for he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11). The Lord's care of His covenant people is not for their sakes, but for His covenant's sake, and for His eternal purposes. It is eschatological. There is no other cause in the universe which is ultimate and determinative than the triune God and His eternal decree. The goals of providence are not man-centered. Rather, it is man himself, willingly or otherwise, who is God-centered. Man's being is thus governed by God's eschatology.

David, in order to better understand God's purposes and his own place therein, prayed: "LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am" (Ps. 39:4). David prayed that he might be ever mindful of himself as a frail creature. *Frail, chadel*, means frail, rejected. David sees his own being as fallen; at best, it is still frail, and no purpose of man's can supplant God's purpose. Therefore, David's prayer is not governed by any neoplatonic withdrawal but by a desire to serve God in terms of God's purpose. Not man's eschatology but the Lord's must govern us. Hence, David says:

> 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.
> 7. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. (Ps. 39:6-7)

The eschatologies of men are a "vain shew." All their accomplishments and wealth are nullified by death, and another man gathers of their labors. David's hope, however, is in the Lord, whose purposes alone prevail.

The goal of history, the meaning of eschatology, cannot be sought within history but only in God. Neither the Jew nor the church, nor the millennium, are the goals of God's working, but only Himself, and His eternal Kingdom.

God's purpose in history far exceeds the salvation of man, or of the Jews. He is emphatic: "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (Isa. 42:8).

If our doctrine of creation is weakened, then our doctrines of providence and eschatology are weakened. The word of God is a seamless garment; rending any part thereof is damaging to all of it.

17. Humanistic Providence

If we deny that man is God's creation, we then make man a product of the void, and man is the potential re-creator or remaker of man. If we deny God's providence, we open the door to man's providence and statist controls.

It would be easy to cite examples of humanistic plans of providence from men like B.F. Skinner; such men are in the business of planning humanistic controls. Much more significant is the opinion of William Burroughs, a writer, and for almost ten years an addict to hard drugs. Burroughs is a potential subject of mind-controlling devices. On the other hand, men like Burroughs, in using drugs, have indicated thereby their intense quest for such controls. Burroughs, in abandoning drug addiction, has simply turned to a more sophisticated form of mind control as his humanistic hope of salvation and as the agency of providence.

Burroughs recognizes the danger in mind controls. In his novel, *The Naked Lunch*, he satirized such efforts. All the same, as a humanist, he sees no alternative to it and is ready to accept "electrodes which can control the brain," recognizing that "Once someone has the control box he is in complete control of anyone fitted with electrodes." For him, man's future require some such control.[43] Burroughs recognizes that "The nature of control is also hierarchical...the orders now are given by fewer and fewer people." More, he adds, "I cannot think of any existing society in whose hands I would like this power to fall." However, the "necessity" of such a providential power overrules his fears. Men can attach themselves to computers, if they have electrode implants, and have their problems readily solved: "it would figure out for example, everything you owe, accounts receivable, bam, bam, bam, and give you an answer." This kind of implant, or autonomic shaping, would enable men to "do in a few hours what a yogi took 20 years to learn." Autonomic shaping would replace hallucinogenic drugs and allow us to create, in ourselves the same drug experiences without the drugs. Anxiety could thus be eliminated without the drug side-effects.[44] Men would go to sleep by direct electric brain stimulation. Pain could be eliminated by

[43] Graham Masterton and Andrew Rassabi: *"William Burrows, Interview,"* in Penthouse. Vol. 3, no. 7, March, 1972, p. 44

[44] Ibid., p. 46.

autonomic controls. For Burroughs the need thus is great for such a control, exercised by man over himself.[45]

For Burroughs, the present road-block to autonomic shaping is Christianity, and, in particular, "the Christian attitude to sex." Autonomic shaping would eliminate the roadblocks to a totally sexual orientation and experience, without moral judgments involved. This autonomic shaping is urgent, not only for sexual reasons or for the sake of the sexual revolution, but to create mutations in man, because, Burroughs holds, "a species must mutate or it dies out," an opinion with no scientific validity. Autonomic shaping would create a new-man by "removing any past conditioning," so that man could re-make himself. Man must become his own maker and providence, or he will, like some animals, die out. "Control of our minds, our society and our environment may be the answer. I think the human species has reached a point where it's going to have to take some form of forward step or we're just not going to make it." In other words, for humanists like Burroughs, God being denied, man must become his own creator and providence, or else he will perish. Despite his fears that the state will control the computer, Burroughs still wants implants. Clearly, such men testify to the need for a god, although they offer us a very sorry one!

Moreover, in virtually every field, humanism's bankruptcy is increasingly in evidence. In the area of psychotherapy, Prof. H.J. Eyseneck states that "the data suggest strongly that, if anything, patients treated by psychoanalysis *take longer to recover* and *recover to a lesser extent* than do patients left untreated."[46] This does not diminish the popularity of the various forms of humanistic psychotherapy; rather, they meet a religious need, the demand by humanism for a man-made form of healing, regeneration and providence.

A humanist of some years ago expressed dismay at the decay within the ranks of humanists. He warned, "Disbelief in man leads, not only to moral bankruptcy, but also to intellectual impotence. You can measure nothing with a rule that is always changing."[47] Since Richards' day, disbelief in man and the humanistic state has increased greatly, and yet statist powers have increased. Having no other faith, the growing crisis of humanistic civilization only forces men to rely all the more on the only gods they recognize, man and the humanistic state. This is comparable to the man in Nevada, pouring money into the slot machine at a crossroads service station and store. He was warned quietly by a friend that the machine was fixed against him at an "impossible" ratio. He answered, "Sure, I know it. But it's the only game in town!" The humanist turns to the only god he knows, and his name is man.

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45. Ibid., p. 52.
46. H. J. Eyseneck, *"The Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire,"* Penthouse. Vol. 3, no. 4, December, 1971, p. 46.
47. Philip S. Richards: *Belief in Man.* (New York, N.Y.: Farrar and Rinehart, 1932). p. xiii.

Moreover, if we believe, as William Blake and others have, that all evil is the result of frustration, and that evil is not in man but in the world around him, then the goal of humanistic providence will be the liberation of man from the chains of Christianity, sexual restraints, law, requirements, standards, and testing. Humanism creates in every area a liberation theology. Man's problems have a simple solution, the liberation of man. Providence thus becomes a liberation from the world of God into the world of anarchistic man, or the world of the humanistic state. According to a California state assemblyman, John Vasconcellos, a Democrat from Santa Clara, man is good and institutions are evil.

> The question facing society, according to Vasconcellos, is whether the nature of man is basically good or evil.
> "If we believe we are not right then we design institutions to make not-right people OK," he said.
> If on the other hand people are basically decent, then society designs institutions that try to "nurture and liberate rather than repress."
> Vasconcellos believes people are basically good and that if they are treated with kindness and honesty they will respond in kind.[48]

Vasconcellos, giving out Rousseau's old myths, spoke to a Chico State University five-day conference on human services conducted by its School of Health and Human Services. The essence of such an approach is to demand more statist providence as the only moral solution to human problems. Men who deny God's providence will get the state's providence and totalitarianism, and men who turn over their children to the educators of the humanistic state will see the wrath of the sovereign God.

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[48] Roger Aylworth: *"Assemblyman Sees Change Coming: Society is OK, Institutions Aren't."* (Chico, CA: Enterprise-Record, Thursday, November 16, 1976). p. 6A.

IV

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

1. The Doctrine of God

Basic to Christian faith is the doctrine of the triune God of Scripture. When Christians speak of God, they mean the God who reveals Himself in the Bible. Any other god is a product of man's imagination. It is very convenient for man to posit a god, and man has very often done so. Man's purposes in doing so are many, but in every case they are self-serving. Philosophy, for example, has often posited a god in order to provide itself with firm ground at some point or another. As a result, a god has, as in Greek philosophy, provided the first cause in order to escape from the intellectual problem of infinite regress. Such a god has little function other than to provide a necessary link in a chain of reasoning. In Descartes, the idea of god provides an insurance policy for Descartes' epistemology; apart from that, Descartes' god has little function, and it is the autonomous mind of man which governs and prevails.

In the world of non-Biblical theism, man creates a god to meet his intellectual needs, and as readily disposes of him when he is no longer needed. In Scripture, the reverse is true: it is God who is the Creator, not man.

Because God is the Creator of man, St. Paul tells us in Romans 1:17-21, as does David in Psalm 19:1-4 and Psalm 139, that the knowledge of God is inescapable knowledge. No man can escape knowing God, because every atom of his being, together with all creation, is revelational of God. Faith therefore is not mere opinion or belief but is saying Amen to God. Faith means placing our entire being on the every word of God, relying on God and His word.

At every point, man is confronted by the living God. Francis Thompson, in his poem, *The Hound of Heaven*, sets forth this fact out of his own experience, echoing Psalm 139 and also Augustine's *Confessions*.

Any apologetic or systematic theology thus which seeks to "prove" God is denying Him. God is not a fact among facts, who, through careful scientific or philosophical inquiry can be discovered or proven. Rather, He is the Creator of all facts, and every fact witnesses to His purpose and order.

Faith is thus not intellectual assent to the Gospel. To believe so is to declare that man's religious problem is intellectual rather than moral, and his problem ignorance rather than sin. But to say this is to deny the Scriptures. Man's problem with the knowledge of God is not ignorance but sin, a wilful rebellion against the authority of God and His word.

If man's problem is intellectual, if his problem is ignorance, then the solution to man's problem is knowledge. Then too in every sphere knowledge

becomes the saving factor. The Greeks held to the belief that man's evils could be traced to fallacious ideas. The solution in Plato was thus a logical one, an elite group of philosopher-kings whose ideas can rule man religiously, politically, economically, educationally, and in every other way. Thus, whenever we depart from the Biblical doctrine of faith, and when we deny man's inescapable knowledge of God, we try to educate man into salvation. We create an elite in church, state, and elsewhere, whose ideas govern man.

We have then a false apologetics which begins with the assumption that men outside the faith do not know of God's existence, and it is our duty to prove it to them. We see then the proliferation of books designed to persuade men to believe that God exists. But man the sinner knows that God is; he suppresses that knowledge in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:17-21). Van Til has written of man's "Cainitic wish" that there be no God.[1] Man's denial of God is a moral denial: he refuses to acknowledge God's existence, not because he does not know that God exists, but because he refuses to submit to God. (The psychoanalyst, Theodore Reik, observed that he knew of no psychoanalyst who believed in God, and of none who did not fear God!)

Man's "problem" with God is simply the fact that God is God, and fallen man wants to be his own god (Gen. 3:5). His problem is thus in essence moral; the intellectual problems are trenches and barriers created as part of his war against God, and as a means of concealing the fact of his moral rebellion. "An honest intellectual problem and doubt" has more dignity than the moral fact, a criminal rebellion against the sovereign creator God.

Another problem with all proofs of God is that they define God. To define is to limit and to comprehend, but God is both infinite and incomprehensible. A definable god is no god at all, and is often less than man. Creedal statements can describe God in terms of His self-revelation, but they cannot define Him.

In Exodus 3:13-15, we have God's answer to the request for definition:

> 13. And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?
> 14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.
> 15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

First of all, to name is to define, in Scripture. In the ancient world, names were definitions, and they changed as a man changed. We do not know Abraham's original name before his calling; after his calling, God named him

[1] Cornelius Van Til: *Psychology of Religion.* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1935.) p. 128.

Abram, and later Abraham. Abraham's name ran against human norms for naming, since he was childless most of his life, rather than a father of many, but it was a name from God, to be borne by faith.

Moses, in pointing out that Israel would want a name for God was saying that they wanted a definition. God, after all, had been long silent. How to account for this? Who was He? The question was thus, explain yourself, define yourself.

Second, the gods of antiquity had names. This is not surprising: they were limited beings and hence definable. Their names were valuable to men, because their names commonly indicated their utility. Many of their names, such as Venus, Mars, Mercury, Janus, and the like, have passed into European languages to have specific meanings related to the ancient function of the god or goddess. The refusal by God to define Himself meant that He was and is beyond utility: He governs and is not governable by man. He is not definable, because, as Lord and creator, all things are made and defined by Him.

Third, the only thing resembling a name which God gives is I AM THAT I AM; He is ultimate and uncreated Being, He who Is, Jehovah, or Yahweh. He is the creator and the definer. All created being is revelational of Him, but nothing defines Him.

Fourth, God manifests His being and nature in His self-revelation in history, nature, and supremely His written word and His incarnate Word. God's revelation is His only name man can know. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This is forever His Name, and His memorial and word to all generations. (To limit His memorial to the New Testament is thus to deny His Name and person.)

But this is not all. History has development and progress, or decline at times. God is the same: He does not change (Mal. 3:6). As a result, we cannot, implicitly or explicitly, see an evolution in God. He is, from all eternity, the triune God. Man's awareness of God can grow, but God is always the same. Thus, on every page of Scripture it is the triune God who speaks to us, the triune God whose revelation in history is described, and the triune God who commands our obedience and hearing.

This means that, when we speak of God, we must mean the triune God thereby. God is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. To reserve the term God to the Father alone is alien to Scripture and assumes a subordination and a disunity in the Trinity which is not true. The living God is the triune God.

The Westminster Larger Catechism declares:

> Q. 8. Are there more gods than one?
> A. There is but one only, the living and true God. (Deut. 6:4; I Cor. 8:6; Jer. 10:10).
> Q. 9. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There be three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory: although distinguished by their personal properties. (Matt. 3:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14).

2. The Trinity and Subordination

One of the most absurd and yet common of all heresies is subordinationism. Subordinationism places one or two persons in the Godhead on a lower level than another. This is *the subordination of persons.* Usually, it is the Son or the Spirit or both who are subordinated to the Father. An implicit Unitarianism is usually in the background. In the Joachimite heresy, the Father and Son were subordinated to the Spirit. From Marcion to the present, more than a few have down-graded the Father, as supposedly representing law as against grace (the Son), or love (the Spirit).

In any and all cases, subordination undermines and finally destroys Biblical faith. To indulge in any degree of subordination of the persons of the Godhead is to deny the unity of the Trinity and the fact of God's being.

Another form of subordinationist thinking is *the subordination of attributes.* We have already noted one form of this, i.e., placing grace, law, and love on different levels and as supposedly contradictory. Very commonly, subordinationism treats God's law or justice as somehow a lower attribute and grace as a higher one. The presupposition in such thinking is that contradictions exist between justice and grace, and, therefore, contradictions are implicit in God's being. For Marcion, these contradictions were the foundation of his theology, which therefore could only rend Scripture and use one part to rule out the rest. Those who profess to follow "New Testament Christianity" not only implicitly or explicitly deny the Trinity, as the Campbellites do, but they also pit various attributes of God one against another. Instead of a unity of the Godhead, subordinationism posits a warfare within the Godhead.

Moreover, subordinationism rests on serious misconceptions and absurdities. To institute degrees and gradations into the being of God is to posit an impossibility. In man, such degrees are inescapable. A man can be an able thinker, a poor mechanic, and a croaker as a singer: he is a creature, and his limitations are many. But perfection is an attribute of God. No part of God can be less than God. Implicit in all subordination is the assumption that one aspect of God's being is lesser than another, and basic to such an assumption is anthropomorphic thinking. It assumes that God is like us, something God denounces: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Ps. 50:21). God, in His economy, or in His workings, can institute a relationship whereby, at differing times, each person of the Trinity acts in a leading or prior way. These are the *economical* aspects of the Trinity; when we speak of the *ontological* Trinity, we cannot speak of any subordination. God in

Himself is one God, three persons, with the same substance, power, and glory. The Trinity in God's own being is without subordination. The Trinity at work, the economical Trinity, can see differing persons of the Trinity, depending on the context of history, taking priority, as in creation, atonement, and Pentecost. The economy of the Trinity does not alter its being or ontology.

Without the doctrine of the Trinity, there is no Christianity. Apart from the Trinity, there is no God. Without this doctrine, man's thinking faces an endless blind alley, and an inability to account for the facts of unity and plurality. The reality of unity in creation, and the reality of particularity or individuality, rests on the fact of the Trinity. The Triune God is the Eternal One-and-Many, and the basis for the possibility of a created or temporal one-and-many. Neither particularity nor unity are illusions, as they have been in non-Christian religions and philosophies, because in God Himself we have both unity and particularity. As Van Til has pointed out,

> Using the language of the One-and-Many question we contend that in God the one and the many are equally ultimate. Unity in God is no more fundamental than diversity, and diversity in God is no more fundamental than unity. The persons of the Trinity are mutually exhaustive of one another. The Son and the Spirit are ontologically on a par with the Father. It is a well-known fact that all heresies in the history of the church have in some form or other taught subordinationism. Similarly, we believe, all "heresies" in apologetical methodology spring from some sort of subordinationism.[2]

The Trinity gives us a concrete universal and a concrete particularity, whereas non-Christian thought remains abstract.

Where subordinationism prevails, the consequences are more than theological: they are practical, political, ecclesiastical, and social. Subordinationist thinking has been basic to caesaropapism. In Byzantium, in medieval Europe, and in the modern world, false notions of the Godhead have led to false views of unity. The idea of statist centralization of powers (and ecclesiastical centralization) has rested on a theology of subordinationism. The rise of Unitarianism has been the triumph of statist unity or totalitarianism. To give priority to the being of God the Father meant the priority of creation to redemption. The state was seen as an order of nature, and hence prior to and more basic than the later and "additional" factor of grace. Hence, the state claimed priority and saw itself as the principle of unity.

Subordination of persons or attributes means a limited religion also. Thus, those who see grace as basic and subordinate law and other attributes to grace, will stress mainly *salvation*. The broader requirements of God's word are

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[2] Cornelius Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith*. (Philadelphia, PA: Reformed and Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1955.) See also R. J. Rushdoony: *The One and the Many*. (Nutley, N. J.: The Craig Press, 1971.)

bypassed. Politics becomes almost a non-Christian or anti-Christian concern, (whereas for the Unitarian mentality, the salvation emphasis becomes a neutralization of man). Subordinationism thus limits Christianity because it begins by limiting God. The conclusion of subordinationism is the destruction of Biblical faith. It is understandable thus why Bavinck declared:

> Thus the confession of the trinity is the sum of the Christian religion. Without it neither the creation nor the redemption nor the sanctification can be purely maintained.[3]

In essence, subordinationism is anti-theistic: it rests on an anti-God principle. In subordinationism, an *idea*, or principle, a universal, or a law, governs over God and is the real god. This *idea* may be derived from the Bible, such as sovereignty, dominion, grace, or law. It becomes the one master principle in terms of which God is understood and determined. It is then the *idea* which governs God, and we are the thinkers of the *idea*. By means of our ostensible honoring of God, we deny Him and exalt our own reasoning. Van Til has stated the matter clearly:

> We may therefore speak of the "system of truth" contained in Scripture only if we are careful to note that its various doctrines are not to be obtained by way of deduction from some master concept. There is no doubt consonance between the "doctrine of God," the "doctrine of man" and the "doctrine of Christ" as found in Scripture. But even when conjoined and seen in their fullest harmony, these and other doctrines together do not begin to exhaust the riches of God's revelation to man through Christ and his Spirit.[4]

There is no truth nor system of truth over God; we cannot subordinate God to any idea of truth, or to any aspect of His being.

3. God, Logic and Reality

All of man's thoughts and years are shadowed by the fall, and the philosophy of the fall. Man in his sin questioned the reality and the truth of God's word. The tempter presented God's word as at best a possible word, ("Ye shall not surely die"), and, at worst, a lie ("For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"). As a result, a healthy skepticism ("Yea, hath God said?") was advisable in any approach to God (Gen. 3:1-5).

The word of God was thus viewed as a public relations word, as a self-serving and self-promoting word from a being anxious to retain control over man. It was thus not an infallible nor a certain word, but a probable or possible

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[3] Herman Bavinck: *Our Reasonable Faith.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956.) p. 161.

[4] Cornelius Van Til: *Defense of the Faith.* (Nutley, N. Y.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1967.) p. 7. Third Edition revised.

word. The word was not necessarily a true nor a real word but simply a probable word. Man's independence could reduce God's word to an improbable and finally an impossible word.

All this has an important presupposition: the real word can come from man; the word of man can finally become the determinative word, and man the determinating cause. When this comes to pass, then God is dead to man, and no longer real. It is then man and his word that are real and true. Man's declaration of independence in the Garden of Eden was thus an assertion about the nature of reality. Reality is man and his will in the process of becoming god.

In this process, man formulates his will, word, and decree concerning the world. As he approaches that world to seek information, he makes certain assumptions. *First*, he assumes that it is a world of chance, born out of chaos, and hence a world of brute factuality. Brute facts are meaningless facts which have no inherent interpretation, meaning, or design. All things are thus meaningless, including man. *Second*, man assumes, as he approaches this world, that an interpretation can be imposed upon it by his fiat will. Men "shall be as gods," i.e., their development in that respect requires the creation of a world of meaning in terms of man. The world is totally irrational; it has no possible inherent rationality. Man, however, will impose a rational order on the world in terms of his fiat word. There will be meaning, because man will declare and establish it. *Third*, as man seeks information towards attaining this goal of a man-made decree of predestination and purpose, he seeks and collects information from various sources, from experience, from reason or logic, from his existential self-affirmation, and so on. However, because there is no meaning as such in the universe nor in man, all such information is in a sense self-generated and self-created information. Thus, while as a philosopher man may talk about independent sources of information, he has in actuality only one, himself. Reality is essentially what the mind, reason, or logic of man declares it to be. Van Til is the superb analyst of this fact. He writes:

> According to the Christian story, logic and reality meet first of all in the mind and being of God. God's being is exhaustively rational. Then God creates and rules the universe according to his plan. Even the evil of this world happens according to this plan. The only substitute for this Christian scheme of things is to assert or assume that logic and reality meet originally in the mind of man. The final point of reference in all predication must ultimately rest in some mind, divine or human. It is either the self-contained God of Christianity or the would-be autonomous man that must be and is presupposed as the final reference point in every sentence that any man utters.[5]

[5] Cornelius Van Til: *Defense of the Faith*. p. 215. Third edition, revised.

Because God is the creator and lord of all things in heaven and on earth, all things are created in conformity to His plan, logic and purpose. As a result, at every point, and in every fact and atom, we come face to face with the mind and logic of God. We are always confronted with God. Man may in his rebellion deny that confrontation and deny his maker, but he himself is in all his being revelational of God. Psalm 19:1-4 is emphatic on this total revelational nature of creation: "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handiwork..." Psalm 139 and Romans 1:17-21 make clear that this knowledge of God is inescapable: men may seek to suppress it, or to hold it down, but it cannot be silenced nor concealed. Morally, or ethically, man is in revolt against that knowledge; metaphysically, it is inescapable, and nothing has meaning apart from it.

Man, however, seeks independence from that sovereign God. For man in revolt, God is only tolerable if He is not sovereign. As a result, man will often disguise his revolt, and his claim to independence, by isolating logic from God, and creation as well, and will seek to establish "independent" sources of knowledge. These supposedly independent sources of knowledge can then be martialed either in open opposition to God, or to "prove" a probable God. However, by declaring these sources of knowledge to be independent, man thereby establishes a principle of independence for himself and the universe, and himself as the reality, and his logic as the governing logic.

A classic example of this kind of self-delusion and intellectual game is, of course, Carnell's famous affirmation:

> Granted that we need revelation from God to learn how He will dispose of us at the end of our lives, are there not many revelations which vie for our approval? How shall we make a selection, when we are not God? We can answer this in a sentence: Accept that revelation which, when examined, yields a system of thought which is horizontally self-consistent and which vertically fits the facts of history. When viewing the Bible, the Christian says, "I see a series of data in the Bible. If I accept the system as it is outlined, I can make a lot of problems easy." Bring on your revelations! Let them make peace with the law of contradiction and the facts of history, and they will deserve a rational man's assent. A careful examination of the Bible reveals that it passes these stringent examinations *summa cum laude*.[6]

In a world of brute factuality, born out of chaos and destined to return to darkness and chaos, neither logic, reason, nor the law of contradiction can exist. At every point, the cosmos is absurd, incapable of being ordered or expressed in any rational or logical order. There can then be no logic nor any law of contradiction. The only law of contradiction which can exist must be an aspect of a reality created by the God revealed in Scripture; it can have no

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[6]. Edward John Carnell: *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952.) p. 178. For an analysis of this passage see R. J. Rushdoony: *The Word of Flux*. (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1975.) p. 67-69.

other source or foundation. By separating the law of contradiction from God and the Bible and making it an independent source of judgment and information, Carnell also separated himself from the same God and set himself up in a similarly independent judgment seat over God. As a result, his approach to the Bible has as its foundation not the principle of faith but of reprobation. Judgment is passed on God; God meets the rigorous test of the sagacious Carnell, and gains the Carnell Good Housekeeping Seal of intellectual approval! How kind of Carnell! In such a philosophy, every man is judge over God, and God must endlessly subject Himself to man's critical examination. Again, Van Til's comment is telling:

> The anti-theist has, in effect, denied the very law of contradiction, inasmuch as the law of contradiction, to operate at all, must have its foundation in the nature of God. On the other hand, the anti-theist, from his standpoint, will not hesitate to say that the theist has denied the law of contradiction. For him, the belief in an absolute, self-conscious God is the rejection of the law of contradiction, inasmuch as such a belief does not permit man to test the revelation of God by the law of contradiction as standing above that revelation. The conception of an absolutely self-conscious God definitely limits the field of the possible to that which is determined by the plan of God...If, then, there is such a fundamentally exclusive difference of opinion on the question as to what the law of contradiction itself is between theists and non-theists, it is quite out of the question to speak of the law of contradiction as something that all men agree upon. All men do agree upon it as a formal principle; but the two classes of men differ on the question of its foundation and application.[7]

What is the implication of this separation of the law of contradiction, of logic, from the God of Scripture? It is part and parcel an aspect of a process of abstraction: the universe, reason, logic, knowledge, and man are abstracted from God's eternal decree and given a more or less independent reality. If either man or logic, or anything else, has to any degree any independent reality, then to that degree God is not *real* to man nor to logic. Reality is then something other than or independent from God's eternal decree. There is then a separate governing principle or law, or multiple independent factors. In any consideration of reality, then, God is peripheral or irrelevant. Consider again the plain meaning of Carnell's words. Why is he at all concerned about God's revelation? He tells us that it is "to learn how He will dispose of us at the end of our lives," and "If I accept the system as it is outlined, I can make a lot of problems easy!" For Carnell, God is not much more than an available resource.

For us, however, God is and must be the Lord: there is no other word than His word, no other logic than the logic created by Him, nor any meaning to

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[7] Cornelius Van Til: *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*. (Nutley, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976.) p. 37.

anything but that ordained by Him. The universe is His creation. God and His word governs us. There is no independent man nor logic, no independent source of knowledge. When man insists on "proving" God, he is in essence proving himself to be an independent source of truth and an ultimate judge over reality. His real "proof" is not of the existence of God but of his own ultimacy, independence, and power of judgment. He is saying to God of himself, "Touch not mine anointed" (I Chron. 16:22), for the anointed one in all such thinking is man himself.

To abstract logic, reason, man, or anything else from God and His eternal decree is to remove God from the world and to leave man in charge. Then the Bible ceases to be the law of God and becomes merely an available spiritual resource, and man's word becomes authoritative for man. This, however, is simply the premise of the fall.

4. The Incomprehensibility of God

When we talk about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, it is usually assumed, by churchmen and others, that we are talking about the doctrines relevant to one particular institution among many, the church, an ecclesiastical institution. This assumption tells us clearly why the church is dead and in need of resurrection.

Such thinking marked the Syrians of old, who said of the Lord, and of Israel, "Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they" (I Kings 20:23). They were polytheistic; they therefore localized the God of Israel in the hills, very much as modern churchmen localize Him within the church. But God the Lord is not only maker of heaven and earth but the only source of true knowledge, law, and government for all things therein. Every area of life has an equal duty to be Christian. There are no boundaries in the universe to limit God's government and word, and to point to a separate power and jurisdiction beyond them. Hell itself is absolutely determined and governed by God the King, and for any man to limit the scope of God's jurisdiction means to deny Him. The unconcern of churchmen with the totality of life is a form of polytheism, because it gives us a god for the church only, one whose jurisdiction does not extend to the hills and plains, to the state and the schools, the arts and the sciences, and all things else.

The prophets are eloquent in declaring that God requires faith and obedience of every man and institution. They never assume for a moment that the state is not a religious institution. Baal worship is an evil in the family, the school, the state, and every other area as it is in the temple. We cannot escape this total requirement of obedience by saying, "Those laws apply to the Old Testament and to the theocracy alone." Theocracy means *the rule of God*. Did God abdicate when the New Testament was given? Are we any the less under

the rule of the triune God now? Has God grown weak, old, and too impotent to rule, i.e., too old to be God?

The Great Commission makes clear that the incarnate Son is a part of that theocratic rule: *all* power, *all* authority in heaven and in earth, is given to Him (Matt. 28:18-20). What we have in the New Testament is not an abdication of the theocracy but the plan for its extension to the whole world: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations..."

This means that, because the doctrine of God is a theological question, it is also a matter of politics, education, the arts and sciences, personal and social life, and all things else. How we view God will determine how we view everything. Because "The new gospel is humanity; the new God is man,"[8] every area of our lives has been in process of reorganization in terms of that false gospel. This is as true of the church as of the state and school. The sovereignty of man means the necessary rule of the word of man in every domain. Those who hold to the sovereignty of God thus can never rest content with a humanistic world, nor with the rule of humanism in church, state, school, family, the arts and sciences, vocations, or anything else. The necessary implication of sovereignty is total jurisdiction.

To speak of the sovereignty of God means also to speak of His incomprehensibility. Because God is sovereign, omnipotent, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all His perfection, it means that to talk of such a God is to speak of one who is incomprehensible to man. Man the creature can never comprehend or know exhaustively such a God. He can, however, know God truly, although not exhaustively. God's perfection makes Him totally self-consistent, and God's revelation of Himself in His written word and in the incarnate Word give us a true knowledge of God. To grasp the totality of His nature and being exhaustively would require a mind equal to God, an impossibility. Our knowledge of God increases as we grow in faith and obedience, but, because He is infinite and eternal, His incomprehensibility never diminishes.

This doctrine has very practical implications. Such a God is self-contained: He is not dependent on nor does He owe anything to man: "Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. 115:3). It is God's decree which controls man and the universe, not man's decree which governs and controls God and the cosmos. This means, practically, that God's word, not man's, is law. As Van Til has shown,

> This modern view is based on the assumption that man is the ultimate reference point in his own predication. When, therefore, man cannot know anything, it follows that nothing can be known. All things being related, all things must be exhaustively known or nothing can be known. And only Reformed theology clearly sets off the Christian position over

[8] Wilbur C. Abbott: *The New Barbarians*. (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1925.) p. 55.

> against all forms of the non-Christian view because it alone makes God the ultimate reference point in all predication.[9]

Man's position, when he makes himself ultimate, leads to a radical rationalism and irrationalism. He must either know all things exhaustively, or else he must hold that nothing can be known. When we hold, however, that God is the ultimate reference point, then we declare that all things are rational because they are the creation of the triune God, who knows them exhaustively. We, on the other hand, can have valid and consistent knowledge of all things, but not an exhaustive knowledge.

Because God is ultimate, His every word is the binding word; it is law. Van Til has called attention to our Lord's view of the Old Testament:

> In John 10 we are told that the Jews wanted to stone Jesus. They charged him with blasphemy because he had made himself as God. In reply to them, Jesus simply appeals to the Old Testament. He says, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods?" (v. 34). The passage Jesus quotes is found in Psalm 82:6. This proves that the term "law" was, for Jesus' purpose, identical with Scripture as a whole. And of this law, or Scripture, Jesus then says that it cannot be broken. It is therefore the final court of appeal. Any passage of Scripture must, according to Jesus, be thought of as having "irrefragable authority." Warfield says: "What we have here is, therefore, the strongest possible assertion of the indefectible authority of Scripture; precisely what is true of Scripture is that it cannot be broken."[10]

The binding word and power in all of society thus must come not from man but from God. The nature and structure of institutions and society must be determined by the law word of God.

Theology is thus more than the queen of the sciences; it defines what the sciences are. The word of God is the word of truth, and it is the defining word. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Because the world was created and defined by God, all things thus much be understood in terms of Him.

Not only is God's word the defining word, it is also the ordering word. All things have their structure and order from God, so that to avoid bringing any area of life under the dominion of God is to declare war against His law order.

This means, practically, that one facet of the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God is that no institution can comprehend Him. To limit the jurisdiction of God and His word to institutions of worship is to hold that God is comprehended, more or less, within the walls of a chapel, and within the members thereof. But God cannot be comprehended within church and state, nor any other institution, nor within the universe, His creation. Neither the sacraments nor the courts of law can comprehend the triune God:

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9. Cornelius Van Til: *Introduction to Systematic Theology*. p. 161.
10. Ibid., p. 151.

they can be faithful to Him, but no more. He can be described and known in His self-revelation, but He cannot be comprehended. Church and state can be faithful to God and can declare His word in their sphere, but they can never associate their boundaries with God Himself.

There are thus no limits to what is religious, because there are no limits to God. To speak of God as incomprehensible is therefore simply to declare that He is God, the God of Scripture, and beside Him there is none other (Isa. 45:5).

5. God's Eternalness

Turning again to Exodus 3:13-15, we find that God speaks of Himself as the "I AM THAT I AM," i.e., as the eternal one. The triune God is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). In past, present, and future, He is still the same, for He is "the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). He is beyond time. Time means change, but God the Lord does not change (Mal. 3:6). Because God is the creator of time and the universe, all things in time and space are open and naked to His sight. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

A central aspect of man's sin, his desire to be his own god (Gen. 3:5), is his effort to arrest time and eternalize it and thereby become an eternal being and god. The goal of modern society is the Great Community. Whether conceived in terms of Marxism or existentialism, it is a final order. Man plans to institute a permanent order, conquer sickness, poverty, divisions, and death, and therefore attain an abiding order, a facade of eternity. When we analyze much of philosophy, and especially literature, we see that to many the problem is *mutability*, time. Humanistic man moves in two directions as he struggles with the problem of time, and in both his motive is in essence the same. *First*, man the sinner seeks to make time central and determinative of all things, which means that man, the central creature in time, is determinative and central. God and eternity are under-rated or denied, and the key to meaning is within time. If God is allowed any relevance, it is to the degree that He is temporalized and made an aspect of the ascent of being in time. If the emphasis is Platonic, and ideas are the key, ideas are real insofar as they are within time and embodied in history. For such a perspective, the eternal God of Scripture is irrelevant or "dead." Whatsoever is real is real to the degree that it is within history and a product of time and history.

Second, having identified reality and determination with time, man then sees time as something which the new god, man, must somehow overcome and eternalize. The anthill and the beehive have long been familiar symbols of occult groups, as well as models of some political thought. Man sees the *unchanging* as a close approximation of *the eternal*, and hence he works to

smash every hint of God's order and then to erect the final human order, man and his society eternalized.

Thus man both exalts time above eternity and at the same time wages war against both time and eternity. He resents God's eternity, because it is not man's, and he resents time, because it limits him and underscores his creatureliness. God is eternal, and time is His creation. Therefore, both time and eternity are hated by fallen man. The problem of man is thus seen as time and creatureliness, finitude, not sin. As a result, man wars against the very source of his salvation because he denies both God and His salvation. Man's salvation lies elsewhere, supposedly.

God's eternity places Him above man's reach and government. Greek theology spoke of God as *passionless*. The term is valid, insofar as it refers to the fact that God is beyond time and change; He cannot be governed nor affected by the factors of His own creation. The term is invalid insofar as it carries the Greek connotation of a somewhat impersonal deity, one who is essentially a first cause rather than a person. The term is thus best avoided as having untenable connotations. God is the absolute person, and hence emphatically a person. The terms used to describe the wrath, mercy, and grace of God clearly suggest and require strong personal feelings. At the same time, we are reminded often that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither His ways, our ways (Isa. 55:8). The term *passion* suggests man's changeability and variableness; the term *passionless* suggests the absence of personality. Both terms are inadmissible in discussing God, because they suggest conditions and ideals which are humanistic rather than theological. We do not understand God by applying our ideas to Him, but by applying ourselves to His word. Terms from various philosophies can at times be apt summaries of Biblical doctrine, but, at other times, as with the use of the word *passionless*, both sides of the controversy involve us in a false antithesis.

On the other hand, the term *aseity* is valid, because it sums up the doctrine of God's eternity and sovereignty. God alone has being by and of Himself; He is uncreated and eternal, whereas all other beings are dependent in their existence on God the creator. To speak of God's aseity is to imply and require predestination. Because God is eternal and uncreated being, and in no wise dependent on any creature, all the conditions, factors, and consequences of creation are totally a part of God's eternal decree. Nebuchadnezzar saw this clearly and declared of 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)

The aseity of God means the radical and total dependence of all creation on God and His decree. No foreseen or unforeseen act of the creature in

independence of the Creator is possible. The doctrine of creation by the fiat word of God, in six days, requires the doctrine of predestination; it is grounded in the aseity of God.

The eternity of God, and the doctrine of creation which sets a distinction between the uncreated Being of God and the created being of all things else in heaven and on earth, is thus also a declaration of the fact that God is unchangeable, independent, and sovereign. He is beyond time and change, and hence unchangeable; time and change are His creation. The fact that He is eternal and the creator makes Him independent of all His creation and absolute Lord over time, space, and history. He is sovereign, because nothing exists apart from His decree or in the slightest shadow or variation therefrom.

It is because the essence of sin is its revolution against God, and its declaration of independence from Him, that men reject the doctrines of creation and of God's eternity and aseity. *A created world is a dependent world*; a world which is the product of chance is a chaotic but independent world, although it is also a meaningless world in which man and his independence are a futile passion. Where creationism is denied, man and the state declare independence from God and seek to replace Him with themselves.

The essence of modern thought is this declaration of independence from God, and hence an assertion of the aseity of the universe. This was often asserted in company with high-sounding moral sententiousness, as witness the case of the corrupt and homosexual Francis Bacon, who wrote in magisterial terms. Stampfer has observed of Bacon:

> When his negotiations are finished, the universe–the world of things–is in business for itself. We will shape, experience, and know it at our pleasure–let God be circumspect in His complaints. A generation later, Hobbes more aggressively projected a world of eternally bouncing mini-marbles, with no play of spirit at all, to be choreographed by Isaac Newton in the eternal dance of matter.[11]

When man and the universe are in business for themselves, then aseity is transferred from the Creator to the creation, to the creature. In politics, religion, education, family life, and in all society, this demand for aseity becomes a governing force. "I want to be me" becomes a battle cry, and it means freedom from responsibility and from all ties, moral and human. Politically, it means revolutionary anarchism no matter what other label it carries.

The roots of all this are, of course, religious. They arise out of false and compromising theologies which limit God's sovereignty and aseity, or openly replace it with man's claims. Where God is limited, an institution, church or

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[11] Judah Stampfer: *Face and Shadow*. (New York, N. Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1971.) p. 61f.

state, takes over for Him and rules in pretended sovereignty as God's visible and divine power. Where God is replaced, the institutions and man begin to speak ex cathedra, and man looks to man, the state, and the school for healing and salvation.

The doctrine of God's eternalness is basic to any understanding of the faith. Without this doctrine, men are all humanists.

6. The Aseity of God

Calvin has been rightly praised by Van Til and Warfield for his important development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Calvin's *Institutes* made clear that, in rejecting subordinationism, we must also maintain the aseity or *autotheotes* of each person of the Trinity. Warfield wrote:

> In his assertion of the *autotheotes* of the Son, Calvin, then, was so far from supposing that he was enunciating a novelty that he was able to quote the Nicene Fathers themselves as asserting it "in so many words." And yet in his assertion of it he marks an epoch in the history of the doctrine of the Trinity. Not that men had not before believed in the self-existence of the Son as He is God: but that the current modes of stating the doctrine of the Trinity left a door open for the entrance of defective modes of conceiving the deity of the Son, to close which there was needed some such sharp assertion of His absolute deity as was supplied by the assertion of His *autotheotes*.[12]

This means that, as Van Til shows very clearly:

> We speak of God as a person; yet we speak also of three persons in the Godhead. As we say that each of the attributes of God is to be identified with the being of God, while yet we are justified in making a distinction between them, so we say that each of the persons of the Trinity is exhaustive of divinity itself, while yet there is a genuine distinction between the persons. Unity and plurality are equally ultimate in the Godhead. The persons of the Godhead are mutually exhaustive of one another, and therefore of the essence of the Godhead. God is a one-conscious being, and yet he is also a tri-conscious being.[13]

What is the practical import of this for us? We can begin to understand it by turning to a comment by a Jesuit theologian, Father Edmund J. Fortman. Like many other theologians, Fortman "detects" Sabellianism in Tillich.[14] Let us consider the implications of this. Tillich was a man who rejected every orthodox doctrine of Scripture. For him, God was neither personal nor non-personal, and "has" neither being nor non-being. The term "God" was for him simply a useful bag in which to toss in an entirely new content.[15] Tillich, a

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[12] Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield: *Calvin and Calvinism.* (New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1931.) p. 283f.

[13] Cornelius Van Til: *An Introduction to Systematic Theology.* p. 220.

[14] Edmund J. Fortman: *The Triune God, A Historical Study of Doctrine of the Trinity.* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1972.) p. 267.

systematically immoral man, despised Biblical sexual and marital laws, among other things, and practiced adultery as a way of life.[16] To discuss the ideas of Tillich as examples of Christian theology is comparable to considering Cain and Judas as models of discipleship and obedience. Why is it done, and what is the appeal of Biblical and theological terminology to obvious atheists? Tillich was a very able man, but his sympathies were radically hostile to Biblical faith. Why did he use the language of theology and its form? His concern was in reality with man, not God, with anthropology, not theology.

Let us glance now at a report of a Tillich sermon in 1965 at Stanford University:

> Dr. Paul Tillich, an internationally known theologian, told worshippers Sunday at Stanford University Memorial Church that the ultimate hope of mankind should be for "participation in the eternal."
>
> However, explained the University of Chicago professor, "This does not mean hope for immortality."
>
> "This is a foolish hope, for no finite being can genuinely hope for eternal life."
>
> Dr. Tillich, guest in residence through Tuesday at the Stern Hall dormitory, offered these ideas in a sermon "The Right to Hope" to an estimated 1,000 people attending standing-room only services in the spacious church.....
>
> Dr. Tillich cautioned that "Christians should never forget that throughout the Old Testament, hope was never for eternal life, but for this life."
>
> "The old belief in the unity of all human races, now that they have diverged so far, has become a genuine hope for their reunion," he said.
>
> Man now controls this world to a high degree and he can "actualize all given to him to limitless possibilities," he said.
>
> "But does this answer the hope of generations past?":
>
> Dr. Tillich suggested that the hope of such progress is justified only if such progress has a higher meaning and aim: The participation in the eternal. "Such participation," he concluded, "is given to those who are in unity with the universe: All are in us and we are in them."[17]

First, Tillich's goal is the unity of man, and, in this unity, a conquest of time and participation in the eternal. This is simply the same goal as that of the

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[15] See Paul Tillich: *Systematic Theology*. (Chicago, IL.: The University of Chicago Press, 1951 and 1957.) Vol. I and II; and Paul Tillich: *The New Being*. (New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.)

[16] See Hannah Tillich: *From Time to Time*. (New York, N.Y.: Stein and Day, 1973.) and Rollo May: *Paulus*. (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1973.)

[17] Keith Hearn, *"Sermon at Stanford, Leading Theologian Views Man's Quest."* (Palo Alto, CA: Palo Alto Times.) Monday, January 25, 1965. p. 24.

builders of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), but they were more honest than Tillich, and openly anti-God. *Second*, Tillich in all his thinking reduces God to impotence and opens the door for man's "limitless possibilities." For him, man's "hope" and goal is precisely the realization of these "limitless possibilities." Tillich has rightfully seen that religion is ultimate concern, but for him ultimate concern is not the triune God of Scripture but man's "anticipation in the eternal." Man's problem for Tillich is not sin but finitude, and the answer is to be "infinitely concerned." For Tillich, "The one thing needed–this is the first and in some sense the last answer I can give–is to be concerned ultimately, unconditionally, infinitely."[18] Our problem is finitude, and "no life and *no* period are able to overcome finiteness, sin, and tragedy." In spite of this, we belong "to the eternal order," Because every man has "the infinite within him," and "Our despair itself, our inability to escape ourselves in life and in death, witnesses to our infinite." Thus we live in two realms or orders.[19] According to Scripture, we are entirely creatures, and our lives are entirely within time and creation. (For Greek thought, man belonged to two orders, ideas and matter, or, eternity and time.) How did Tillich see man as participating in the eternal? By perfecting his own eternal decree, controlling his world fully and actualizing "all given to him to limitless possibilities," as he told his Stanford audience, and by finding and realizing the unity of all human races. God is totally inoperative, and man is then totally operative.

Third, Tillich has retained thus the facade of Christian theology in order to provide a limiting concept for his philosophy, *i.e.*, to provide an orderly stage for man's operation, without any explicit or implicit liabilities for man. By denying God, man does not thereby leave himself as still a creature. He denies God in order to open the door to his own claim to be god (Gen. 3:5). The "content" of God but without the person of God must be retained for man's expropriation. As a result, the more intelligent and the more sophisticated the unbelief, the more necessary it finds it to retain the forms of Biblical theology.

Let us turn now to another thinker, an evangelical scholar, Robert L. Reymond, to consider the implications of his position as they appear in a review by Countess, who writes:

> Having conceded indebtedness to both Clark and Van Til, he (Reymond) now reviews the 1945 conflict between these men over epistemology. Van Til insists that man can know nothing as God knows it. God knows univocally, man only analogically. "We dare not maintain that (God's) knowledge and our knowledge coincide *at any single point.*" When Van Til asserts that he refused to make any attempt at stating clearly any Christian doctrine because he desires to defend Christianity, Reymond exclaims: "This is an incredible statement!" Van Til's analogous knowledge becomes no knowledge at all, and this is what Clark has

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[18] Paul Tillich: *The New Being*. p. 159.

[19] Paul Tillich: The Shaking of the Foundation. (New York: N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948.) p. 22f.

> charged. In addition Reymond draws a noteworthy parallel: "Exceedingly strange it is that as ardent a foe of Barthian irrationalism as is Van Til, he comes nevertheless to the same conclusion concerning the nature of truth for man as does Barth."
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> But neither does Clark escape Reymond's razor. He too is a presuppositionalist. For the Christian apologist, "only arguments whose conclusions follow necessarily from correct premises and therefore which give formally valid demonstrations" are to be embraced. Clark's supreme major premise for all his deductions is that "the Bible is the Word of God."[20]

These are indeed startling words. What Van Til does is to state clearly all Christian doctrine in terms, not of any supposed identity of the minds of God and man, but in terms of God's self-revelation. He permits no coincidence or confusion between the mind of God and the mind of man. In terms of Chalcedon and Scripture, Van Til sees the incarnation as a unique event, a union of the two natures and beings without confusion. The intellectuals of the church want to breach that gap between God and man through the intellect. God declares it to be bridged only in Christ. In addition, we have God's revelation of Himself in Scripture: although that revealed word came through men, and partook of their personalities, the word was from God; Peter tells us that the prophets themselves studied that word, trying to understand its meaning (I Peter 1:10-12). Daniel also declares more than once his failure to understand fully what he set down (Daniel 12:4,8,9; 8:27; 10:21).

In brief, we do not share the mind of God, nor have in any sense the same being or content, but we receive the revelation of God, and we understand it, as creatures. That knowledge is inescapable knowledge, because we are creatures, and every atom of our being witnesses to the Creator. That knowledge is also always creaturely knowledge, and it is never the same kind of knowledge as God has. According to Countess, Reymond has an answer:

> His proposed solution to the Van Tillian dilemma is that the creature and the Creator do have knowledge that coincides as far as content is concerned, but man is never able to know a fact exhaustively. "The solution to all of Van Til's difficulties is to affirm, as Scripture teaches, that both God and man share the same concept of truth and the same theory of language."[21]

How can man's knowledge coincide with God's? God knows the end and the beginning, and His sovereign purpose from all eternity in the creation of every fact. Man's knowledge can never coincide with that. Not only does man have no ability to know anything exhaustively, he can never know anything

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[20] Review of Robert L. Reymond's: *The Justification of Knowledge*, by Robert H. Countess, "A *New Era Or a New World.*" (Christianity Today.) Vol. XXII, no. 4, November 18, 1977, p. 34 (300).

[21] Ibid., p. 35 (301).

creatively as God does, nor absolutely, nor in any other way have a coincidence of content. The difference between God and man cannot be bridged by the mind of man.

But man the theologian wants to make an end-run around Scripture and Chalcedon. He wants some kind of "participation in the eternal," or some kind of coincidence with the mind of God. If he is denied this, and is reminded of his creaturely status and knowledge, he reacts with dismay, as though the faith were denied. And indeed that faith is denied, the faith of the builders of Babel, who wanted to reach unto heaven and achieve a coincidence with the God they hated and denied. Not in his knowledge, being, politics, or anything else can man enter into the aseity or *autotheotes* of the three persons of the Godhead.

Chalcedon, by affirming the Creator-creature distinction of Scripture, provides a barrier. Even in the incarnation of God the Son, who was "at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood," we must recognize the union of "two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ."[22]

The mind of man cannot bridge that gap between God's uncreated being and mind and itself. To know as God knows is impossible for man. Man knows as God ordains that man shall know, by His revelation in His word, and by His creation, which manifests His glory, order, grace, and law. Calvin's insistence here is very much to the point. He insisted,

> On this, indeed, if on any of the secret mysteries of the Scripture, we ought to philosophize with great sobriety and moderation; and also with extreme caution, lest either our ideas or our language should proceed beyond the limits of the Divine word. For how can the infinite essence of God be defined by the narrow capacity of the human mind, which could never yet certainly determine the nature of the body of the sun, though the object of our daily contemplation? How can the human mind, by its own efforts, penetrate into an examination of the essence of God, when it is totally ignorant of its own? Wherefore let us freely leave to God the knowledge of himself. For "he alone," as Hilary says, "is a competent witness for himself, being only known by himself." And we shall certainly leave it to him, if our conceptions of him correspond to the manifestations which he has given of himself, and our inquiries concerning him are confined to his word.[23]

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22. Henry Bettenson, editors: *Documents of the Christian Church.* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1943.) p. 73.

23. John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936.) Book I, Chap. XIII, xxi; vol. 1, p. 162f.

Orthodox theologians, at Nicaea, Constantinople, Chalcedon, and elsewhere through the centuries, have dealt with the issue, not in any attempt to penetrate the mind of God, but to erect barriers against such attempts by heretics. Berkhof noted this, observing of the true church, "It has never tried to explain the mystery of the Trinity, but only sought to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity in such a manner that the errors which endangered it were warded off."[24]

Calvin's insistence on the aseity of the Son thus barred the door to the use of the Son as a means of access by man into the life of the Godhead. We must add that a like emphasis on the aseity of God the Spirit is the answer to some of the Pentecostal and charismatic efforts at penetration. Whether with Tillich, Reymond, or some of the charismatics, there is a discontent with God's self-revelation and an insistence on man's independent exploration, penetration, or participation in the eternal. This amounts to looking into a dark mirror and participating in their own reflection.

As Van Til points out, God is a triunity. He is one Person, and yet He is three Persons, each a distinct Person and yet each "exhaustive of divinity itself." He is one conscious being, and yet He is at the same time also tri-conscious. He is the ultimate One and the ultimate Many. There is nothing beyond Him nor beside Him, nothing equal to Him or, like Him, uncreated Being. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Because He is totally personal, no abstract principle of unity or particularity, of truth or of being, exists apart from or in Him. Because He is totally personal, truth, being, unity, and particularity are personal. We know all things in terms of Him (I John 2:20). As David declares, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:9).

Man as a sinner seeks independence from God. This is the essence of original sin (Gen. 3:5). But man soon finds out that he cannot sustain himself; his world collapses into meaninglessness. As a result, man, while implicitly or explicitly denying God, seeks all the same to retain God as a resource, as a rich mine to be tapped endlessly for the gold of the realm. Man seeks the hoped for benefits of rebellion, as well as the benefits of God's being, without God Himself. The goal is to marry heaven and hell with man as king. But God the Lord remains, and the times of judgment.

7. Idolatry

John Calvin, in chapter XI of Book I of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, writes on the "Unlawfulness of Ascribing to God a Visible Form. All Idolatry a Defection from the True God." He made clear that the

[24] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946.) p. 89.

prohibition against idolatry applies to all images of God, whether physical images made by human hands, or intellectual images fashioned by philosophers. Only God can speak with truth and authority concerning Himself, and all men's speculations involve idolatry. In Calvin's words,

> Now, as the Scripture, in consideration of the ignorance and dullness of the human understanding, generally speaks in the plainest manner,–where it intends to discriminate between the true God and all false gods, it principally contrasts him with idols; not that it may sanction the more ingenious and plausible systems of the philosophers, but that it may better detect the folly and even madness of the world in researches concerning God, as long as every one adheres to his own speculations. That exclusive definition, therefore, which every where occurs, reduces to nothing whatever notions of the Deity men may form in their own imaginations; since God alone is a sufficient witness concerning himself. In the mean time, since the whole world has been seized with such brutal stupidity, as to be desirous of visible representations of the Deity, and thus to fabricate gods of wood, stone, gold, silver, and other inanimate and corruptible materials, we ought to hold this as a certain principle, that, whenever any image is made as a representation of God, the Divine glory is corrupted by an impious falsehood. Therefore God, in the law, after having asserted the glory of Deity to belong exclusively to himself, when he intends to show what worship he approves or rejects, immediately adds, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness."[25]

Idolatry has often received intellectual justification. Thus, Hindu idols are often described by some defendants as a visual instruction concerning God: several hands to indicate omnipotence, an extra eye to declare the god to be all-seeing, and so on. The answer to these statements is an obvious one: Hindu religion has no omnipotent and all-seeing God, so that attempts to justify the idols in terms of Biblical concepts are absurd. Moreover, the Bible clearly forbids idolatry in any and every form. The prohibition is law. It gives us case law: if a simple physical image is forbidden (Deut. 5:8-10), how much more so an elaborate intellectual image?

The presupposition behind idolatry is that man can know God exhaustively and fully, and as an object of knowledge. But God is not an object to be known and studied, like a tree or a lion. He is the Creator, by whom all things are made. He is the only ground of knowledge as Creator, and He Himself is beyond man's created and finite ability to know exhaustively and fully. Man cannot escape the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:18-21), because all creation is His handiwork and manifests His glory, but man cannot know God exhaustively.

Idolatry presupposes man's ability to know God exhaustively and definitely, but God declares that He alone can declare His own counsel. As Isaiah declares,

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[25] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. I, ch. XL, I; vol. 1, p. 114.

> 13. Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?
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> 14. With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? (Isa. 40:13-14)

If no man can enter into the counsel of the Lord, how then can any man define Him?

But this is not all. Idolatry can exist where only the Bible is used as the material for an image. If our use of Scripture is partial or limited, then it is not the whole word of God which informs and shapes our doctrine of God. We can use the materials of Scripture selectively to construct a false image of God. Most heresies begin with a partial use of Scripture and end with an alien faith.

Again, a false emphasis can lead to idolatry. Systematic theology distinguishes, as Van Til does so clearly, between the ontological Trinity and the economical Trinity, that is, between the Trinity in its own being or ontology, and the Trinity in its revelation and manifestation towards us. Arminianism stresses the economic Trinity, the triune God in His relationship to us, as Savior in particular. The result is a loss of perspective and a rapid decline into humanism. This emphasis leads to man-centered religion. God exists to save and glorify man, and to enjoy man forever. God becomes man's greatest resource, and the focus of such religion becomes fire and life insurance, the care, protection, and safety of man. All the emphasis in piety is placed on a denatured Jesus, and God in Himself remains in the background. Man's salvation becomes the goal of religion, not God's glory and purpose. Such a religion is idolatrous, although it uses Biblical materials in constructing its man-made image. Its emphasis is on man and man's experience, man's life, not on God and His glory.

Similarly, hyper-Calvinism is commonly guilty of idolatry. It sees clearly the sins and idolatries of Arminianism, but it emphasizes the ontological Trinity, or God in His sovereign being, His eternal decree, His unapproachable glory, and His eternity to the eclipsing of the economy of the Trinity, the Trinity in its work of creation and redemption. The result is an indifference to history, a lack of cultural consciousness, not unlike that of the mystics they oppose.

But, while the priority of the ontological life of the Trinity to the economical aspects is obvious, it is equally obvious that Scripture gives us no ground whatsoever for concentrating on either one to the exclusion of the other. It is idolatry and sin to limit God by concentrating on His revelation of Himself as Redeemer, but it is also idolatry and sin to probe the secret things of God, and to make them our preoccupation. Moses declares, "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).

In the economy of the Trinity, there is at times a subordination of persons; thus, God the Son becomes the suffering Servant (Isa. 53) who gives His life, in obedience to the Father, as a ransom for many. He thereby manifests as, God, God's faithfulness to the covenant, and, as man, man's obedience thereto. This subordination of God the Son is a subordination of action, not of being. He is of one substance, nature, and being with the Father and the Spirit. We cannot read a subordination of *action* into the *being* of the Trinity: economy is not ontology. *However, we cannot use ontology to under-rate economy.* The church fathers wisely saw this fact in Scripture and spoke of the Second Person as eternally the Son. God's economy is not an afterthought to His ontology. It was not two nor six thousand years ago that it occurred to the triune God that creation and redemption might be a good idea. Paul declares that God "hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), and Peter speaks of Christ as "foreordained before the foundation of the world" (I Peter 1:20).

Thus, we cannot know the triune God simply in terms of His action in history, nor can we know Him simply in His being. To emphasize either at the expense of the other aspect is to falsify God's word and to create an idol. God declares Himself at one and the same time to be He Who Is, I AM THAT I AM, the eternal one, and also the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God who acts in history and reveals Himself to man (Ex. 3:14-15). We cannot concentrate on either the economical or the ontological life of the Trinity without falsification. The consequences of so doing are distortion and idolatry. God reveals Himself in His economy and ontology, *i.e.*, His actions manifest Who He is, and we are not able to separate the two without falsification. Man's interests and concerns lead him to concentrate on that aspect of God and His word which most suits his tastes, and the result is idolatry.

However, it is not only the result but the cause which is idolatry. Calvin denied the common opinion that idolatry originated in ancestor worship. "The true state of the case is, that the mind of man, being full of pride and temerity, dares to conceive of God according to its own standard."[26] Man the sinner is an idolater: he worships himself, although he often disguises this self-worship by projecting it on something which is his handiwork: an image, physical or intellectual.

That false image can also be an institution, and both church and state can become idols. We have the common doctrine that the church is the continuation of the incarnation, so that, by means of this error, which denies the uniqueness of Christ and His incarnation, the church becomes an idol.

[26] Ibid., Bk. I, ch. XI, VIII; vol. I, p. 122f.

Again we are told of this institution of worship, the Christian synagogue, that it is the body of Christ. Such a statement seems Scriptural. After all, Ephesians 1:23 and Colossians 1:18 seem to say so. But *the church* in these cases is clearly the totality of God's Kingdom, not the one portion of it known as the institution for organized worship. However, I Cor. 12:27 seems to refer to a single congregation, or does it? The context is a discussion of spiritual gifts, and the fact that the Lord endows with various gifts His community. "The body is one, and hath many members" (I Cor. 12:12). Paul is not dealing with the local congregation as in essence an institution but as a living community. Community and institution are not identical terms; a community can also be one or more institutions, but an institution is not necessarily a community. Paul's concern is that the covenant people recognize that, above all else, they are a community and members one of another. As such, their life is not in the institution nor in themselves but in Jesus Christ, who is both the head and the body. The focus of Paul's comments is thus not in the institution, nor even in the community and its members, but in Christ.

Now, to make that institution, or the community, itself the Body of Christ is idolatry. Christ is Himself the Head, the Body, and the life, and we are grafted into the life of the Lord (Rom. 11:17-21) by His sovereign grace. Thus, when Paul says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:27), he says that we are Christ's possession, because the body is "of Christ," *i.e.*, it is *His* body, and we are particular members thereof by grace, not by nature. Our *gifts* as members are from God the Spirit, not from ourselves (I Cor. 12:4), so that it is wrong to reduce that body to its human grafted aspects. To do so is idolatry. Calvin makes clear that, "whatever belongs to the Deity, should not be transferred to another."

> We said, at the beginning, that the knowledge of God consists not in frigid speculation, but is accompanied by the worship of him. We also cursorily touched on the right method of worshipping him, which will be more fully explained in other places. I now only repeat, in few words, that whenever the Scripture asserts that there is but one God, it contends not for the bare name, but also teaches, that whatever belongs to the Deity, should not be transferred to another. This shows how pure religion differs from idolatry.[27]

God is clear: we can have no other gods before Him (Ex. 20:3). Idolatry is forbidden. All images, intellectual, institutional, and physical, are barred as idolatry. To take His name in vain is also forbidden, because to invoke God's name for vain purposes is to put Him to idolatrous use.

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[27] Ibid., Bk. I, ch. XII, I; vol. I, p. 132.

8. God the Father

It is an implicit subordinationism and Unitarianism which limits the word *God* to the Father. God is the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. In speaking of God, we speak of one who is beyond the comprehension of our minds, and we need therefore to depend exclusively upon His self-revelation in His word for any verbal description. It is very true that "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1), but we are not able to comprehend the vastness nor the full nature of creation, let alone the Creator. Some have said that dim aspects of the universe are remotely grasped, not by words, but by mathematics, so difficult are they to express. When the works of creation are so beyond comprehension, to seek to comprehend God the Creator is insanity. We must take Him at His word.

God Himself makes this clear repeatedly. Isaiah 40:28 declares, "there is no searching of his understanding." In Isaiah 40:25, God asks, "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." God is incomprehensible; He is beyond our ability to comprehend and grasp, because there is nothing comprehensible by our minds to which or to whom He can be compared. As a result, our minds fail and falter as we contemplate God; the terms we of necessity apply to Him, as required by Scripture, are themselves beyond us, and the terms are but faint echoes of His being and glory. We only dimly understand the meaning of *eternal, infinite*, and *omnipotent*, to cite but three terms; their meanings go beyond our minds, and yet we are aware of their direction.

Thus, when we speak of the triune God, we are speaking of more than we can comprehend. True, we have the insanely proud pretensions of some philosophers and theologians who insist on the comprehensibility of God, but Proverbs 26:4, 5 gives the answer to all such:

> 4. Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.
> 5. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

As Delitzsch pointed out, v. 4 means that, if we take a fool seriously, and treat him as a learned and wise man, we too become fools, but, rather, we must answer him as due to his folly, as a fool, to undercut his self-importance (v. 5).[28]

If it is difficult to speak of the Trinity, how much more difficult to speak of the three Persons, except in terms of God's own declaration? The Scriptures give us much of the economical life of God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,

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[28] Franz Delitzsch: *Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950.) Vol. II, p. 176.

of their actions in history, but God the Father is less readily described. Thus, L. Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology*, gives less than a page to the separate consideration of God the Father. Even this brief section is not without its problems. The name "Father" as applied to God in Scripture sometimes means the entire Trinity. *First*, the name *Father* is used of the triune God as the origin of all creation, as in Heb. 12:9 and James l:17, although there may be an emphasis on the First Person of the Trinity. *Second*, the term "Father" describes the Trinity in its relationship to the covenant people of the Old Testament, as in Deut. 32:6; Isa. 63:16; 64:8, Jer. 3:4; and Mal. 1:6; 2:10. *Third*, there is a similar usage of *Father* for the Trinity in relationship to the covenant people in the New Testament, as in Matt. 5:45; 6:6-15; Rom. 8:16; and I John 3:1. These usages are theocratic, ethical, and typical. However, as Berkhof pointed out, the *fourth* usage is different. The relationship of the Father to the Son (John 1:14, 18; 5:17-26; 8:54; 14:12, 13) is metaphysical. The distinctive property of God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, is that he is the Father, the generator of the Son, which is not an event in remote eternity, but a timeless and eventless relationship from all eternity (Micah 5:2; John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 5:17, 18, 30, 36; Acts 13:33; John 17:5; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3).

What more can Berkhof say of God the Father? He summarized it thus:

> All the *opera ad extra* of God are works of the triune God, but in some of these works the Father is evidently in the foreground, such as (1) Designing the work of redemption, including election, of which the Son was Himself an object, Ps. 2:7-9; 40: 6-9; Isa. 53:10; Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:3-6. (2) The works of creation and providence, especially in their initial stages, I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 2:9. (3) The work of representing the Trinity in the Counsel of Redemption, as the holy and righteous Being, whose right was violated, Ps. 2:7-9; 40:6-9; John 6:37, 38; 17:4-7. [29]

It is clear from this how feeble our knowledge is; Berkhof wrote carefully and clearly, and he made no attempt to inflate our information.

Shall we conclude, as some have, that we know very little of God? Shall we say, because our knowledge of the ontological Trinity is so dim, that we do not really know God? On the contrary: we must say, because of Scripture, and because of God's general revelation, that we know God better than we know ourselves and the world around us.

Why? Because the economy of God faithfully and truly manifests the ontology of God. Where the world is concerned, I lack dependable knowledge on even the weather. Where I am concerned, I find that the unfolding of my life brings many changes and surprises: clearly, God knows me far better than I know or can know myself.

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[29] L. Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1941) 1946. p. 91.

However, every fragment of knowledge I have concerning God has an infallible and total consistency. He declares, "I am the LORD, I change not." (Mal. 3:6). Thus, as He was, and what He was, to Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Daniel, Paul, John, and Peter, He is today. My mind cannot grasp nor comprehend the being of God, but I can, with all my heart, mind, and being truly know Him and trust in Him. God the Son in His incarnation is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8), and the triune God is no less the same. Thus, Moses can say, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

What then do I know about God the Father? If I seek to know Him as an intellectual insisting on an autonomous mind and rationality, I am wilfully ignorant (Rom. 1:18-21); I have suppressed what knowledge I have. If I seek to know Him as a neoplatonist, I seek knowledge in separation from reality, and from the wholeness of life, and hence false "knowledge."

If I seek to know Him as His covenant child by grace, then my knowledge is greater than myself. My word is an uncertain and a faltering word: I lack absolute knowledge and consistency. God's word is an absolute and a totally consistent word. One small word from God is consistent with all, *i.e.*, with all of God's being and activity, with His ontology and economy, and with His every word and act.

God calls Himself, in the words of Scripture, and in the words of the incarnate Son "Our Father" (Matt. 6:9). All human fatherhood is a faint echo of His Fatherhood (Eph. 3:15). From this one word alone, as declared by the Son, I know more than the theologians can dream of concerning God the Father. The Lord's Prayer alone tells me more about God the Father than I have yet mastered (Matt. 6:9-13)!

I freely and happily confess that I am ignorant about many theologians, but I am not ignorant about God. By His sovereign grace, I am His creation and re-creation, and every atom of my being, and every aspect of creation, echoes the knowledge set forth in His written word.

Some philosophers and theologians will now say that I have shifted the argument from an intellectual to an experiential basis. Is this true? As a Christian, I must oppose both the intellectual and the experiential approaches as deformed. They are implicitly Hellenic and neoplatonist and presuppose a man made up of differing substances, dualistic or tripartite in nature.

It is the whole man who thinks, feels, and experiences, and these things are inseparable. Attempts at their separation and their isolated stress lead to serious errors and deformations. To know God the Father as *Father* means that the whole man, in his thinking, experiencing, and feeling, has knowledge of the First Person of the Trinity.

When we are told by Scripture what God is, our minds may stumble at the incomprehensibility of God, but they still know Him truly. The attributes of

the triune God, His aseity, simplicity, sovereignty, infinity, eternity, omnipresence, immutability, omnipotence, wisdom, holiness, justice, love, mercy, and so on, are terms which sometimes overwhelm me, but, when joined to His own designation of Himself as "Our Father" become totally personal, as He is personal, and they heighten my knowledge of His Fatherhood.

Knowledge is for man, *first* of all, *creaturely* knowledge. Man can never know God as himself a god examining a fellow being. On so limited a thing as God's care for him, David finds himself compelled to say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Ps. 139:6).

Second, knowledge is *covenantal*. We know God and all creation either as covenant-keepers or as covenant-breakers. The covenant is the condition of man's life and inseparable from it. The covenant-breaker will either refuse to know God or he will insist on knowing Him as an object to be examined, redo discovery, by a philosopher-judge or scientist, with the power of decision resting in man's hands.

The only possible knowledge of God the Father is covenant knowledge. Some fragmentary "data", totally misinterpreted because viewed as brute factuality, can be brought into view concerning God the Son, and even less such "data" is available concerning God the Spirit. The historical records concerning their work are, however, viewed in terms of alien presuppositions and their meaning denied. But God the Father remains transcendent. Although no real knowledge of the Trinity is permitted by the covenant-breaker, this is especially true of God the Father. The covenant-breaker suppresses the knowledge (Rom. 1:18-21), because it denies his own claim to be god (Gen. 3:5), and is an indictment unto death of covenant-breaking man.

We must, moreover, hold that *all* knowledge is covenantal. As a result, all attempts by theologians and philosophers to arrive at a knowledge of God *outside* of His covenant and *apart* from His word are in reality denials of knowledge.

9. God the Son

As we turn to the doctrine of God the Son, it is important that our concept of knowledge remain the same.

The goal of Hellenic thought, in seeking knowledge, was to understand *the idea* of things. But the idea of things is an abstraction, not a reality. We cannot know a man and a woman by abstraction, by seeking to know their *idea* or their *flesh or matter* in abstraction from them. We know them as *persons*. Even then, we cannot begin to know them unless we see them as creatures of the triune God, created for His purpose and glory. Because reality is not an

abstraction, neither an idea nor a concourse of atoms, it cannot be truly known if we seek to understand it as an abstraction.

This means that philosophers who seek to know God and His creation as an abstraction, or to know them exhaustively, are "creating" an imaginary world. Knowledge as sought by such philosophers and theologians does not exist. Put crudely, it means that the idea of God is inseparable from the totality of the triune God.

By denying that knowledge is pure reason, are we saying that it is experiential? On the contrary, while the aspects of reason and experience are clearly present and inseparable, because man is a unity, we must affirm that knowledge is theological. As David makes clear, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:9). Because God is "the fountain of life", all knowledge begins with Him, and the knowledge of God is the starting point of all true knowledge. The ungodly can only know what they know by presupposing God even as they deny Him, as Van Til has made abundantly clear.

Thus, we know God the Son as the triune God reveals Him. We are told that He is, even in His incarnation, truly God (Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5,6; Joel 2:32; Rom. 9:5; I John 5:20; I Tim. 3:16). John is very explicit, declaring of Jesus Christ, "This is the true God" (John 5:20). He is eternally existent (Isa. 9:6; John 1:1,2; Rev. 1:8). Jesus makes clear that He is the Son of God (Matt. 26:63-65), and that He is omnipresent (Matt. 18:20). This omnipresence means that Jesus Christ, as God the Son incarnate, was on earth and yet at the very same time "in heaven" (John 3:13). He is omniscient (John 2:24,25; 21:17; Rev. 2:23). He is omnipotent (Isa. 9:6; Phil. 3:21; Rev. 1:8), and unchangeable (Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8). The Son is active in the work of creation (John 1:3, 10; Heb. 1:2, 10; Col. 1:16), and in providence (Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 17:2; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1-3). He has the power to forgive sins (Matt. 25:31ff.; John 5:19-29; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Phil 3:21; II Tim. 4:1), and together with this, the divine works of the resurrection of the dead, and judgment. All power and authority in heaven and earth are in the Son's hands (Matt. 28:19).

These and other texts make clear that the Son is God, and that His Sonship is not ethical but metaphysical, from all eternity, and unique: He is the "only-begotten," and the Son of God from before the incarnation (John 1:14, 18; Gal. 4:4). Berkhof goes carefully into the Biblical declarations of the personal subsistence, the eternal generation, and the deity of the Son.[30] Any tampering with these doctrines leads quickly to heresy.

Let us return again to the matter of knowledge: Jesus declares, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). This is an unqualified statement. Whether we seek the Father by means of knowledge, for relief by

[30] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. p. 92-94.

prayer, or for salvation, Jesus Christ is the only way. If we seek a knowledge apart from Him, we deny both Him and knowledge. The quest of the philosophers and theologians for a separate way is thus wrong. In answer to Philip's question and request that the Father be shown (*deiknuo*, shew, exhibit, make known, prove), our Lord answers, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," but, Philip, having been with Jesus for so long a time, had not really known Him, and hence did not know the Father (John 14:8).

To know the Son is to know the Father. The knowledge of the economy of the Trinity is inseparable from the ontology or being of the Trinity, and neither God's activities nor His being can be known in isolation from one another nor other than in His self-revelation.

Our life is a created unity; to be apart from and in war against God as a covenant-breaker is to be under the bondage of sin and the sentence of death. We are then "dead in sins and trespasses" (Eph. 2:1; cf. 2:5; 4:18; etc.) This is not only a theological but an epistemological fact. It governs our knowledge of God as well as our relationship to God. We cannot shift from Christianity to humanism as we go from theology to epistemology.

We are plainly told, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12). It will be objected by some that *life* and *death* here have a "spiritual" or theological meaning and thus do not "literally" mean life and death as we experience them. Such a statement rests on the humanistic premise that life must mean a this-worldly existence as a breathing entity, and death means endless non-existence. Neither definition is tenable for us. The idea of death as endless non-existence is a myth: death is separation from God and the denial of Him and His law-word and covenant, whether here or in hell. Life is faith, obedience, and fellowship in and with the triune God through the Son, both now and in the life everlasting. We cannot think otherwise without warping our view of things.

Our view of things must be theological and God-centered. We cannot separate our knowledge of God's being from God's revelation and activity, but we cannot make the center of God's being coincide with His activity. The Son is the full incarnation and declaration of the Father (John 1:1-18), but He does not exhaust Him. God the Son was Himself at one and the same time on earth and yet "in heaven" (John 3:13). When our Lord identified Himself as very God, the people sought to slay Him, because He declared "God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:17-18). Not only does our Lord not retreat from that declaration, but He affirms it, at the same time declaring that all determination is from eternity, so that God's economy manifests His ontology.

> 19....Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

> 20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.
>
> 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.
>
> 22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.
>
> 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.
>
> 24. Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
>
> 25. Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
>
> 26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;
>
> 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. (John 5:19-27)

In this remarkable declaration, our Lord, *first*, affirms the unity of God's being in eternity and His revelation on earth. The Father and the incarnate Son are in perfect accord, inseparably so. *Second*, determination is totally from eternity: the incarnate Son "can do nothing of himself." God's revelation of Himself in the Son is a full revelation, but God is not exhausted in His incarnation, creation, or revelation. The triune God and the three Persons of the Godhead are in heaven even as the Son was on earth. *Third*, God's love is fully on the incarnate Son, who is in the eternal counsel of God, who "sheweth him all things that himself doeth." *Fourth*, all power and authority is given to the Son to effect salvation, restoration (the resurrection), and the judgement. *Fifth*, "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." The term now shifts to "Son of man," and the reference to life is to the possession of the power to regenerate men as the fountain of life, and to judge them as Lord; this is a declaration concerning the economy of God. *Sixth*, the Father judges no one in separation from the Son, but has committed all judgment to the Son in order that all men may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. The two are one in being, and are to be held one in honor. *Seventh*, the enemies of our Lord accused Him of sabbath-breaking and of claiming to be God. His answer is to affirm Himself as God the Son and to deny any violation of God's law, because "The Son can do nothing of himself" (v. 19). There can be no contradiction of wills between the Father and the Son. Again we see the economy of God in unity with the being of God. Likewise, to honor the Son means to honor the Father, and to honor the Father requires honoring the Son.

Thus, there is a perfect unity between God in His being, the eternal and sovereign God, and God in His activities and revelation. This unity is manifested in the incarnation, and we can know the Father because we can know the Son.

The Hellenic and humanistic view of knowledge and truth as an impersonal and abstract idea is a myth, and the attempts of philosophers and theologians to understand Biblical faith in terms of abstractions is false and heretical. Because God is totally the Creator, and there is no independent creation or counsel in the universe or beyond it, there is an inescapable unity of all things under God. Hence, life, faith, and knowledge are not in contradiction to one another where they are faithful to God and His word. In John 17:3, we are told, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (cf. John 1:4). Knowledge is not an abstract, intellectual matter, but concerns the whole being of man (Deut. 6:5,6; 8:6; 11:26-28; 30:18-20; Matt. 7:24,25; 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 8:47,48; 10:27; John 7:17; 8:31, 32; 15:1,2; Rom. 1:21; 2:19-21; 10: 9, 10; I Cor. 8:1-3; 13:1-3; Eph. 6:24; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:38-39; Rev. 22:14). Knowledge is something which involves the total being of man. In knowledge, neither subject nor object are impersonal and abstract, because God the Creator, who is the ground of all knowledge as creator, is neither impersonal nor abstract. In our theology as in our lives we cannot seek to know the Son of God as an idea: He is the living Lord.

10. God the Spirit

In the history of Christianity, there has been no lack of heresies concerning all three persons of the Trinity.[31] Perhaps the basic heresy with respect to the person of the Spirit is to deny Him personality. Some ecclesiastical institutions openly deny personality to the Spirit, despite the many obvious texts concerning this fact (*e.g.*, John 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Rom. 8:26; I Cor. 2:10; 12:11, etc.). Pagan mysticism commonly sees God as impersonal, and hence the mystical experience as beyond reason, and sometimes even beyond feeling. Charismatic and "spiritual" experiences likewise stress the Spirit as beyond reason, and the experience as alien to rationality. This aberration is all the more striking because the Spirit in Scripture is so closely associated with wisdom and counsel. The prophets become discerning political and religious counsellors in terms of God's law when governed by the Spirit. The effect of the Spirit on their lives is not unreason and confusion but power and clarity. As Paul later declares of the triune God, with particular emphasis on the Person and work of God the Spirit, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33).

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[31] See R. J. Rushdoony: *The Foundation of Social Order.* (Nutley, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1964.)

But this is not all. Two of the earliest references to the person of the Spirit speak of Him as the source of practical knowledge and workmanship:

> 2. See, I have called by name Bezaleel the Son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:
> 3. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,
> 4. To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,
> 5. And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. (Ex. 31:2-5; cf. 35:30-35)

We are not here dealing with mystical ecstasy, but with hard work, sweat, and perseverance, all guided and governed by God the Spirit. God's law is practical, and its goal is the Kingdom of God. The Spirit is also practical, and His goal is the Kingdom, because the Trinity works in unity. God is not interested in our ecstatic experiences, however much we may be; He is interested in His Kingdom and our service thereto.

Again, we are told that the fullness of the Spirit rests upon the incarnate Son. Here too the fullness of the Spirit means the same fulfillment of God's creation mandate and His Kingdom purposes, wisdom, understanding, holy might, knowledge, and righteousness. Both in a craftsman like Bezaleel, and in the incarnate Son of God, the presence of God the Spirit is inseparable from dominion under God and the practical requirements of the Kingdom. Isaiah 11:1-5 is very clear on this as it describes the Messiah:

> 1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:
> 2. And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;
> 3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:
> 4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
> 5. And righteousness shall be in the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

There is nothing here to suggest that mindless expression is the work of the Spirit. Rather, the work of the Spirit is at one with the work of the Father and the Son. This practical nature of being filled with the Spirit is stressed by Paul in writing to the Colossians (Col. 1:9-12).

Paul, in counselling Titus, urges him to encourage converts in sound, sober, honest and chaste behavior (Titus 2:1-11). Was and is the Spirit engaged in some extra manifestation other than godly living and dominion? Shall we see the Spirit as one who provides a periodic escape from

responsibility and rationality, as well as "sound speech" (Titus 2:8)? To think so is to posit an alien purpose at work in one member of the Trinity.

Some will object, but what about Saul? Saul was an unregenerate man who was twice used by the Spirit to testify in contradistinction to what he was (I Sam. 10:6-12; 19:23-24). The whole of Saul's being was against the Spirit, and, on the second occasion, it led to radically unstable behavior. On *both* occasions, it led to the amazed and cynical comment, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" The ancient rabbis knew clearly that this behavior was not of the Spirit but of Saul, declaring simply, "he was man."[32] It tells us something of the madness of our age that the unregenerate and insane Saul is taken as a source of knowledge concerning God the Spirit rather than the witness of God the Son.

Absurdities abound in theology and Biblical scholarship. Some years ago, a very able and truly Spirit-led scholar of an older generation had, it is said, a habit of pulling at his nose when asked a difficult and searching question. He would reach back into his rich and extensive knowledge of Biblical scholarship and languages and after a bit of nose-pulling, followed by ear-lobe pulling, come up with profound and godly answers. Shall we identify nose-pulling as a mark of the Holy Spirit?

Despite the obvious hostility to fertility cults in all of the Old Testament, some scholars insist on seeing such practices on page after page. Why? Because their thinking is governed by the myths of evolution, the primitive must precede the developed. Hence before intelligent prophetism, the declaration of God's law-word, there had to be primitive shamanism, fits, foaming at the mouth, and so on, and before the intelligent word there had to be fertility rites and practices.

In Numbers 11, we are told that the Lord gave the Spirit to those elders who were to serve as judges, so that they might judge with wisdom and justices:

> 16. And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.
> 17. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.
> 25. And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. (Num. 11:16-17, 25)

Is there any reason to assume that this represents some "primitive" event? Had Moses, who was also used of the Spirit, done other than to speak for the

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[32] H. D. Spence, *"I Samuel,"* in Charles John Ellicott, editor: *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible, II.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.) p. 376.

Lord with compelling power and authority? These men were chosen because they were already elders, "wise men, and known" (Deut. 1:15), "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (Ex. 18:21). The Lord gave them enhanced insight, wisdom, and understanding by His Spirit. Nehemiah refers to this fact, declaring, "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20). This teaching, instructing work is basic to the task of God the Spirit as He comes to men. The Spirit gives wisdom and guides men into all truth (Isa. 40:13,14: Mk. 12:36; 13:11; Luke 2:26,27; 12:24,49; John 12:16; 14:26; 16:13,14; Acts 13:2-4; 15:28; 16:6-10; Romans 8:26; I Cor. 2:13; 12:8; Eph. 1:16,17; I John 2:20,27). This is an aspect of "power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The Spirit guides man "into all truth" and will glorify Christ and show the things which are "to come" in terms of Christ and His royal power (John 16:13-14). He is "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" (Eph. 1:16-17). Some supernatural aspects of the Spirit's work have ceased (I Cor. 13:8), but wisdom, judgment, and understanding remain.

But why the insistence on the Saul-like behavior as the work of the Spirit? A common and more than a century and half old occurrence in the U. S. revivalistic and "Spirit-filled" meetings is this: a woman, supposedly stricken by the Spirit, falls to the floor, moaning and crying out, babbling nonsense. She writhes and jerks orgasmically, her dress up to or above her hips, as solicitous or curious persons gather round to "pray her through." When I cite this, and ask "Is this the Holy Spirit at work, or some other kind of spirit?" I am told that I am apparently unsaved, or, at best carnal, and hence look at things sensually, and cannot understand the "Spirit." I do indeed recognize this spirit as Phrygian, Montanist, and pagan, not the Spirit of God. It is closer to Greek enthusiasm and the mystery cults than to God the Spirit. The Phrygian spirit leads to sin; God the Spirit reproves and judges sin (John 16:7-11; cf. 3:18,19). He leads the sons of grace into keeping God's commandments (John 14:15-26). By God's truth, and obedience thereto, He sanctifies the faithful through God's truth (John 17:17,19). The Spirit goes hand in hand with repentance (Acts 2:38), which means literally a change of direction, *i.e.*, a changed life and conduct.

Because the Trinity is one in being and nature, we cannot assume one kind of character in the Father and the Son, and another in the Spirit. (One man once tried to tell me that the emotional nature of the Trinity was in the Spirit, whereas the Father was passionless!) The Spirit is not another kind of God but one God with the Father and the Son.

In the economy of the Trinity, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6). He is clearly a person (John 14:26; 16:7-11; Rom. 8:26; Rom. 8:16; Acts 16:7; I Cor. 12:11; Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30, etc.). We are told repeatedly that He wills, acts, commands, reveals, makes intercession, etc. The texts are so many that only the wilful reject them. At the root of the Phrygianism of all such groups as the Montanists, and some

pentecostals, and charismatics, and others is an implicit or explicit *denial* of the personality of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is impersonal or subpersonal, then His work will be so. The result is the kind of mindless emotionalism commonly associated with all such movements. An ultimate chaos and impersonalism is ascribed to the Godhead and given a priority over the self-consciousness of God. Especially when viewed with a Hellenic and Darwinian belief in the priority of chaos and non-being, and then of mindless being, over mind and consciousness, it leads to an emphasis on Phrygian antics as more true to God than faith and obedience. The truly Spirit-filled men among Charismatics are above all teachers of God's word.

Reading Phrygianism in Freudian terms, we might say that the id in this god is more basic than the ego and the superego. The Spirit is this id asserting itself.

But when we look at Scripture, we find that God made man in His image (Gen. 1:26-28). Man fell, and God began the work of the regeneration and restoration of all things. Christ, God the Son incarnate, is the Adam of the new humanity, and God the Spirit works with and through the Father and the Son in that task.

The Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 17, declares:

> Q. How did God create man?
> A. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man; endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge (Col. 3:10), righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24), having the law of God written in their hearts (Rom 2:14,15) and power to fulfill it, with dominion over the creatures (Gen. 1:28); yet subject to fall. (The statement with respect to "immortal souls" represents a neoplatonic element which intrudes and does not do justice to Gen. 2:7. R.J.R.)

The triune God through Christ regenerates the fallen man. The Holy Spirit instructs, guides, and directs him, and teaches him all truth. In the Garden of Eden, Adam had the oral word of God to guide him, and the personal presence of God (Gen. 2:16; Gen. 3:8-19). Now, the redeemed man in Christ has the full written word of God, and the living, indwelling presence of God the Spirit (I Cor. 3:16), and His guidance in terms of the written word. The Spirit thus is man's guide into knowledge, holiness, righteousness (or, justice) and dominion. In all these things, it is not our purely individual experience that is of any consequence. Rather, it is the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness or justice (Matt. 6:33).

The goal of the Phrygian religion was experience and strong emotions. Self-mutilation was often a part of religious devotion. In other words, true religious devotion meant a forsaking of the wholeness of man for the sake of emphasis on temporary possession by the spirit of a god or goddess. The

greater the departure from normality and wholeness, the greater the likelihood of possession.

This same temper marked the later mystery religions and related cults. Babblings and cries were cultivated, and drugs used, to help man abandon wholeness and invoke the spirits of chaos as the spirits of power.

The gift of the Spirit is very different. As Paul reminds Timothy, recalling his ordination and the gift of the Spirit conferred on him by God's calling,

> 6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands,
> 7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (II Tim. 1:6-7)

Clearly, Paul never imagined God the Spirit as working emotionalism, confusion, and babblings. The triune God, being totally self-conscious and with no unconsciousness at all in the being of God, communicates a sound mind, power, and love. Hence Titus is urged, with respect to his congregation, to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" and not given to fables and the commandments of men (Titus 1:13-14).Moreover, the Holy Spirit, having inspired the written word of God (I Cor. 2:13); II Peter 1:21, etc.), does not contradict nor supplant that word, but works rather to instruct us therein and to guide us in obedience to it.

The mind of the Spirit, and the majesty of His handiwork, is seen in all creation (Gen. 1:3; Job 26:13; Ps. 104:30). The Spirit's love of beauty and order is seen in His influence and power in those who made the priestly garments (Ex. 28:3), and even in the calculated and righteous indignation of Saul (I Sam. 11:6), although an unredeemed man. God the Spirit manifests Himself as the power of God, working to effect knowledge of the truth, holiness unto the Lord, the righteousness or justice of God, and the dominion of God's Kingdom in and through man. Towards that goal, God the Spirit commands and guides God's covenant people, and can and does direct even the works of the ungodly, so that even the wrath of man works to the praise of God (Ps. 76:10).

In the history of the church, we have seen false views of God and man lead to a view of faith heavily governed by Greek rationalism. In reaction to this, some movements have seen God the Spirit working in irrational emotionalism. What is needed is a wholeness in our view of God and of man.

11. Sovereignty, Government, and Providence

Before discussing the meaning of sovereignty, government, and providence in relationship to the triune God, it is wise to understand what we mean by these words. It is also important that we see these words, not abstractly, but theologically. If God be indeed creator of all things, all things must be defined in relationship to Him, or else we have a false definition.

Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) wrote thus of sovereignty:

> When I speak of God's acting in a sovereign way, I do not mean that he acts above or without all reason and motive, or merely because he wills, for God never acts so in any instance whatsoever. Such sovereignty and arbitrariness is in no case to be ascribed to God, for this would be to dishonor and reproach him as acting without any wisdom or holiness. The Sovereignty of God consists in his being above all obligation to his creatures and so infinitely above any direction, influence, and control from them in any thing that he does. In this sense, God is an infinite sovereign; he does just as he pleases, not being influenced by any obligation he is under to any one, any further than he has been pleased to oblige himself by promise or some other way.
>
> Sovereignty is, therefore, in a peculiar manner, essential to all acts of grace, for grace in all cases is sovereign grace, and what is not so is not grace at all: for, whatever good is bestowed, if he that grants it is under any original obligation to do it, or is obliged to do it from the reason and nature of things, and so owed it to him that receives it, it is only an act of justice, and the nature of paying a debt, and there is no grace in it; for grace is free, unobliged, undeserved favor, and that which is not so is not grace.
>
> In the case before us, God acts in the highest sense and degree as a sovereign, he being not only under no obligation to grant such a favor to any one when he does it, but there is in the sinner something infinitely contrary to this, even infinite unworthiness of the favor granted, and desert of infinite evil. Therefore, whenever God changes and regenerates the heart of a sinner, he does what he was under no sort of obligation to the sinner to do, but might justly leave him to the hardness of his own heart to perish in his sin forever. So that God in determining to whom he will grant this infinite favor, and in giving it to some and withholding it from others, "has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." What the sinner does before he is regenerated does not lay God under any degree of obligation to him by promise or any other way, for he complies with none of God's commands or offers in the least degree.[33]

God is sovereign because He is the creator of all things: He is He Who Is, the Lord. As Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) wrote so clearly:

> There is no succession in the knowledge of God. The variety of successions and changes in the world make not succession, or new objects in the Divine mind; for all things are present to him from eternity in regard of his knowledge, though they are not actually present in the world, in regard of their existence. He doth not know one thing now, and another anon; he seeth all things at once; "Known unto God are all things from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18); but in their true order of succession, as they lie in the eternal council of God, to be brought forth in time. Though there be a succession and order of things

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[33] Samuel Hopkins, *"The Cause, Nature, and Means of Regeneration,"* in the *Works of Samuel Hopkins, vol. III.* (Boston, MA: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1854.) p. 565f.

> as they are wrought, there is no succession of God, to be brought forth in time...
>
> God is his own eternity. He is not eternal by grant, and the disposal of any other, but by nature and essence. The eternity of God is nothing else but the duration of God; and the duration of God is nothing else but his existence enduring. If eternity were anything distinct from God, and not of the essence of God, then there would be something which was not God, necessary to perfect God...God is essentially whatsoever he is, and there is nothing in God but his essence...
>
> God hath life in himself (John 5:26): "The Father hath life in himself;" he is the "living God" therefore "steadfast forever" (Dan. 6:26). He hath life by his essence, not by participation.[34]

With this in mind, remembering that only God is or can be sovereign, let us look at *government*. Government is the act of governing, of exercising control and authority. Government is thus an exercise of sovereignty, or else a power delegated by sovereignty. Paul says plainly that "there is no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1), using for *power* the word *exousia*, meaning absolute, unrestricted freedom of action and rule in God, delegated by Him as He chooses (The New Testament uses two words translated as *government: kubernesis*, to guide, pilot, or steer, and *kuriotes*, lordship, dominion.)

Sovereignty and government are thus very obviously theological facts, if Scripture is to be believed. Thus, for a theologian to discuss the doctrine of God without dealing with the usurpations of humanistic civil governments and schools is to deny God. It is impossible to discuss the doctrine of God in an ecclesiastical vacuum. God is not a mere Idea, after the Greeks: He is the living Lord and maker of all things, and "a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). Those who fail to see the implications of sovereignty and government do not know the living God.

The secular historian Baumer, in speaking of the rise of absolutism in the modern era, clearly sees its connection to the rise also of the doctrine of statist sovereignty.[35] First the monarchs, and then parliaments, became the sovereign authority in society. Hegel openly viewed the state as god walking on earth in his political theology, and still the church slumbered on. The Marxists exclude any sovereignty and government outside of the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat, and the theologians talk of dialogues with such men!

Now let us turn to *providence*. Berkhof gave a good, brief statement of the doctrine:

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[34] Edward Hinson, editor: *Introduction to Puritan Theology, A Reader*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Guardian Press (Baker Book House), 1976.) p. 77, 78, 81.

[35] Franklin L. Baumer: *Modern European Thought: Continuity and Change in Ideas, 1600-1950*. (New York, N. Y.: MacMillan, 1977.) p. 98.

> With its doctrine of providence the Church took position against both, the Epicurean notion that the world is governed by chance, and the Stoic view that it is ruled by fate. From the very start theologians took the position that God preserves and governs the world.... Due to the close connection between the two, the history of the doctrine of providence follows in the main that of the doctrine of predestination....
>
> Providence may be defined as *that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end.* This definition indicates that there are three elements in providence, namely, preservation *(conservatio, sustenatio)*, concurrence or cooperation *(concursus, co-operatio,)* and government *(gubernatio)*.[36]

The providence of God is little spoken of today, because His powers of government have been transferred to the state and to man, together with His sovereignty. It is the state that today preaches providence to willing congregations, calling it cradle to grave (or womb to tomb) care, social security, and a variety of other names. Men everywhere believe in providence, and they look to their gods for it. Unhappily, their gods are false gods, and not the living Lord.

Berkhof summarized very ably, with supporting texts, the providential control and government of God over every area of life, from inanimate to the animate, over things great and small, over things seemingly insignificant or accidental, and over heaven, hell, and earth.[37] (This writer does not intend to cover the same grounds as Berkhof, and urges that he be read.)

What does it mean then to believe in sovereignty, government, and providence as a Christian? It means that my life and being are under the sovereignty and government of the all-wise and most holy Trinity, whose ordering, preserving, and government of all things is for His own purpose and glory, and that my only joy and purpose is to acknowledge that sovereign, governing providence, and to rest in its sufficiency. It means that, in every area of life, I must acknowledge and establish rule, law, and authority only in terms of His law word and in faithfulness to His Kingship. This means that, in every area of life and thought, I must assert the crown rights of Christ the King and bring all things into captivity to Him.

The alternative to the sovereignty, government, and providence of the triune God is in practice the sovereignty, government, and providence of church, state, or some agency of man. It means freedom from God for the slavery of sin and rebellion. The man who is in revolt against God's reign will soon be the slave, not only of sin, but of apostate institutions, churches, states, families, men, women, and children. For such a slave, freedom is intolerable.

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[36] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. p. 165, 166.
[37] Ibid., p. 168.

As a young Nazi boasted, just before World War II, "We are free of freedom."[38]

But man's revolution against God does not abolish or dismantle God's reign: it only unleashes His judgment.

The theologian who believes in God's sovereignty, government, and providence must challenge the things which are, the humanistic usurpers of God's honor. Theology is not a classroom subject but a battle-line cause. This fact the theologians of statism (more commonly known as political scientists) have seen, but the church theologians have not seen. In a sinful world, at war with God, and in rebellion against His law, a Biblical theology is a declaration of war and a call to battle.

Samuel Hopkins had this to say of providence:

> This care and providence of God, in directing and governing all creatures and things, is universal, and constant, respecting all things at all times, and is extended to the least as well as the greatest and more important existence, and is concerned in every event, however minute, and in our view inconsiderable. Not a sparrow, or the least bird or insect, falls to the ground, or dies, without the direction and agency of God. The hairs of our head are all carefully numbered, and so many and not one more are ordered to exist, and not one is removed or broken, without the order and operation of the divine hand. And this is equally true of every hair on men and beasts, and of each leaf in the forest, or spire of grass on the earth that ever have existed, or will exist, to the end of the world.[39]

Deuteronomy 28 tells us how God's government moves against a faithless people, and also how He blesses His covenant race. If our trust and obedience is in God's sovereign government and providence, we may suffer at the hands of men, but we are under the guiding, protecting hand of God, who chooses our inheritance for us (Ps. 47:4), and guides and directs us in terms of it. There is no safety except in our God, nor any government. As Hopkins wrote:

> How safe and happy are they who put their trust in God! He who directs and governs all things, and orders every event, who is infinitely above all control, on whom all things entirely depend, who does whatsoever he pleases in heaven and among the children of men on earth; –He is engaged by repeated promises to them, that no evil shall come near them to hurt them, but that every thing shall work together for their good. If God be thus for them, who or what can be against them? The Lord reigneth, let them who trust in him always rejoice. Well may they say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters

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[38] Dusty Sklar: *Gods and Beasts: The Nazis and the Occult.* (New York, N. Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977.) p. 152.

[39] Samuel Hopkins: *System of Doctrines.* op. cit., vol. I, p. 165. Hopkins was a pastor whose life had its heavy share of problems and burdens, but a stronger share of faith.

> thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee!"[40]

When sovereignty is claimed by the state, the state then seeks to remake man and the world. It assumes the central and sovereign task of government and therefore of providence. The result is nominal and disappearing churchianity and the steady replacement thereof with a political religion. Men look then to the state to provide: providence becomes a political, not a Christian, article of faith. To affirm the sovereignty of God means to deny the sovereignty, government, and providence of man, the state, the church, and all other man-made agencies. Their only role is to obey God as defined by God's word. All else is usurpation and sin.

12. God and Creation

The Bible plainly declares that all things were created by God, not out of necessity, but in sovereign grace, and by the word of His mouth. This fact of creation is set forth, not only in Genesis 1, but in John 1:1-14; Ephesians 3:9; Col. 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; and Rev. 4:11. In Psalm 33:6, we are told:

> By the word of the LORD were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

The psalmist, in vv. 4-9, speaks of the greatness of the word of God. God's word *is* right; it is also the word of omnipotence, justice, love and creation. Moreover, God's word is the fiat word; the very "breath of his mouth" creates instantly, and hence all the earth should fear the Lord and stand in awe of Him. The psalmist declares (Ps. 33:8-9)

> 8. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
> 9. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

Nothing outside, beyond, beside, below, or above God was involved: He created all things out of nothing. They came into existence by His fiat word. Leupold rightly described it as "fiat creation in its superlative form," and pointed out that the second half of v. 9 can be translated, "He commanded, and there it stood."[41]

Calvin, who sometimes lost patience with wayward theologians and unbelieving philosophers ("that sty of swines," he called them),[42] spoke of the necessity for the guidance and teaching of Scripture for knowledge of God as Creator. The reason is "the mutability of the human mind, –how easy its

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[40] Ibid., I, p. 168f.
[41] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms*. (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959.) p. 274.
[42] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. I, ch. V, v; Vol. I, p. 67.

lapse into forgetfulness of God; how great its propensity to errors of every kind; how violent its rage for the fabrication of new and false religions," in brief, its wilful moral and intellectual "imbecility."[43]

What Scripture teaches us is that God created all things in the space of six days (Gen. 1). Genesis 1 is set forth as literal history; to read it symbolically, or to stretch out the six days to endless ages means that everything else in the Bible can be re-interpreted to mean whatever is most convenient to us.

God's fiat creation in six days rules out all process philosophies and any inherent and independent powers within creation. It sets forth a mature creation which is totally the work of the triune God. This means the total dependence of creation upon the Creator. Instead of evolution and development through some inherent urge, power, or force, the universe has rather been marked by devolution, the fall.

The doctrine of fiat creation out of nothing makes clear the gulf between the uncreated Being of God and the created being of the universe. In non-Biblical thought, there is to some degree a merging of beings, or a divinization of creation.

The goal of all efforts to eliminate the strict doctrine of God's fiat creation out of nothing is not to eliminate the fiat aspect but God. Evolutionary thought pushes back billions of years to some dim event or process, when, out of nothing, something came forth. The problem the ungodly have is not with creation out of nothing, but with *God's* creation out of nothing.

Because the Bible declares God's fiat act of creation out of nothing, it also sets forth its necessary and concomitant doctrine, predestination. Since nothing other than God's fiat will and decree is involved in creation, nothing other than His decree is involved in the determination thereof. If we tamper with the one doctrine, we implicitly tamper with the other. Creation and predestination are different aspects of the same fact and doctrine.

When man declares that the universe is self-generated out of nothing, he will soon affirm the same about history, and this is regularly done. Van Til points out that Collingwood does exactly this:

> Collingwood thinks that the modern historian should follow Vico, the Italian philosopher of history, in holding that *verum et factum convertuntur.* "The fabric of human society is created by man out of nothing, and every detail of this fabric is therefore a human *factum*, eminently knowable to the human mind as such."
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> Nothing short of this will do for Collingwood if we are to be rid of what he thinks of as the dualism between God and man.[44]

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[43] Ibid., Bk. I, ch. VI, III, IV; Vol. I, p. 83, 84.

[44] Cornelius Van Til: *The Great Debate Today*. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1971.) p. 75. The citation is from R. G. Collingwood: *The Idea of History*. (London, England, 1949.) p. 64f.

Thus, creation out of nothing is affirmed, but it is transferred to man and the universe. There is then a doctrine of self-generation in both the material universe and with respect to human society and history.

The Greeks held that the mind of man participates in the mind of God. Man was thus not entirely distinct from God, and truth and being were not really beyond man.[45] Since then, man has increasingly gained in his claims, so that it becomes more and more clear that God, in the conception of many philosophers and theologians, is not really beyond man. Potentiality and actuality are transferred from God to man, the universe, and time. Infinity, once the attribute of God alone, has been transferred to the universe, and "Millions of years, a mere quantity, stands for God."[46] Others have ascribed eternity to the cosmos, holding it to be not only self-existent but also eternal. If the universe (or multiverses) be self-existent or self-generated, then God, if He exists, is an outsider. That which is self-existent or self-generated is a law unto itself and to all within its domain. God's law is irrelevant to such a world: it is at best an interesting word, capable of inspiring man to his own kind of activity, but without a mandatory power over man. It is not a command word. Then sovereignty, government, and providence are self-generated, open for seizure, by any power within the universe capable of commanding and controlling the situation. It logically follows that the humanist speaks of man controlling evolution and making his own society and history out of nothing.

To hold to strict creationism means to declare God's sovereignty, government, and providence over all things. We live, move, and have our being in Him (Acts 17:27-28), and all of history does the same. Moreover, the doctrines of creation and the Sabbath declare a radical discontinuity between God and creation, and between man and redemption. God is not entangled in creation: He "rests" and is separate from it. Man's redemption is not an aspect nor an outcome of his work: he rests, detaches himself from his work, to celebrate God's works of creation and redemption. The doctrines of creation and the Sabbath are thus related. The Sabbath is patterned on the creation rest (Ex. 20:11), but it also is on the day of redemption, to celebrate the regeneration by the generating God. Israel's Sabbath began with the day of Passover, the redemption from Egypt (Deut. 5:15), and New Israel's Sabbath is on the day of resurrection, the first day of the week (Acts 20:7, etc.). The doctrines of creation and the Sabbath stand together.

In fact, to tamper with the doctrine of creation is to unravel the whole fabric of doctrine. To diminish at any point the sovereignty of God in creation is to diminish His sovereignty in redemption, providence and predestination, and vice versa.

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45. Cornelius Van Til: *Christ and the Jews*. (Nutley, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968.) p. 5.

46. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy: *The Christian Future*. (New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.) p. 156n, 45.

The world was not only formed but created by the triune God; it was created finite and good. The evil in creation is ethical or moral, not metaphysical. This means that sin and death are unnatural, not normal. Health and life are normal for creation, not ideals.

Creatureliness is thus not a defect to be overcome but the norm to be restored in moral obedience to the Creator. Fallen, man, however, regards his creatureliness as a problem born of his evolutionary past and hence to be overcome in his march to self-generated divinity. The so-called "space age" thus has had a great symbolic import for humanists. In a full-page colored advertisement in *Time Magazine* for November 12, 1956 (p. 91), the Lear corporation of Santa Monica, California, showed a giant scientist-doctor's hand holding up, by the feet, a space man as a newly born baby. The ad declared, "The Cord Has Been Cut. Man has at last severed the tie that bound him to Mother Earth." Here the faith in the god-scientist's creation of a new, non-creaturely man is very much in evidence.

For us, it is our glory to be human, to be creatures, to be men and women under God. For us, it is man's original sin which leads him into trying to be as God (Gen. 3:5), and the end thereof is judgment and disaster.

To affirm our creatureliness under God means to deny as sin every effort to transcend creatureliness. Such efforts have, historically, taken a variety of forms. From Babel to the modern state, many seek to create a political order which will restore Eden and will enable man to be his own god. Again, asceticism has been a common renunciation of creatureliness. By renouncing the flesh, marriage, and meats, many have tried to ascend into a higher, trans-creaturely estate, as though their problem were flesh, not sin. Others seek to divinize the church by identifying it with Jesus Christ, so that the institution gains all the authority of the divine-human Lord.

Still others, philosophers and theologians, assign to their reason and logic an identity with the mind of God, so that they are in effect partners in the eternal counsel of God, and able to pass judgments on the mind of the Trinity.

Another method of trying to transcend creatureliness is by a false use of virtues. In terms, for example, of what John says about God and love (I John 4:8), some seek transcendence by means of their humanistic doctrines of love. Since God is love (He is also a consuming fire, Heb. 12:29), let us become love incarnate, such people tell themselves, and we will be as gods. But, while God is love, love is not God, any more than fire, justice, righteousness, or holiness are God. Man was created to be God's creature. His joy, calling, knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion comes by being a creature under God.

13. Predestination

Predestination is so obvious a fact that the necessity for a discussion of it is evidence of the unwillingness of men to think systematically and logically.

First of all, the only real alternatives in viewing the world are either chance or predestination. If the world is not the creation and therefore the determination of God, it is a product of chance and is governed by chance. We cannot without self-contradiction deny God and insist on the ultimacy of chance while still retaining the order of the universe as real. Without the presupposition of order, then no thinking nor science is possible, because all then is brute factuality, and no two facts can have any meaningful and sustained relationship and order. One philosopher, a pragmatic naturalist, admitted in a discussion the validity of this statement: it is either chance or predestination, and the Christian theistic argument cannot be defeated *if* we raise the question of origins; the solution, he held, is to deny the question of ultimacy, chance or God, and insist on taking the order of the universe as our *given*, no questions asked. He refused, however, to answer the next question: if the universe as is, with all its order, is our given, or our presupposition, then have we not resurrected the Biblical God in our philosophy, under the name of the natural order? His answer was simply this: we cannot raise that question; just as for the Christian, the question, "Where does God come from?" is illegitimate, so for us any question as to where the universe and its order comes from is illegitimate. By so stating it, he of course equated the universe with God and admitted in effect the validity of the charge. The scientist, meanwhile, is less astute; he tries to frame a hypothesis as to the origin of the universe and hence raises the ultimacy of chance as the issue. To be an atheist requires a greater belief in the miraculous than to be a Christian. Given the Christian's God, miracles are logical and rational. Given the atheist's ultimacy of chance, miracles are impossible and irrational and yet totally necessary, or else we begin and end with an ultimate nothingness, out of which nothing comes forth.

Second, the doctrine of fiat creation necessitates predestination. All things having been created by the sovereign and triune God out of nothing, the total possibility, potentiality, and actuality of all things is completely determined by the Creator. As James declares, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). All things that have existed, do exist, or shall exist, have no being nor any history and possibility apart from the sovereign creating power and act of God. Creation and history have no surprises for God: He made all things, and all things move in terms of His decree from all eternity. To affirm the doctrine of creation is to affirm predestination, and vice versa. To tamper with one is to tamper with the other.

Third, because God is sovereign, and because creation is totally the work of God, His predestination of all things is both universal and particular. God

thus not only has, in creating all things, determined the goal of creation and history, but also every detail thereof. Election is thus both particular and general. All who are in the covenant of Christ are elected by God for redemption, but that election is also particular. The Good Shepherd knows His sheep, and calls and leads them out by name (John 10:1-7). This particularity cannot be restricted to the redeemed, as some, like G. C. Berkouwer, would do. To do so is to introduce a realm of the fortuitous and of chance into the ultimacy of God, or at the least, some areas of blindness and inability to function; it implies that God is not God. If God is the sovereign God, then both election to redemption and to reprobation are aspects of His decree. There can be no other decree nor possibility in creation.

Fourth, because predestination is not only a necessary aspect of creation, but also of government, it follows that, wherever sovereignty and government are claimed, there also the power of predestination is affirmed. Where man claims to be sovereign, there we find also man's claims to govern himself absolutely and to predestine according to his sovereign will. Thus, William Ernest Henley (1849-1903), in his poem "Invictus", affirms both his sovereignty and his self-determination, because

> I am the master of my fate:
> I am the captain of my soul.

Philosophically, we find this same affirmation, more consistently and radically held, in existentialism, as in Jean Paul-Sartre's thought. Libertarian anarchism tends to the same kind of faith.

The greater threat is the claim of the modern state to sovereignty, and therefore to ultimacy in government. The modern state claims jurisdiction over all other forms of government, over the individual, the family, the school, the church, the professions (law, medicine, etc.), the arts and sciences, business, agriculture, and so on. The logic of its claim to sovereignty and government leads the state to claim to be the source of all providence and predestination. The state is man's source of security, it is held, and the state offers itself as man's hope of providence by means of medical care, aid to the aged, the sick, the needy, and so on, usurping what God requires be done in His name and with His tithe. Again, the state, by means of its planning and controls, works towards the total predestination of the social order and of all persons therein. Election and reprobation are made aspects of statist legislation and bureaucratic fiat rather than the decree of God.

Predestination and providence thus do not disappear when denied to God. They reappear in political form as aspects of the life of the state and as exercises of the sovereignty of the State. All men believe in predestination; they only disagree as to the source of predestination and providence. The locale can vary, but the faith remains.

Fifth, predestination is inseparable from grace. To deny predestination to God is to deny His sovereign grace. Grace means that the favor of God comes, not because of any merit or cause in us, but totally as a result of God's good pleasure, as a consequence of His eternal decree. To deny God's predestination means to affirm that God's good favor has an origin other than God Himself, namely, an origin in us. If the origin is in us, in our will, choice, works, or faith, then the ultimate determination of our lives is transferred from God to man. The Bible makes clear that, while the proximate determination of a man's life is in man's hands, the ultimate determination is of the Lord. The first paragraph of Chapter III, "Of God's Eternal Decree," of the Westminster Confession of Faith, states the matter clearly:

> 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.

Because God is the creator, His predestination does no violence to the liberty or contingency of the will of the creatures, which are second causes, but rather is in perfect harmony with them. When the state, however, seeks to ordain whatsoever comes to pass, it must of necessity do violence to the will of many men. The state seeks to remedy this matter in various ways. It can, as is commonly done, use terror to bring compliance. It can, as is also commonly done now, use Pavlovian techniques to remake or recondition man and to make him thereby a creature of the state. The hope of statist education is that man will become the total creature of the state and thus will be in conformity to the will of the state. This is an impossible hope and dream, because man is inescapably and ineradicably the creature of Almighty God.

The state is not God: it cannot create, it cannot govern as a god, nor decree providence and predestination without disaster. It cannot give grace with redemption; its favor is rather corruption, when it seeks to play god.

Sixth, attempts to give ultimacy to foreknowledge are really denials of God's sovereignty, because they seek to transfer ultimacy from God to history. Supposedly, God foresees what man will do, and predestination is not God's determination of all things, but merely His foreknowledge of what history would decree. Foreknowledge is thus an attempt to make man's actions ultimate, and God is at best the spectator who has a preview of what man will do. Determination is thus transferred from God to man, and from eternity to time and history. Such attempts are particularly contemptible, because they represent man's efforts at rebellion in the name of God, or the use of Scripture to deny both God and His word. Paul condemns all such attempts very clearly:

> 11. (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)
> 12. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.
> 13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.
> 14. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.
> 15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.
> 16. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.
> 17. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared through all the earth.
> 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.
> 19. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?
> 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God. Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast though made me thus? (Romans 9:11-20. We shall return to the implication of vv. 19-21 later.)

Seventh, when we speak of man as a second cause, and God as the first cause, we must be careful not to do so in any Aristotelian sense, nor in the manner of Aquinas. As Van Til has pointed out,

> Thomas constructs his man and his world by means of the Aristotelian form-matter scheme. Man, he says, is created by God. But this means that God his Creator is the *first cause* of man's existence. Aquinas virtually identifies the biblical teaching on creation with the Aristotelian notion of cause. Having God as his first cause, man *participates* in the being of God. But it also means that man is not identical with God but only participates in him and therefore has an existence apart from God. This separate existence is due to his participation in pure matter, pure nonbeing, pure contingency.[47]

We must begin with God as Creator, creating all things out of nothing at His sovereign good pleasure. That man is, as the Westminster Confession declares, a second cause, does not imply a necessity in the first cause which leads to the second cause, but rather that, God as fiat creator, has created all things out of nothing. *Out of nothing* means not only that no pre-existent matter is utilized, nor that any idea requires the creation, but that in any and every sense no necessity led God to create. His creation of all things was a sovereign and fiat act, out of nothing save His own good pleasure. The doctrine of causality cannot be used to introduce an element of necessity into predestination and creation without again denying implicitly God's ultimacy and sovereignty in His decree.

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[47] Cornelius Van Til: "Confessing *Jesus Christ,*" in *Scripture and Confession*. J. H. Skilton, editor. (Nutley, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1973.) p. 126.

What does the doctrine of predestination require of us? St. Paul concludes his discussion of predestination by barring the door to impious and curious questions and by declaring God's absolute sovereignty, echoing Isaiah 40:13; Jeremiah 23:18; Job 11:7; 15:8 and 35:7 (cf. 36:23); Psalm 36:6 and 92:5.

> 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
> 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?
> 35. Or, who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?
> 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

Paul proceeds then, having barred the door to all attempts to probe the mind of God, to summon men to the obedience of faith. The faithful must present themselves as a living sacrifice to God, and this requires a continual service on their part, which is a reasonable claim God has on them. This reasonable service means the love of God, the love of all faithful believers, the performance of all our duties towards God and man, and the manifestation of God's love, by fulfilling or keeping His law, towards all men. The rest of Romans thus makes clear what our response to God's sovereignty and predestination is to be: it is the security of our life and faith, and our confidence in action. Nothing, Paul had said earlier (Rom. 8:30-39), can separate us from this predestinating grace, power, and love of God. We can therefore do all things and endure all things confident that the Lord who governs will repay and will right every wrong (Rom. 12:17-19). Because of God's sovereign and predestinating power, "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). We can therefore joyfully conclude, even in the face of persecution and death (Rom. 8:35-37), that, "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). This is what predestination means.

14. "Why Hast Thou Made Me Thus?"

St. Paul, in discussing the implications of predestination by the triune God, forestalls the objections of humanists by raising their question himself, and then setting it in the context of God's sovereign and creating will:

> 19. Thou will say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?
> 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
> 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (Rom. 9:19-21)

The issue at stake between God and man is sovereignty: if God is sovereign, then man is responsible to, and accountable to, God. If man is sovereign, then

God is responsible to and must give account to man. Man as sinner wants the world to revolve around him and his will: this is his religious quest. He seeks the fulfillment of his dream of an egocentric universe, or, in its mildest form, a man-centered universe, in religion. If church and temple fail to provide it sufficiently, he seeks it elsewhere, supremely in politics.

Man, since Adam and Eve, has been adept at snivelling self-justification. All his sins are God's fault, and all the griefs of his life are ascribed, not to his moral apostasy and revolution, but to God's hard-heartedness.

Man complains about his life, as though the purpose of life were self-fulfillment. As against this, Paul is emphatic: we were made, not for our own purposes, but for the Lord, and by the Lord. Repeatedly, the Bible compares us to clay, and God to the potter, (but even in this image the fact is that not only the vessel but the clay is created by God). We are told, for example,

> But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. (Isa. 64:8)

> 3. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.
> 4. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.
> 5. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
> 6. O House of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. (Jer. 18:3-6)

Thus, the Biblical doctrine of God makes clear that we are absolutely God's creation and property, and He can do with us as He wills. That He chooses some to serve Him in redemption, and others to serve Him by their reprobation, is in His sovereign good pleasure. We have no right to complain about the conditions of our lives, but we do have a duty to conform them, materially and spiritually, to the requirements of His word and Kingdom. We must reconstruct all things in terms of His word and bring every area of life and thought into captivity to Christ the King (II Cor. 10:5). Our lives cannot be governed by our wills but His will, not by our word, but His word, and not by our law but His law, for we are not our own, but His by right of creation, and doubly so by right of redemption (I Cor. 6:19).

But, too often, the basic factor in our lives is an essential discontent which says, in effect, "Why hast Thou made me thus? Why am I subjected to these problems and difficulties? Why am I not enjoying various blessings common to others?" We are thereby denying God the right to be God over us. We are in effect saying that we are not God's possession but our own, and that therefore our lives and the conditions thereof, must be of our choosing and for our pleasure.

God, however, never asks our consent to the conditions of our lives: they are of His ordination and predestination, and in terms of His sovereign purpose. What He does ask of us is that we serve Him therein and magnify His purpose and Kingdom by exercising knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion to His glory. Our calling is not to ask idle questions attempting to reconcile His absolute sovereignty and predestination with our responsibility and accountability. He has declared that this is so, and it is our duty to believe it and act in terms of it.

Thus, first and last, the doctrine of God is not a matter of disputation and discussion, but the only true ground of all life and action. Adam was a true theologian only as long as he obeyed God and exercised knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and dominion in his work and rule in Eden. He became a false theologian when he raised questions with regard to God's right to command him, and with respect to God's sovereignty and word. The basic questions of false theology are still the same: "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1), and "Why hast Thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20). Where these questions are raised, whether in the classroom, pulpit, or our minds, there theology disappears, and humanistic anthropology replaces it.

Our doctrine of God is thus an intensely and essentially practical concern: it determines how we live, and who rules over us. Is our God the living God, or the fallen and dead man? Does God reign in our lives, or do we merely rely on God for assistance as we try to rule ourselves and our world?

We began our study of the doctrine of God by stating, "Basic to Christian faith is the doctrine of the triune God of Scripture." By *Christian faith* we mean more than an academic definition and formulation set forth by scholars. *Christian faith* means the ground of man's life, its motivation, purpose, and meaning. Job was deeply troubled, in his misery, by many questions and even doubts, but, in the face of all this, the bedrock of his life was his faith. He could thus cry out, even as he argued with God, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). Job's life and faith were inseparably one. Faith is more than mere opinion and belief: it is the very nature and character of our life and indivisible from it. To be regenerated, means to be born again, to have new life, so that our life and our faith in the triune God are inseparably one, and are of His creation and redemption.

We do not know the doctrine of God unless there is nothing else we can live in terms of, because our very life is of His creation and ordination. Paul, having faced all the alternatives again and again, could thus say simply, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). As against all false theologies, philosophies, and religions, Paul declares, "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" (Col. 2:8).

V

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

1. "The Seed of the Woman"

One of the problems of our time is the studied irrelevancy of the modern church. On the one hand, we have the modernists, to whom the only considerations are those born of man and society. Hence their gospel is only a social gospel, relative only to society, seeking to cure man's ills by means of purely human resources. On the other hand, pietism seeks to separate itself from history and to live as though only eternity is real: this is an abstraction from history which is closer to neoplatonism than Scripture.

Traditional orthodoxy is concerned with eternity *and* time, provided it is past time or history, ancient problems rather than present ones. It will discuss ancient theological heresies as though time froze some generations ago. One is reminded of an incident in the life of W.M. Whitehill, as he reported it to Meryman:

> A friend of mine in Bilbao, Spain, once went with Don Miguel del Muño, the director of the university there, on a walking tour in Navarre. They got to the foot of a mountain on which the sanctuary of San Miguel of Excelsius is located, and they wanted to go up there for the night. People in the village down below said, "Oh, it's getting late. You better not try and go up. Ever since the robbery the monks have been very careful about locking up." Nevertheless the two men went up, and the monastery door was indeed barricaded. They banged and banged and finally the monks, recognizing the director, let them in. The monks excused themselves saying, "Ever since the robbery we've had to be so careful." There was more talk about the robbery and my friend asked the monks, "When was the robbery?" And they replied, "1484."[1]

All too often, traditional orthodoxy barricades itself against the thieves of 1484 but is blind to the threats of today. When men like Cornelius Van Til call attention to the current threats, they are viewed with suspicion.

This is not to say that the issues of earlier centuries are irrelevant. In my study of *The Foundations of Social Order*, I deal with the relevancy of the creeds and councils to the issues of our time. Relevancy is both seeing the link between ancient heresies and modern threats, *and* providing the answers to current problems out of the law word of God.

Our purpose here is to discuss the work of God the Son and God the Spirit in time, in relationship to man and history. The works of creation and providence are basic to the economical Trinity; here our concern begins with Genesis 3:15, God's curse upon the serpent: "And I will put enmity between

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[1] Walter Muir Whitehall: *The Irascible Iconoclast*, interviewed by Richard Meryman, in *Yankee Magazine*, September 1978, p. 106.

thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heal."

Scripture never speaks to satisfy our curiosity nor our pride. Thus, we are given the identity of the serpent with Satan, but not the particulars nor the manner of their identity:

> Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)
>
> He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (I John 3:8)
>
> And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Rev. 12:9)

In these verses, *first*, our Lord identifies Satan as the original liar, and the murderer of man, he who brought sin and death into the world (John 8:44).

Second, John declares that Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, sin and death, i.e., to bring about the sway of righteousness (or justice) and life over man and the earth (I John 3:8).

Third, all who commit sin are of the devil (I John 3:8). Conversely, the truly righteous are of the Lord.

Fourth, in some sense (not our concern for the present) Satan is cast out or dispossessed (Rev. 12:9) because of the coming of the woman's child (Rev. 12:1-8). The coming of our Lord is thus the invasion of this world by the Triune God and His hosts, in order to restore the world to the condition intended by God. Having created the heavens and the earth "very good" (Gen. 1:31), God invades history to re-establish man and the earth in terms of His eternal purpose.

This then is the purpose set forth in Genesis 3:15, called the Protevangelium. It declares that history will see both battle and restoration, total warfare, and total victory. The *head* of the enemy shall be *crushed*.

A curious fact is set forth in this promise. In the Fall, the entire humanity of Adam is involved, Adam and Eve, and all their descendants. Satan's triumph thus appears total. We are repeatedly reminded that, "by one man's offense death reigned by one and sin reigned unto death" (Romans 5:17). All were made sinners by one man's disobedience (Rom. 5:19,21). In spite of this fact, the humanity of Adam sees warfare, total war. Life and death are at stake in that struggle.

Moreover, the humanity of Adam continues only through the seed of the woman, so that the fallen world of Satan's plan appears in every birth. Cain is the immediate and dramatic example of this fact (Gen. 4:1-26). At the same

time, God introduces a division "between thy seed and her seed" (Gen. 3:15). Here, the "seed" clearly refers to posterity. In the fallen world of Adam, some will miraculously be the children of life, i.e., daughters of Eve, "the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20) in a different sense. All born of Eve are born into sin and death, so that the "life" Eve gives us is a tainted one. In spite of this, some of her seed will by God's miraculous grace and power become the children of life. In fact, Jeremiah is told that he was ordained a prophet and sanctified thereto while still in his mother's womb (Jer. 1:5). Thus, even as in Eden Satan perverted God's humanity, so God after Eden converts some of the fallen humanity to His purpose.

Then, however, from referring to *posterity, seed* becomes singular: "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). The warfare narrows down to a final conflict between two, "thou," Satan or the Serpent, and the great "seed of the woman," Jesus Christ.

Candlish[2] saw a probable reference to Gen. 3:15 in Micah 5:2,3:

> 2. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
> 3. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

Also, Paul's statement in Gal. 3:16 would also apply here, with regard to the second half of Gen. 3:15, "He saith not, seeds, as if there were many, but one seed, which is Christ." The one Person who shall crush Satan's head is Jesus Christ.

He shall be the great seed of the woman. Into Adam's fallen humanity, born into sin and death, God comes to call out His own, some, like Jeremiah, from their mother's womb, and then supremely in Jesus Christ.

Natural birth into Adam's race produces a life governed by sin and death. The triune God at once works supernaturally to rescue some from that fallen humanity by means of a miraculous regeneration. In Genesis 3:15, we have given the division between that City or Kingdom of Man versus the City or Kingdom of God which Augustine described later.

Even more, God, who created all things "very good" (Gen. 1:31), ordained that, out of that very fallen humanity perverted into sin and death by Satan, He would bring forth a Second Adam, Jesus Christ, as the Head of a new humanity, one re-established in righteousness (or justice), holiness, knowledge, and dominion (Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24), with the law of God written in their hearts. Whereas all men originally had the law written

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[2] Robert S. Candlish: *Commentary on Genesis*, I: (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, reprint of 1868 edition). p. 77.

in their hearts (Rom. 2:14-15), but suppressed that knowledge of the law in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18), it will with the new covenant in Christ be a perpetual part of their new nature (Jer. 31:31-34).

Thus, Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, in continuity with Genesis 1 and the original creation of man, and in continuity with Eve, "the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20). All the redeemed of the Old Testament era were forerunners and types of what God would do in Jesus Christ, in that every regenerate man in that era was a miracle of grace, both in physical continuity with Eve, and in supernatural discontinuity by grace. Similarly, every regenerate man since Jesus Christ is an antitype of Him who is the great Archetype.

Genesis 3:15 thus has central reference to Jesus Christ. But all who are born again in Him are clearly in mind in this text. Paul reminds us of this in Romans 16:20: "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." The unique work of atonement and justification belongs to Jesus Christ. The miracle of regeneration is the work of the Triune God in our lives. This is the great bruising or crushing of Satan's head. His power is broken; a new humanity has come to possess the earth (Matt. 5:5; 28:18-20). Christ therefore sends out His new humanity to make all men and nations His Kingdom, and to trample under foot the shattered head of Satan everywhere. In that commission, conflict is an assured fact (Rom. 8:35-39) but also victory, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

2. The Promise to Abraham

The incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ came in fulfillment of the whole of revelation, and as the confirmation of the relationship of the Messiah to human history. God the Son came, not to enable men to escape from this world and its history, nor to condemn it, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). The world, John points, was *already* condemned: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

Christ came as the salvation and the blessing of the world. Centuries earlier, in a fallen and widely reprobate world, God had declared to 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)

This promise to Abraham was made perhaps some 2000 years after the Fall. The family records of God's works and revelation had been handed down in written form, from Adam through Noah to Abraham (and later collected by Moses into one narrative), so that the past was a matter of recorded knowledge.[3] Abraham, living in a sea of unbelief, would be very intensely aware of the promise of redemption through the "Seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15). Since the crushing of Satan's head was dependent upon that promised Seed, any and all promises of blessing were therefore likewise contingent upon that seed. Hence, when God promised to bless Abraham and to make him a great nation or kingdom, Abraham would have seen this promise in terms of the promised Seed. Our Lord declares this to be so: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

Thus, as we look at God's promise to Abraham, we can be sure of two things: *First*, Abraham saw the blessing in thoroughly historical terms. He lived in the midst of a fallen world, one ruled by sin and death. It was a world which God had ordained to be under covenant man's dominion, to be developed into God's holy realm or kingdom by covenant man. For Abraham, salvation and blessing meant rescue from the power of sin and death, and the restoration of all things to their place as God's holy realm. Abraham was keenly aware of the world's decay. Noah lived 350 years after the Flood and died at the age of 950; the Flood occurred in 1656 A.H., so that Noah's death date was 2006 A.H.; Abraham was born in 2008 A.H. (or 2038 B.C.)[4] The world of Adam and Noah was thus closer to Abraham than the past is to us, because of the longevity factor. At the same time, Abraham was familiar with the steady decline of man's life-time since Noah. His grandson Jacob would later say, at 130 years of age and old, "few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (Gen. 47:9). Thus, for Abraham, salvation and blessing would clearly include the reversal of the degeneration of man physically and spiritually as an aspect of the victory over sin and death.

Second, God had promised that this victory would come through the Seed of the Woman. Thus, any promise of blessing would clearly be in the context of that promised Seed. Apart from Him there would be no crushing of the enemy, no real victory.

It is in the light of these two facts that we must read God's promise in Genesis 12:1-3. The promise came to Abraham in his context, not to our framework of history. The validity of that promise to us is its validity and meaning to Abraham.

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[3] P. J. Wiseman: *New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1953). p. 52 ff.

[4] Philip Mauro: *The Wonders of Bible Chronology*. (Swengel, Pennsylvania: Bible Truth Depot, 1961). p. 30f.

First, God requires separation: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." This separation was required by God because the context of Abraham's life could not be *blood* or *race* but *only grace*, God and His promise alone. Israel was never a blood line but always a grace line. Abraham was early a ruler of a great household of slaves, who were in ancient times family members. He took into battle against the kings of the East 318 "trained servants, born in his own house" (Gen. 14:14). We can reasonably assume that he left a like number of elderly men to care for the flocks and herds, and a like number of boys, to give us about 1,000 males in his household, and as many females, for a total of c. 2,000 persons. Thus, the Abrahamic blood, when Isaac took over, without counting any further increase, was at best 1\2000th of *the covenant* people. By Jacob's time, and his journey to Goshen, these 2,000 had easily increased to 50,000, of which only "threescore and ten" were of Abraham's blood, and this figure of 70 includes wives, who became Abrahamic by marriage only (Gen. 46:27). It was because of this larger number that all of Goshen was given to Israel by Pharaoh (Gen. 47:6). Add to this the fact that Israel later left Egypt as "a mixed multitude" (Ex. 12:38), and the Abrahamic blood becomes even thinner. Add to this the foreign blood and the adoptions in the two chronologies of our Lord (Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38), and it becomes clear that, while there is a tenuous connection between Abraham and Jesus Christ, the essential line is one of faith and promise.

Thus, the separation required of Abraham demands separation from blood to grace. The law insists on a separation in terms of the covenant and faith (Deut. 7:2; II Cor. 6:14-7:4; Num. 16:21,26; Ezra 10:11; Prov. 9:6; Acts 2:40; Rev. 18:4, etc.) The covenant people begin with a denial of the blood tie in favor of the faith-bond. The creation by Christ of the new Israel of God makes even stronger this fact. The call is to break with the humanity of Adam to the Kingdom of God and His new man, Jesus Christ, God incarnate.

Second, not only is the calling *from* the Lord, but it is also *to* God's appointed place, not to the place of Abraham's choosing. It is "unto a land that I will shew thee."

Third, God declares, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." The great pretense of humanism is to be non-religious; a part of that pretense is to view all of life through supposedly non-religious rational eyes. As a result, modern man has been moved by humanism into an intense and fanatical faith with the illusion all the while that his is the life of true reason. Hence, he is saturated with humanistic religion without knowing it and is given to viewing all other religions through dissecting categories, i.e., sociologically, psychologically, and so on. Modern man is thus usually unable to recognize religion even when he stumbles over it.

The nations of Abraham's day were *openly* religious entities. Each nation represented a god, or a group of gods, and a particular kind of faith. For Abraham to be told that he would be a great nation, the greatest nation, one in which all nations of the earth would be blessed, could thus mean only one thing: it would be God's nation or Kingdom. This could only mean the Kingdom of the Promised Seed. For Abraham, this was clearly a messianic promise. Hence, as our Lord declares, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

Fourth, Abraham is told by God, "Thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Again, for God to speak of blessings and curses was a reminder to Abraham of the promise to Adam and Eve of the Promised Seed. Also, it had reference to the curse: "Cursed is the ground (adamah) for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). Lamech, the father of Noah, knew that the promise of God would come through Noah's line, and declared of Noah, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed" (Gen. 5:29). The memory of Eden's fertility had been passed on to Lamech, together with God's promise. Abraham was heir to the same knowledge. God's declaration to him was thus the promise of God's Kingdom and the Promised Seed, of the removal of the curse from the ground and the restoration of Edemic fertility, and a new principle of judgment for the world and its peoples. God says to Abraham that it is "in thee," not Abraham himself, but Abraham as the father of the faithful and the forerunner and forefather of the Promised Seed.

We cannot spiritualize away this and other like prophecies of the Old Testament without negating them. Jesus Christ came to remove the curse of sin and the penalty of death, to establish God's Kingdom and new humanity, and to become He who is the Judge of all men, the curse of the unbelieving, and the salvation and the blessing of God's new humanity. The new humanity is the creation of Jesus Christ, in whom all members thereof are born again.

Hengstenberg rightly noted, "The ardent desire of Abraham to see the day of Jesus Christ implies that he already *knew* Christ, which can be the case only on the supposition of Christ's concealment in Jehovah."[5] Hengstenberg said further, with respect to Genesis 12:1-3, and Gen. 18:18,

> Paul probably refers to this promise when, in Rom. iv. 13, he speaks of a promise given to Abraham and his seed that he should be the heir of the world. A blessing imparted to the whole world is a spiritual victory obtained over the world. The world is in a sense, conquered by Abraham and his seed. Express references are found in Gal. iii. 8, 14, 16.[6]

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[5] E. W. Hengstenberg: *Christology of the Old Testament, I.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1956). p. 52.
[6] Ibid., p. 53.

Materially and spiritually, economically, by means of education, civil order, ecclesiastical order, family life, and in all ways, the Promised Seed is the Lord and ruler over all. Before the end, He shall have triumphed and prevailed. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (I Cor. 15:25).

3. Shiloh

One of the haunting prophecies of Genesis is 49:8-10. Even C.A. Simpson, in *The Interpreter's Bible* admits that Genesis 49:10 "has a messianic significance," although, perhaps for that reason, he assigned it to a later date.[7] His evolutionary presuppositions prevented him from a clear assessment of the text.

Jacob, on his death-bed, gives an inspired blessing and prophecy. The inheritance God ordained for Judah is the messianic element in his blessings:

> 8. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.
> 9. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?
> 10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

First, these verses clearly assert the pre-eminence in Israel of the tribe of Judah. Verse 8 was plainly fulfilled in II Samuel 5:1-3, when all Israel gathered to make David king at Hebron, and to declare their membership in him: "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh" (II Sam. 5:1). These words clearly recall Adam's words concerning Eve (Gen. 2:23). The Kingdom of Israel declared itself to be the bride of God's appointed king, David. All his father's children, including half-brothers, would be under his authority, and he would rule over his enemies.

Second, Judah is compared to a lion, bold, fearless, and lordly. When a lion is at rest, even then, who would dare to rouse him up? We are prepared, in Genesis 49:8,9, for the messianic prophecy which follows. All of Judah's pre-eminence through the royal Davidic line is a prologue for the world dominion to follow in the great Son of David, the Messiah.

Third, the royal line of David has as its purpose the passing on of the sceptre, the symbol of rule and dominion, to the world ruler. In Abraham, God called out the chosen line for the Seed of the woman; that line is now narrowed down to Judah. Shiloh shall come, he "to whom it is," i.e., Shiloh means "to whom it is," the rightful possessor of all rule and authority. Shiloh

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[7] Cuthbert A. Simpson: "Genesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, I. (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon, 1952). p. 821.

or the Messiah fulfil the mandate of Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 5: He is the great new Adam, the royal man, and the head of the new humanity.

Therefore, unto Him shall be the gathering or obedience of all the peoples of the world. He will, as the new Adam, *dispossess* the old humanity of the fallen Adam. He therefore declares, even to the outward but unbelieving Israel, "Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Jesus Christ is the Head of that new nation or Kingdom. We must remember again that, in antiquity, and beyond antiquity to the present, the idea of a *nation* is totally religious. A nation is a people gathered together under a common faith, in terms of the kingship of their lord or god. The modern age has sought to equate nationhood with a common racial or geographical boundary, or a common language, but this is a recent development, and also a myth. Nationalism in this sense has been a very real force in the past almost two centuries, but nationalism has been so closely allied with imperialism that its "faith" in nationalism is open to question. Nationalism has been a humanistic faith, (as has been internationalism), and it defines man and nation to suit the humanistic politics of the moment. Basic to it has been its humanism, its religious faith in a particular kind of man.

When Jacob speaks of the peoples obeying or being gathered to Shiloh, he speaks of a *religious obedience*. Any other concept of obedience had no place in antiquity, and in Jacob's world of thought. We thus have a very plain declaration that the peoples of the world will be gathered to, or be in obedience to, the Messiah. The Messiah is clearly declared to be the world ruler.

Again, however, it is the line of faith, rather than blood, which is stressed. Judah is the chosen line, but in the line of Judah there are aliens like Ruth and Bathsheba (Matt. 1:5,6), as well as Tamar (Matt. 1:3).

Even more, while Judah is the royal line, it cannot rule apart from God and His word. Judgment thus fell upon Rehoboam and his successors, again and again, until we come to the end of the kingdom and captivity. In words which recall Shiloh, Ezekiel declares:

> 25. And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,
> 26. Thus saith the Lord GOD: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.
> 27. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is: and I will give it him. (Ezek. 21:25-27)

No man nor nation, nor any church, has any standing before the Lord in terms of its past, its ancestors, or its history. The very House of David is turned out and sent into captivity, its diadem removed, and its kingdom overturned and destroyed. God makes clear that only one nation has any

standing in history, the Kingdom of Christ. He alone has a *right* to rule and authority, and a property right to all the earth.

It is not only man but all the nations that have fallen prey to original sin, to the desire to be as God (Gen. 3:5). Each makes itself its own source of law, a clear usurpation of God's prerogative. Each seeks to limit or prohibit the freedom of God's word. The nations without exception claim *sovereignty*, a plain assertion of their own lordship or deity. Every nation is and has always been a religious entity. Moreover, the nations, as they now exist and function, are members of the fallen world of Adam and fanatic advocates of Adam's faith and rebellion.

The coming of Shiloh is the beginning of the war against the nations, a war set forth in part in *Revelation*. Their declaration of independence from God and His Messiah-King is a great insult, and a declaration of war. Shiloh comes as the conqueror, as He Whose Right It Is, i.e., as the only rightful Lord of all things. Against all His enemies, He is like a devouring lion. He shall destroy all who refuse Him His due obedience.

Thus, today, men, churches, and nations which are not faithful to Shiloh are, like Judah, cast aside and sent into captivity. Those who stand by faith and under the Messiah's authority reign with Him. It is the nations of our time, not Christ's Kingdom, who are in trouble and under judgment. Until they are in obedience to Christ, they are under His wrath and His judgment. The nations are His inheritance, and God declares

> 9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
> 10. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
> 11. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
> 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Ps. 2:9-12)

4. Dominion

The prophecy of Balaam, a godless man and a false prophet, should not surprise us. In a sense, we are all prophets in spite of ourselves. Paul makes clear, in Romans 1:16-31, that the whole creation witnesses to God's truth. Men may, in their depravity, seek to hold down that truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18), but it is an irrepressible witness. In their self-judgment, in their sado-masochism, and in their imitations of God's Kingdom and law, they witness to God and are prophets in spite of themselves. When we rage at the truth of God, it is because God's truth rages in us. When we laugh off God's word, it is a hollow mockery of God's mocking laughter at our own folly (Ps. 2:4).

Thus, Balaam prophesied in spite of himself, declaring:

> 17. I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.
> 18. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.
> 19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. (Numbers 24: 17-19)

Balaam was sent for by Balak, King of Midian. Balak knew, *first* that Israel was plainly and obviously blessed by God. The deliverance from Egypt was common knowledge, as no doubt were the messianic prophecies made to Abraham and his posterity. For the nations of the day, with the memory of the Flood all too near, the God of Noah and Abraham was a feared though not followed power. He was the Occasional God, a God who at times awoke in wrath at the events of history to bring forth a Flood, or to scatter the men of Babel, but no more. Everyday forces and agencies were more relevant to them: the power beyond history they saw as an Occasional God, the forces in history as the relevant focus of life and worship. Now, they were faced again with the threat of the Occasional God.

Second, Balaam was known to have some connection with this Occasional God, some power therefore over Him, or in controlling His wild charges into history. Hence, the summons: "Come...curse me this people," i.e., Israel (Num. 22:6).

Third, it was believed that this Occasional God would some day enter history to rule it (Gen. 3:15). Hence, just as the heart of Balaam's prophecy came to be the Messianic King and His Dominion, so the heart of the curse was to prevent the rule and dominion of the Messiah's people and realm. Moab could not allow Israel to pass by in peace. The power of Israel meant an alien religious force, a threat even in peace, and hence to be broken.

In terms of this, let us now look at Balaam's prophecy. *First*, Balaam's literal words are, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh. There hath come forth a Star out of Jacob..." The tense is prophetic past or historic tense of prophecy. The event is so assured, that it is visible and present, while still ahead in time. Thus, the Messianic King is not merely He who is to come, but He who was, who is, and who is also to come (Rev. 1:8). He is the Almighty. There can be no preventing of such a One.

Second, He is described as a Star and a Sceptre, both very ancient symbols of kingship and dominion. Behind Israel's present power, Balaam sees, stands the King of the Ages. Thus, Moab's problem is only superficially Israel: it is the Messiah King. This great King shall smite both sides of Moab, i.e., destroy it, and break down all the sons of tumult or pride, all the sons of Sheth.

Third, Edom, another great power of the day, is also to be destroyed. This singling out of Moab and Edom has a particular significance beyond the

moment. Both were peoples related to Israel. Both were aware more than most of the Messianic promise. Edom, descended from Isaac's older son, claimed that promise, and Herod openly affirmed its fulfillment in himself, centuries later (Acts 12:20-23). Like many churches of our time, Edom and Moab saw themselves as the blood line of promise. Like the churches of today, they face their destruction at the hands of the King, for "judgment must begin at the house of God" (I Peter 4:17).

Fourth, this King "shall destroy him that remaineth of the city." *City* is a collective noun and can refer to cities in general. Cities are the focal points of civilization. To speak of the Messiah destroying even the survivors in cities is to declare that He shall totally destroy all His enemies, so that the visible symbols of the rule and power of the Kingdom of Man shall be wiped out. This is a particularly dramatic symbol of victory, and its purpose is to tell us how complete the victory of the Christ is. His people, Israel, shall acquire power or wealth.

Fifth, the Messiah or Christ is He who shall have dominion. The whole of Psalm 72 is a magnificent statement of that dominion. David in 72:8 makes clear the world-wide nature of that dominion: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." The nature of this dominion is set forth by Psalm 72: it shall be the kingdom of justice and peace for all peoples. The oppressors shall be destroyed, and the poor and needy saved. The fear of the King shall restrain men, and His blessings will come down like rain and dew from His throne. Fertility and prosperity shall mark even the mountain-tops. The assured future is that "all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (Ps. 72:11).

Dominion thus is basic to Jesus Christ and His salvation, His Kingdom. The fact that a star heralded the birth of our Lord marks the fact that His Kingship over all things began then and there (Matt. 2:2,3). It was because of the star, and a knowledge of its meaning, that Herod the king "was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matt. 2:3). Herod and the priests at least recognized that Christ is King, and to be the Christ means to have dominion. All too many churchmen today are unwilling to recognize as much. When Balaam spoke of Christ's dominion, he did not limit it to Israel, Edom, or Moab: it is dominion as such, total dominion, before which none can stand.

We must therefore regard it as a deadly heresy wherever any limitations are placed on Christ's royal power and dominion. Balaam saw Christ's Kingship as a present fact in the year c. 1452 B.C. If we insist that it is a future thing, we do not see as far as Balaam.

Christ is King! The sceptre and dominion are His, and He reigns, in time and in eternity. If we insist on seeing Him as only a future king, we cannot have Him as a present Savior, because He then does not rule, and is not

omnipotent against sin and death. Christ is our Savior, because He is the King.

We cannot be the people of God if we trust Him as an Occasional God, worshipping Him at times, while serving man and pragmatism mostly. All of history is a great shaking of the nations by the God of all dominion, to remove all the things which are shakeable, so that only those things which cannot be shaken, because they are of Him, may remain (Heb. 12:25-29).

5. The Prophet

Deuteronomy 18 is of particular importance for the believer because its concern is *covenant life and teaching*: God had made a covenant with His chosen people. Now, He stresses the administration or ministry of that covenant. *First*, in Deut. 18:1-8, the continuing ministry is set forth. The priests have as their function the sacrifices of atonement; the Levites were called essentially to instruction (Deut. 33:10). Their support is required of the covenant people.

Second, in Deut. 18:9-14, they are warned against the ministers of demonic covenants. These come with many super moral manifestations. Their claims is to know *the secrets* of the unseen world, to probe the supernatural and to bring a word from beyond the grave. The true ministers of the covenant set forth God's atonement (through sacrifice), and God's way of holiness and sanctification (through the law). The demonic covenants offer secret knowledge of the unseen rather than righteousness. They offer gnosis, not salvation, and for them man's problem is not sin, but a hostile universe, which they claim to penetrate.

Thus, Moses declares, the covenant people will be in an ocean of pretended knowledge from the unseen world often pretending to come in the name of the Lord. This knowledge will be esoteric: it will thus be *gnostic and antinomian*. Because its salvation is knowledge or illumination, it will be hostile to the fixed and unchanging word of God.

The Lord, however, had not yet concluded His revelation to the covenant people. The one word of God (Deut. 4:2) had yet many words to be added to it. The threat was that the various ministers of the demonic covenants would claim to have such an additional word from the Lord.

Hence, *third*, Deut. 18:15-22 gives us the marks of the true prophet, the prophet of God's covenant and law as against the prophets of a covenant with hell (Deut. 28:15). The prophets were to culminate in the Great Prophet, of whom the woman at the well said, "when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26). Our Lord applied Moses' statement to Himself again in John 5:45-47. After the first feeding of the multitude, men said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). Our Lord echoes Moses' words, Deut.

18:18,19 in particular, in John 12:48-50. Peter, in Acts 3:19-23 refers Moses' words to Christ.

Thus, Jesus is supremely the Prophet, and all prophecy is summed up in Him. At the same time, all prophets coming before Him are to be judged by the requirements of Moses in Deut. 18:15-22. These words of Moses are *law*, a test and a law. The word of the covenant God will only come from a covenant prophet and will be in agreement at all points with covenant law.

The non-covenant or false prophet will speak a word which is not from God, "a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or...in the name of other gods" (Deut. 18:20). Thus, the false prophet will speak, whether in the name of the Lord, or of other gods, *an uncommanded word.* The command word of God is His law; the whole of Scripture is a command word. The prophets of the Lord speak the command word: Hear ye the word of the Lord.

The false prophet shall die. God himself will bring judgment upon him, as witness the case of Hananiah (Jer. 28:15-17), who, in the name of the Lord, "taught rebellion against the LORD" (Jer. 28:16).

The work of a prophet was *to speak for God.* Thus speaking was twofold. *First,* the prophet had to speak in faithfulness to the law of God, *the covenant word.* By giving His law-word to Israel, God established the covenant, an act of grace. To deny the covenant law was to deny God and His grace. Thus, in every age, the false prophet of the covenant denies the law. This is a form of idolatry as well as apostasy (Ex. 20:1-5; 22-26; 23:13; Deut. 5:7-10; 6:14f; 13:1-11; 4:15-28; 8:19f; 11:16f, 26-28; 16:21f; 17:2-7; 27:15; 30:17f; Lev. 26:1; 19:4; Ex. 34:14,17). To *serve other gods* was to obey their law; to "go after other gods" meant to desert God's covenant and law (Deut. 13:2). This was an obvious, and previously stated, test of a false prophet. Moses does not repeat it here.

However, there was a *second* aspect of prophecy, a more complex one, prediction. If the prophet spoke a word which did not come to pass, then he was a false prophet, a presumptuous man, and not to be feared (Deut. 18:22).

At this point, two facets of this warning concerning a false prophet must be noted. *First,* the false prophet may be outwardly faithful to the covenant law-word and then prophesy falsely: he is a false prophet. *Second,* he may be faithless to the covenant law-word, and like one of the occultists described in Deut. 18:9-14, while using God's name, and yet make true predictions: he is still a false prophet. The true prophet thus, *first,* speaks only God's commanded word, and, *second,* he predicts accurately in terms of that word.

A Biblical example of the first kind of false prophet was Hananiah. Although God's word makes clear the judgment on sin, on lawlessness, Hananiah insisted on preaching an encouraging word to sinners, and he

predicted deliverance, not judgment. This made him a false prophet, and he was judged accordingly by God (Jer. 28).

A twentieth century example of the second kind of false prophet was Rasputin. Rasputin believed in the occult, in reincarnation, was a member of the Khlisti sect (a sexual, fertility cult), and was a believer in an immanent divinity in all men. (Some of his followers believed him to be a reincarnation of Christ.) At the same time, while syncretising paganism and Christianity, he predicted the downfall of Czarist Russia if the country entered the war in 1914, and in other ways was at least a shrewd forecaster of the future events.[8] An accurate prediction alone did not make a true prophet or covenant man.

The Great Prophet, in whom God spoke His final word, and with whose word through His apostles the canon of Scripture ended, is Jesus Christ. His is the true and faithful word and the sure word of prophecy. He is "the faithful witness" (Rev. 1:5). Because Jesus Christ is the very Son of God, Peter declares, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy," (II Peter 1:17-19), i.e., *the great reaffirmation* of the covenant word of God.

Thus, the word of Peter to the faithful, and to all of the old Israel, is that Moses' requirements, as given by God, for the Great Prophet, had all been met by Jesus Christ.

The word *sure* is *bebaios*, meaning firm, steadfast. It is used of God's promise to Abraham (Rom. 4:16), and of the law given at Sinai (Heb. 2:2). Jesus Christ is the confirmation of the Old Covenant and all its prophecies, of its covenant grace, law, and prophecies, so that in His person all has been confirmed. Thus, the Great Prophet is the total confirmation and ratification of God's covenant.

The believer is in Christ called to be priest, king, and prophet. To be a prophet in Jesus Christ means to be faithful to the whole word of God as law, prophecy, and grace, and to be a predictor in terms of that word. The key to the believer's prophetic role in Christ is Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." God's law tells us that judgment follows sin: in terms of Deut. 28, for example, we can predict and prophesy what sin will produce. In terms of God's grace, we can also declare what follows from His gift and grace. Our prophetic calling binds us to the whole word and person of the Lord.

6. The Lion and His Cubs

In approaching Micah 5:2ff., the modernists are emphatic in denying that it has any messianic content. Harold A. Bosley, in *The Interpreter's Bible*, calls this the most abused chapter of the Bible, and declares that the Scripture

[8] See Maria Rasputin and Patte Barham: *Rasputin, The Man Behind the Myth*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977). pp. 64, 68, 78ff, 88, 90f., 162, 181f., 250f., etc.

here is "betrayed" into a false meaning by its "friends." Bosley declares that the belief of the people and their religious leaders that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1-6) was in error.

On the other hand, all too many evangelicals and others restrict Micah to a prediction of Christ's birth, so that this has become a Christmas text, and not much more.

Our concern is with the doctrine of Christ. Micah 5 not only predicts the coming of the Messiah, but much more is told us about Him.

First of all, Micah looks to little Bethlehem as *the future* source of royal power. This cannot be restricted to the normal run of Davidic kings. Judah was long familiar with Davidic rulers, good and bad. The centuries had seen them come and go, and the power of Judah dwindle. David had come out of Bethlehem, but, in time to come, there would be another king born in Bethlehem, one destined to be "ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2). Clearly, a literal birth is forecast in Bethlehem, not in the royal palace at Jerusalem. This fact is in itself a very significant one. In Micah's day, it was Jerusalem, not Bethlehem, which was the royal and Davidic city. Bethlehem was, while geographically close, historically remote and insignificant. To predict a royal birth at Bethlehem was in effect to say that Jerusalem, the royal city, had been by-passed. The lowest literal meaning would be that some remote, insignificant side-line of the Davidic house would produce a ruler in Bethlehem. In other words, if Davidic, as Bethlehem would indicate, the royal family of Jerusalem was by-passed.

Second, the Messiah is then plainly set forth. He who would be born in Bethlehem was one "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (or, from the days of eternity)" (Micah 5:2). The word translated as *goings forth* is in the Hebrew *mowtsa-ah*, family *descent*. We are thus told that this Davidic king, while born in Bethlehem, has also a family descent from all eternity, from God Himself. Very clearly, we have here a Messianic prophecy. The Nicene Creed echoes in part this text in its affirmation that "we believe... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten of the Father, Son of God; begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father."

Third, this Great King's realm shall be world-wide, and He shall provide for His people. In the words of Micah 5:4, "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." His reign will give security, because He brings to it "the strength of the LORD his God." Clearly, we have here a supernatural King, in birth, rule, and providence. Moreover, He is obviously a victorious King, whose sway and

authority are world-wide, and whose dominion is so clear and unchallenged that Micah earlier described the glory of His reign thus:

> 1. But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.
>
> 2. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
>
> 3. 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 pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
>
> 4. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. (Micah 4:1-4)

Micah speaks of great, world-wide dominion and peace under the rule of a Messiah whose origin is from eternity.

Fourth, Micah says of this ruler, "And this man shall be the peace," (Micah 5:5) i.e., He Himself is Peace. In every age, from the Assyrians of that day to the end of time, His rule accomplishes His purposes towards His world rule and peace. Until that world order arrives, there will be Assyrian and other enemies in the land, but the Lord will raise up Shepherds and princes to accomplish all that He purposes towards His peace. Our Lord sets forth the fact that His peace is different: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). The Messiah's inner peace precedes the world's outer peace; salvation precedes pacification.

Fifth, before this world peace is realized, there must be not only salvation but very extensive judgment. (Micah 5:7-15) The enemies will be destroyed. The weapons of aggressive warfare (horses and chariots) will be destroyed. Occultism, idolatry, and unbelief will be dealt with by the Messiah in His vengeance and fury. There will be thus a shattering of all His enemies.

Sixth, to the redeemed the Lord Messiah will be a blessing and a benediction, and He will make them the means of blessing the whole world: "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Micah 5:7). This is a key text. It declares that the remnant redeemed by the Messiah are to be *the means* whereby the Lord blesses all the earth. This text plainly precludes pietism and quietism and requires the exercise of godly dominion by Christ's people. This meaning is obviously post-millennial.

Moreover, the Messiah's judgment, which we have already spoken of, is, like His blessing, to come through his redeemed people. In Micah 5:8-9, the redeemed of the Messiah are declared to be like a lion in a sheep-fold:

> 8. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.
> 9. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

Rolland E. Wolfe, in *The Interpreter's Bible*, sees these two verses as "out of harmony," because he apparently wants world peace without world judgment. Micah's prophecy, however, has no pacifist version of the Messiah's people. They are to be like "a lion among the beast of the forest," not in their righteousness but the Lord's.

Thus this text, a central one in the prediction of our Lord's birth, is also basic to the declaration of His world rule. That world rule is to come through the dominion-work of His people. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5) is to have a lion-like people exercising His sovereignty (Micah 5:8-9).

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter asked that they remain to build a memorial to that event (Matthew 17:4). To have arrested the faith there would have been to reduce the faith to a vision, a theophany, and no more. The atonement, resurrection, world victory, and Second Advent would have been denied.

To read Micah 5:2ff. and restrict its meaning to our Lord's birth is to reduce our faith even more drastically than did Peter. The doctrine of Christ summons us to be Kings, priests, and prophets in Him. We cannot be members of His divine nature; salvation is not deification. We are, by our justification, regeneration, and adoption made members of His humanity and are adopted into the Family of the Throne, the Royal House. This places a requirement upon us: the Family calling requires that we exercise dominion in His name. We are the Lion's cubs.

7. The Canopy

Isaiah 4:2-6 is regarded by Christian orthodoxy as a messianic prophecy. The pertinent question for us goes a step further: what does it have to say, if anything, about the doctrine of Christ? The text, while lovely, seems at first rather nebulous:

> 2. In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.
> 3. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

> 4. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.
> 5. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.
> 6. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain. (Isa. 4:2-6)

"The Branch of the LORD" is a messianic term which we encounter, although not always identically, in Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5,6; 33:15, and in Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12. On the other hand, there is clearly some reference here to the remnant returning to Judea after the captivity. Calvin's comment on this is very much to the point:

> They who limit it to the person of Christ expose themselves to the ridicule of the Jews, as if it were in consequence of scarcity that they tortured passages of Scripture for their own convenience. But there are other passages of Scripture from which it may be more clearly proved that Christ is true God and true man, so that there is no need of ingenious glosses. Yet I acknowledge that the Prophet speaks here about the kingdom of Christ, on which the restoration of the Church is founded. But it ought to be observed, that the consolation is not addressed indiscriminately to all, but only to the remnant, which has been marvelously rescued from the jaws of death.[9]

In terms of this, we can note, *first*, that because all history comes to us from the hand of God, it is more than isolated events. Each event in history has both a uniqueness and a part in an over-all design and pattern. Typology is the study of these patterns as set forth in Scripture. Thus, the Bible gives us a succession of judgments upon the nations, each a type and a forerunner of the Last Judgment. To limit the meaning of these judgments to the particular event, or to read them only in terms of the final event, is equally wrong. Thus, we have here a meaning which applies to Judah and unfolds in Christ and His Kingdom.

Second, This Branch of the LORD, defined now both as the Remnant of God and the Messiah of God, in whom history's great new beginning will occur, is defined as "beautiful and glorious," or, as "beauty and glory." This Branch will be fertile and rich in an unprecedented way, so that we are reminded of the Garden of Eden. Just as history is to have a new beginning, and humanity its new Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47), so too will the redeemed of the Lord represent a new beginning and a new humanity. The survivors returning to Judea from Babylon represent the Great New Beginning of Jesus Christ,

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[9] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, I. William Pringle translation. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1958). p. 153.

and belong to Him, as do those of us who come after Him and are members of Him. After the desolation of Babylon comes the Hebrew Remnant; after the desolation of the cross comes the risen Christ and His great Remnant, and the promise of a renewed earth of renewed fertility.

Third, the survivors of the judgment are the redeemed. Without judgment, there is no salvation, and the cross best illustrates this fact. All those who are "written among the living," or written "for life" shall not only survive but shall be declared holy. They are not described as becoming holy but as "called holy:" it is a God-given designation and calling. The "filth" of the people is removed by God's washing. The "filth" which is removed is deep-seated and involves capital offenses: it is "the blood of Jerusalem," or blood-guiltiness. This included judicial murders (Isa. 1:15,21) and Moloch or state worship (Isa. 57:5; Ezek. 22:2,3; Psalm 106:38). The salvation of the Remnant is an act of sovereign grace. Its judgment is by the spirit, breath, or blast of judgment, and of burning, to purge out the dross by fire.

Fourth, in Isaiah 4:5,6 we have set forth the tabernacling Presence of God. Very clearly, we are reminded of the wilderness journey of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. In the Exodus, the presence of the Lord, as the great defender of His Kingdom and people was manifested as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21; Num. 9:15,16). Thus, the Branch means not only renewed fertility, as in Eden, but also renewed providential care, as in the Exodus, for the Remnant of God. There is thus a canopy of defense about God's people. Of this, E.H. Plumptre commented:

> The thought seems to be that over the "glory" of the New Jerusalem, as just described, there shall be stretched the over-arching *canopy* of the Divine Love. The word for "defence" occurs in this sense in Ps. xix. 5, Joel ii. 16, and is still used by Jews of the "canopy" held over bride and bridegroom at a wedding. The "baldacchino" over the altar of an Italian church probably represents the image that was present to Isaiah's mind.[10]

David speaks of this tabernacling presence thus in the psalms:

> For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. (Ps. 27:5)

> Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues (Ps. 31:20)

Thus Isaiah declares that all the glory of Eden and of the Exodus will be manifested by God to the redeemed. All who are a part of the Branch will thus

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[10] E. H. Plumptre, "Isaiah in C. J. Ellicott, editor: *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, IV. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d.). p. 428.

be the object of the great care, providential government and direction, and purposes of history. Calvin, commenting on Isaiah 4:5, noted:

> Such expressions ought not to be understood literally, as if the Spirit would be sent down from heaven under that visible sign; but by reminding them of the miracle, it would lead believers to expect that the same power of God, which the Apostles formerly experienced, will now be displayed in restoring the Church. Add to this, that the Prophet, by this mode of expression, points out an uninterrupted continuance of blessing; as if he had said, "Not only will God for a moment stretch out his hand for your deliverance, but as he always accompanied your fathers in the wilderness, so likewise he will deliver and protect you to the end."[11]

What does this tell us about the doctrine of Christ? *First* of all, salvation is set into the context of history. It is Israel and Judah, called to be God's Kingdom, who have fallen and who must be purged and restored. Jerusalem, the temple city of God, the seat and center of His visible reign, must be purged and purified. To limit the work of Christ to the salvation of souls, to man's redemption, is to distort its meaning and make it man-centered. The Lord seeks to restore His Kingdom; He promises to lead and protect them always, as in the Exodus; His goal is that His Kingdom prosper and abound as in Eden. *Man is not saved for man's sake, but for the sake of God's Kingdom and purpose.* Christ and the Kingdom of God are thus set in a God-centered perspective.

Second, it follows therefore that the canopy of the tabernacling Presence, set forth first in the Exodus, and then by the incarnate Presence in Matthew 28:18-20, is also theocentric. We are not under that canopy of grace and care in order to rest where we are and to have our ease. The purpose of the canopy of sovereign care is to *guide and protect* us in our appointed calling, pilgrimage, or journey. Again we have a theocentric salvation and Savior. There is none other.

Third, Christ as the Branch *requires* fruitfulness or productivity in His branches, or, lacking that, gives them over to judgment. Our Lord, in John 15:1-6, is emphatic on this necessity for fertility.

The Great Commission is a command. It gives marching order and promises, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). Faith and obedience precede productivity and fertility.

There is no place here for a man-centered Christ. What the great and true Branch does is not to fulfil the hopes of fallen man, or man as such, in any estate, but, as very God of very God, as well as very man of very man, to re-institute man into a God-centered life and faith. He is the One who says, to God supremely and perfectly, "thy will be done" (Matt. 26:42). It is He who

[11] Calvin, op. cit., p. 158.

declares, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). He summons us to a like calling in Him.

We are forbidden and barred from seeing Christ in terms of ourselves. Rather, we are required to see ourselves in terms of Jesus Christ, and as branches of the Branch or Vine. He is the canopy. All that are not in Him nor of Him are for judgment and for burning. To be under that canopy is to undergo the judgment of His cross and the penalty of death in Him. The God-centered Christ requires a God-centered humanity.

8. The Wonderful Counsellor

One of the better known Messianic prophecies is Isaiah 9:1-7. In the shadows of Assyria's power and threat, Isaiah looks ahead to the coming of the Messiah. The enemies of God's covenant people will see their destruction with His coming, which will in time lead to the very destruction of the weapons of war (Isa. 9:2-5).

Four *names* are given to the Messiah. Since *to name* in the Old Testament means to define or describe, these names are important to any understanding of the nature of Christ. These names indicate that, while He is born out of the humanity of Adam, He is at the same time God Himself. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isa. 9:6). He is both born and given, born into Adam's humanity, yet the Son of God. The government or dominion shall be upon His shoulders, so that the future is His to ordain and establish. Moreover, "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:7). The continuity thus is not only with the humanity of Adam, but also with God's covenant people and the royal House of David. At the same time, it will be the zeal of the Lord which will accomplish these things.

Turning now, to the four names of the Messiah, we see them clearly pointing to and setting forth the Messiah's deity. *First*, He is the *Wonderful Counsellor*, or Wonder Counsellor, or Wonder, Counsellor (two separate titles). A counsellor in antiquity was a wise man whom the King consulted before declaring a law or preparing for action. A counsellor was a resource for rule and dominion. Ahasuerus thus consulted with his wise men before passing judgment on Vashti (Esther 1:13-22). Law and action were initiated out of the wisdom of the counsellor. However, man being a sinner, no one counsellor was trusted. Scripture speaks of the necessity for many counsellors. Proverbs especially stresses this fact:

> Where no counsel is, the people fail: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. (Prov. 11:14)

> Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy. (Prov. 12:20)
>
> Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established. (Prov. 15:22)
>
> For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety. (Prov. 24:6)

The Messiah being the wonderful or wonder counsellor, no other counsel is needed. His is the sufficient word and the law word.

This wonder counsellor is the antithesis of the counsellor of Genesis 3:1-5, the tempter, to whose counsel humanity listened, and whose word is at the heart of every son of Adam. The tempter's counsel demands the sovereignty of man, not God, and any command word over man is then seen as offensive. Even more, any punishment, either capital punishment or hell, is seen as a barbaric invasion of the supposed freedom and rights of man. Thus, Stephen H. Gettinger, in *Sentenced to Die: the People, the Crimes, and the Controversy*, reviews the cases of eight men who were sentenced to die. He speaks of the jury's decisions as "arbitrary and capricious." However, as Clarence B. Carson points out in a review article,

> In each case, the man was charged with and found guilty of either premeditated murder or murder committed while in the act of committing a felony. Each of them had a jury trial, had at least one attorney, was protected against self-incrimination, was permitted to submit evidence on his own behalf, and was accorded a presumption of innocence. Some of the crimes were particularly horrible: a man beat his wife to death in bed and killed one of his small children with a poker (after making sexual advances on one of his daughters); another involved the killing of a man in bed and attacking his wife who was beside him; another was a father who gave poisoned candy to one of his children on Halloween, and so on. A good case can be made that the murders were arbitrary and capricious. On the face of it, no such case is made that the decisions to execute were. At the time of the writing of the book, none of the appeals made on behalf of the murderers had moved any court to decide so.[12]

Either we accept God's counsel, or we move in terms of the tempter's counsel. The logic of the tempter's counsel leads us to Gettinger's conclusion, whether we like it or not. Either man is sovereign, or God is, and, if God be sovereign, it is His counsel we must obey. Man seeks to enforce his own counsel, but God declares, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10).

Second, He is called *The Mighty God*, or Hero-God. He is God the Almighty, the omnipotent One. Because God is the covenant God, this means that He has, by His own grace, bound Himself to His covenant people. The

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[12] Clarence B. Carson, "Lawful Killing in the Barbaric Present," in *Chronicles of Culture*, January/February, 1980, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 17.

penalty for violation of the covenant law and oath required the death penalty. The covenant people had again and again broken God's covenant; the prophets speak at length of God's judgment on covenant-breakers. God, however, promises to redeem His covenant people. The Old Testament gives us repeated examples of both God's judgment on and His redemption of His covenant people. Such rescues were futile. God thus promises His Messiah, who is one with Himself, who will be of the covenant people, of the House of David, and yet still "The mighty God." In Him, the covenant is renewed: He provides the salvation and the rule, and also both parties in His Person.

Third, the Messiah is called *the Everlasting Father*, or the Father of eternity. This again is stated with reference to the covenant people. Throughout all eternity, the God-Messiah is the Father of His people. Hengstenberg pointed out that it means He is one who will forever be a Father, the loving provider of His people; because of His everlasting fatherly love, He will always feed His Kingdom and church.[13] The Messiah is thus the Messiah of God's covenant and Kingdom. We have a personal relationship to Him only when we have a covenantal one; to deny the covenant is to cut ourselves off from Him.

Fourth, the Messiah is *The Prince of Peace*. The peace sought is that which the tempter, as man's evil counsellor, broke. Man declared war on God, claiming to be himself a god. With every man claiming to be a god, all men were soon at war with one another, each demanding that his own will be done. The restoration of peace with God re-establishes peace between man and man. Hence, it follows as a necessity that the triumph of Christ means the death of war (Isa. 2:1-5). All creation will reflect that peace, including the very animals (Isa. 65:25). Man will be restored into the creation mandate, to exercise dominion, and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:26-28).

The messianic prophecies stress the Kingship of the Messiah. Christ as King is lord over creation, which will be remade finally in terms of His glorious purpose. It is the calling of the Messiah to re-create and to rule. His covenant people are commissioned and called in terms of His mandate to redeem and to rule. They are sent out with this requirement, and they are required to bring all things into captivity to Christ the King.

In this calling, He is the only sufficient counsellor. If He is not our covenant Head and King, He is not our Savior. The Messiah is the reality of the unique union and incarnation, for the fulfillment of the covenant of God with man. Before the Messiah, there were *types*: types are forerunners and are prophetic of the *reality*. There can be no typology, no fore-ordained or predestined pattern to history, unless God determines all history *and* reveals its meaning. That meaning is revealed in all creation, in man's own being (Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:18-22), and supremely in God's infallible word (I Tim.

[13] E. W. Hengstenberg: *Christology of the Old Testament*, vol. II, p. 89f.

3:16f.). In Jesus Christ, that meaning is made a covenant fact and seal, a full revelation.

Apart from Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life, which He incarnates (John 14:6), man has no meaning, no types, and no truth, *only symbols representing a pretense at meaning*. Truth then goes out of life, to be represented by empty symbols, and life itself is reduced to such a symbol.

Modern politics gives us this reduction of truth and life to symbols. Politicians crusade for state school while placing their children in private schools. They demand equality while practicing elitism. They honor honesty while dealing in corruption. In all this, they reflect their voters, people who honor symbols, not reality.

In California, then Governor Jerry Brown made clear that politics is about symbols, not reality, and has succeeded with this formula. Of the conflict between loggers and environmentalists, he said, "Its all symbols. All they're arguing about is symbols."[14] His aide, Bob Graizda, could say, "it's all a game."[15] In his great potato chip debate in a Zen Buddhist setting, Brown argued in favor of Pringle's manufactured potato chips:

> So what if they were more expensive and not very nutritional. What *was* a potato chip, anyway? Who could say? Were the experts assembled in the room so high and mighty that they could define what a potato chip was? He, for one, wasn't convinced. He wasn't convinced about anything. What was reality, anyway?[16]

For Brown, reality has given way to appearances and symbols. Instead of a *real* world, we have one in process of becoming *illusion*. For the present, it is *symbols* and *Appearances*. As Lorenz sums up this new view in politics and life, "Appearances *were* the New Reality, and if you tried to hold on to the Old Reality in spite of it all, you were unhappy or went crazy or did both."[17] A legislator in this new faith could comment, "I'm living on junk food and junk sex."[18] Anything more points to the Old Reality, God, and the New Reality, appearance, wants no part of Him. The result is the world of *Camp*. No one has defined it more tellingly than Lorenz:

> Camp was not only an assault on conventional meanings, it was the glorification of no meaning, the triumph of style over substance, of aesthetics over morality, of irony over tragedy, of form over feeling...The whole purpose of Camp was to dethrone seriousness and strong feelings...it tried to decorate the environment rather than change it.[19]

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[14] J. D. Lorenz: *Jerry Brown, the Man on the White Horse.* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1978). p. 48; c.f. 54.
[15] Ibid., p. 50.
[16] Ibid., p. 184.
[17] Ibid., p. 185.
[18] Ibid., p. 195.

To reject the incarnate Christ is to enthrone appearances and symbols, the imagination. The verdict of Scripture on imagination is that it is evil (Gen. 8:21). When man plays god, he substitutes his imagination for God's law and reality and then attempts to legislate his imagination.

Jesus Christ as the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace is the antithesis of man's imagination. He is the reality by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made (John 1:3). In His Person, He negates man's imagination and requires an accounting of it. In Him the realities of the triune God and of inescapably covenant-man are joined in perfect union. Man has no tenable ground save as a covenant-keeping man. The incarnation shatters man's symbols and sets in process their judgment.

9. Rights

The doctrine of human rights is basic to the modern age and is under great expansion. We hear much of women's rights, children's rights, homosexual's rights, and more. A key concept in this tradition is the doctrine of *property rights*. Historically, as Drucker points out, we have seen three forms of property rights. *First*, there is "real" property, such as land and buildings. This is a key area, and basic to much conservative and libertarian thinking. *Second*, there is "personal" property, such as money, tools, furnishings, equipment, books, machinery, and personal possessions. *Third*, there is "intangible" property, such as copyrights and patents. But, *fourth*, as Drucker points out, there is now a claim to property rights in the job, the job "as a species of property rather than as contractual claims." An increasing amount of union negotiations presupposes a property right in the job by employees. As Drucker observes,

> In Belgium, for instance, the system of redundancy payments may prevent employers from laying off people. But it also keeps them from hiring workers they need, and thus creates more unemployment, than it prevents or assuages. Similarly, lifetime employment may be the greatest barrier to the needed shift in Japan from labor intensive to knowledge intensive industries.[20]

This trend has a strong element of historical inevitability to it. Once we begin with a certain presupposition, axiom, or faith, certain conclusions follow from it. Just as fire will burn, and water will make things wet, ideas too have consequences. Humanism, by usurping the doctrine of ultimacy to man, places both *right* and *rights* on the side of man. He who defines *the right* has also the *rights*, the power and the privileges, he is the one to whom all are

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[19] Ibid., p. 128f. For one of the best analyses of political blackmail, see Lorenz' account, pp. 115ff.

[20] Peter F. Drucker, "The Job as Property Right," in *The Wall Street Journal*, Tuesday March 4, 1980, p. 22.

accountable. The tempter's program is that man has *the right* to be as God, knowing or determining good and evil for himself, i.e., defining his *rights* (Gen. 3:5). Given this presupposition, there is no limit to human rights. Men demand perfection as their right from friends, doctors, pastors, and all who in any way serve them.

Problems then ensue, because there are no bounds on the property and other rights of individual men, and even less on collective man in the state. The result is the savage conflict of rights: the rights of capital versus labor, the individual versus the state, men versus women, children versus parents, and so on. The result is a conflict society.

The *first* thing which needs to be said with respect to the modern view of property rights is that it is unscriptural. The Bible is hostile to both the state ownership of property (totally so), and to private ownership. It holds rather to a doctrine of stewardship, and the family is the trustee of property. Ownership rests with God. The basic premise of God's law is that "the earth is the LORD'S" (Ex. 9:29; Deut. 10:14; Ps. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26). Man is a trustee under God over the earth. He is blessed for his faithful discharge of his stewardship, and cursed for his faithlessness (Lev. 26:3-45; Deut. 28:1-68). The Last Judgment is the final accounting for man's trusteeship. Man has no property rights in anything, including his own life and body. He is totally accountable to God for his life, time, and possessions. Biblical law rests on this fact. Humanistic law presupposes either man's absolute property rights, or the state's. Both positions lead to anarchy and tyranny. They create a war between rival gods; conflict replaces the harmony of interests in a God-governed realm, and each claimant to property rights seeks to advance his realm of rights by imperialism.

Second, in Scripture, a job is not a property nor a right but rather a vocation or calling and an obligation. God summons man to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:26-28; Matt. 28:18-20). This means developing the earth's resources, increasing its productivity, increasing our fertility and the earth's fertility, and enhancing the quality of life.

It is often stated that "the typical American" has the energy equivalent of 125 slaves working for him. Unhappily, too often this fact is cited by the idiot clergy, educators, and politicians as a reproach! Supposedly, we are exploiting others in doing so well, or depleting the earth. Rather than depleting the earth's resources, we are increasing its *available* resources. With each decade, the resources increase, because our ability to use and develop the earth's resources increases. From a few feet of reaching into the earth for materials, we now go thousands of feet, and our technology is still very young. Instead of bewailing our 125 energy equivalent slaves, we need to plan for 3,500 by the end of the century.

The fact is that our possession of the energy equivalent of 125 slaves is a religious fact and achievement; it will disappear as the faith which made it possible disappears. Men with a calling have exercised dominion and produced those advances. Now, people talk about a return to primitive ways as a goal, and work against the division of labor as though it were a virtue to destroy it.

This destruction is associated with the idea of rights, especially property rights in jobs. This doctrine is anti-productive; its goal is security, but its results disaster and insecurity of the most tragic sort.

The doctrine of calling claims no rights for man; it speaks of life as a pilgrimage. We cannot arrest time nor history, nor deny the mandate to grow: here we have no continuing city, no permanent status at any point (Heb. 13:14). We do have a calling, and a mandate (Gen. 1:26-28). To reject that mandate, and to assume an independent mandate, is to invite judgment.

Christ's absolute property rights, and His total sovereignty, are set forth in a very important messianic prophecy in terms of a false claim to property, and an evil assertion of rights. Church and state in Israel alike assumed a property right in God's covenant, and God through Ezekiel indicts the covenant people and judges them:

> 25. And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,
> 26. Thus saith the Lord GOD: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.
> 27. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him. (Ezek. 21:25-27)

The prince is described as "profane;" the same word is translated in v. 14 as "slain" and can be rendered as "overthrown." By abandoning his calling and seeing his position as a right rather than a duty, he is under sentence of death. The word "diadem" is elsewhere translated as "mitre" (Ex. 28:4,37,39; 29:6; 39:28,31; Lev. 8:9; 16:4). The use of diadem or mitre (*mitsnepheth*) emphasizes the religious nature of all rule and authority, of every vocation. God prepares the way for a new order by reversing all previous authority and power. He overturns all rival powers until Shiloh comes (Gen. 49:10).[21]

This messianic prophecy thus is concerned with property rights. Men claim, in every area of life and thought, an independent jurisdiction, i.e., independent from God. The state claims to be *sovereign*, a god walking on earth: it invents is own laws, sees no need to be under God and His law, and rules as a realm free from God. The church uses the name of God but seeks freedom from His law. Men too often believe that God will be content with

[21] F. Gardiner, "Ezekiel," in C.J. Ellicott, editor: *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. V. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan). p. 263.

hand-outs and verbal professions rather than total sovereignty. Ezekiel's prophecy declares the full and absolute sovereignty of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. It declares that all false claimants to sovereignty shall be overthrown and slain. It denies all property and other rights to man. Jesus Christ alone is "He whose right it is."

This means that the modern age is under judgment, because it claims as its own what rightfully belongs to Christ the King. Any theology which does not set *the crown rights* of Christ our King against all pretended human rights is neither systematic nor Biblical.

10. Our New Adam, Jesus Christ

In I Corinthians 15, St. Paul makes emphatic the necessary connection between Jesus Christ and His covenant people. Unless they know this connection, they "have believed in vain" (I Cor. 15:2). Paul stresses, *first*, the necessity of believing in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ arose from the dead in the same body in which He was crucified; however much that body was glorified, it was the same body. To deny this resurrection is to make all preaching vain, and all faith futile. Paul is emphatic on this point (I Cor. 15:1-19).

Second, not resting here, Paul goes on to declare that this physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is essentially related to the life of every man (I Cor. 15:20-56). Jesus Christ is "the firstfruits," not merely a freak occurrence, so that His resurrection tells us something about all humanity.

Third, Paul makes equally emphatic that all who are members of Jesus Christ become partakers of the victory He accomplishes, so that, having triumphed over sin and death (I Cor. 15:42-56), He makes His people triumphant over sin and death also. Even more, in Christ they enter into a new creation; being a part now of the world of total meaning, they have a victory through Christ which assures them that their "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:57-58). As Paul declares in Romans 8:28, "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." God's victory is built into his creation, and into the lives of his people.

Now, as Paul stresses this necessary connection between man and Christ, he sets forth the doctrine of Christ as the second or last Adam. Not only is it necessary for us to believe in the resurrection, but also to believe that Jesus Christ, in His person and resurrection, is essentially related to us as well as to God. He is both very God of very God, and very man of very man.

God created man in His own image, to be His vicegerent over the earth, to subdue it, and to exercise dominion over it, in righteousness, holiness, and knowledge (Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24). Man fell from this high calling, and, by his sin, brought death into the world (Gen. 3:f.). Since the

Lord God is Himself life (John 1:4; 11:25; 14:6), sin means death, because it is a war against life and a love of death (Prov. 8:36).

Thus, the humanity of the first Adam has no future other than sin and death. Adam I and his world face an endless repetition of the cycle of sin: the desire to be one's own god, and to determine what constitutes good and evil (Gen. 3:5), leads constantly to the death of every culture the world of Adam I seeks to establish.

Jesus Christ came as the new Adam, as Adam II. Like Adam, He was a special creation of Almighty God. Like Adam I, He was sinless, and had to face temptation. Whereas Adam I was tempted in paradise (Gen. 2:1-35), Adam II was tempted in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11), for Adam I's sin had turned the world into a wilderness. Adam I was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28); Adam II, in His humanity, was also made in God's image, but, in His deity, was very God (John 1:1,14; I John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4; etc.). The two natures of Adam II were in perfect union, but without confusion. As Adam II, Jesus Christ resisted temptation, kept God's law faithfully and totally, made atonement for the sins of His people, and destroyed the power of sin and death in His resurrection. Whereas Adam I gave to his seed or humanity sin and death as an inheritance, Adam II gave to His humanity righteousness and life, and membership or citizenship in the Kingdom of God. We have thus two Adams, two humanities, and two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of God.

The victory of Jesus Christ thus means our victory, and His resurrection means our resurrection, for "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:21-22). Adam I, by his defeat in the temptation, made man a slave to sin and death, rather than a king. His sin now had dominion over him, not he over the world. In Adam II, this situation is reversed, as Paul tells us in Romans 6:9 and 14:

> 9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
> 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Paul declares that, because Christ is risen from the dead, and free from the death penalty, i.e., the law, we too are therefore delivered from the law's sentence of death, and from the dominion of sin and death. This means we are freed for dominion, and we are sent out into all the world to proclaim and extend that dominion in Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).

In Adam I, we partook of sin and death; in Adam II, we partake of the restored and purified image of God. Peter states it thus: through Christ's work, and our membership in Him and His humanity, we "are given... exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of

the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4). The word *promises* (*epangelma*) means a gift given to us by grace; the gift, however, needs to be used and developed, as with the promise of the Spirit (Gal. 3:14). The word *partakers, koinonos*, means a companion or partner who is a recipient by having been made a part of the fellowship. It thus has to do with the adoption of grace, and the communicable, not the incommunicable, attributes of God. Thus, the reference is to the image of God in us, which now in Adam II manifests itself in and through us to apply knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion. Lenski's comment on this is especially good:

> We are to be children and sons of God (John 1:12), begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever (I Peter 1:23). Ours is the restored divine image, righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24) plus knowledge (*epignosis*, Col. 3:10). The two former are divine attributes. When they are restored in us they do not deify us; yet they are derived from God and make us *koinonoi* of divine nature.[22]

Calvin too made clear that deification is not the meaning of II Peter 1:4, but rather our restoration in God's image in order to serve Him and inherit eternal life and glory.[23]

In Adam II, we are thus restored into fellowship (*koinonia*) with God. In becoming members of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 6:15), we are made members of His humanity, not His deity, although we have communion with God, and fellowship with the divine Son of God. When our Lord speaks of Himself as the bread of life, and declares that none have life in them who do not eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6:32-35, 47-58), He declares that life means membership in His perfect humanity. It means becoming members of the new humanity and the new creation (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) of Adam II. Christ, Adam II, "lives by the Father;" He is a member, in His deity of the Trinity; "so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:57). The life of the incarnate Christ is dependent upon, and a part of, the life of the Father, because Christ is very God of very God, but, as the God-man, both truly man and truly God, He lives by the Father. We, as members of the new humanity of Jesus Christ, Adam II, are made partakers of His power and privileges: we live by Him. We are made victors over sin and death in Him, and released to fulfil the creation mandate in terms of our renewed image, knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion.

We are therefore to abound in the work of the Lord, because in Christ we have been called to victory. Paul, as he develops the meaning of Christ as our

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22. R. C. H. Lenski: *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, and St. Jude.* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1945). p. 262.
23. John Calvin: *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles.* John Owen translation. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 371.

resurrection, and Christ's victory as our victory, declares that Christ will, in time and history, "put down all rule and all authority and power." All things shall be put under His feet, and He shall reign over all things, and then, finally, destroy the last enemy, death (I Cor. 15:24-27). John makes the same point concerning the redeemed in Christ: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). These affirmations are tied to the resurrection of Christ to indicate that the victory is not merely a "spiritual" or Platonic one, but a total one, in time and history.

The early church expected such a victory, at times impatiently. In Revelation, we hear the cry of the martyred saints, asking how long before the victory, and before our avenging? They are told that the suffering must continue yet for a time (Rev. 6:9-11), but then Revelation goes on to give us a vision of God's vengeance and the church's resounding victory.

In the meantime, Paul assures us,

> 57. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
> 58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (I Cor. 15:57-58)

We cannot lose in Jesus Christ. As members of His glorious new humanity and new creation, we live in God's world of total meaning and total victory. Jesus Christ as Adam II makes us partakers of God's victory. As an old resurrection hymn declares, "For Christ has won, and man must win."

11. Jesus Christ as Lord

The most common title of and reference to Jesus Christ in Scripture is as *Lord, Kurios*. The term is used perhaps 6,700 times; it means absolute property owner, God, and sovereign. St. Paul ties the Lordship of Jesus Christ to His office as covenant man, and as head of the new humanity which He, as the second Adam, generates by grace.

We are born of Adam I, but he does not own us, nor is he our lord. Our relationship to Adam II is radically different. As St. Paul declares,

> 7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.
> 8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.
> 9. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living. (Romans: 14:7-9)

This passage is basic to the doctrine of Christ. *First* of all, as Charles Hodge stated, with reference to v. 7,

> No Christian considers himself as his own master, or at liberty to regulate his conduct according to his own will, or for his own ends; he is the servant of Christ, and therefore endeavors to live according to his will and for his glory. They, therefore, who act on this principle, are to be regarded and treated as true Christians, although they may differ as to what the will of God, in particular cases, requires. *No man dieth to himself*, i.e., death as well as life must be left in the hands of God, to be directed by his will and for his glory. The sentiment is, "We are entirely his, having no authority over our life or death."[24]

In I Cor. 6:19-20, and 7:23, Paul makes clear that we have been *bought* with a price, Christ's atonement, and we are not our own, but are Christ's property.

This militates totally against the doctrine of religion as an area of free choice. Modern man sees the state as an area of necessity and religion as an area of option or free choice. As a result, in the modern world, treason and the death penalty are related to the state, not religion. Modern man is not disturbed by the idea of death for treason, or for revolutionary activities, but the thought of death for adultery horrifies him. The reason for this is that his religious world is upside down. Since, for the world of Hegel, the state is God walking on earth, necessity attaches to the state. Rebellion against this statist god is punishable by death. Modern men view the executions of heretics by the medieval and Reformation churches with horror, but are less excited about what is done in the Soviet Union, where millions have perished, or at the exactions and oppression of taxing bodies. Without at all agreeing with those medieval and Reformation era executions, we must recognize that they never matched in horror and ferocity the modern humanistic state's persecutions.

As against modern faiths, we must assert that the state is not the area of necessity, because the state is not our Lord. It is Jesus Christ who is lord, and He alone. We obey the civil authorities "for conscience' sake" (Romans 13:5), because the Lord commands it, not because the state does.

Second, because we are the Lord's property, our life and our death are totally His to command (v.8). Many today are ready to question the lordship of the state, but only because they assert their own. They maintain a right to privacy, the right to enjoy life, or to have some peace, or some of the good things of life, *as though life were man-centered.* But life is no more man-centered than it is state-centered: it is God-centered.

Third, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ establish His dominion over us (v. 9). Our Adam has destroyed the power of sin and death, made us members of His household and Kingdom, and commanded us to occupy all things in His name and power (Luke 19:13; Matt. 28:18-20). The lordship of Jesus Christ is cosmic, temporal and eternal. "The authority of Christ over his

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[24] Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.* Revised edition. (New York, N.Y.: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893). p. 662.

people is not confined to this world, but extends beyond the grave. He is Lord both of the dead and of the living."[25]

Stauffer has noted that "Lord" is the richest of the Christological titles of our Lord. Our Lord Himself sets forth *the royal meaning* of this title when He cites Psalm 110, in Mark 12:35-37. St. Peter, in Acts 2:30-36 also sees Ps. 110 fulfilled in Christ. According to this psalm, the Lord is the great priest-king who is lord of all the earth; all nations are subdued under Him. Our Lord uses the title also in Mark 11:3. As Stauffer pointed out, in Semitic and Old Testament usage, God is always described and seen as the supreme ruler. The sacred name of God is replaced in the Hebrew usage with *Adonai*, Lord, and the Septuagint uses *kyrios*, lord also. The title *lord* is identical in meaning as a result with the name of God. In the New Testament, calling upon the name of the Lord means calling on Jesus Christ (Acts 2:21, etc.)[26]

The *name* of Jesus Christ is thus set forth as KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:16). This lordship of Jesus Christ cannot be postponed to the millennium, nor to heaven. It is the immediate result of the atonement and of the resurrection (Rom. 14:8-9). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ became lord, because He destroyed the power of sin and death. Moreover, Paul tells us, the resurrection from the dead made Jesus lord over *all* principalities and powers without exception:

> 13. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;
> 14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;
> 15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them. (Col. 2:13-15)

Thus, Paul says, *first*, that Jesus by His lordship triumphs over all powers and principalities and destroys their *dominion* over His new humanity. The *spoiling* of all His enemies means their public humiliation: "he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them." We miss the whole point of the death, atonement, and resurrection if we fail to see that it was the public dethroning of all Christ's enemies. They were *openly* shown to be dethroned and impotent, and Christ *openly* set forth as the great and cosmic Lord. The Greeks might call that cross "foolishness" (I Cor. 1:23), but it was their confounding, and their public humiliation. The enemies of Christ are spoiled and disarmed, for to disarm is a means of spoiling.

Second, Christ as lord accomplishes this by redeeming His new humanity from sin and death. The death penalty of the law ("the handwriting of

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25. Ibid., p. 663.
26. Ethelbert Stauffer: *New Testament Theology*. (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1955). p. 114f.

ordinances that was against us") is satisfied. Even more, it is blotted out, so that our criminal record before God is erased. We have been *quickened*, made alive, regenerated, and our sins are forgiven.

Third, in the Old Testament, God alone can forgive sins. This same fact is set forth in the New Testament, so that, when Christ forgave the palsied man his sins, He openly set forth His lordship, His deity (Mark 2:1-11). The fact of our forgiveness of sins sets forth Christ's lordship. It should be noted that no man has any *right* to forgive anyone. Forgiveness is not a human prerogative but a divine one. Thus, all forgiveness between man and man must be strictly according to God's word, in terms of His law. Sin can only be blotted out and forgiven by the Lord.

Fourth, the Lord not only gives us forgiveness of sins, and blots out the record of them, He takes them "out of the way." They cannot be an impediment any longer. When we are saved, we do not sin in a corner in embarrassment because of what we once were, but we stand in the freedom of regeneration as a new creation, as members now of a new humanity in Jesus Christ.

Fifth, we are by His sovereign power and grace "quickened *together with him."* We are born in the old Adam, but he does not own us. The legal date of our rebirth is with the resurrection of Jesus Christ; we were made alive by His resurrection long before our existence. We are His creation, and His possession. Now that we have been born and reborn, we are alive with Him and in Him. This means that we have a life and a dominion in heaven and on earth. Our prayers are heard in heaven, because our Adam is at the right hand of the Father, and His power and dominion are here on earth, wherever we are, because we are members of His new humanity and dominion. This is why he commands us, "Occupy till I come."

In brief, lordship means rule. To be members of Jesus Christ means to set forth His dominion and to rule in His name. Hence, we are told by our Lord to pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

12. The Cosmic Christ

In Isaiah 10:5-34, God singles out Assyria, the great world power of that day, for a sharp judgment. God declares that He raised up Assyria to judge "an hypocritical nation:"

> 5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.
> 6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. (Isa. 10:5-6)

Assyria ascribed its power to itself and failed to see the power of God behind its role and power (Isa. 10:13). As a result, God's wrath was kindled against Assyria also, for their's was an evil self-confidence. The instrument saw itself as the power, and not the tool:

> 15. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.
> 16. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. (Isa. 10:15-16)

These words are directed against Assyria, but they are also given as a general principle. They therefore apply to every man and every church and nation which, being used of God, imagines itself to be necessary to God. My tools I can readily replace; my arm, I cannot. For men and nations, who are tools in God's hands, to imagine that they have been made God's actual arm is very common, but an absurdity all the same.

God declares plainly that he shall destroy the arrogant instrument. Assyria is compared to a mighty forest, whose trees are all cut down by the wrath of God:

> 33. Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.
> 34. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. (Isa. 10:33-34)

As Hengstenberg rightly points out, this judgment of Assyria "refers to him as the representative of the whole world's power."[27] This means that God here speaks concerning all the nations of our day. Every power, including men, their institutions, and churches which does not see itself as God's instrument, with a total duty to serve and obey Him, is thus under condemnation. All have a common duty to believe and obey the Lord totally. The alternative to faith and obedience is madness and revolution, war against God.

Immediately after this judgment, Isaiah declares, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1). Assyria is represented as a mighty forest, Jesus Christ appears as a small shoot from a stem cut down. Out of the roots comes forth a growth which shall rule the world. The reference to the stem is to Jesse, not to David, his royal son. There is thus no reference to Davidic royal glory; the stem is, like Jesse, one of obscurity and insignificance. This Son of Jesse shall be the great world ruler, whose reign is one of wisdom and righteousness. He is the great king whose reign brings in all the glory of God's Kingdom:

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[27] E. W. Hengstenberg: *Christology of the Old Testament*, II, p. 96.

> 2. And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.
> 3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:
> 4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
> 5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (Isa. 11:2-5)

Scripture describes the Messiah as truly human and truly divine. But this is not all: He is set forth as truly royal and *political.* A world-state is set forth, not as a union of all nations, but as the submission of all nations to the Messiah, whose government rules over all, and whose law is the law of all nations.

This Ruler is directly the expression of the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit does more than use Him or speak through Him: He rests upon Him. Both the Ruler and the Spirit are thus the fullness of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might or strength, and of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

The perceptions of this Ruler shall be infallible, exercised in the fear of the Lord, and without reference to seeing and hearing (v. 3). All these attributes the Ruler or Messiah has, not merely for Himself, but as the Second Adam, the regenerating power and source of the new humanity. In John 2:24-25, this infallible perception of the nature and mind of all men is manifested, John tells us, in Jesus Christ.

Perfect justice or righteousness marks His rule, and omnipotence as well. He is the fulfillment of Proverbs 29:14, "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever." His word is the creative word. Since "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3), the very words He speaks are sufficient to bring judgment, and "the breath of his lips" in anger sufficient to "slay the wicked" (Isa. 11:4).

Righteousness and faithfulness go hand in hand in the Ruler, and therefore in His Kingdom and new humanity (Isa. 11:5). As against the tyranny of Assyria, the Messiah shall manifest a supernatural wisdom, a "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." This wisdom is not dependent upon sight nor hearing, but on the Lord and His law. *Righteousness* or justice is the nature of His rule, and "The girdle of his loins," the tie that binds his clothing and enables Him to function. Righteousness is that which conforms the norm of God's character and law. The word *righteousness* in both the Old and New Testaments (*tsedeq* in the Hebrew, *dikaiosune* in the Greek) means both the law of God, and the salvation of God by His sovereign grace (in the New Testament, the salvation accomplished through Jesus Christ). Thus, the word

righteousness refers both to the law of God and the grace of God. Both *law* and *grace* are aspects of the *covenant* mercy of God, and His favor to man. Thus, while there is a differing emphasis in the words *law* and *grace*, they are alike aspects of the covenant, and of God's righteousness. An added use of the word *righteousness* refers to the moral conduct required of the believer. Paul uses the word righteousness in all three senses: as the law of God in Romans 9:31; as the salvation of God through Christ in Romans 3:21; in Romans 6:16, it means obedience or works of faith. (Paul also uses the word *law* to mean the death sentence against us, a works religion, and the righteousness required of believers, among other things. The context makes clear the meaning.)

In verse 4, the scope of the Messiah's realm, as well as the nature of His justice, is set forth. We are twice told that the covenant king shall rule *the earth*, the whole world. He gives justice with impartiality or equity "to the meek of the earth," and He judges and slays the wicked of the whole *earth*. He destroys these wicked ones by "the rod of his mouth" and "with the breath of his lips." Because He is very God, the Messianic King has the creative word (Deut. 32:39). Isaiah makes the point even more emphatic: by the very breath or life of the Messiah, whose being is righteousness, the wicked are foreordained to death.

This perfect King demands and requires a perfect world, one in which the evil brought in by the first Adam is undone and is replaced by the Kingdom of God. Christ, having been made king by His resurrection (Rom. 14:7-9), began at once to rule. We have therefore the second great shaking of the nations, all nations, so that the things which cannot be shaken will alone remain (Heb. 12:18-29). The realm to be brought forth by the king's judgment and the king's law and grace is then described:

> 6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.
> 7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
> 8. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.
> 9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:6-9)

In these verses, the Kingdom of God is described. The description is both a metaphor of the great change which will take place in man, and also, as Calvin and Hengstenberg held, the change as a result in the material creation. The earth was subjected to the curse and a bondage because of man's sin. The very ground was cursed for man's sake (Gen. 3:17). Now, in Christ, the whole creation looks for its deliverance in Christ together with His elect people (Rom. 8:19-22).

No matter how men may seek to interpret these verses, they plainly point to a remarkable and supernatural change in the nature of the earth and its inhabitants. This change, moreover, is more than a "spiritual" change; it is very obviously a physical one as well.

In verse 9, we have the precondition of this change: the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of the LORD, "as the waters cover the sea." This knowledge is religious: it is the awareness of God's reality, and a life in faithfulness to God and His law word.

The focus of the Messiah's work is thus more than His people; it is the totality of his kingdom and righteousness. It is in terms of this that our Lord orders us to "seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). If the Messiah does this Himself, His people dare do no less. We dare not limit the scope of Christ's Kingdom to man only, or to man's soul. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). He is therefore the cosmic lord, and His government is over all things. There is not an animal, stone, or atom unrelated to or outside His government and purpose. Jesus Christ is more than a religious figure: He is the Lord, the cosmic Christ. (The term "cosmic Christ" comes from the thought and pen of Cornelius Van Til.)

13. The Wisdom of God

St. Paul, in I Corinthians 1:24 declares Christ to be "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Modernist commentators somehow try to make this text mean something other than it plainly reads, and to question whether Christ is called the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Their quibbling need not trouble us (Prov. 26:4). Wisdom (*sophia*) is in its absolute sense an attribute of God. Total wisdom and knowledge belong to God alone. To declare Christ to be "the wisdom of God" is to declare Him to be in Himself God, the second person of the Godhead. Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, God incarnate.

At this point, by way of contrast, it is of value to contrast Christ as *wisdom*, the wisdom of God (cf. Col. 2:3), with Satan, the tempter or serpent of Genesis 3:1, *nachash* in the Hebrew. This serpent is identified as Satan in Revelation 12:9, 14,15; 20:2. In the verb, the meaning of *nachash* is to hiss, whisper, foretell. The word is one among many in Scripture used for serpents. The meaning of *foretell* or *divine* comes from the silent or hissing aspect of the serpent, and its hidden nature, i.e., hidden in grass and bushes. The word of all occultists is such a word, dark, hidden, and not clearly spoken. Satan thus is one who offers the occult word or "wisdom" so called. It is an insinuated word, a hissed and whispered word, a "possible" word, never the sure word. Astrologers are given to asserting that the stars indicate but do not determine. Occult "knowledge" is prone to speak so. *It speaks about the future apart from God as a possible future.*

In verb form, we meet with *nachash* in several places. In Genesis 30:27, it is translated as *experience*, Laban's experience. In Gen. 44:5 and 15, it is rendered as *divineth*. In Leviticus 19:26, it is *enchantment*. In Deut. 18:10, an *enchanter* is *nachash*. In I Kings 20:33, *nachash* is translated as "diligently observe," or divine; in II Kings 17:17, it is "enchantments," as it is also in II Kings 21:6, and II Chron. 33:6, and in Num. 23:23 and 24:1 (as a noun).

Very clearly, occult knowledge is Satanic knowledge. It offers knowledge about the future as a knowledge outside of God and His eternal decree. Thus, even when occultism at times gives us valid forecasts concerning the future, as with the Witch of Endor (I Sam. 28:7-25), it is false, because it offers that information as a forecast in a world stripped of God and His predestination. The same is true today of all who are busy forecasting a variety of predictions concerning the future of the Soviet Union and the United States. Many of these forecasters have valid data; some of them, given the many kinds of predictions, will be true as to events. All are false if they see the present and the future apart from God and His predestination. As such, they are dangerous, because they offer a realm of possibility outside of God.

Christ as the wisdom of God gives us a different kind of knowledge and forecast. *First*, as the wisdom of God, omnipotence is His. He is "the power of God" (I Cor. 1:24). The dynamics of history are totally in His power (John 1:3); nothing exists apart from His determination, nor can exist. For Him, there is no "possible" knowledge, but only certain knowledge. He knows the beginning and the ending absolutely, because He is "the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). There is thus no power nor future outside of Christ.

Second, not only does Christ by His sovereign power ordain all history (John 1:3), but He also is the central force *in* history. By His incarnation, and by His sovereign rule and power, He is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (Rev. 1:8). From creation to the Last Judgment, Christ, in His person or in His government, is not only the determiner of history but the central person therein. His is not an abstract or remote government or presence.

Third, Christ is also the savior and redeemer of the world (John 3:16), so that His wisdom is manifested not only in His determination and government of history but in His redemptive work therein. Man's idea of God and of redemption is foolishness and futility. Christ's redemption is both wise and particular.

The universalists reject Christ to offer a plan of universal redemption. We live in an age of universalist politics. Whether it be Marxism, Fabian Socialism, National Socialism, or democracy, the prevailing belief is in some form of universalism. In National Socialism in the German form, this universalism was limited by blood, but applied indiscriminately to all within the blood-line.

Universalism thus professes to care for all (however it defines *all*), and thus to be a broader and nobler faith. However, by its insistence on salvation for *all*, it denies the person. The fact of particularity is denied. If all humanity is to be saved, or all Nordics, there is then an unconcern about the very real individual differences of faith and character.

As a result, universalistic faiths tend to be brutal in their disposition of the particular person. We can say that, the more universalistic the faith, the more brutal it is. Marxism surpasses all others in its universalistic zeal, and also in its brutality and inhumanity. In the name of humanity, universalism practices radical inhumanity. Its wisdom becomes slavery and death.

On the other hand, according to St. Paul, God's wisdom is manifested in the particularity of salvation (Rom. 11:32-35). He concludes all in unbelief, and makes known to man the implications and consequences of unbelief, so that those whom He mercifully saves might know His grace and wisdom in salvation.

Wisdom is practical and successful (Luke 14:28-32). It accomplishes that which it purposes. Christ as the wisdom of God infallibly accomplishes all that He purposes, to bring His new humanity and creation to its predestined purpose.

To see Christ's work apart from the wisdom and certainty of God's absolute power is to view Biblical faith and our history as occult knowledge, not revelation. To remove the certainty from Christ's command of history, of time and eternity, is to deny the Christ and to affirm Satan. Satan allows for a great measure of probability to God's word. He adds, however, "Ye shall not *surely* die" (Gen. 3:4). *Surely* (*ak* in the Hebrew) means *only*. Death is not the only option, according to Satan; God's determination is not total nor absolute. However powerful God's word, a realm of possibility escapes His control. It is in this realm of religious possibility that man's opportunity lies, and must be exploited. This is the meaning of occultist wisdom: it is a theological principle, and has been, since the Garden of Eden.

In Jesus Christ, we see God's absolute wisdom, and His determination of history in incarnate form. He declares himself to be the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). There is no possibility outside of Him: there is no occult knowledge.

To know Christ as "the wisdom of God" is thus to seek no presupposition, knowledge, wisdom, possibility, or determination apart from or outside of Him. He is the Lord. All attempts to gain wisdom apart from Him are doomed (Job 5:12; Isa. 29:14; Jer. 8:9): "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (I Cor. 1:19).

14. The Word

The opening words of John's Gospel roll out like thunder and like the music of the spheres:

> 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
> 2. The same was in the beginning with God.
> 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
> 4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
> 5. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:1-5)

Like Genesis 1:1, the Gospel of John begins with "in the beginning," *genesis*. It begins with this obvious and deliberate parallel, because it too is an account of a genesis, a new beginning. As Paul states it, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or, creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). But it is more than man who is a new creation. In Jesus Christ, we have the beginning of the new cosmos, the new creation, the great and final genesis. Jesus Christ is the great "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). He is "the beginning" of the first creation of Genesis 1 (John 1:3), and He comes into that creation, now fallen and in bondage to sin and death, as its re-creator.

Thus, the parallel is there between Genesis 1 and John 1:1-5, but it is more than a parallel: it is a continuation, a restoration, the completion, and the perfection of that original creation by its Creator. Moreover, the Creator comes as an incarnate God-man to become the new and last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47), as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15), and as the "first fruits" of the new creation (I Cor. 15:20-23).

The whole of the first creation, of Genesis 1, was not only *by* Him, but *for* Him, as Paul declares:

> 16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
> 17. And he is before all thiings, and by him all things consist. (Colossians 1:16-17)

Because we are born into a world of sin and death, and ourselves are born to sin and die, we see the world and its future in terms of ourselves, and in terms of the fall. We even use Scripture to justify our sinful vision, declaring, "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (I John 2:17), as though this refers to the world of the second genesis. It is the world of Adam which is being shaken (Heb. 12:25-29), in order that the new creation of the Word might alone remain. The goal is the regeneration and restitution of all things (Matt.

19:28; Acts 3:21), to bring the purposes of God in creation to their completion.

The Word is the Creator, and He is God. He is, however, the second person of the Godhead: there is both an identity and a distinction: "the Word was with God" (i.e., as a separate person), and yet "the Word was God," so that we have three persons, with the Spirit, and one God. We are not told that "the Word was the God," i.e., exclusively and totally one person, which was the error of Sabellianism, but that the Word was truly God, even as are the Father and the Spirit.

Jesus Christ is here called "the Word," both to set forth His true incarnation and His nature as very God of very God, and to indicate His eternal pre-existence. Before the incarnation, He was, from all eternity. He is eternal and pre-existent as the Word, so that, as the Word, He is beyond the understanding and grasp of man's mind. At the same time, however, we have the amazing fact that this infinite and eternal person, mind, and purpose is incarnated and expressed in Jesus Christ. This Jesus Christ is like us, a man, very man of very man as well as very God of very God, and He is the Head and Adam of the new humanity and the new creation.

He is the Word incarnate. As Westcott stated it,

> The personal titles "the Word" and "the Word of God" must be kept in close connection with the same term as applied to the sum of the Gospel in the New Testament, and with the phrase "the word of the Lord" in the prophecies of the Old Testament. The Word, before the Incarnation, was the one source of the many divine words; and Christ, the Word Incarnate, is Himself the Gospel.[28]

He is the Creator: "all things were made by him" (John 1:3). Westcott noted, "The exact form (pauta) expresses all things taken severally, and not all things regarded as a defined whole."[29] The whole world was created by Him, but in that creation the triune God is mindful of the sparrow, the blade of grass, and every hair of our head (Matt. 10:29-31). All are comprehended in His glorious purpose and Word. Nothing was made apart from Him and His purpose: "all things were created by him, and for him" (Col. 1:16).

The creation of physical or natural light is set forth in Genesis 1:3-5. In John 1:4-5, we again have a parallel, deliberately made, to Genesis 1. Because *all things*, as a totality, and every thing particularly from atoms to men, were made by Him, all bear His stamp and purpose. The meaning, purpose, and goal of all things is inseparable from the Word who made them for His own eternal purpose.

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[28] B. F. Westcott: *The Gospel According to St. John.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1881) 1954).
[29] Ibid., p. 4.

The Fall was the rejection by man of that eternal purpose. As against the revelation inherent in all things by the creative fiat of the Word (Romans 1:18-20), man chose darkness; he chose to deny the Word's purpose and decree. As against the Word, man chose no word; as against an eternal meaning, he demanded no meaning, in order to be free to be his own god, to create and impose his own meaning on the world (Gen. 3:5).

Apart from Him, there is only death. He is life (John 14:6). "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:9). There is no wisdom, understanding, counsel, nor light apart from Him (Prov. 21:30). The only light men can have is the word of God, the word or counsel of the Word, and His person (I John 1:5).

The Fall, however, brought in darkness; deliberately willed darkness now rules all men. This darkness of a fallen world seeks to *comprehend* or *overcome* the Light, to blot it out. If fallen man cannot be god, he is determined that there shall be no God. Hence, his life and work are dedicated to the destruction and blotting out of light. Men like the Marquis de Sade and Nietzsche were more honest than most in expressing fallen man's dream of blotting out the very sun, and in demanding the death of God. As against God's "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3), the fallen world declares, "Let there be no light!" But the Light shines into the darkness of sin, and the fallen world cannot put it out.

The coming of the Word means the world triumph of the Light, and our triumph in Him. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

To declare that the world is wilfully in darkness is to say that it is suicidal, murderous, and determined to see the triumph of evil. We have only to examine the politics of our time to see this wilful urge to mass destruction. On all sides, the choice of men and nations, however disguised with noble and life-affirming phrases, is the negation of life. To expect anything but the worst of ungodly men is to disarm ourselves, and to give ourselves over to illusion, the delusion of sin, and of Genesis 3:1-5. Until we face up to the radically perverse nature of all efforts, plans, and activities of fallen man, of the humanity of Adam, we cannot understand nor grasp the cosmic dimensions of our salvation in Christ.

The darkness cannot blot out the Light. His coming is repeatedly spoken of as *the day*, the day of Christ, the day of the Lord, and so on (I Cor. 1:8; 5:5; II Cor. 1:14; 6:2; Phil. 1:6; 2:16; I Thess. 5:8; II Thess 2:2; Heb. 10:25; II Peter 3:10,12; etc.). Paul speaks of "the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). The fullness of Christ's work is total light, the perfect day. Then God's meaning prevails. Christ as the Head (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10) is then openly the Word of all things, their total Creator, purpose, and meaning. We

see ourselves and every atom of creation in terms of Him. The darkness which denies the Word is separated from all creation into Hell, the trash-heap of the universe, into the bin of meaninglessness. As for the new creation of the Word, the Light of the World (John 8:12), we are told, "And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

15. The Divine Exegesis

Subordinationism is one of the most ancient as well as most prevalent of heresies. According to this error, Jesus Christ is less than and subordinate to the Father in His deity by virtue of the incarnation. Some crude, popular opinions see Christ as half man and half God. Such an opinion opens the door to ancient forms of paganism and to the divinization of man. Moreover, the validity of the incarnation is denied, and priority is given to a hidden god, who cannot fully declare himself, over a supposed Christ, who has a partial revelation of this god in himself.

The Biblical faith is that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man; the two natures are fully present, in perfect union, without confusion, as Chalcedon stressed in 451 A.D. This too is the plain statement of John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him." The word *declared* is the Greek *exegeomai*, related to our word *exegesis*. It means to make known, to declare by setting forth openly, to bring out or forth. Thus, Jesus Christ is the full and perfect exegesis of God: He declares, reveals and sets forth the covenant God in the fullness of His meaning.

Note that we are not given a philosophical exegesis. Such a declaration would be an abstraction, which God emphatically is not. Rather, this is a revelation of God, the covenant Father.

John writes as a believing Jew and an eye-witness. God for him is the covenant God. The covenant God reveals Himself to save His people. That salvation, as it reaches out to save the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20), is still within the context of the covenant with Adam, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Moses, and David. Jesus Christ is emphatic on this point: "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22), i.e., it comes through the historical covenant made with Israel and Judah.

The exegesis of God as set forth in Jesus Christ is thus an exegesis with a stress on covenant faithfulness. The covenant God comes to save His people. His exegesis or revelation manifests in its fullness the grace, mercy, and salvation of the covenant God. Thus, we are not given a metaphysical exegesis of God, but a covenant revelation of the moral and redemptive work of God unto salvation. What is thus fully declared or revealed is not a god of the Greek philosophers, but the God of Scripture, the living God.

John says, "No man hath seen God at any time," or, as Westcott pointed out, No man hath *ever yet seen* God at any time, and J. B. Phillips renders it, "It is true that no one has ever seen God at any time. Yet the divine and only Son, who lives in the closest intimacy with the Father, has made him known." Our Lord is emphatic on this same point to Philip: "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). God is now clearly revealed and seen. Westcott commented:

> *No man hath seen God at any time (ever yet seen).* I John iv.12. In both places the original of "God" is without the article. By this manner of expression thought is turned to the divine Nature rather than to the divine Person: "God as God." The Theophanies under the Old Dispensation did not fall under this category. Comp. Exod. xxxiii. 12ff. (xxxii.30).[30]

Now we have the full declaration or exegesis of the covenant God, a "once and for ever" revelation.[31]

This revelation or declaration is not a step backward or forward. It is not a more material or a more spiritual stage in the history of revelation. It is rather the open revelation and declaration of the covenant God who is eternally, "In the beginning" (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1), and *from* the beginning. He is the covenant God who does not change (Malachi 3:6); He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). The exegesis by God of God is present in its fullness in Jesus Christ. Because of our incomplete sanctification and the blinding factor of sin, our vision of that full revelation is clouded and sometimes darkened in this life (I Cor. 13:12), and the unbelieving, the covenant-breakers, do not see it at all, but the declaration has been made in all its fullness.

It is the covenant God who reveals Himself, His covenant faithfulness, His covenant grace, law, and love, and His covenant salvation. The emphasis throughout John's Gospel is thus on signs and wonders which set forth the glory of life in the renewed covenant. We deny that exegesis and revelation if we hold that, whereas providential blessings marked covenant faithfulness previously, as promised in Deuteronomy 28, the renewed covenant marks their end. Rather, in Jesus Christ we see how totally faithful God is to His covenant with His people. He is the same God in every age. Now, He is fully revealed: we receive *the fullness* of His covenant mercy, grace, and truth (John 1:16-17). *The fullness* or *pleroma* of the covenant God's grace and truth is now openly set forth.

We are called therefore to live in terms of that fullness, because it is given to us; if we have received it, we live, as "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). The unbelieving live in a world of chance; atoms

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30. B. F. Westcott: *The Gospel According to St. John.*, p. 15.
31. Idem.

without meaning or purpose hurtle through space, and death and dissolution is the end of all things. In such a faith, there can be no hope. For the Christian, however, hope is inescapable and certain of triumph. Ours is a hope that "maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:5).

This declaration of God is made to men who are by grace received into the covenant. It is a covenant exegesis for covenant men who are made by the adoption of grace into sons of God, joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

> 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that 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.
> 14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:12-14)

Covenant men, like the Christ, have a supernatural birth. The comparison to the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ is very clear in v. 13: they are born of God, not of blood, flesh, or human decisions. It is these covenant men who behold His glory, and who see the clear revelation and exegesis of God in Jesus Christ.

All such men have the *power to become the sons of God*; it is *given* to them. *Power* is *exousia*, which means power with rightful, legitimate authority. This authority is an act of covenant power and is conferred by covenant grace. It is "even to them (exclusively to them) that believe on his name" and are born again by His regenerating power and grace.

Thus, the exegesis of God is the incarnation: it is a covenant revelation. It brings with it regeneration and power, and rightful authority in the Kingdom of God, a status as sons and heirs. This exegesis sets forth God's victory, and our victory in Christ. It is the triumphant coronation of Christ as King over creation, and therefore our triumph in and with Him, of whose coming Hebrews 1:1-3 declares:

> 1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
> 2. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
> 3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Jesus Christ upholds "all things by the word of his power," or, in Phillips' translation is "himself the upholding principle of all that is." This was true *in* His incarnation, *before* His incarnation, and *now and forever.* To question His government, lordship, salvation, and victory is to blind ourselves to His revelation. God has declared Himself in Jesus Christ. We have been made

members of the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ. We are thereby partakers of the absolute victory of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4).

In a time of great trouble, an Old Testament saint could sing:

> 2. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
> 3. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. (Ps. 46:2,3)

We dare say no less.

16. "The Alpha and the Omega"

Again and again, the references to Jesus Christ in the New Testament resound with majestic music. However real the sufferings of the church in those days, the thundering certainty of victory is the dominant note. This is certainly true of Revelation 1:4-8:

> 4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;
> 5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
> 6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory, and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
> 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.
> 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Let us survey, first of all, these five verses in terms of the doctrine of Christ. In v. 4, we have the benediction from God the Father, he who "is, and which was, and which is to come." This is a clear reference to Exodus 3:14, "I AM THAT I AM," or "I am He who is" (cf. Deut. 32:39). The shrine of Minerva (or Isis) at Sais had this inscription, "I am all that has come into being, and that which is, and that which shall be; and no man hath lifted my vail." The resemblance between these two statements is superficial; it is the difference which is striking. The Isis inscription speaks of the goddess as total potentiality; no man has lifted her veil, i.e., penetrated the future, because it is unknowable and a product of chance. Since the totality is potentiality and unknowable, man himself is unknowable. Man's life and being are both aspects of this blind and meaningless potentiality. The Isis inscription is grimly pessimistic. The pronouncement of Revelation is totally joyful. All things come from the hand of the Almighty, who has ordained all things, controls all things, and makes all things work together for good to them who love Him and are His called ones (Rom. 8:28). As Carpenter noted, "there is

no 'will be' with an eternal God. With Him all *is*; so the word 'cometh' is used, hinting His constant manifestations in history, and the final coming in judgment."[32] The reference to the "Seven Spirits of God" is to the Holy Spirit in all His fullness. He is described as being "before his throne." As man's great Advocate, both He and Christ (I John 2:1) are before the throne as the covenant man's voice before God.

In v. 5, Jesus Christ is set forth. He is "the faithful witness" or martyr, who died but is "the first begotten from the dead" and is now "the prince of the kings of the earth." The total and sovereign rule of Jesus Christ is not a future but a present fact. The inescapable fact is that Jesus Christ ordains and rules over all things. At this point, a very difficult problem arises for man the sinner. For him, the goal of history is to be determined in terms of *externals*. Is man happy, and at peace? Has war been abolished, as well as poverty, hunger, sickness, disease, and death? Is a good life possible for all men? Man's demands can be summed up briefly by stating that the *world* must be changed and made into a fit habitation for man. God is seen as unreasonable or heartless in ordaining and permitting all the problems which beset human history. Scripture, however, makes clear that the world was not created to be man's kingdom but God's Kingdom. Both man and the world must be changed towards that end. The problem is not generally evil conditions but sin. By generalizing evil, man seeks to evade the problem, which is his moral nature, his rebellion against God and his attempt to be his own god (Gen. 3:5). Christ's kingship has as one of its functions the shaking of all the things which are, so that only that which cannot be shaken may remain (Hebrews 12:22-29). This shaking means wars and natural disasters; it means radical problems to man in all his history. Man is allowed no peace in his sin, nor is any society. The Christ who ordains all these things is also He "that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." The purpose of all His royal rule, as well as His priestly sacrifice, is to make us into a royal priesthood. Jesus Christ, as the great Passover lamb, saves His firstborn from death and hell by His atoning blood. Life is in the blood (Lev. 17:14), and blood alone can cleanse man of sin (Lev. 14:1-9, 14). The pure and sinless blood of Jesus Christ makes atonement for us.

In v. 6, we are told that we are made a priestly kingdom *unto God the Father*. The focus of our calling and election is on God and His Kingdom (Matt. 6:33). Christians are the New Israel of God. Old Israel was called to be God's priestly kingdom (Ex. 19:6), but it was faithless to that calling. The Israel of our Lord's day was the world's most moral realm and clearly superior to other nations, but it was rejected and cast out, because Israel made itself the focus of its calling. Neither the church, nor the United States, nor

[32] W. Boyd Carpenter, "Revelation," in C. F. Ellicott: *Commentary on the Whole Bible.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan). Vol. VIII, p. 534.

any other power can make itself the focus without incurring God's wrath. The Kingdom is not of us: it is the Lord Himself. Hence, we are told, "to him be glory, and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 5:1)Royalty and deity alone are possessors of *glory*, human royalty by claim, God alone in fact. Glory means divine sovereignty and power. Dominion too belongs to Christ, and to us in Him.

In v. 7, we have a reference to Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10, as well as Mark 14:62. All who are His enemies shall wail in mourning for themselves. The response of the church to this must be, "Even so, Amen."

In v. 8, God declares Himself to be "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...the Almighty." The speaker is both the Father and the Son, and the Spirit as well. This word is from the Father and the Spirit (v. 4), and also from Jesus Christ (v. 5). The triune God pronounces the benediction and declares its unity, its oneness. In Rev. 22:13, Jesus Christ declares, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (cf Isa. 41:4; 44:6). He is God, *the Almighty*, or, the Omnipotent (gr. *pantokrator*). By self-designation, the Roman emperor called himself *autokrator*, meaning that he ruled by himself, by his own self-generated authority: no man ostensibly made him emperor other than himself. By declaring Himself the *pantokrator*, Jesus Christ says, I am the all-ruler, lord over Caesar and all the universe. This all-rule of Christ, the Almighty, includes all things generally and particularly, including the sparrows and all the hairs of our head (Matt. 10:29-31).

This Almighty One is also the incarnate one; He is not only the Father and the Spirit but the incarnate God the Son, Jesus Christ. The blood of the covenant has redeemed us to be kings and priests unto our God. In that blood of the covenant, Christ's shed blood, God and covenant man meet; in Jesus Christ, the covenant is kept, and the covenant Kingdom sees its visible king.

The modern age speaks much about the communications gap between man and man. Having separated themselves from God, fallen men are in separation one from another. A communications gap is inescapable. Sinful men communicate best by means of war, conflict, and hostility. What they communicate one to another is rebellion and hatred. The word from the throne is, "grace be unto you, and peace." Men cannot communicate what they do not know, nor have, nor are. A man may not be able to communicate in Chinese, but he can learn Chinese in time, and speak it. Grace and peace he cannot learn: they are a gift from the throne. They come only through the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Word; He is the divine exegesis of God. He is also the Almighty who rules all things, establishes us as a priestly kingdom, and orders all history and us in terms of His sovereign purpose. He is the Almighty God, the Alpha and the Omega. The Christ of history is "the Lord of glory" (James 2:1), and the Lord of all eternity.

17. Christ the Savior

Modernist scholars have at times made much of the supposed resemblance between Christianity and the mystery religions of the Roman Empire. Some have virtually reduced Christianity, and especially St. Paul's writings, to the status of a mystery religion. Any attempt to see the Scriptures in terms of mystery religions is radically wrong. Having said this, we can grant that some within the church, then and now, did so view Biblical faith. We can add further that this tendency is more prevalent now than ever before.

Let us glance first of all at what mystery religion represented. We know very little about them, because they were secret cults, and, like modern secret lodges and societies, reserved their teachings for their members. What we do know indicates an implicit or explicit dualism or polytheism. Man, it was believed, lived in an essentially alien universe. The origin of these cults was the Orient. They were marked by an essential pessimism concerning this world. All looked to a semi-divine hero or savior god to guide the faithful to immortality. An initiation ceremony took the believer into the realm of the appointed escapees. There was little or no moral content to the mystery religions, and some were highly sexual in their practices and opposed by the imperial authorities. The essential fact about the mystery religions was their doctrine of a super-human protector, friend, and savior who guides men through this life and world to immortality. *Thus, the mystery religion provided, not so much a way of life, but an escape from this life and an insurance for immortality.* Because of its low moral content, the essential fact about the cults was that of becoming a part of an escape group. The cults were antinomian, and hence viewed widely with suspicion. It was believed that no law of God (or gods) and man bound them. Their main and essential concern was immortality, salvation from this world, death, extinction, or punishment.

The mystery religions tended to merge easily with faiths in spirits and their powers, magic, witchcraft, and the like. Mattingly observed, of all these cults and their doctrines, "From the contemptible enslavement to such beliefs Christianity set men free."[33]

The savior and the salvation of the mystery religions was thus governed by two essential facts, *immortality* and *antinomianism.* The Romans regarded the cults with suspicion, because their influence undermined the necessary practical concerns of citizens and subjects.

The parallel to much current religion is obvious. Mystery religions settled the after-life question, assured salvation from this world, and rendered meaningless the laws of God and man. They were religions without any catholicity or universality. The early use by Christians of the word *catholic* has this background. Rome sought to dismiss Christianity as "another

[33] Harold Mattingly: *Roman Imperial Civilization.* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, (1957) 1959). p. 255.

mystery religion." The church stressed, *first*, the catholic nature of the faith, in that the triune God, and Jesus Christ, is Lord over all things, so that no area of life or thought is outside His government and law. The King rules over all His realm, and, as maker of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3), the Lord is King over all creation. Antinomianism is thus a sin, a denial of His Kingship. *Second*, the faith is catholic because it is inclusive of all men; no civil government can be catholic; its realm is limited. Christ's realm includes all men, believers and unbelievers, and He as King will bless or judge all men, without exception.

The New Testament speaks of both God (I Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4) and Jesus Christ (II Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6) as *Savior*. This is a very important fact. God the Father is also the Savior from Eden on, and in the Old Testament God is repeatedly spoken of as Savior, meaning thereby the Trinity in each person. The totality of the Trinity is involved in salvation, and salvation is plainly set forth in terms of a new life in Christ and as a new life which affects the total life of the believer. In Titus 2:11-14, this appears very clearly:

> 11. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
> 12. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
> 13. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
> 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The previous verse, Titus 2:10, speaks of "God our Savior."

Paul tells us here, *first*, that salvation is an act of God's grace. Grace is an attribute of sovereignty. Now, as the Internal Revenue Service, and various other agencies of statism, claim sovereignty, they have begun to speak also of *grace*. So many days of *grace* are allowed us at times to pay our arrears, and so on. But God alone is sovereign, and the only source of grace.

Second, God our Savior, Jesus Christ, gives us by His royal grace salvation, a salvation manifested to all men. This "great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" has died for our sins to redeem us.

Third, this redemption is "from all iniquity" or lawlessness, for "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Thus, salvation is the antithesis of antinomianism and lawlessness, because it purifies us into a unique people who are "zealous of good works." These good works are to keep His commandments; "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

Fourth, God our Savior teaches us through His word to deny all "ungodliness and worldly lusts." We are to live "soberly," or responsibly, and righteously, i.e., in terms of the justice of God. This justice or righteousness

is set forth in His law-word. We are also to be godly, to live in faith and obedience to our Lord. We have thus a prescription for living which covers the totality of this life, the grace and newness of life whereby we can live that redeemed life, and the sure word of God to guide us in that living.

Fifth, this salvation covers our life in time and eternity. Hence, we look ahead in terms of our glorious hope to the great conclusion, Christ's second coming and the last judgment. The consummation of history is His victory, and our victory with Him.

Salvation in this sense is closely tied to dominion. There is no true dominion without salvation. Therefore the most common term in the New Testament for Jesus Christ is *Lord*. Because He is the Lord, He can save us. His salvation is a facet of His dominion. His saving power extends over death and life, over this world and the next. He is Lord over all and hence the only Savior.

When the angelic herald declared to the shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," they prefaced it with the joyful word, "behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10-11). This was the great Lord and Savior of all things. Our salvation is total, because Jesus Christ is both Lord and Savior, and there are no limits to the catholicity or universality of our faith.

Ours is not a mystery religion. It is the catholic faith. Therefore we can declare, in the words of Psalm 2:10-12,

> 10. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
> 11. Serve the lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
> 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

18. The Ruler

We have in II Samuel 23:3ff. the last formal and inspired words of King David, and we are told in v. 2 that this is an inspired statement:

> 2. The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.
> 3. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.
> 4. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.
> 5. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.
> 6. But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:

> 7. But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place. (II Samuel 23:2-7)

Keil and Delitzsch pointed out that II Samuel 23:1 echoes Numbers 24:3,15. What Balaam as an outsider had predicted concerning the Messiah, now God's anointed king over Israel confirms and expands:

> This not only shows to what extent David had occupied himself with the utterances of the earlier men of God concerning Israel's future; but indicates, at the same time, that his own prophetic utterance was intended to be a further expansion of Balaam's prophecy concerning the Star out of Jacob, and the Sceptre out of Israel. Like Balaam, he calls his prophecy...a *divine saying* or oracle, as a revelation which he had received directly from God.[34]

What David receives from God is a statement concerning God's ruler. The ruler over men, set forth by David's prophetic utterance, is in terms of the echo of Balaam's prophecy, the Messiah. He is the Star and Sceptre who shall destroy all the sons of tumult (Num. 24:17).

It is significant that the stress in both prophecies is on *rule*, or rulership. This is an emphasis common to many of the messianic prophecies: the framework of His coming is the Kingdom of God, and the glorious reign of God's anointed. We can appreciate the meaning of this fact by recognizing that the fall of man was a messianic event. God created man to rule the earth in terms of God's righteousness, God's law, to exercise dominion under God (Gen. 1:26-28). The Garden of Eden was a pilot project in that plan; man was there to learn obedience and dominion under God, to apply it then to all the world wilderness.

Man, however, chose another and an independent messiah, himself. Genesis 3:5 gives us that doctrine of independent rule. Now Scripture is clear that all rule is from God. The powers that be in every area of life are ordained by Him (Rom. 13:1-7). Whether it be the authority of civil powers, parents, church leaders, and masters in any and every realm, all rule is from God and is to be governed by His word. Both ruler and ruled are under the law of God at all times. In no area of life can man make his own rules and laws. God is the Lord.

Christ came as our *Lord*. The term *lord* is the most common designation for Jesus in all of the New Testament: it means He is absolute owner and ruler over all things in heaven and earth.

Man wants his own rule, however, and hence the fall; Adam became his own messiah. Wherever men seek to rule apart from God's law-word, as their

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[34] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch: *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Samuel.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950). p. 485.

own saviors and messiahs, the result is injustice or unrighteousness. For man to determine good and evil means the triumph of the sons of tumult (Num. 24:17). Man's messiahship is an attempt to play god; thus, it is a quest for power, total power, not righteousness. Power divorced from God's law becomes progressively more evil. It becomes Belial and confusion, and, instead of a blessing, thorns.

As such, power ceases to be *dominion* and becomes oppression. Dominion means the orderly life of all things under God and His Kingdom. Where God's law is transgressed, we have oppression, not dominion.

We have also the destruction of *meaning*. David's prophecy, in v. 4, speaks of the *naturalness* of God's rule. Just as a good rain and a clear sun thereafter on a fertile field causes growth, so too does a just rule in terms of God's word cause man to flourish and abound. In other words, the more supernatural the rule, the more natural it is, *i.e.*, the more faithful it is to God's holy and righteous purpose, the more readily and naturally does it prosper.

The false messiahship of man violates God's order and destroys direction and meaning in every area. It is not surprising that humanism has developed a philosophy of *the absurd*. Absurd in this sense means the antithesis of all meaning; it means that no sense can be made out of life, and that every attempt to gain meaning out of anything is a contradiction. No meaning exists in the universal meaninglessness. Siegel has noted, as a commentator on the absurd, on the futility of philosophy:

> Philosophy is the mind's chewing gum. There is a technique of classical logic called *reductio ad absurdum*, in which you elaborate the possibilities of a situation until it becomes self-evidently absurd. We now find ourselves at exactly that point, as The Age of Reason exhausts itself into The Age of the Absurd.[35]

Life, then, is absurd, and Siegel and Garfinkel chronicle the absurdities of life for 180 pages: a university course on prostitution at U.C.L.A.; a federal program, funded by tax funds, to teach rapists "the normal techniques of wooing women;" a man in New Jersey, who killed a savage Siberian husky owned by his neighbor, and which was attacking his mother, was taken to court by the Bergen County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and so on and on.[36] Siegel and Garfinkel describe "the official mind" thus: "It hates logic, simplicity, spontaneity, common sense, and people as individuals. It loves power, regulations, duplication, complexity, titles, penalties, and people as categories. Its philosophy: More is better, even if it's worse. Its program: There are no solutions, there are only bigger problems."[37]

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35. Jules Siegel, in Jules Siegel and Bernard Garfinkel: *The Journal of the Absurd.* (New York, N.Y.: Workman, 1980). p. 8.
36. Ibid., pp. 22, 40, 68.
37. Ibid., p. 112.

In spite of all absurdities, men who deny the Lord will look to the state for salvation, or else trust in their own absurdities. They prefer the most absurd rule of man to Christ's rule. The Internal Revenue Service is better than God and His tithe.

The result is, of course, judgment. These men who rule without faith, and all who put their hope or trust in them, are *thorns*, and thorns only. They are the sons of Belial or worthlessness, and fit only to be destroyed. Their destination is the fire.

David's trust is in the Ruler from God. Although his own dynasty was not so with God, i.e., the holy and righteous order required by the Lord, still God in His grace had made a covenant with the House of David, and through that line the Messiah would come.

Meanwhile, all who rule must rule in terms of God's righteous word. Dominion means rule in terms of God's Kingdom and law. The Messiah is Jesus Christ, not the sons of Adam, Sheth (Num. 24:17), or Belial (II Sam. 23:6). David declares, of the Ruler from God, that He is as the sun, and as the light of the morning (II Sam. 23:4). Jesus Christ declared that He Himself is the Light of the world, and none other; apart from Him, men walk in the darkness of the absurd (John 8:12).

19. The Great High Priest

Peter speaks of Christians as "a royal priesthood" (I Peter 2:9), and John declares that Jesus Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1:6; cf. 5:10). This doctrine, however, is not new to Scripture with the apostles. Every covenant man, as he brought his sacrifices, functioned as a priest. In fact, one of the central commandments, given with the Ten Commandments and spoken to all of Israel, was this: "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon" (Ex. 20:26). As Rylaarsdam noted of this verse, "The provision presupposed that the officiant was the head of a household wearing a short skirt."[38] Exodus 28:42 requires breeches of all priests as they officiate. According to Josephus (*Ant.* iii. 7,2) and rabbinic data, a cassock was worn over the breeches, completely covering the body down to the feet.[39] There are references to the *required* clothing in Exodus 28:1-29; 29:29,30; 39:1-31; and Leviticus 8:7-12.

Clearly, every covenant man was called to be a priest and to be mindful of a certain meaning in the garb thereof. Every covenant-breaker was a renegade

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38. J. Coert Rylaarsdam, "Exodus" in: *The Interpreter's Bible*, I. (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon, 1952). p. 994.
39. J. Muehleisen Arnold. "Priest," in Patrick Fairbairn, editor: *Imperial Stand and Bible Encyclopedia*, V. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan (1891) 1957). p. 288.

priest; this is still the case. The clothing has an important meaning, one which the church retained rather extensively.

Before we examine the meaning of the clothing, let us consider further this universal priesthood. The liturgical priests were *priests by birth*, born priests. All who were priests in the liturgical sense were of the blood of Aaron (Ex. 28:1; 30:30; Numbers 3:2,3,10). All the unblemished (Lev. 21:17-23) sons of Aaron were priests by birth, and all covenant and non-covenant men are priests by birth. The *true priest*, however, is a *true priest by grace*. Thus, an inescapable priesthood is laid upon all men by *birth*; they can only discharge that calling by *grace*. The ungodly are false and blasphemous priests and accursed men.

Back to the garb: the priest is man's representative before God; he dedicates himself, his household, and his people to almighty God. As a priest, he is also a substitute for God's great high priest, so that his priesthood is doubly representative. He represents his people to God, and he represents as a stand-in and member, God's great high priest.

In his priesthood, his own person is thus almost invisible and is reduced to a minimal appearance. He represents more than himself. The church recognized this fact and placed the clergy into cassocks, clerical gowns, and the like. The judge, because he had to represent God's law, was also garbed to cover his own person.

In recent years, many Protestants, because of anti-Roman Catholic sentiment, have extensively abandoned clerical clothing. It has been replaced with a tacit requirement of conservative dress and a position *behind* the pulpit and the Bible, to emphasize the fact that it is the Bible which alone must speak and be heard. Moreover, many or most pastors in this tradition tended to avoid all personal references. I recall in the mid-1930s hearing an aged pastor preach. An elderly Russian nobleman, born about 1850, he had known many of the great men of his day, and I was delighted at our table-talk in my father's home and pressed him for details. Because of his conversion, he had been sent to Siberia. All this came out, only because I was reading Tolstoy, and I questioned him about Tolstoy, whom he had known, and others. None of this appeared in his preaching. He cited as illustration one incident, of which he was not the center, and prefaced it with these words: "If you will pardon this personal reference..." Other men held that only an older and judicious man could use personal illustrations and references. *The person* is to be covered: the office is to appear, and *the word* of that calling.

It is significant that the great high priest, Jesus Christ, does not in His teachings indulge in personal references and reminiscences. He who, being very God, could alone declare, "I say unto you," used that pronouncement to set forth God's word, not Himself. From *the words* of our Lord, we know little about His personal history, much about the will of the Father.

One of the duties of a priest was *to encourage* the people in terms of God's covenant word (Deut. 20:2-4), and to be a *judge* in terms of that word (Deut. 21:5; 17:8-13). Every covenant man as priest needs to encourage his charge in the Lord, and to judge all things in terms of God's law-word. Jesus Christ so encourages His people (John 14:27; etc.), and He is the great Judge of all things. He is, of course, the great high priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14; 5:5; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1).

As the great high priest His work is unique. He, as both priest and sacrifice, offered up Himself as the sacrifice of atonement for the sins of His people. He is also, with the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Intercessor with the Father (I John 2:1; John 14:16; cf. Zech. 3:1; Heb 7:25; Rev. 12:10; John 16:8; 14:26; 15:26; Rom. 8:23; Heb. 9:24). The ministry of intercession is closely related to the atonement. Berkhof, citing Heb. 9:24, wrote:

> Just as the high priest on the great Day of Atonement entered the Holy of Holies with the completed sacrifice, to present it to God, so Christ entered the heavenly Holy Place with His completed, perfect, and all-sufficient sacrifice, and offered it to the Father. And just as the high priest, on entering the Holy Place, came into the presence of God, symbolically bearing the tribes of Israel on His breast, so Christ appeared before God as the representative of His people, and thus reinstated humanity in the presence of God.[40]

In all the Bible, intercession is spoken of as the privilege and duty of covenant man (Gen. 20:7; Jer. 29:7; II Cor. 9:14; Eph. 6:18; I Tim. 2:1; Heb. 13:18-21; James 5:14-16; I John 5:16). Christ is the great Intercessor, but we are all intercessors in Him.

The point of all this is that Jesus Christ as the great high priest came to fulfill what man was called to be, priest, prophet, and king under and to God and His glory. Christ's life, person, atonement, and intercession are God-centered, *as indeed we must be.* In our priesthood, we represent, not merely our own, but God's people, His covenant and kingdom. The true priest is a *covered* person, and Jesus Christ is our atonement and covering. As priests, not only are our sins covered, but ourselves. We put on Christ and become a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). The priest functions for Christ and for Christ's glory, not his own.

As we have seen, the church very early continued the use of clerical garb to symbolize this covering of man's nakedness by Christ's atonement. Protestantism added another dimension to this: the pastor was to stand behind *the open Bible*, to present to men not himself and his word but the binding law-word of God. At no point does he meet the world on his own or in terms of his own word, but always in terms of God's covering, Jesus Christ, and His royal word.

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[40] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1941). p. 402.

Jesus Christ is very man of very man; *Hebrews* is emphatic that He knew our infirmities, was "in *all points* tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15; cf. 5:8,9). Yet we are never "treated" by Christ to an exciting tale, How I met temptations and triumphed, or, My struggle with Satan, and the like. Rather, He said simply that He had come "to do the will of him that sent me, *and to finish his work*" (John 4:34). This is the calling of every priest.

20. The Great Prophet

Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15,18 spoke of the coming of the Great Prophet, and Philip told Nathaniel that Jesus of Nazareth was this great one (John 1:45).

A prophet can be very briefly defined as one who speaks for God. The prophet applies God's law word to himself, all men, and all the earth. He speaks and acts in the name of God, and under the authority of His word.

From this definition, it is clear that Adam and all men born of Adam have a prophetic calling. They are either true and faithful prophets, or false prophets. The word given to Adam in the creation mandate (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:13-17,19) is a prophetic calling: Adam and all men born of Adam are required to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth in terms of God's law word and kingdom. Man sought an independent or humanistic prophetic calling, and this is the meaning of the Fall.

Peter, preaching in The Temple, declared that Jesus Christ is the prophet foretold in Deut. 18:15 (Acts 3:22,23). Earlier, our Lord identified Himself as a prophet (Luke 13:33). Again and again, He spoke of Himself as the bringer of the Father's word (John 8:26-28; 12:49f; 14:10,24; 15:15; 17:8,20). The people recognized Him as a prophet (Matt. 21:11,46; Luke 7:16; 24:19; John 3:2; 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17).

Christ in His prophetic office makes emphatic the reality of the incarnation. As very God of very God, He could speak saying, "I say unto you," whereas the prophets before Him said, "Thus saith the Lord." He spoke the whole word of God to man, and, as the faithful Prophet, kept that every word of God (Matt. 4:4). Paul and the apostolic company tell us in Hebrews 4:14-16,

> 14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.
> 15. 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.
> 16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Although the focus here is on the priestly office of Christ, the prophetic and royal functions are no less in view. The first prophet, Adam, being tempted, sought an independent and humanistic prophetic role. All of us, as Adam's

sons, still bear, in this life, the marks of that fall and the failings thereof. The great Prophet, Jesus Christ, overcame that temptation to be a false prophet (Matt. 4:1-11) and remained without sin. Thus, because of His temptations, He understands our frailties, and, because of His sinlessness, He is our perfect High Priest and Intercessor.

In that temptation, He stood as the true Prophet, answering the devil with God's word. He shows us all, therefore, how to be true prophets. Thus, the *first* word of the true prophet is, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3). Our Lord's great prophetic answer is thus the total word of God. Satan advocates a partial word, or a wrongly emphasized word (Matt. 4:6), but our Lord insists on the *every word*. To pick and choose at God's word is to place ourselves above it and to reduce it to a resource for man to use. The true prophet stands on the whole word of God, without reservations. Christ as the faithful prophet answers Satan each time with Scripture, declaring, "It is written" (Matt. 4:4,7,10). In His incarnation, He subordinates Himself to God's word. Thus, God incarnate moves in total obedience to the triune God and to the law-word of God. Man as prophet can do no less.

The *second* word of the true Prophet is, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7). The word translated as *tempt* is *ekpeirazo*, the intensive form of *peirazo*, to tempt, test, try, prove, or in any way put to a test. Satan's demand was, Let God prove Himself God; let God prove His goodness and care for man. The prophetic word of the great Prophet is that it is God who is alone the Lord; therefore, whereas God can test or try man, man cannot bring God before his humanistic bar of judgment, nor any other kind of judgment. God is the Judge, not the judged.

False apologetics demands that God's word and God be tested by reason. We have the amazing audacity of Carnell, whose rationalism led him to declare,

> Bring on your revelations! Let them make peace with the law of contradiction and the facts of history, and they will deserve a rational man's assent. A careful examination of the Bible reveals that it passes these stringent examinations *summa cum laude*.[41]

Since Carnell wrote these words, some of his associates and successors at Fuller Seminary, in applying their reason to Scripture, have not found it to pass *summa cum laude*, perhaps at best only *cum laude*! Whatever judgment man gives, man can take away. Man's reason is God's creation, like all of man. Shall the thing made pass judgment on the Maker? (Rom. 9:20; Isa. 29:16; 64:8). It should be a rebuke to the theologians that God incarnate, Who was Himself ultimate and absolute reason, gave as His answer to Satan not

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41. Edward John Carnell: *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952). p. 178.

reason but Scripture, God's word. Had He attempted to reason with Satan, He would have acknowledged the validity of an appeal to a common ground shared by both God and Satan and to which both are accountable. This would have made a universal and immanent reason, an indwelling aspect of all being, god over God. Instead, Jesus Christ as the true Prophet answered with the fiat word of God: "It is written..."

Third, Jesus Christ, in His final prophetic word to Satan, declares, "it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10). The second prophetic word was from Deut. 6:16, and it has reference to the incident at Massah, when Israel judged God because God did not make all things conform to their will (Ex. 17:1-7). Israel refused to accept problems or testing: God had to perform at their demand and need. This third prophetic word cites Deut. 6:13 and 10:20. It also echoes the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). The first and continual false god we place before the living God is ourselves (Gen. 3:5); this is our original sin. The presupposition of Satan as false prophet is that this world, its realms and their glory, are all his; he therefore claims the right to lay down the terms of life and its laws. So too does fallen man, who says with Satan to God and Christ: "fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9). Let my will be done. The false prophet speaks the independent word, the humanistic word; he demands that God serve man. Against this, Christ, the true Prophet, declares that only God can be worshipped, served, and obeyed. As God incarnate and King of Kings, Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16), and God's true Prophet, He refuses to depart for a moment from the every word of God, believed, obeyed, and made the means of dominion.

Our role thus as God's restored prophets in Christ must be the same. Christ's prophetic calling points to ours.

21. The King

One of the most obvious facts of Scripture is that Jesus Christ is king. Many texts can be cited to confirm this, such as Psalm 45:6-7 (cf. Heb. 1:8), and the fact that Jesus Christ's crucifixion was in part because of His royal status. The one charge on the cross, citing His "crime," was that He was "the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19). This meant more than a royal claim on a little, satellite state; it meant the Messiah-King, and the chief priests and scribes mocked Christ on the cross, saying, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe" (Mark 15:31,32). Our Lord did *not* deny this charge; He simply made it clear that His kingship was not derived *from* this world but was supernatural, and *over* this world (John 18:36).

Moreover, the chief priests and scribes recognized the scope of His royal nature; it was linked to His deity, and they charged Him with the affirmation, "I am the Son of God" (Matt. 27:43). Very plainly, they were crucifying one who had declared Himself to be the God-King of creation.The early church saw Christ as the God-King, and it quoted extensively from such Old Testament texts as Psalm 2 (Acts 4:25-26 etc.) and Psalm 110 (I Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12-13; I Peter 3:22; etc.). Christ Himself speaks of His reign and throne (Rev. 3:21).

It is, however, unnecessary to pile text upon text to "prove" Christ's kingship. The most common term applied to Him in the New Testament declares Him to be both God and King. That term is *Lord*, *Kurios*. It means *sovereign*, and it also means *God* (I Peter 1:25). Jesus Christ is Lord; He is the God-King (Phil. 2:9-11).

He is King, because He is the Creator, the Redeemer, the Head of the Church, and the King of the universe (I Cor. 15:24, 28).

Christ's kingship, however, has another important and central facet. He is king, because He is the second or last Adam, called to replace the first Adam, who forfeited his dominion mandate (Gen. 1:26-28) and fell (Gen. 3:1ff). By His baptism, Christ entered into His royal calling, and the voice from heaven cited Psalm 2:7 in part at His baptism (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). Christ's baptism is comparable to the formal investiture of a prince to be the *crown* prince, the heir to the throne. The full statement of Psalm 2:7 is cited later with reference to Christ's resurrection: He was now "begotten" or born into the fullness of His royal estate, having conquered sin and death (Acts 13:33). With this victory, Christ was exalted to the right hand of God, made King of creation, and lord over all things (Ps. 2:8,9; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11). The second Person of the Godhead always is King and Lord; now, the incarnate Christ, the God-man, gains this status as God's vicegerent, fulfilling the calling of Genesis 1:26-28. Berkhof stated the meaning very clearly:

> This investiture was part of the exaltation of the God-man. It did not give Him any power or authority which He did not already possess as the Son of God; neither did it increase His territory. But the God-man, the Mediator, was now made the possessor of this authority, and His human nature was made to share in the glory of this royal dominion. Moreover, the government of the world was now made subservient to the interests of the Church of Jesus Christ. And this kingship of Christ will last until the victory over the enemies is complete and even death has been abolished, I Cor. 15:24-28. At the consummation of all things the God-man will give up the authority conferred on Him for a special purpose, since it will no more be needed. He will return His commission to God, that God may be all in all. The purpose is accomplished; mankind is redeemed; and thereby the original kingship of man is restored.[42]

Christ's kingship thus is the restoration of Adam's original kingship, and of the kingship under God which we lost in Adam.

Man in his sin rejected kingship, because God's requirement for kingship means rule over ourselves and over all creation in terms of God's law word. Kingship means responsibility and work. Instead of kingship, man sought deity, to be as God (Gen. 3:5). At the same time, man rejected responsibility (Gen. 3:11-13). To be God means to be the one to whom all persons and things are accountable; this was man's goal, to be beyond good and evil, and to be beyond work and accountability. The association of royal status with battle, work, and responsibility is very clear in I Cor. 15:24-28:

> 24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
> 25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
> 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.
> 27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifested that he is exempted, which did put all things under him.
> 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

We have here the work of Christ, the last Adam, set forth, *and the work of all who are members of His new humanity.* As Paul says in I Cor. 15:21, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." All men are "made alive" who are in Christ by His redemption (I Cor. 15:22). To be in Christ is to be a soldier in His holy warfare; it means arming for warfare against the powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:10-17). We are thus called to follow Christ in His warfare. The work of Christ, His warfare and dominion, is described here by Paul as, *first* putting "down all rule and all authority and power" (I Cor. 15:24). Only God's rule shall prevail: all other pretended powers and laws shall be put down. Christ thus establishes His dominion as the last Adam, and we, as members of His new humanity, are called to exercise dominion in and under Him. *All* Christ's enemies shall be put "under his feet" (I Cor. 15:25). However, this promise is to all Christians also: "The God of peace shall bruise (or, crush) Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20).

Second, the fall brought in the reign of sin and death. Before the end,sin will be effectually but not totally broken and suppressed. All powers and principalities will be placed under Christ's feet (I Cor. 15:27). Then, at the end, with His coming again, death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed.

Third, then Christ, the God-man, with total dominion having been gained by His new humanity, now restored eternally to God's dominion-service,

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[42] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. p. 411.

(Rev. 22:3, "and his servants shall serve him"), will yield the Kingdom to the triune God. As Hodge noted,

> And as the delivery of the kingdom or royal authority over the universe committed to Christ after his resurrection, is consistent at once with his continued dominion as God over all creatures, and with his continued headship over his people; so is subjection here spoken of consistent with his eternal equality with the Father. It is not the subjection of the son as Son but of the Son as Theanthropos of which the apostle here speaks.[43]

God's purpose has been accomplished: man has learned dominion, and man is now able to serve God perfectly throughout all eternity. Christ as King schools His covenant people, the new humanity, into their life as priests, prophets, and kings unto God. Having done so, He turns the Kingdom over to the triune God as an eternally faithful, obedient, and perfect realm.

The work of Christ as King is tied to the dominion mandate (Gen. 1:26-28), and to our re-establishment in Him for the fulfillment of that calling. Those who postpone Christ's kingship into the future, to heaven, or after the "rapture," also postpone or abolish man's duty to exercise dominion. The result is a surrender of this world to Satan, a dereliction of the Christian's duty, and an open invitation for God's judgment.

22. King Adam II

Man was created by God to exercise dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26-28) as His prophet, priest, and king. Man's sin was to seek rather to be as God, to be his own god, defining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). Jesus Christ came to restore man into his original place and calling. As the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47), He overcame the tempter's plan (Matt. 4:1-11) and became the man of dominion. In Christ, we are restored into our calling and made members of His new humanity, a covenant people called to dominion.

All four gospels record the miraculous feeding (Matt. 14:13-23; Mark 6:32-46; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:4-21). Mark 6:52f. tells us of the disciples themselves that "they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was darkened." In John 6:47-58, we have our Lord's declaration of that meaning, and, in John 6:35, He summarized it clearly: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." Our Lord clearly ties the meaning of the miraculous feeding (and of the Last Supper, which came later), to the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of the church, and to life in Him. It is most certainly basic to the doctrine of the covenant, and Christ's office as the last Adam, the head of the new humanity. According to John 6:47-58,

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[43] Charles Hodge: *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans). p. 333.

47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.
48. I am that bread of life.
49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.
50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.
51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.
52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?
53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.
54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day.
55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.
56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.
57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.
58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.

First, our Lord declares that faith in Him means to have everlasting life. Subsequently, He declares that this faith involves more than mere belief or affirmation: it requires "eating" His body and blood, i.e., incorporation. Christ becomes our life and sustenance. Since death came in by Adam's sin, so now by Christ's life and work righteousness and eternal life are made the possession of His people (Rom. 5:17-21).

Second, our Lord declares that the miraculous feeding of manna in the wilderness is now succeeded by a greater care. He is the living manna, the bread of life, miraculously come down from heaven like the manna of old. Unlike the manna, He is *living*, the *living bread*. His body, given in atonement for His people's sins, is that living manna, and His blood is the water of life (Rev. 21:6; 22:1,17).

Third, He is thus the overcomer of sin and death. In His person, paradise is restored, and the gates of Eden begin to re-open to covenant man. The people of Christ *live* by Him and in Him, even as the old humanity sins and dies after Adam: "he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

Fourth, we are told that "the Jews" found His words hard to digest. The term *Jews* is here a religious designation. Outside the circle of the Twelve, many believers were Jews; except for Judas, the Twelve were Galileans. John uses the term *Jews* to refer to those outwardly within the covenant but opposed to Christ. These *Jews* said, "How can this *man* give us his flesh to eat?" Rather than *man*, the Greek text reads *houtos*, *he* or *this person*. Our Lord had first said, "the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give

for the life of the world." These *Jews* clearly understood the reference: Jesus was saying that He, in His own person, would make atonement "for the life of the world." They knew also that the only valid atonement is by God's appointment and in God's prescribed way. They were insistent that Jesus was *only* a man, possibly a demon-possessed man (Matt. 9:34; 12:24; etc.). They were thus rejecting totally the idea that Christ could in any way make atonement for sins. Again and again, the *Jews* were those who, in the name of God, denied to Christ any place in the work of salvation. As was said to Him in Capernaum, "who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7). The reality of the incarnation they refused to consider; they would not even allow Him the name of a prophet, nor any honor, despite the many miracles. They thus denied Him the reality of the incarnation, the work of the Holy Spirit in Him, and any role other than a demonic one.

And yet, in their sin, they had raised a sound theological point: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7). To acknowledge any righteousness to Jesus of Nazareth and His word and works meant to acknowledge some kind of relationship to God, a prophetic role. But the words of Jesus compelled those men, who lacked faith but not discernment, to recognize that implicit in all His words and works was deity. He claimed the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10); He taught as one having authority (Matt. 7:29), for He spoke as God, "I say unto you," as more than man. His was not the statement, "Thus saith the Lord," but an emphatically personal statement, a royal decree.

Fifth, on the other hand, Jesus, though very God of very God, identified Himself with manna, a miraculous but still created thing; with bread, a human product; He spoke of His flesh and blood, aspects of the life of man. Thus, as He spoke of His work of atonement, His emphasis was on His humanity. It was He, as the last Adam, who would effect man's atonement. Adam I faced the tempter, and lost. Adam II faced the tempter, and conquered. Adam I gained death for His sin; Adam II destroyed the power of death for His righteousness, and death's hold over us by His atonement. As Swete noted, of John 6:63, "It is Christ's flesh, His manhood, full of the Spirit, and in its risen and glorified state wholly spiritualized, which is offered as the food of men."[44]

Because of His atonement, we are now members of Jesus Christ, i.e., of the greater Adam and His new humanity. We are *not* incorporated into God the Son, but into Christ the new Adam. Man's only hope of life is to partake of Christ's *humanity* through faith in Him and His atoning blood. It means transference from the world of Adam I to the world of Adam II. Communion

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[44] Henry Barclay Swete: *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, (1910) 1976). p. 141.

means knowing and rejoicing in our new humanity, and a life in community one with another.

Our Lord speaks of His body as both flesh and blood, bread and wine, and as the nourishment of His people and their life.

The sin of man was to try to be a god (Gen. 3:1-5); the grace of man is to be a creature in Jesus Christ, to know our total dependence upon the Holy Trinity, and upon our new federal head and Adam, Jesus Christ. We have been made (John 1:3) and re-made by Him (John 3:16). He, having destroyed sin and death, and taken captivity captive (Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8), has restored us to dominion. He reigns now over all things, and He summons us to conquer and to reign in Him, to put down all rule, and all authority, and all power, and to put all His enemies under His feet in His name and by His power (I Cor. 15:24-28). He is King of kings, and Lord of lords, "and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14).

The miraculous feedings of the multitudes pointed to the bounty, care, and power of our greater Adam. If we feed on Him, we shall be fed (Matt. 6:33). The fools of His day sought, not God's Kingdom and righteousness, nor His Christ, but a human feeding or manna. As a result, they died in the wilderness of their sins.

VI

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The Giver of Life

One of the strange aspects of church history is the relatively minor role given to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the limited theological discussions thereof. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is clearly the most in evidence of the three persons of the Trinity. From His part in creation, through His constant presence as the source of revelation through the prophets, His part in the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, on through Pentecost through John's *Revelation*, the Spirit is the Person most in evidence in Scripture, if not in theology.

Moreover, when theology deals with this doctrine, the role of the Holy Spirit varies from an impersonal influence to a displacing and total power. Without agreeing with the charismatics, in particular with the tongues emphasis, I must say all the same that the rise of the charismatic movement is a very important theological as well as historical fact. It compels the church to give attention to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Thus far, the debate has been localized and has been man-centered; i.e., it has centered on such things as the validity or non-validity of tongues. Clearly, this is an important question, but not even remotely as important as the nature and person of the Holy Spirit Himself. Our concern must be with more than His manifestations; it must be with the Spirit Himself.

This confessional poverty goes back to the creeds. The Apostles' Creed, in its final form, says simply, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan creed (381 A.D.) in its developed form declares:

> And (I believe) in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father (and the Son); who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets.

The Athanasian Creed repeatedly asserts the unity of the Trinity. It also says specifically:

> 23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten: but proceeding.
> 24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.
> 25. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, or less than another (there is nothing before, or after, nothing greater or less).

This limited emphasis is in one sense understandable; the early church began in a Jewish context in which God the Father, and the Spirit, were "recognized" doctrines; the point of conflict was the doctrine of Christ. Hence the

confessional emphasis on Christology. However, what the early church failed to appreciate sufficiently was that the word *God* referred to different things in different cultures, so that, in the Greco-Roman world, and amongst barbarians, *God* and *the Holy Spirit* had radically different meanings. With the Reformation, the emphasis was on justification and ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church), so that the doctrine of the Spirit received minimal emphasis. Luther's *Small Catechism* declares:

> *I believe in the Holy Ghost...*
> I believe that I can not, by my own reason or strength, believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church he daily forgives richly all my sins, and the sins of all believers; and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day, and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563 A.D.), in Question 53, asks, "What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Ghost?" and answers:

> First, that he is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son. Secondly, that he is also given unto me, makes me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits, comforts me, and shall abide with me forever.

The French Confession of Faith (1559 A.D.) cited the work of the Holy Spirit as basic to the inward illumination which enables the believer to know God's Word and to distinguish it from other ecclesiastical books. The French Confession also said:

> XXI. We believe that we are enlightened in faith by the secret power of the Holy Spirit, that it is a gratuitous and special gift which God grants to whom he will, so that the elect have no cause to glory, but are bound to be doubly thankful that they have been preferred to others.

The Belgic Confession (1561 A.D.) restates the creeds in their emphasis on the eternity of the Spirit, and His equal procession from the Father and the Son (Art. XI). The same is true of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, and of the Methodist Articles of Religion (1784 A.D.), as well as the Westminster Confession of Faith (1729).

The fullest statement from this era comes from The Scotch Confession of Faith (1560 A.D.).

> Art. XII. Of Faith in the Holy Goste
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> This our Faith and the assurance of the same, proceeds not fra flesh and blude, that is say, fra na natural power is within us, bot is the inspiration of the holy Gost: Whom we confesse GOD equall with the Father and with his Sonne, quha sanctifyis us, and bringis us in all veritie be his awin operation, without whome we sulde remaine for ever enemies to

> God, and ignorant of his Sonne *Christ Jesus*; for of nature we are so dead, so blind, and so perverse, that nether can we feil when we are pricked, see the licht when it shines, nor assent to the whill of God when it is reveiled, unles the Spirit of the Lord *Jesus* quicken that quhilk is dead, remove the darkness from our myndes, and bowe our stubborne hearts to the obedience of his blessed will. And so as we confesse, that God the Father created us, when we were not, so also do we confesse that the holy Gost doth sanctifie and regenerat us, without all respect of ony merite proceeding from us, be it before, or be it after our Regeneration. To speak this one thing zit in mair plaine words: as we willingly spoyle our selves of all honour and gloir of our own Creation and Redemption, so do we also of our Regeneration and Sanctification, for of our selves we are not sufficient to think one gude thocht, bot he quha hes begun the wark in us, is onlie he that continewis us in the same, to the praise and glorie of his undeserved grace.

In 1848, the confession of the Evangelical Free Churches of Geneva united the Spirit's work of salvation with the doctrine of election, seeing clearly the sovereignty of grace in choice and in operation:

> XII. We believe that the Holy Ghost applies to the chosen ones, by means of the Word, the salvation which the Father has destined for them and which the Son has bought, so that, uniting them to Jesus by faith, he dwells in them, deliveres them from the sway of sin, makes them understand the Scriptures, consoles them and seals them for the day of redemption.

In 1876, the Reformed Episcopal Church in America expanded the Thirty-Nine Articles' affirmation concerning the Spirit:

> Article IV. Of the Holy Ghost.
>
> The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.
>
> It is the work of the Holy Ghost to reprove and convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; to take of the things of Christ and show them to men; to regenerate–making men willing, leading them to faith in Christ, and forming Christ in them the hope of glory; to strengthen them with might in their inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; and to secure in them that walking in the ways of God which is called the Fruit of the Spirit the true Church is thus called out of the world, and is builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.

In 1902-1903, The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. added to its version of the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter XXXIV, "Of the Holy Spirit." This statement, while following the orthodox outline, opened the door to Arminian rather than Calvinistic interpretations. Twentieth century emphases on the doctrine of the Spirit have been mainly Arminian, not Calvinistic. This presents us with a contradiction. The Holy Spirit, as very God of very God, manifests in His Person and power the determining will and sovereignty of

the triune God. A charismatic emphasis should thus be highly Calvinistic, but it is not normally so and is commonly very alien to such a stress. Likewise, those who are Calvinistic and who stress God's sovereignty should logically be very emphatically given to a high emphasis on the doctrine of the Spirit. This, however, is clearly not the case.

It may be that sovereignty is confused with an exclusive transcendence, so that immanence is seen as a compromise. In any case, where a strong doctrine of the Spirit is not operative and governing, a strong doctrine of the church replaces it, so that institutional controls and government replace the Spirit. On the other hand, where the doctrine of the Spirit is not in union with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the triune God, human activity and enthusiasm replace the Spirit, and men set about to engender the ostensible working of the Spirit by trying to create in themselves an emotional climate. In this way, both charismatics and anti-charismatics conclude by stressing man, institutional controls in the one case, and emotional charges within man in the other. This should indicate to us that the true starting-point with respect to the Spirit is in Scripture and the Spirit Himself.

Even here, there are problems. Man, being a material creature, finds *spirit* a difficult concept to comprehend. We are told of God, that He is Spirit (John 4:24), but we are able to understand, within creaturely limits, God the Son because of His incarnation. God the Father we can also understand, although not as well, because *Father* is a term understandable to all of us. Thus, the Father and the Son have something to concretize our understanding. The titles of the Spirit, however, refer to functions rather than a concrete person, i.e., Comforter, Advocate, etc. Thus, for many God the Spirit is always somehow the remote and abstract person of the Trinity. The fault lies clearly in man's understanding.

Scripture deepens the mystery at the very beginning. According to Genesis 1:2, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The earth was a vacancy, an unshaped nothing; it was a void, a nothing, a vacuity, and it was dark. All was an abyss or sea. The Spirit of God moved, brooded, hovered, or fluttered over the waters, according to the commentators. Cassuto has called attention to the inadmissible nature of brooding or blowing as translations. He rendered or paraphrased the line as possibly, "Although the earth was without form or life, yet above the unformed matter hovered the *ruah* of God, the source of light and life."[1] But none of these interpretations penetrate the mystery of creation.

The word *ruah* means breath or wind, but it here refers in its Hebrew construction, as Lenski pointed out, to a *person*. It is the Spirit of God who is

[1] Umberto Cassuto: *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part I.* (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, (1961) 1972). p. 25.

referred to. The Spirit is clearly the Creator of life in some special sense, and He is also the re-creator of life in fallen man. We have a very obvious parallelism. On the one hand is the darkness, the void, and formlessness, and on the other is the Spirit of God, who is light, life, and order. What follows in Genesis 1:3 ff. is a series of divine fiats: "Let there be...and there was." The presence of the Spirit is inescapable life, light, and order.

In Genesis 6:3, we read, "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Here the Spirit of God is closely linked to life, without being identical to it. The Spirit gives life, and the Spirit also withdraws it. For the Spirit to come upon men means at times more than life: it means prophecy (I Sam. 10:10; 16:13). The Holy Spirit is also vexed and grieved by man's rebellion, and He turns on them, to be their enemy, and to fight against them (Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30). The Spirit thus is very much present in this world; His immanence is most notable, and yet he is also fully transcendent. Oehler has best stated the relationship of the Spirit to creation: "*Since the world is placed outside of God, it originated and subsists only by the life imparted to it by his Spirit*; thus it is not *separated* from Him, although *distinct* from Him."[2] This is a very necessary distinction. It is all the more important, because the modern era has either fallen into pantheism, or so separated God from the world as to make the Holy Spirit's presence unusual or dramatic. God is not a God who is afar off (Jer. 23:23), although men in their sin are inclined to think so. (Ps. 10:1). The world of science has made the great cause of all a very remote or non-existent cause, whereas the God of Scripture is totally sovereign, omnipresent, and always governing in every event and second of time. The scientific world-view has thus aggravated man's difficulties in understanding the doctrine of the Spirit.

Because man now sees God as distant, and the Spirit as vague or sporadic, other gods rule over men. Institutions and persons become *the givers of life.* As a result, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has lost its Biblical force. It is thus urgently necessary for theologians, pastors, and believers to give renewed attention to this doctrine. The revival of Christendom depends upon it, for the doctrine of the Spirit confronts us with the mystery of God. God is great and beyond our comprehension, and yet He speaks our language, which He ordained, and incarnates Himself as man, so that we might truly know Him. He is incomprehensible, yet understandable; we can know Him truly, but never exhaustively. He is most near to us in the Spirit, and yet never more remote to our capacity to grasp His infinite and inexhaustible being than in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost.

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[2] Gustave E. Oehler: *Theology of the Old Testament.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, (1883) reprint). p. 118.

2. The Spirit and the Kingdom

One of our key problems in any understanding of the relationship of God and man is that man wants to reduce all determination to God or to man. All things are either determined by God, or else by man, some would insist. The free will advocates have reduced God to a beggar at man's door, pleading with man to allow Him to enter. Such a view in effect makes man ultimate, or god. Others so insist on God's determination that man becomes an automaton. Early Calvinism was a vigorous and socially determinative force; today, Calvinism, or those who bear the name, is a quietistic, pietistic, and retreatist movement which is irrelevant to our world. Why? The Scripture both insists on the absolute predestination by God of all things, and on man's responsibility. All *primary freedom* is God's, and belongs to God alone; man's responsibility and liberty is a *secondary freedom*, established by God Himself. The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter III, "Of God's Eternal Decree," Section I, states this clearly:

> 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.

Still another problem confronts us as we view the doctrine of the Spirit. Hellenic thought very early influenced the church, beginning with some of the earliest church fathers. Certainly, the triumph of Aristotle in Thomism, and later its reappearance in Arminianism, gave to the church an alien doctrine of God. This is often best stated by the medieval philosophers, because they were more logical thinkers than many of the Protestant churchmen who also fell heir to this error. The fusion of Greek and Biblical views of God led to a belief in the Trinity in terms of Aristotle. The three persons of the Godhead came to be analyzed as substance (the Father), structure (the Son), and act (the Spirit). The Son thus as Structure became the reason in all ultimate being, the mind, as it were, of God. The Father became ultimate being, and this contributed to the impersonality which has haunted the doctrine of the Father: as pure being, with reason isolated from Him, He was a difficult concept to warm to or view as a Person. The Spirit, as pure, ultimate act, was impersonal and mindless, so that "to be filled with the Spirit" came to mean, in terms of this paganized view, to be anti-rational and emotional in an irrational sense. To be filled with the Spirit meant thus a kind of transcendence but also a form of abandonment and even hostility to reason and to our being, an all too solid flesh. Indeed to cultivate the Spirit for some required the abandonment of intellectual pursuits and achievements.

This was the case, for example, in the 17th century English commonwealth. Many of the university preachers were deliberately pedantic.

They were Christ's trained spokesmen, and they often larded their published sermons with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew phrases in order to awe the man in the pew. Much of Puritan preaching has this academic manner, and its argumentation is for scholars and other clergymen, not believers. Richard Baxter (1615-1691), an antinomian leader of the day, declared, in *The Reformed Pastor* (2nd ed., 1657),

> It is most desirable that the Minister should be of parts above the people so far as to be able to teach them and awe them and manifest their weaknesses to themselves...See that you preach...some higher points that stall their understandings...Take up some profound questions (such as the Schools voluminously agitate) and...make it as plain as you can, that they may see that it is not your obscure manner of handling, but the matter itself that is too hard for them, and so may see that they are yet but children that have need of milk.[3]

Such men stressed reason and reasoning. In their view of the church, the clergy replaced the Holy Spirit as the governing power. John Milton could with justice charge, "New presbyter is but old priest writ large." We still find among current "Christ only" preachers a very strong authoritarian and antinomian tendency.

On the other hand, those who stressed the Holy Spirit felt it necessary to declare that learning was unnecessary for preaching. In fact, according to Thomas Collier, an uneducated Baptist, God used the intellectually weak to prevent any glorying in knowledge. Indeed, he held, there were "none but Asses in the things of God, who study Arts and Sciences, to help them to preach and prophesy."[4] Learning was thus seen as a handicap to the ministry, *and to the Spirit.* The Quaker, George Fox (1624-1691), held that the teaching of the Spirit came without and did not need human means, including education.

Some Puritans, like Samuel Rutherford (1600?-1661), held to the unity of reason and the Spirit. Reason, such men held, could not work properly unless aided by Spirit. The sectaries held that religious knowledge came from the Spirit, not through any use of reason. Some very able sectaries, like John Bunyan, were very well read; yet they spoke disparagingly of book learning and were unwilling to admit their familiarity with it. Bunyan claimed, "I am for drinking water out of my own cistern." The Welsh Independent, Morgan Llwyd (1619-1659), held that reason is a "thief within...which locks the door of every mind against the waft of the Holy Spirit."[5] The dream of these men was of a society in which men would not be dependent on a professional class

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[3] Cited in Richard L. Greaves: *The Puritan Revolution and Educational Thought.* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1969). p. 8.

[4] Ibid., p. 19.

[5] Ibid., pp. 115-120.

for knowledge of any subject but would be walking sources of knowledge through the Holy Spirit.[6]

The problem was in part due also to a faulty doctrine of man, either a Greek dualism (body-mind), or a Greek tripartite view (body-mind-soul). Very early, men like Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-393) held to a "divine mixture" in man's being, i.e., a divine and immortal soul, and corruptible matter.[7] The Quakers were a conspicuous heir of this tradition with their doctrine of man's divine inner light. In the Cappadocian Fathers of the early church, salvation became divinization.[8] This meant too, as it did for Gregory Nazianzen, that the work of the Holy Spirit was in part to deify us.[9] Gregory Nazianzen criticized the Hellenic intrusion into the doctrine, however. He saw that the Three Persons of the Trinity were being viewed as the Creator, the Co-operator, and the Minister, so that the Holy Spirit was reduced to an act.[10] He sharply criticized this view:

> Now if he were an accident, He would be an activity of God, for what else, or of whom else, could He be, for surely this is what most avoids composition? And if He is an Activity, He will be effected, but will not effect and will cease to exist as soon as He has been effected, for this is the nature of an Activity. How is it then that He acts and says such and such things, and defines, and is grieved, and is angered, and has all the qualities which belong clearly to one that moves, and not to movement? But if He is a Substance and not an attribute of Substance, he will be conceived of either as a Creature of God, or as God. For anything between these two, whether having nothing in common with either, or a compound of both, not even they who invented the goat-stag could imagine. Now, if He is a creature, how do we believe in Him, how are we made perfect in Him? For it is not the same thing to believe IN a thing and to believe ABOUT it. The one belongs to Deity, the other to–any thing. But if He is God, then He is neither a creature, not a thing made, nor a fellow servant, nor any of these lowly appellations.[11]

Gregory Nazianzen was, clearly, defective on some points, i.e., salvation as divinization, and in his belief in the necessity for creation.[12] At this point, however, he is excellent. If the Holy Spirit is act, or activity, He has no existence when the effect or act if done. If, however, He is a substance, a being, He is either God or a creature. But He is clearly spoken of as God. It follows clearly therefore that it is an error to reduce the Spirit to act or activity. The Third Person of the Godhead, He with whom we have the most to do, is

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6. Ibid., p. 146.
7. A.S. Dunstone: *The Atonement in Gregory of Nyssa.* (London, England: The Tyndale Press, 1964). p. 9.
8. Ibid., pp. 14, 17ff., 29.
9. Gregory Nazianzen, "The Fifth Theological Oration: On the Holy Spirit," XXIX, in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, editors: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. VII. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans). p. 327.
10. Ibid., V, p. 319.
11. Ibid., VI., p. 319.
12. "On the Theophany, or Birthday of Christ," XXXVIII, IX, in Ibid., p. 347.

seen then largely in terms of His activity in us, and His effect on our lives. We are too little concerned with the Spirit Himself, which is another way of saying our concern with all three persons of the Trinity is in terms of their effect on us, and their service to us.

In answer to the question, who ever worshipped the Spirit, Gregory Nazianzen replied;

> ...It will suffice to say that it is the Spirit in Whom we worship, and in Whom we pray. For Scripture says, God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) And again,–We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26): and I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding also (I Cor. 14:15);–that is, in the mind and in the Spirit. Therefore to adore or to pray to the Spirit seems to me to be simply Himself offering prayer or adoration to Himself. And what godly or learned man would disapprove of this, because in fact the adoration of One is the adoration of the Three, because of the equality of honor and Deity, between the Three?[13]

It is not necessary to go further. Clearly, the early church had the same problem we have today, a tendency either to neglect the Holy Spirit, or to see Him in terms of His effect on man and in man. This puts us into a practicing humanism.

H.B. Swete cited five aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. These are (1) creation and conservation; (2) bestowal of intellectual gifts; (3) prophetic inspiration; (4) anointing the Messiah and his forerunners; (5) the moral and religious life of man. An important point made by Swete was that, while the prophetic gift was exercised by certain individuals, "the prophetic gift belonged to the nation, as the elect people."[14] Moses made bitter reference to the failure of the people as a whole to be prophets (Num. 11:29). Abraham was a prophet (Gen. 20:7), and all of the covenant people were called to be prophets, but few were, because of sin. The vision of Joel is of a prophetic people (Joel 2:28-29). Much later, Paul longed for a prophetic people rather than a tongue-speaking church (I Cor. 14:5).

To prophesy is to speak for God, and to predict by applying God's word. To declare that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) is to prophesy. The Holy Spirit works to further God's Kingdom and reign. He is God, and He is God-centered in all His ways, not man-centered.

Our Lord defines our goal thus: "seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). The Kingdom and righteousness or justice are one and the same thing. What the Son commands, the Father and the Spirit

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13. "On the Holy Spirit," XII, p. 321.

14. H. B. Swete, "Holy Spirit," in James Hastings, editor: *A Dictionary of the Bible*, II. (New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919). p. 403.

command. Their works of creation, regeneration, sanctification, preservation, and providence have not man as its center, but God's purpose, glory, and kingdom. The work of the Spirit in man and the world is inseparable from this fact.

The Holy Spirit moves us to witness to God's truth, His salvation, care, judgment, and more. His work is closely associated with the royal work of the Son, in redeeming, and in judging. In I Peter 3:18-20, we read:

> 18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
> 19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
> 20. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

These verses, too often carelessly read, tell us, *first*, of Christ's redemptive work, His atonement "that he might bring us to God." Although put to death, he was made alive by the Holy Spirit. *Second*, this same Spirit preached through Noah to "the spirits in prison," those in bondage to sin. This was done "while the ark was a preparing." Thus, Noah's preaching of God's coming judgment, and the offer of salvation, was the work of the Spirit.

Here again we are face to face with the amazing mystery of the Spirit, and of God's eternal decree. The focus of the Spirit's work is God's Kingdom. All the same, to a condemned generation (Gen. 6:11-13) the Spirit witnesses through Noah. Nothing is too great nor too small for the Spirit's concern, and even a world sentenced to obliteration is given a witness from the throne, the Third Person preaching to it through Noah.

In I Peter 3:19, "and preached to the spirits in prison," we have reference to an expression thrice used by Isaiah:

> Isa. 42:7. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.
> Isa. 49:9. That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.
> Isa. 61:1. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

All three of these verses are messianic, the first and last most clearly so. In the last, we have the words our Lord applied to Himself in the Nazareth Synagogue (Luke 4:16-21), and declared were fulfilled in His person. The Spirit creates, judges, and summons to redemption. Even as in creation He hovered over the waters to bring forth the first creation, so He hovers over all

things, and works in all things, to bring forth the new heavens and the new earth.

3. The Spirit of Jubilee

Our doctrine of man has a profound influence on us. Within limits, as Solomon observed of man, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). When man sees himself as made of two or three different substances, i.e., mind and body, or, mind, body, and soul or spirit, the consequences are serious. In his moral struggles, he can then reserve an ostensible innocence to one part of his being and blame another for his moral failures. To illustrate, a particularly beautiful young woman called me some few years ago in very deep distress. She came from a family in which the mother was politely described as "a mess." She had been a very beautiful woman when younger; now, in middle age, she merely looked dissipated. She was one of those woman of whom is said that they regard their rear ends to be gold-plated, and a man as privileged to touch them. Now she was no competition for her beautiful daughters, and her life revolved around a psychiatric couch. Except for the youngest daughter, who called me, all the children were involved in the sexual revolution. The father said little, and did less, except to say often to the children, that there would always be an open door for them, and a roof over their head. The youngest daughter, about 20, was especially beautiful, with a dewy-eyed innocence about her; she was a virgin before marriage, because of a revulsion to her family. Her husband, a brilliant young scientist, was radically adulterous; he had been attracted to her by her naive innocence, which now repelled and infuriated him. She called me after, within a few hours, she left her husband and committed adultery. Her adultery sickened her; she recognized as she was involved in it that the man had in effect raped her: he knew her husband, recognized her innocence, and wanted to defile her.

The girl's problem was this: she recognized evil in her family, her husband, and her seducer, but not in herself. Her adultery disgusted her. It had been caused, she said, by her anger at her husband, her need to be loved, and her loneliness, all of which had been exploited. Her anger and her emotions had swept her into a cesspool situation, she felt.

It was not until she recognized that it was not *a part* of her being which had sinned, and carried along the rest, but *all of her*, that her regeneration took place. Until then, she had seen sin in all around her, but only in *one part* of her own being, with *the heart* of her life still unsmirched.

When we have a divided view of man, we can talk of being "carried away" by our emotions into sin, when in reality sin begins in our heart, in the center of our being. The divided view enables us to say that, instead of having a

moral conflict, we have had a *metaphysical* conflict in our being. The Greek view was in fact metaphysical; the Biblical doctrine is ethical.

How we view sin's effect upon us will also mark or color our view of the effects of grace and the Holy Spirit. If sin acts on the borders or peripheries of our lives, then too so will grace and the Holy Spirit. All the while, our hearts are then reserved to ourselves.

The sinner likes to believe that he is in command of his sin. The alcoholic will commonly maintain that he can quit drinking whenever he chooses. Sin is seen as on the periphery, whereas the heart remains a reserved and untarnished or private domain. One man obviously guilty of particularly repulsive sins, insisted, "If you really get to know me, you'll see I'm really very different." The Manichaeans went so far as to hold sins to be inevitable to the flesh, but the soul to be pure, if the soul separated itself from the body's depravity; the Manichaean could then sin with impunity and supposed purity.

Similarly, too many churchmen seem to believe that man's heart commands grace and the Holy Spirit. Grace can be accepted or rejected, and gifts of the Spirit brought into play at will, because the command post is not God's throne but man's heart. The metaphysical view of sin means by implication that one of the two, or three, substances of man's being is superior, and in some way ultimate. Hence, man is viewed as determinative and on the throne. The result is a utilitarian view of sin, grace, and the Spirit. Sin can be used selectively and for self-promotion, in this view; as someone remarked once, the sensible man sins judiciously. Churchmen have a like view. One man and his family have at various times been in churches which are Reformed as well as Arminian, and in charismatic and non-charismatic circles as well. This man, rather successful economically, wants a church which will do the most for his family; he has been interested at times in healing, at other times in the musical fare, and so on. At all times, all things must serve him.

We have thus an ironic fact. Man insists on being in command. If he sins, it is not that he chose evil, but that one aspect of his being "carried" him away. The captain of a ship is normally liable for anything that happens under his command. The humanist insists that he is the captain of his soul, but this captain blames the crew, his emotions, sexuality, or disposition, for everything that goes wrong.

As we approach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we must remember that we are not the standard. Charismatics and non-charismatics are all too prone to cite what the Spirit has done in *their* lives, when the criterion is not us, but Christ. The Lord is the normative man, and Christ's experience of the Spirit in His incarnation must be normative for us. We have that experience set forth in Old and New Testaments:

1. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed 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;
2. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of the vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto 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)

16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.
17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,
18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.
19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.
20. And he closed the book, and gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.
21. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. (Luke 4:16-21)

Our Lord tells us that the Holy Spirit is fully upon Him, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, to enable Him to do His appointed work. Anything from Pentecost to the present is fragmentary and limited as compared to our Lord's relationship to the Spirit.

Moreover, we miss the point of this prophecy and fulfillment if we see it only as an episode in the life of our Lord. It is that, and much more. It sets forth our Lord's calling, and the Spirit's purpose, but it also declares what our life in the Spirit is to be. Jesus Christ is not only God incarnate, very God of very God, but also our last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47), the head of God's new humanity, very man of very man. The purpose of the Spirit in Jesus Christ is His purpose in all of us.

It is thus a beggarly view of the Spirit and a serious distortion, to limit His work in us to our salvation, or to our experience. The coming of the Spirit is expressly associated with preaching good tidings, setting free the captives, comforting the mourners, declaring God's vengeance, *and bringing about a mighty reversal of all things*. When the Virgin Mary went to see Elizabeth, when both women were pregnant, both, filled with the Spirit, spoke prophetically. Mary, carrying our Lord, said,

46....My soul doth magnify the Lord,
47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.
50. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.
51. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.
53. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.
54. He hath holden his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
55. As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. (Luke 1:46-55)

There is a common theme in Isaiah's prophecy of the work of the Spirit and of Christ, and in Mary's Magnificat, because both come from the same Spirit. The central point is clearly stated: "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isa. 61:2; Luke 4:19). Commentators have long noted that this verse and the passage as a whole have reference to the year of jubilee, and then said no more. But our Lord plainly sets forth the freedom and redemption of the jubilee as the life of His Kingdom. Our calling in the Spirit is thus jubilee oriented as was the Magnificat of Mary, and our Lord's entire life and ministry. The Holy Spirit thus points us to God's jubilee and moves us to work in terms of it. The jubilee is the time of return, restoration, and restitution. The trumpet of the jubilee is accompanied by the great declaration, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Lev. 25:10). It is *unto all the inhabitants thereof*, because it is all to be God's Kingdom. In our Lord's words, as in Isaiah's, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jubilee, of fulfillment and freedom. It is the great restoration and development of God's order, and to be in the Spirit is to be one who works for God's jubilee.

Humanism works also for its dream of jubilee, but its realm is one of death and mourning, where life is exchanged for ashes, and freedom for bondage. Our Lord is the Lord of the Jubilee; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Jubilee and the Lord thereof. When we are filled with the Spirit, we then work to bring in the Kingdom of the Jubilee. Our Lord declares in the Spirit, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7). We are called to say and do not less.

4. The Spirit and Bezaleel

As we have seen, our doctrine of man is important, in that a false doctrine of man will color our beliefs about the work of the Holy Spirit in man. A false or warped view of the *work* of the Holy Spirit will affect our doctrine of the *nature* of the Holy Spirit. A dualistic or tripartite doctrine of man (i.e., mind

and body, or, mind, body, and spirit or soul) will, as has been noted, give us a Hellenic rather than a Biblical framework. However, it is definitely not enough to hold to a unified view of man's nature, although such a view is true. It is necessary to say that man is a creature, but this too is not enough. The key fact about man is that he is a creature made in the image of God. His created status man shares with all of creation, but, as image-bearer, he is unique (Gen. 1:26-28). As God's image-bearer, man thus is most truly what he was created to be when he is most faithful and obedient to the triune God. By his fall, man damaged his entire being, so that he is infected in all his life by his rebellion against God (Gen. 3:1-5). From being God's priest, prophet, and king over creation, he fell to the status of a slave to sin (John 8:33-36). In Christ, man is restored to his original calling, and, by the Holy Spirit, empowered and guided in the fulfillment thereof. We must therefore say that *man is most truly himself, as God intended him to be, when he fulfills his vocation by living in the Spirit.*

We see this very early in Scripture. When God ordered the tabernacle to be built, He gave, not only the specifications, but the power to do the work by His Spirit. According to Exodus 31:1-6:

> 1. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
> 2. See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:
> 3. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,
> 4. To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,
> 5. And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.
> 6. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan: and in the heart of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee.

We are also told specifically and emphatically that some things were especially to be made "for glory and for beauty" (Ex. 28:2,40,etc.). Scripture speaks of "the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2; 96:9; 110:3; II Chron. 20:21; I Chron. 16:29). All excellence is associated with the Lord, and with the Spirit.

Too often churchmen see virtue in an ugly church, or no church property at all. The Lord stresses in His word the need for such a physical (as well as spiritual) witness, and a beautiful one. The church is His palace and throne room from whence His law-word goes forth. Hence, the Lord called out by name the artisans who were to do His work, and He empowered them by His Spirit. As surely as prophets were used by the Holy Spirit, so too were God's artisans.

At this point, some older commentators did some hedging. The Bible says Bezaleel was "filled...with the spirit of God," but John Gill (1697-1771), for example, one of the finer ones, limits this to "a sufficient measure of natural wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in all sorts of workmanship hereafter

mentioned."[15] Later, Gill spoke of Bezaleel as a type of Christ, but he limited Bezaleel's inspiration to his craftsmanship. But a Baal-worshipping artisan, carving images of Baal, could no doubt have been found of equivalent abilities. Bezaleel is given wisdom, understanding, and knowledge by the Spirit in order to bring God's requirements and the actual workmanship together. Bezaleel was thus working in terms of a true *theology* and *workmanship*. The Spirit brought all of Bezaleel's being up to the required level of inspiration.

The world of Aristotle led to a false division of being; the influence of Aristotle led to a view of God as being, and the Trinity as substance (the Father), structure (the Son), and act (the Spirit). The Spirit was thus limited to a mindless and emotional role, because structure or reason belongs to the Son in such a system. Although in the *economy* of the Trinity, certain acts or functions are restricted to one Person, (i.e., the Son alone became incarnate), in the *being* or ontology of the Trinity, no such limitations can be made.

The work of the Spirit in the life of Bezaleel, Paul, and John meant the mature and fuller realization of all their being and all their aptitudes. If we were to locate, in some archaeological discovery, some of the non-canonical and uninspired letters of Paul, we would not know Paul better. By comparison to the letters of the New Testament, these letters would be flat, intellectually and emotionally. Paul was most Paul when he was writing his inspired epistles.

George Rawlinson was thus very much to the point, in commenting on Exodus 31:1-6, when he observed:

> He (God) knew what was in man. He knew to whom he had given the highest artistic power, and who at the same time that they possessed it would work in the most religious spirit. He accordingly names two persons, Bezaleel and Aholiab, as those to whom the superintendence of the whole business should be given...Both...were to receive the special assistance of God's Holy Spirit for the due execution of their respective tasks (verses 3-6), and both, had their names equally commemorated in His Holy Book, and were thus upheld as examples to future ages.[16]

The whole man is affected by the Spirit. Thus, Bush's comment, that only those aspects of their lives related to their task, and *not* their moral character was affected by the Spirit, is very, very wrong.[17]

The Holy Spirit comes to a man prepared by the triune God for His coming. God calls us from our mother's womb (Jer. 1:5), and from all eternity He decrees and establishes all things (Acts 15:18; Prov. 16:4,33; Rom.

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15. John Gill: *Gill's Commentaries*, Vol. 1. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980 reprint). p. 405.
16. George Rawlinson, "Exodus", in C. J. Ellicott: *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan). p. 306.
17. George Bush: *Notes, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Exodus*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Henry A. Young, 1870). p. 204.

9:11,13,15,16,18,22,23; Eph. 1:5,6,etc.). All that precedes our regeneration and conversion is used by God in terms of His purpose. The Spirit thus comes to us, having prepared us all our lives for *His purposes.*

The Holy Spirit thus comes to us, not to fulfil our purposes, nor to gratify us, but to fulfil His purposes, and all our lives and being are a preparation by Him for His work. Our Lord at the Mount of Olives prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Our Lord teaches us to pray saying, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). Our Lord was filled with the Spirit at His baptism (Matt. 3:16f.), and the Spirit always spoke in and with Him. At His baptism, our Lord began His calling; we have the plain testimony of Scripture to His Spirit-filled life years before, however, as a child (Luke 2:40-52). The baptism was Christ's public inauguration into His ministry, by means of the entrance rite of the new creation. At that moment, the Spirit gave public witness to his indwelling in Christ, and to the new creation and its King.

Thus, whether in Bezaleel or in Jesus Christ, the Spirit is directly related to our calling. He appoints the calling, and He appoints the purposes of our lives. The gift of the Spirit Himself is permanent and abiding.

One further word: in Exodus 28:3, we read that God declared to Moses, "And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office." The men, Bezaleel and others, who were called, were already able and wise men, whom the Lord God had prepared all their days for His service. Probably, Bezaleel and the other chosen men had worked as chosen artisans for Pharaoh's purposes. Leaving Egypt may have seemed the end of their calling. What use could a horde of ex-slaves have for skilled workers in gold, ivory, brass, wood, and other media of the arts? The journey into the wilderness may have seemed to spell a bitter freedom, release from Egypt's bondage, but the end of their calling. Perhaps Egypt offered inducements to these skilled and superior artisans to stay behind, to separate themselves from Israel and Moses. Perhaps even their freedom and status as Egyptians was offered. We know that this was done in antiquity. The inventions of Greece were commonly the works of foreign slaves who had been re-named with Greek names and dignified. Bezaleel and all the others were there by choice, a choice that required a *separation.* Now, in their work on the tabernacle, they were to follow God's pattern; this again required a *separation* from other traditions of artisans of paganism. Art was a religious function, a handmaid of religion, and God's artisans were put through a schooling, *as are we all.* The Holy Spirit prepared them for His service.

5. Saul and the Spirit

We have in Scripture two texts about King Saul and the Holy Spirit. These texts are important for us to consider, as we study the doctrine of the Spirit:

> 1. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?
> 5. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:
> 6. And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.
> 7. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee:... for God is with thee...
> 9. And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.
> 10. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.
> 11. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?
> 12. And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the Prophets? (I Sam. 10:1, 5-7, 9-12)
> 23. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.
> 24. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets? (I Sam. 19:23-24)

These passages are very dear to the modernists and their scholars. According to their evolutionary views, prophecy developed out of a shamanistic and primitive cult; it was at first marked by dervish-like frenzies and mouthings, and only gradually become ethical. Apart from these verses, these scholars have no Biblical warrant for their views, which represent an alien perspective imposed upon the text. Unfortunately, however, orthodox scholars have not given sufficient attention to these episodes.

The *first* thing that appears is the religious and theological nature of civil power. While the king could not be a priest, he was required to be a prophet. He was to know God's law and to apply it (Deut. 17:18-20). Like the Levite and the prophet, he was to be a master of God's word, a teacher within his appointed sphere. The king was anointed, not because he was now a king, but because he was God's king, and required to acknowledge that fact by his

ordination or coronation. The meaning of a coronation ceremony in Scripture, and in the history of Christendom, is induction into God's service. The anointing of kings has been commonly associated with coronation to signify the necessity of God's Spirit and law in their calling.

Second, both the anointing and the possession of Saul by the Holy Spirit set forth what the life of the king, and of all in authority, is to be, a life in the Spirit. When we assume authority under God, we must be, as Samuel said, "turned into another man" (I Sam. 10:6). Since all authority is by delegation from God, God's word (Deut. 17:18-20), and God's Spirit are the necessary conditions for the faithful discharge of all such authority.

Third, while these are the necessary conditions of authority, Saul was himself not a believer. While a commanding person and an able leader, he was a person who was essentially indifferent to God. Hence, when he joined the company of the prophets, who came down the mountain with music playing, those who knew him well asked cynically, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" He had been anointed to kingship; had he been anointed to prophet-hood also? The term, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" became proverbial to mean, a fish out of water, a man out of his element. There was a humility about Saul, and a simplicity of life as compared with other powerful men, but also a strong pride. For the son of Kish to be among prophets who were of no family of any consequence was an additional surprise: "But who is their father?" Those who knew Saul had a sharp awareness of his character. The king and the priest had status, and a family heritage; the prophet was usually without either. As the one who brought God's word to bear in judgment on kings (or judges) and priests, the prophet was usually an outsider.

Saul, however, having been called by God to be king was thereby also called to be His prophet, to apply God's word to his realm and to speak for God in the area of justice. For Saul to fail to be a prophet meant to fail to be God's king. Hence, Saul was rejected by God, and therefore by God's prophet, Samuel. Saul wanted to be his own king, not God's king; he preferred his way to the Spirit.

He sought therefore to compel the continuing attendance of Samuel, and Samuel's support, and to strike at God's new man, David. Saul sent officers to arrest David at Naioth; the officers, on arriving, became inspired and prophesied. A second detachment was sent, with the same results. Then Saul went, only to be struck down and used by the Holy Spirit in the same way. Saul and his men stripped themselves naked, and lay down before Samuel's dwelling all day and night, prophesying.

All too many orthodox commentators are more interested in trying to put some clothes on Saul than in understanding the text. We are told that Saul and

his men only stripped off their outer garments and left their under-garments on! We are told they were naked.

Again, whereas Hebrew commentators said all were temporarily madmen, H.D.M. Spence gave us this amazing comment: "Is it not, however, better to explain the incident by understanding that once more the pitiful Spirit pleaded with the man whom the Lord had chosen to be His anointed?"[18] The Dean of Gloucester, in calling the Third Person of the Godhead "pitiful," and portraying Him as pleading, blasphemed.

God the Spirit struck down Saul and his officers, humbled them, and demonstrated that He could use them in spite of themselves. The behavior of Saul and his men was not normal behavior, then or now. The text calls attention to its abnormality. It was emphatically not the planned behavior of these men: it was alien and abhorrent to them. What then is its meaning?

A comparison to Isaiah 61:1-3 is instructive. Christ, filled with the Spirit, sings out of conquest and victory. Saul and his officers, abased by the Spirit they rejected, grovel before God's prophet Samuel (and His anointed, David), and prophesy in spite of themselves.

Saul was warring against God, the most futile effort possible on any man's part, and God struck him down.

But there is another factor. The Hebrews knew well what the encounter of sinful man with the all-righteous God meant. When the Angel of the LORD came to Manoah and his wife, and they knew who He was, "Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judges 13:22). When God the Spirit possesses a rebellious and sinful man, for the time being, he breaks that man's pride and will. The encounter is dramatic because there is resistance, futile resistance, but resistance still. Saul grovels before Samuel, and perhaps David, for we are not told when he fled from Naioth (I Sam. 20:1), and he prophesies, certainly no good to himself, and certainly to God's purposes, which set him aside.

There are some clear inferences here, although we must be careful not to say more than God says. It would appear that, when God's Spirit comes in judgment on men and nations, He causes them to witness against themselves, and to act in contradiction to their own faith and convictions. We see too that the Holy Spirit rules and over-rules, not only in the lives of God's people, but in the hearts and lives of His deadliest enemies. There is no man living who will not be confounded in his own being by the Spirit when and where the Spirit chooses.

While there is no specific mention of the Spirit in Exodus 4:24, there is reason to believe that the Spirit was no less active here. When Moses sought to go to Egypt, more subservient to an ungodly wife then to the Lord, the Lord

[18] H.D.M. Spence, "I Samuel," in C.J. Ellicott, editor: *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, II. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan). p. 376.

met Moses on the way "to kill him." When the incarnate God came to Jerusalem, and the city rejected Him, their judgment was death and destruction. They saw God: in their sin, they despised and crucified Him, and they died. The triune God is never remote from our private lives and sins. We cannot limit the Spirit's place in our lives to those comfortable and happy functions we desire, any more than Saul could cease prophesying before Samuel until the Spirit so chose. He is the Lord.

6. The Spirit and Epistemology

For all too many people, the title, "The Spirit and Epistemology," smacks of poor religion and little spirituality. Because of a limited and defective view of Scripture, such people see the realm of the faith as limited to "spiritual" concerns, mainly the life of the "soul." Such a view is not Biblical; God who made all things governs all things and requires us to view all things in terms of His word. Scripture plainly states the relationship of the Spirit to epistemology, to the doctrine of knowledge, how we know things. In I John 2:20, we read: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." The basic reading of the text is in virtually all instances, "Ye know all things." A few read, "You all know." Not surprisingly, some modern scholars prefer this latter reading. This includes even a Reformed theologian, Gordon H. Clark. Supposedly, this strange reading means that all to whom John wrote knew the doctrine of the incarnation and could thus identify false prophets.[19] This is a manufactured reading, and, given Clark's epistemology, is not a surprising one.

Westcott gave at length a clear analysis of this text. The reference to "unction" or anointing refers clearly to the gift of the Spirit. According to Westcott, "Ye have an unction, and, in virtue of that gift of the Holy Spirit, ye know all things; ye have potentially complete and certain knowledge; no false teaching can deceive you if ye are faithful to yourselves."[20] Westcott said also;

> Here the outward symbol of the Old Testament–the sacred oil–is used to signify the gift of the Spirit *from the Holy One* which is the characteristic endowment of Christians...
>
> This "unction", this gift of the Spirit, is said to come finally *from the Holy One*. The title is chosen with direct reference to the gift, for all hallowing flows from "the holy one" but in itself it is ambiguous, and has been understood of God (the Father) and of Christ.[21]

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19. Gordon H. Clark: *First John, A Commentary.* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1980). p. 76-78.
20. Brooke Foss Westcott: *The Epistles of John.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1883) 1952). p. 74.
21. Ibid., p. 73.

"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." This is not a statement a theologian would dare to make on his own. There is an audacity about it which startles and amazes us as we read it. What does it mean?

The basic question of epistemology is, how do we know, how do we gain knowledge? Closely related to that question is an equally basic one: is knowledge possible?

Very plainly, knowledge is not possible in a universe of chance. All facts are then brute or meaningless facts, unrelated one to another, and without meaning. The closest thing to such a world which we can imagine is a city dump, where all things are useless and meaningless, and nothing stands in any meaningful relationship to anything else. Even this analogy is a poor one, because in a city dump all things are relics of once meaningful and functioning things, whereas, in a universe without God, if such were possible, nothing would ever remotely be linked to meaning and function. A world without God would thus be a world without meaning and therefore without knowledge. We can therefore rephrase our text and say, if there were no God, there would be no knowledge; there would be nothing.

But there is a God, the living God of Scripture. There are also men who refuse to acknowledge that God, either His existence or His Lordship. Such men deny that any order exists and yet do have a certain knowledge of the universe, because, as Van Til has so powerfully shown, they deny God religiously but presuppose His order in their scientific studies.

Let us look again at the first question: how do we gain knowledge? As scholars through the centuries have pointed out, *how* we gain knowledge depends in part on *with what* we gain knowledge. If I am color blind, my vision and knowledge of the world will be affected; if I am blind, my knowledge of the physical universe will be even further limited. In other words, there must not only be an order out there (and in me) which can be known, but I must also have the ability to know it. The knowledge may be there, but I may be blind to it.

This is, of course, exactly what the Bible teaches. Regeneration is compared to sight at times (Mark 8:18; John 9:39, etc.) God's law-word is light, we are told (Ps. 19:8;119:130; Prov. 6:23, etc.). Jesus Christ is "the light of the world" (John 8:12; I John 1:1-10; Luke 2:32; John 3:19; 12:35, etc.). If a man be in Christ, he is a new creation, Paul tells us (II Cor. 5:17). To be born again is thus not only a moral fact but also an epistemological fact.

Thus, to be born again means that, because we are a new creation, the blindness of our fallen estate is gone. We know the Lord, and therefore we have a clearer *and* different view of the world (and of ourselves), and we therefore have a clearer knowledge of all things.

Moreover, basic to this new life is the gift of the Spirit. Because we have the unction or anointing of the Spirit, *We now know all things in principle*, we have the key to all knowledge, i.e., the Lordship of Christ and the triune God. We do *not* know all things in detail, but we know them in principle, as a part of God's Kingdom and order. We have the key to knowledge.

Our Lord speaks of this fact:

> 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. (Matt. 16:19)
>
> Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. (Luke 11:52)

Keys are an ancient symbol of access to knowledge which we still have today in the Phi Beta Kappa key. The "lawyers'," as interpreters of Scripture, were not entering into the meaning of God's word but were replacing it with their traditions. They were thereby hindering those who were entering in. Christ tells Peter that He gives the keys of His Kingdom to the church, to the people of His Kingdom. With this faithful knowledge of God's law-word, the church can bind on earth what God has bound in heaven by His law, and loosen on earth the bonds God has ruled in his word are to be loosed. Without the *keys*, men would have no ability or knowledge to bind or to loosen. This knowledge is thus related to God's Kingdom. Godly knowledge is never abstract: it is God-centered and Kingdom-related.

The sectaries of the 17th century English scene wanted to replace all book-learning and study by an experience in the Spirit which would open up by revelation all knowledge. The university preachers closed the door on the Spirit and stressed their logic and reasoning. Both were wrong.

The Spirit gives us the key to all knowledge, and He opens the doors of our understanding. He does not thereby implant in our minds the mathematical times-tables, nor the elements of chemistry; He does enable us to see their meaning as none other can.

The Spirit anoints and frees the whole man. As Darwin developed his theory and perspective, he lost his ability to enjoy music, and to enjoy life. As we receive the Spirit and grow in Him, every aspect of our life is freed and opened. If the Spirit is at work in our lives, we are made into *dominion men*. Because we have an unction from the Holy One, we know all things, and are called to exercise dominion in that knowledge. Of our Lord it is said, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8). Under Christ and in Christ, this is to be our realm, and we are called and anointed in the Spirit by the Father and the Son to exercise

knowledge and dominion in righteousness and holiness (Gen. 1:27-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24).

7. The Spirit and the Incarnation

Although the Scripture presents the work of the Spirit as central to the incarnation of our Lord, we too seldom think of Him in relation to that event. The celebration of Christmas commonly overlooks the Spirit. We have become so accustomed to our own preconceptions concerning the Spirit that we fail to see Him where He stands clearly and powerfully. Swete stated very powerfully and clearly the work of the Spirit in the incarnation:

> In this act the Spirit is seen presiding over the beginnings of a new creation. As in the beginning of cosmic life, as in the first quickening of the higher life in man, so at the outset of the new order which the Incarnation inaugurated, it belonged to the Divine Spirit to set in motion the great process which was to follow...In the new world, in the New Man, as in the old, life begins with the Breath of God.
>
> The birth of our Lord is not represented by the canonical Gospels as in itself miraculous or attended by any special signs of Divine power. The miracle lay in the Conception and not in the birth of Jesus; birth followed under ordinary conditions. It was however preceded and followed by another outburst of prophecy.[22]

Matthew tells us in 1:18, that Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost." The facts are clear, but we have here a mystery beyond the limitations of our minds. The First Person of the Trinity is called the Father by Jesus Christ, but it is the Holy Spirit who brought about the miraculous conception. In Luke's Gospel, this distinction is very clearly made by the angel Gabriel:

> 26. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,
> 27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
> 28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.
> 29. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.
> 30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
> 31. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.
> 32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
> 33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

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[22] Henry Barclay Swete: *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House (1910) 1976). p. 32.

> 34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?
> 35. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.
> 36. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.
> 37. For with God nothing shall be impossible (Luke 1:26-37)

The Holy Spirit is present at every step of the incarnation, with Zacharias (Luke 1:5-25; 67-80), with John the Baptist (Luke 1:80), with Mary and Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56), and in the miraculous conception (Luke 1:35). At the first creation, when God made the heavens and the earth, the Spirit was present and active (Gen. 1:2). Now, with the beginning of a new creation and a new humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is again present and active. The Spirit thus is basic to both creation and re-creation. In either case, we have God's miraculous power at work, with the Spirit as the great Mover.

This fact is stressed by John 1:12-13:

> 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in 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.

Our Lord, through the Virgin Mary, has a continuity with the original creation, and with the original humanity of Adam. However, by His conception through the Holy Spirit, he is also a new creation. John writes with this in mind, in a clear reference to the virgin birth. Jesus Christ was born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John then compares the regeneration of all Christians to the virgin birth: it is not of man; it is the miraculous creation of a new humanity to be a people of God's new prince, His new Adam and Israel. This regeneration of man is totally of God, as was the virgin birth. Our Lord stresses this in John 3:5: "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."

The *water* plainly signifies, among other things, baptism, and our cleansing from, and the forgiveness of, our sins. But cleansing alone is not enough. The divine fiat, cleansing us from all our sin, leaves us sinners still if unaccompanied by our regeneration. This is the work of *the Spirit* who moves upon the face of our sin and death to bring forth new life, righteousness, holiness, knowledge, and dominion. Apart from this, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

To all these who are regenerated by the Spirit, God gives the *power to become the sons of God.* "Power" is *exousia*, privilege, right, authority. All

such have received "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). What Christ is naturally, God's Son, we are by adoption, God's sons. Therefore, John declares joyfully, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I John 3:1). Peter tells us that we are made "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4), i.e., we now receive by grace the blessings of the life of the Trinity through the Holy Spirit.

The Virgin Birth is the pattern of our rebirth. Our rebirth is from sin and death into life in Christ, into *power* (John 1:12). Our Lord carries the implications of this to startling lengths. According to His statement,

> 12. 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.
> 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
> 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. (John 14:12-14)

First, these words precede the promise of the Spirit and are inseparable from it (John 14:26). As a result, the promise of "greater works" is wrongly read if we separate it from the coming of the Spirit. *Second*, our Lord sees these greater works done in and through us by the Spirit. The purpose thereof is the glorification of the Father in the Son. Because Jesus Christ makes us members of His body, His redeemed and new humanity, our "greater works" are His glorification of the Father. *Third*, hence the importance of the asking in His *Name*. To ask in His Name is to ask in terms of His Kingdom, work, and life. *Fourth*, too often these "greater works" are limited to Pentecost and its aftermath, and to supernatural and miraculous events. They cannot be so limited. The work of our Lord was our salvation; our work in Him is discipling all the nations under Him (Matt. 28:18-20). The work of atonement is a finished work in Christ. The work of dominion continues to His coming again. There is no independence in these "greater works." We work as members of the Son's new humanity in and through the Holy Spirit. We are given *power* in order that we may exercise *dominion*.

Turning again to the Virgin Mary, we can see in both the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-37), and in the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), why it is that the birth of our Lord is heralded as the beginning of a great over-turning. The mighty of the old world of Adam I are to be put down from the seats of power, and those whom the world despises as base and low are to be exalted (Luke 1:52; I Cor. 1:18-31). Thus, the great regeneration of all things is begun by the Holy Spirit with our Lord's Virgin Birth and is continued in and through us. God declares through Isaiah, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17; cf. 66:22), and, through John, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). That new creation began with the birth of our Lord, and was openly manifested by

His resurrection (I Cor. 15:20). It continues to grow and spread through us. It is a work "greater" in scope: all the earth is to be brought under the dominion of Christ our Lord. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8; cf. Zech. 9:10).

The world hates this predicted victory and seeks to suppress it. In the 18th century, Catholic and Protestant monarchs did not want the Magnificat to be sung because of the verse, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree" (Luke 1:52).[23] Today, our humanistic rulers are trying to put down Christ and His Kingdom. God laughs at their conspiracy, and prepares to smash them (Ps. 2:4,9). Christ, our conquering king, has come. Conceived of the Holy Ghost, he was crucified, dead, and buried by the powers that be. But Christ is risen from the dead. Let the nations tremble.

> 10. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
> 11. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
> 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Ps. 2:10-12)

8. The Coming of the Spirit

In the Old Testament, it is God the Spirit who is most present; it is He who speaks through the prophets and holy men, and it is He who is the comfort and strength of covenant men. The repentant David prayed, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. 51:11). In spite of this, we can speak of the post-resurrection era as the time of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The reason for this appears in our Lord's own words:

> 7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.
> 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
> 9. Of sin, because they believe not on me;
> 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;
> 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.
> 12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
> 13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
> 14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (John 16:7-14)

Our Lord speaks plainly of the coming of the Spirit in some unusual sense. He is not here referring to Pentecost, but to something far greater and broader.

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[23] Luigi Sturzo: *Church and State*, II. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, (1939) 1962). p. 332.

Our Lord says that He Himself must leave His disciples and this world. It is expedient, profitable, and necessary to bring together the purposes of the triune God that God the Son leave, and that God the Spirit come. The word translated as *expedient* is *sumphero*, which is used also by Caiaphas in John 11:50. Caiaphas declares that it is expedient or profitable for Christ to be sentenced to death; only so can the purposes of their national history be realized. Our Lord now says that His departure and the Spirit's coming are necessary to God's purposes. Our Lord had previously pointed to that coming and its greatness (John 7:37-39). Now, with His atoning work and resurrection completed, the Spirit can come.

The Spirit is called *Parakletos*; the word has reference to an advocate or legal assistant in a court of law; such a person is a comforter to one who is accused; he is, however, a prosecutor of the guilty also. Here the Spirit plainly functions as both the Comforter and Advocate of Christ's members, and also as a Judge and Prosecutor of Christ's enemies: "he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The word *reprove* is *elencho*, which can mean rebuke, also convict. *The Spirit convicts the world.*

We see here the significance of this coming of the Spirit. The Spirit from creation has been active in creation. Now Christ has come, and He has set forth God's sovereign claim on all men. Jesus came preaching "the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14f.). By His death and resurrection, He became the head of the new humanity (I Cor. 15:20-50). Now the Holy Spirit comes to prosecute that witness of Jesus Christ in the hearts of all men.

First, He will reprove or *convict* the world. Christ had come, and the world crucified Him. Moreover, it was not the world at its worst that crucified Christ. The Jews were the most moral, the best educated, and the most disciplined people of that era. With all that, they were at heart humanists and sons of Adam, unregenerate sons. The depravity of man was manifested in this fact, that the fallen world, at its best, crucified Christ, and the fallen world since continues to reject Him and to give assent to that judgment by their refusal to know Him as Lord.

Morris' comment on this text is very good:

> The world is guilty, but it requires the Spirit to sheet this home. The Spirit convicts the world in two senses. In the first place He "shows the world to be guilty," *i.e.*, He secures a verdict of "Guilty" against the world. But in the second place we should take the words to mean also that the Spirit brings the world's guilt home to itself. The Spirit convicts the individual sinner's conscience. Otherwise men would never be convicted of their sin.[24]

[24] Leon Morris: *The Gospel According to John*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971). p. 698.

Churchmen are too accustomed to seeing the relevance of the faith, of Christ, and of the Spirit to the believer only, forgetting that the relevance is cosmic. Clearly, the coming of the Spirit means that the Old Testament presence is now an expanded and world-wide one. The Spirit will not allow the world to forget Christ; He works in the hearts of all men, including those not yet evangelized, to bring forth conviction, a recognition of their guilt and their rebellion against Almighty God.

Second, the world is convicted of sin, because it will not believe on Him (John 16:9). The emphasis is on Christ. He is very God of very God, He against whom mankind is in revolt. The world prefers to make its sins vague and abstract when sin is personal; it is against God the Son, the incarnate Son, who came to be the head of the new human race. The world may day-dream about a new paradise, but, in all its being and actions, it works to re-create the old Babel and the new Hell. Then and now, the world's best and worst cry out, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14).

The world would like to forget about Christ, and a sleeping church seems all too ready to help the world to forget Him. The Spirit, however, will not permit it. He convicts the world of sin, all sin, and supremely its sin in relation to Christ.

Third, the Spirit convicts the world of righteousness, "because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more" (John 16:10). Righteousness and justice are the same words. The world outside of Christ seeks to establish a humanistic doctrine of justice: social justice, human rights, equal rights, etc. All of this is injustice, not justice. Christ's death and resurrection set forth justice; His ascension is the triumphant procession of the King of Justice to His throne. Because man the rebel deserves to die, Christ's death witnesses to the righteousness and binding force of God's law for all time. Because Christ arose from the dead, and by His power makes us alive in Him, we know that "the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). Because of His ascension, we know that God's righteousness and law are forever on the throne.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of judgment, i.e., of the reality of God's judgment. The word *judgment* is, in the Greek, *krisis*, separation and division. "The prince of this world," he whom the fallen world sees as its leader in revolt against God, Satan, is judged. The cross and the resurrection are the defeat of Satan and his world.

The world, however, refuses to acknowledge God's judgment, although their entire being witnesses to it; they suppress and hold down that truth in their unrighteousness, their fanatical adherence to injustice (Rom. 1:18). They have no liking for Calvin's sentence, "Without judgment there can be no God." They are determined on creating a judgment-free or justice free world. The philosopher Walter Kaufmann, in his insistence on man's autonomy from God, called for a world *Without Guilt and Justice*.[25] Let there

be no conscience and no judgment! Heine's rejection of repentance for sin was a direct insult against God and His righteousness or justice: "The good God will pardon me, for that's His job."[26] Since Heine's day, his sentence has become a half-wit aphorism among the ungodly.

The Holy Spirit makes this judgment on Satan and the ungodly resound in their hearts. Hence the world of the unregenerate is the world of neuroses, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts. Guilt is declared by Freud to be a primitive relic lingering in man's psyche since the days of the primal horde, but guilt haunts all fallen men as a very present and personal fact. The Holy Spirit convicts men of their need for and their actual judgment by the court of Almighty God.

Up to this point, the work of the Holy Spirit, *i.e.*, convicting men of sin, justice, and judgment, is a work in relationship to the world outside of Christ. Now, our Lord turns to the Spirit's work in relationship to His humanity, the people of the covenant. While Christ is with them, His followers rely on Him, and they cannot bear the thought of separation. He is the Lord, the miracle-worker, and the Savior. They cannot think of life without His physical presence. Until He leaves, they cannot do the "greater works" (John 14:12), the world-wide conquest, which is their calling. How shall this be done?

Our Lord declares, *fifth*, that the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" Who shall guide His people "into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13-14). The Spirit leads men into all *the Truth*, Jesus Christ (John 14:6). The Greek reading, according to Westcott, is "the truth in all its parts."[27] The Spirit's guidance is not of Himself: it expresses the one will of the triune God.

The Spirit's communication is an amazing one: "whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." Some have limited this to an understanding of "the whole Christian way."[28] No doubt, it seems to some to open the door to unrestricted new prophecies and revelations, and some have indeed so interpreted it. What does it mean? The fall of Adam I is the fall of all the sons of Adam I; the life and righteousness of Adam II is the possession by grace of all the sons of Adam II, of all His members. The sons of Adam I cannot transcend Adam I; in the words of Thomas Boston, they cannot leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom. Likewise, the sons of Adam II cannot transcend Adam II. Thus, the limits of His word are their limits; there can be no new revelations. There can be and are gifts of wisdom

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25. Walter Kaufmann: *Without Guilt and Justice*. (New York, N.Y.: Peter Wyden, 1973).
26. "Ilico:" *No More Apologies*. (London, England: Religious Book Club, 1941). p. 76f.
27. B. F. Westcott: *The Gospel According to St. John*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (reprint) 1954). p. 230.
28. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 701.

and light which enable men to see the meaning of those words, and their light on our times. To say that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) is a very simple and necessary forecast of things to come. To develop its implications fully and specifically in relation to prayerlessness, inflation, ignorance of Scripture and especially of God's law (Deut. 28), politics, family life, business, the arts and sciences, and all things else requires "the Spirit of truth." Even more, it requires that we glorify Christ even as the Spirit of truth does.

The coming of the Spirit thus unleashes powerful forces in history, forces of conviction and growth. History cannot be stagnant. The pool of Bethesda had healing only when the angel "troubled the water" (John 5:4). Today, the Holy Spirit is troubling the waters of history, as He has since Pentecost. That troubling is conviction and judgment for the ungodly. Churchmen who draw back from the troubled waters remain impotent. Those who in Christ and in the power of the Spirit move into the troubled waters alone know the power of His salvation and victory.

9. The Presence of the Spirit

When the Council of Trent finished its sittings, a sentence was engraved at the Church of S. Maria Maggiore at Trent, reading, in Latin "postremum Spiritus Sanctus oracula effedut," "Here the Holy Spirit spoke for the last time."[29] The clarity and audacity of this sentence shocks us yet, but it had the virtue of clarity. What the Council of Trent openly affirmed in that inscription, the church has too often implicitly held. The history of the church has periodically been marked by extravagant claims concerning the manifestations of the Spirit; various sects have arisen again and again to identify their utterances with the Spirit. The reaction of the church, again and again, has been no better: it has too often been interested in limiting the claims of the sects by limiting the voice and work of the Holy Spirit.

One result has been the modern doctrine of man. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, man becomes a passive creature, one governed by naturalistic motivations like the animals, rather than by the image of God in him. We have seen that the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of the unregenerate and the regenerate alike. The unregenerate seek to establish the Kingdom of Man. The Spirit convicts them of sin and of justice, and brings home God's judgment into all their being (John 16:8-11). With the covenant people, the Spirit works to guide them into all truth (John 16:13).

Without such a perspective, without the Holy Spirit, man, as Ramuz observed, is left exposed to the universe, which becomes the active agent in his life. "Man is no longer called upon to act; he has only to let himself be

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[29] Charles Williams: *The Descent of the Dove, A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church.* (London, England: The Religious Book Club, 1939). p. 187.

acted upon...Meanwhile, however, he feels himself becoming smaller and smaller - precisely because of his own passivity."[30] Man then lives in an empty world, and he suffers from emptiness, because God no longer fills the world. "Man never has what he wants, because what he wants is *everything*. It was only in God that he could have everything."[31] When the world is emptied of God, then usefulness to society replaces usefulness to God's Kingdom, and this calls for the radical and total transformation of society.[32] "Man no longer knows what he is, so he seeks to possess."[33] The result is communistic, a logically atheistic faith. "Society replaces God. You must have faith in society as you had faith in God."[34] To empty the world of God is a deadly and dangerous idea.

Now traditional orthodoxy will deny that it has emptied the world of God, or that it has limited or silenced the Spirit. Technically, such answers are correct. Practically, the Spirit has been so circumscribed, and so limited to official church channels, that for the people the Spirit is remote.

Earlier eras saw the triune God at work in storms, droughts, and the like, and rightly so. They recognized that God is not remote but closer to us than we are to ourselves. With the Enlightenment, Deism saw God as an absentee landlord: He created the world, and it now operates in terms of its built-in laws and clockwork. The classic examples of the adoption of these deadly premises into Christianity are to be found in the works of Butler and Paley, whose influence is with us still. The result was that the *form* of Christianity remained, but its *power* was diminished or negated (II Tim. 3:5).

Thus, without agreeing with all that the charismatic movement holds, we need to welcome it with certain dissents. The Holy Spirit has not spoken for the last time, nor is His work limited to ordination services and ecclesiastical functions. He is at work with the godly and the ungodly. He is the very present power, work, and person of God. At every moment, it is God the Spirit with whom we have to deal. Our relationship to Him is closer and more thorough than with our husband, wife, children, parents, or friends. Our relationship to the Holy Spirit, unlike any other we have, is *total*. This is true of the regenerate and the unregenerate alike. Perhaps we need to say that the charismatics have not gone far enough. We cannot limit the Spirit's presence and power to certain meetings, moments, and events.

Our Lord, in John 14:15-21 declares:

> 15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.
> 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

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30. C. F. Ramuz: *What Is Man*. (New York, New York: Pantheon Books, 1948). p. 73.
31. Ibid., p. 85.
32. Ibid., p. 86f.
33. Ibid., p. 92.
34. Ibid., p. 97.

> 17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.
> 18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
> 19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.
> 20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.
> 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Our Lord says, *first*, "If ye love, *You will* keep my commandments."[35] Faith, love, and obedience are inseparable. To love the Lord is to obey Him.

Second, the Comforter or Advocate, the Holy Spirit, becomes the very present life and strength of all who love and obey the Lord. In view of Matthew 5:17-20 and Luke 16:17, it is only perversity to deny that the whole of God's law-word is meant by "commandments." The word "commandments" is the Greek word *entole*, which is used repeatedly in the Septuagint for God's law, for the commandments of the Lord, as in Deut. 4:2.

Third, the world cannot "see" the Spirit and hence rejects Him; the world's test is empirical: what man sees and proves in terms of his autonomous reason is alone true. By this premise, unregenerate man excludes the witness of the Spirit from his rationality, although not from his life. It refuses to know Him.

Fourth, the regenerate know and see the Spirit in His power and witness. They are thus never alone. The world is never empty for them. The deadly effect of the modern world and life view has been to empty the world of God, and also of all life and meaning beyond man. The result is the terror and dread of existentialism, and the flight into fantasy and imagination, drugs, sexual experientialism, and anything man can conceive of as an answer to the void. No theology can do justice to the faith which limits or silences the Spirit. All such theologies smell of dust and death.

Fifth, Christ declares to His disciples that He will return to them in the resurrection soon to follow His death, after His ascension in the Spirit's presence, and, finally, in His coming again. They are never alone. Every step of history comes from the hand of God and accomplishes His purpose.

Sixth, to love and obey Christ means that we are loved by God the Father and God the Son. This means that we are surrounded by the love and presence of the triune God. For the ungodly, the world is empty, and its essential fact is death, (the consequence of sin). For the regenerate, the essential fact is that we live, and move, and have our being in the totally personal triune God. To live in the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) means that all things are mediated to us by the Spirit. The Spirit is inseparable from God the Father and

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[35] See Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 205 and Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 647.

God the Son, and the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the word of God, from Scripture. The world for us is not the same as it is for the unregenerate. The word of the Spirit for them is a word of judgment; for us, it is the word of grace and His abiding presence and power.

The doctrine of the Spirit does not allow us to define ourselves or to number our days apart from Him. To define ourselves as poor men when we have a chest full of gold is to lie. To define ourselves as alone or impotent in the face of an angry and evil world is to deny the indwelling of the Spirit. To have God the Spirit with and in us, and as our Comforter and Advocate before God and man, is to be indeed a child of the King, and very rich and strong. It means too that for us the Spirit has not spoken for the last time: we know better.

10. Power

One of the more controversial verses of Scriptures is Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The word *power* is the Greek *dunamis*, ability or power, a word we have as dynamite, dynamo, and dynamic; it may come from a root word meaning to be able. This meaning is basic to an understanding of the text.

The problem with the text is that its obvious reference is to Pentecost; it cannot, however, be limited to Pentecost. To do so is to limit severely the working of the Holy Spirit. Again, very clearly, the *power* promised is very clearly manifested in the miraculous gifts of Pentecost: the power to heal, to speak in tongues, even to raise the dead, and in like ways to show the power of Christ and His salvation. Unfortunately, too often both charismatics and non-charismatics limit this power to the Pentecostal gifts and then argue as to whether or not these powers ended with the fall of Jerusalem, or still continue to this day. Moreover, although all these powers were indeed given at Pentecost, *none* are spoken of here by our Lord.

But this is not all. Our Lord is here answering a very specific question from the disciples. They had been told to tarry a while *in Jerusalem* (Acts 1:4) and await the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5). Our Lord says all this in the context of speaking about "the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Certain things are thus very clear: *First*, the disciples were being taught things concerning the Kingdom of God. Their natural curiosity led them to ask, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Plainly, they were thinking in terms of a Jewish expectation. Our Lord does not contradict their hope, nor does He affirm it. He tells them to *wait*.

Second, they are to wait in Jerusalem, "the city of the great King" (Ps. 48:2). Jerusalem was the site of the Triumphal Entry, and also the place where Christ was sentenced to death on the cross. Very clearly, the choice of Jerusalem as the place for the baptism of the Spirit revived hopes for a restoration of the Jewish hope. It was clearly the place for a great manifestation of power.

Third, equally clear to the disciples was the fact that there was some question, at the very least, about a Jewish restoration. Their question plainly reflected their uncertainty. There was an obvious *new* beginning. In the wilderness, when Moses called out seventy elders, the Holy Spirit came upon them all, and they prophesied (Num. 11:24-30). Our Lord had plainly created a new Israel, with twelve disciples (Matt. 10:1), to parallel and replace the twelve tribes (and patriarchs) of Israel. The seventy elders of Israel had been supplanted by Christ's seventy (Luke 10:1), so that a new Sanhedrin replaced the old. At Pentecost, however, no restriction is placed upon the number present: it is the twelve, the seventy, and more. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon these was an open manifestation in Jerusalem that the tabernacling Presence and Glory had a new habitation, Christ's congregation or assembly.

The new Israel was, thus, publicly proclaimed. No one could miss the parallel: Moses and the seventy elders, and now Christ and His disciples. The Holy Spirit was now witnessing to the new Israel of God. The manifestations of the Spirit's witness, *first*, were greater than in Moses' day and, *second* they continued, in their *miraculous* witness, for some years, to the fall of Jerusalem.

The *gifts* of the Spirit were the miraculous powers. These were *the Spirit's witness* to His coming and His Presence in Christ's members. It must be stressed that, in some sense, the Spirit still witnesses to His Presence in and with us. We may differ as to what that witness is, but we dare not deny that witness. The life of the covenant man is a supernatural fact because of that witness. It is a very sad fact that today differences as to the nature or extent of that witness of the Spirit blind us to the all-important fact of the reality of that witness.

However, this should not blind us to the most important fact, and the central meaning of the coming of the Spirit. *First*, the gift is power. That power is an ability, a sufficiency in the face of all things. The Lord tells Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9). Paul tells the Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Our Lord says,

> 18. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.
> 19. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

> 20. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (Matt. 10:18-20)

Much more can be said, but, while true, like Pentecost, this not the central meaning of the gift of power.

This takes us, *second*, to the purpose of the gift of power from the Holy Spirit: to "be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). A triumphant world-wide witness is the purpose of the Spirit. The phrase, uttermost part, or extreme point, of the earth is often used in Scripture to signify the whole earth (Ps. 2:8; 19:4; 67:7; 72:8; Isa. 48:20; Zech. 9:10). It means not only total dominion over all the earth, but over every aspect thereof. Thus, our witness in the Spirit is to all nations, and to every aspect of life, work, and thought. In other words, we cannot park the Spirit at the door of the church and leave Him there! The power of the Spirit witnesses in and through us in our homes, our work, and in every facet of our lives. The power is given for witness-bearing.

Israel had been called to be God's witness to all the world. God through Isaiah reminds Israel of His requirement:

> Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (Isa. 43:10)

> Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. (Isa. 44:8)

To be the Lord's witness means that, in all our being, we witness that He is, and there is no other god before Him. Our Lord tells us, "ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

The function of Israel (Isa. 49:6) is now taken over by the new Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). Paul, in Acts 13:47, quotes Isaiah 49:6 as now applying to the Christian congregation, to Christ's new Israel: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Simeon in Luke 2:31-32 cites Isaiah's prophecy, now fulfilled in Christ. Now, Paul tells us, the church is in Christ the herald of this salvation to the world, His witness.[36]

The focus of the Spirit's witness in us is on the Son. We are His witnesses, and the power we receive from the Spirit is to show forth Christ's Kingship over all things.

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[36] See Joseph Addison Alexander: *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. II. (New York, New York: Charles Scribner, 1866). p. 42.

11. The Unchanging Spirit

One of our problems in every age is anthropomorphism, which is to "create" God in our own image. Especially with the rise of evolutionary thinking, anthropomorphism has become very prevalent. Given the premise of humanism, evolution, while a fallacy, is logical. Man sees development in his own history, and he projects that same development onto God and the universe. The Old Testament revelation is thus seen as somehow more primitive than the New, and the New is seen as revealing many accommodations to the context of the times. Therefore, it is held, we too must now contextualize the gospel as we evangelize non-Christian peoples.

This doctrine gains a semblance of truth by the claim that the incarnation is itself an example of contextualization by God Himself. God accommodates Himself to the human scene to reach man, to be *understandable* to man.

Such a statement is a radical perversion of Scripture, and an example of humanism. The Bible does not tell us that man's problem in relationship to God is intellectual or cultural. The problem is not a question of understanding but of sin. Man the sinner understands God's claim on him all too well; he holds back and suppresses this knowledge of God because of his own unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18-32). Man will not admit that the "context" of his problem is sin. He will not confess, as the old Order of Compline requires in its confession:

> I confess to Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and before all the company of heaven, that I have sinned, in thought, word and deed, through my fault, my own fault, my own most grievous fault: wherefore I pray Almighty God to have mercy upon me, to forgive all my sins, and to make clean my heart within me.

Indeed, men commonly rebel, not only against a confession of sin, but *any* confession. Very recently, a pastor telephoned concerning a problem in the church: there was a strong hostility to the inclusion within the service of the use of the Apostles' Creed. It was held that the "conscience" of the people should not be bound! However, to confess Jesus Christ as Lord is to acknowledge that He has bound us to Himself forever.

Moreover, the word of God binds us to believe and obey this God-breathed word (II Tim. 3:16). If we wish to know God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we must know Him through His word. We are commanded, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). To seek or claim an independent knowledge is to set ourselves up as our own gods, with a "right" to determine good, evil, and whatever else we choose in terms of ourselves (Gen. 3:5).

In brief, to know what the Spirit is, yesterday, today, and forever, we must know Him in terms of and in faithfulness to His infallible word. It is important thus to turn again to the Old Testament, to glance briefly at the revelation

therein of the Holy Spirit. In 1899, H.B. Swete gave a good summary of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament era.

First, the Holy Spirit works in creation to create and to conserve the cosmos. "The Breath of God vitalizes what the Word creates."[37] Clearly, the Holy Spirit was and still is what the Nicene Creed confesses, "The Lord, and Giver of Life." It is wrong to limit the work of the Spirit to persons, or to make Him on the other hand simply an energizing force in "nature." He is omnipresent and total in His government.

Second, the Holy Spirit gives men gifts *to fulfil their calling under God.* These gifts are God-centered, not man-centered. They call attention to God, not to ourselves. They give us wisdom and understanding. Swete called them "intellectual gifts," which is too narrow a term. Some references to these are Gen. 41:38; Num. 27:18; 11:17f.; Ex. 28:3; 35:31; Deut. 34:9; these make clear that the gifts include craftsmanship and the ability to govern wisely. These gifts continue.

Third, the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets, and the writers of all the Scriptures. The prophets declared that it was the Spirit of God who spoke in and through them II Sam. 23:2; Ezek. 2:2; Micah 3:8; etc.). Now the canon of Scripture is closed, and no such infallibility exists, but prophetic inspiration by the Holy Spirit is a part of the Christian witness. The disciples, when sent out on their first mission, were told by our Lord:

> 18. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.
> 19. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.
> 20. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (Matt. 10:18-20)

Where the Lord commands us, He empowers us. The same witness is still required of us, and the same guidance of the Spirit. It would be foolhardy and ungodly to say that the Spirit is not with those saints who face trials and persecutions today.

Fourth, the Spirit anoints the Messiah (Isa. 61:1). As Swete noted, "The Spirit is the chrisma which makes the Christ."[38] This too has both a unique as well as a continuous fulfillment. Because we, by the adoption of grace, are made members of Christ's new humanity, we too share in the blessedness and witness of the Spirit, although not on the messianic level. Paul tells us:

> 10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

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[37] H. B. Swete, "Holy Spirit," in James Hastings, editor: *A Dictionary of the Bible*, II. Edinburgh, Scotland: T. and T. Clark, 1899). p. 403.
[38] Ibid., II., p. 403.

> 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.
> 12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
> 13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
> 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. (Rom. 8:10-17)

Paul makes clear that the doctrine of the resurrection cannot be limited to Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:12-19); it is the foundation of our faith that Christ is "the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20). Similarly, we cannot limit the quickening of the Spirit to Christ: He works in us *because* He worked in the incarnate Son of God, the Christ.

Fifth, the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament works to create a clean heart and a right spirit in believers (Ps. 51:10-11). He is the Spirit of holiness and righteousness. To deny that this is still the work of the Spirit in us is to deny the faith.

The Holy Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever, even as Jesus Christ is the same unchanging Lord (Heb. 13:8). Any altering or limiting of the Biblical doctrine of the Spirit has serious consequences: it strips the church and the Christian of power.

We live in a hostile and evil world which is at war against us because it hates Jesus Christ. We are not turned loose in this world as impotent men. It is an ugly and evil deformation of the faith to present it as the adoption of impotence. To be in the Spirit is to be in power (Acts 1:8). It is not the Christian who should tremble before the world, but the world before the Christian. The Holy Spirit, he who is the Lord and Giver of Life, is with us, and in us, and he shall prevail.

12. The Sin Against the Spirit

We are all of us prone to curiosity, and it is not at all surprising that we are especially ready to learn more about the unpardonable sin than anything else. As one man once candidly remarked, partly in humor, "I want to know which one sin I should avoid!"

Our Lord speaks plainly about this blasphemy against the Spirit;

> 31. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.
> 32. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matt. 12:31-32)

Let us glance also at other texts dealing with this same fact;

> 4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,
> 5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,
> 6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Heb. 6:4-6)

> For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. (Heb. 10:26)

> Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:29)

> 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. (I John 5:16)

> Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. (Acts 7:51)

> 20. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.
> 21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. (II Peter 2:20-21)

> For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (I Cor. 11:29)

> But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. (Num. 15:30)

There are variations of emphasis in these texts, but all have a common focus. *First*, it is a deliberate and high-handed sin. It does not represent weakness but deliberate strength. The stress in each text is on this distinction between sins which represent a lesser state of holiness because of weakness, ignorance of God's law, and insufficient growth in obedience as against high-handed and presumptuous sin. Numbers 15:30, and Deuteronomy 17:12-13,

speak of the sin of presumption, i.e., a proud self-assertion against God and His law. Leviticus 7:20-21 gives us an example of this: a man deliberately eats that portion of the peace offering which belongs to God; he thereby places himself in God's stead as his own lord.

Second, it is a sin that marks people who are usually or normally within the covenant; at the very least, they are people who know better. It is for this reason that the law provides no sacrifice for presumptuous sins, a fact echoed in Hebrews 6:4-6, and 10:26,29. It is wilful, and it is knowledgeable. This is why Peter says that their very knowledge aggravates their sin; it increases the meaning of their contempt for God (II Peter 2:20-21).

Third, this unforgivable sin is against the Holy Ghost. It is thus direct and personal. It is the Spirit who is the very present God, the Spirit of truth to all in the covenant, and the Spirit of the witness to the meaning of sin, justice, and judgment to all fallen men (John 16:7-14). Such a sin is an open contempt for and defiance of God the Spirit.

Fourth, it is blasphemy, *blasphemia*, probably from *blapto*, to injure, and *pheme*, speech. It is the direct and deliberate insult to God, and it involves a continuing fact of a radical rejection and hatred of God. Hebert said, "People who are distressed in their souls for fear that they have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost should in most cases be told that their distress is proof that they have not committed that sin."[39] The unpardonable sin involves a continuing state of mind and heart.

Fifth, it is a total resistance against the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). It turns the moral world upside down, and it calls good evil, and evil good. The context of our Lord's statement in Matthew 12:31-32 is the preceding section, vv. 22-29. The Pharisees saw our Lord cast out devils, and they imputed this power to the prince of devils. By so doing, they were declaring that the working of the Lord was demonic; they sinned thereby against the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. Isaiah 5:20 says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Here this sin is clearly defined. To say of our Lord, "He hath a devil" (Matt. 9:34; 11:18-19; 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15; John 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20), marked the Pharisees as guilty of the unpardonable sin; their blasphemy represented their total reversal of God's moral order.

Sixth, this sin is unpardonable; it has no remedy. In Mark 3:29, we read, "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." J.B. Phillips renders the last clause as, "That is an eternal sin," J.C. Lambert described this sin as one "that eternally persists, a sin that has so entrained itself in the character as to become fixed in the form of destiny."[40]

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[39] Cited by R. P. Martin, "Blasphemy," in J. D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1962) 1973). p. 160.

We have discussed this sin thus far as though it were simply a *personal* sin. That it is personal is very clear, but it can also be the mark of a culture. It would be foolish to deny that, in our Lord's day, the nation, in rejecting Jesus Christ, committed the unpardonable sin. This is the whole point of the fearful judgment pronounced upon it by our Lord. The sentence pronounced by our Lord in Matthew 21:43 concludes a parable (Matt. 21:33-46) which describes this high-handed blasphemy. Revelation 11:8 describes Jerusalem (and also Rome) as another Sodom and Egypt because of their sin; the sin of both Sodom and Egypt was deliberate and an assault against the Lord and His law-order.

This point is very, very urgently important. Our modern humanistic culture and nations are declaring abortion, incest, homosexuality, and much more to be good, and God's order to be evil. The modern era is moving openly and deliberately into blasphemy, into the sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin. We cannot be indifferent or lukewarm in this conflict. If our modern culture is guilty of the unforgivable sin, and is under judgment, we must separate ourselves from it. According to Revelation 18:4-6,

> 4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.
> 5. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.
> 6. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

The unpardonable sin is more than an academic matter, and a subject of curious concern. It is a dark cloud of judgment hanging over all of us.

13. "The Communion of the Holy Ghost"

A very interesting book of 1980 dealt with the work of two experts in demonology. It is not our purpose here to argue for or against the thesis of E. and L. Warren's *The Demonologist*. Our concern is with some telling insights from the Warrens. According to Ed and Lorraine Warren, ghosts are the manifestations of people who have died, whereas spirits are demonic presences. The best protection against "invisible intruders" is a happy home. Ghosts are unhappy beings, and they seek out people to whom they can relate emotionally. The same is true of demonic spirits: they seek out unhappy and self-centered persons. Indeed, states Lorraine Warren, normally and as a rule, ghosts and demonic spirits are consciously or unconsciously invited in. According to Ed Warren, the subject is inescapably religious. The demonic

[40] J. C. Lambert, "Unpardonable Sin," in James Hastings, editor: *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, II. (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908). p. 787.

spirits believe in God, and they hate Him; this gives them an affinity for those at war with God. The Warrens found college audiences, during the 1970s, "delighted" with talk about ghosts, but faculty and students were intensely hostile at mention of the demonic, and especially of Christ. The religious dimension was resented.

Another very interesting point was this. Ghosts and demons seek communion with those of a like nature in this world; they enter at man's permission usually, consciously or unconsciously given. The demons, in entering into "communion" with the living, can only harm them: they communicate hatred and death. The ghosts are so egocentric and self-absorbed that the Warrens state that they do not even realize that they are dead. They have shut out reality, and yet their grievance is that reality has shut them out.

In brief, the communion the world seeks *and* gains is a communion in animosity, sin, and death. Its hatred can tolerate nothing else. Erica Jong, in *Fear of Flying* (1973), wrote about the modern erotic dream, "the zipless fuck," i.e., sexuality without commitment or communion. The novel was an immense success, because it catered to a very popular existentialist and erotic ideal. About seven to eight years after World War II ended, I began to encounter a strange variety of marital problems, at first startling and rare, and then steadily more common and familiar. The couples in virtually every case were not Christian; they shared in the popular existentialism. Except for one couple, all were definitely affluent financially, and they were also both people of superior attractiveness; some had the look of "All-American" couples. In each of these cases, one or another, the man or the wife, refused except rarely, sexual relations with the spouse, and words and acts of intimacy were strictly avoided. At the same time, the abstaining partner was not averse, usually, to quick, meaningless sexuality with strangers. The problem was a fear of intimacy, of ties that bind, a fear of love and communion. Precisely because the spouse was appealing, lovable, and loving, any kind of loving relationship would lead to a loss of existential "freedom" and independence. A loving bond was seen as bondage.

This existentialist attitude, I came to realize, has been long in process of developing. Aspects of it are basic to popular thinking, to *Playboy*, to feminism, and more. Marriage is seen as bondage, and the wife is called "a ball and chain," implying that a loving interdependence is slavery. In the extreme instances of this existentialism, it means avoiding all loving sexuality in favor of meaningless and purely physical encounters. For many, the "bondage" of marriage leads to impotence: only in "free" sexuality, i.e., free of all meaning and responsibility, is there freedom and potency for them.

At the same time, the typical modern lament is over alienation and the lack of communication. The alienation is deliberate; the communication sought is

a one-way street, each existentialist delivering, and the world receiving. It is in this sense that the existentialist wants both freedom and closeness.[41]

This, however, is also the same mentality which the Warrens describe in the ghosts, and in demons. These want closeness, but not love nor communion. Such a closeness is simply an insistence on one's own will, and it goes with a radical hatred towards all who deny one's will. The modern world is peopled with living ghosts, persons who are dead and do not know it; their total self-absorption makes them a problem or a menace to all who will not bow to their will. These ghosts talk about the need for communication and communion; a monstrous political order called communism is sought, to bring in world communion through world conflict and death, but they can neither love nor commune. They only convey hatred and death. They are sinners, and the living dead. Communion must be sought elsewhere.

The Bible summons us into "the communion of the Holy Ghost." Paul says, in the concluding sentences of II Corinthians,

> 11. Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.
> 12. Greet one another with an holy kiss.
> 13. All the saints salute you.
> 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. (II Cor. 13:11-14)

Vine defines *communion* here as "participation in what is derived from the Holy Spirit." The word is *koinonia*.[42]

For the existentialist mind, freedom is autonomy and hence isolation. In Scripture, the term means a common and shared life; it means a mutual care, concern, and sharing. It is also translated as *fellowship*, in Philippians 2:1. It means manifesting the mind, love, and concern of our Lord one for another:

> 1. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,
> 2. Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
> 3. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.
> 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
> 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 2:1-5)

This communion is not merely an emotional state: it is an act of life. It means caring one for another in terms of God's law; it means being a *family* in Christ.

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41. Erica Jong: *Fear of Flying*. (New York, New York: Signet Books, New American Library, 1973). p. 277.
42. W. E. Vine: *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, I. (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, (1940), 1966). p. 215.

When II Peter 1:4 tells us that we are made *partakers* of the divine nature, the word translated as *partakers* is again *koinonia*; it means that by grace we have fellowship with God. Christ, and the Father and Spirit, have fellowship with us, and give us good gifts, beginning with grace, and we are to be gracious and giving one to another.

In Romans 15:26, when Paul speaks of the collection for the relief of the poor in Jerusalem, he uses the word *koinonian*, translated as "contribution." In II Corinthians 9:13, *koinonias* is translated as "distribution." Fellowship is thus set forth as a very practical concern one for another. In Hebrews 13:16, we read, "But to do good and communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The word translated as *communicate* is again *koinonias*, and it refers to the act of giving to one another's needs.

This point is very important. In the 20th century, stormy controversies have sometimes arisen between Pentecostals and charismatics on the one hand, and their critics within the church on the other. Among many on both sides, "the communion of the Holy Ghost" is often lacking. On the one hand, the presence of the Spirit is identified sometimes with correctness of doctrine, and on the other, sometimes with gifts and experiences. The Scriptures are clear that this communion of the Holy Ghost is a fellowship by grace with the triune God, and a resulting fellowship in the Spirit one with another. It is in a love which is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:8), and it is a fellowship which is practical and caring. It is a life in family; it means being members one of another (Eph. 4:25). Where the Spirit is, there is communion.

Ghosts and demonic spirits cannot have communion. Hell is the antithesis of it, whereas heaven and the new creation are the fulfillment of communion. The covenant, with its grace and law, is God's act of communion with man. To be in communion with God and with fellow members in Christ means to walk in God's covenant grace, law, and love, and to manifest this one to another.

14. The Spirit and Authority

A key problem which has beset Christianity from the beginning has been the question of authority. The word *authority* is important in Scripture; it is *exousia* in the New Testament, and it means lawful authority, the right to exercise power. In Matthew 28:18, it is rendered "power:" "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." In a much misunderstood verse, I Corinthians 11:10, *exousia* is translated again as power: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." Ultimately, all power belongs to God alone (Ps. 62:11); all human power and valid authority comes from God, and in submission to Him. Man has authority insofar as he is in submission to the triune God, and to all lawful authority under God, and

the same is true of women. Hence, in I Corinthians 11:10 and elsewhere (cf. Matt. 8:5-13), submission to God is associated with authority and power.

Life is a network of subordinations and authorities. It is noteworthy that *exousia* means derived or conferred authority. It is therefore declared to be *given* (Matt. 9:8; 10:1; 21:43). It is given by God, "for there is no authority (or power) but of God" (Rom. 13:1). *Exousia* is also translated as *jurisdiction* (Luke 23:7). Evil powers seek to exercise jurisdiction and authority apart from God, but Christ is in process of destroying all such powers.

Some of the legitimate and God-ordained powers include the family, the church, vocations, and much more. Our concern here is with none of these as such, but with the key issue of authority in the final and basic sense. Who speaks the authoritative and binding word? The answer is, of course, the triune God through His word. But who interprets, controls, or gives that word?

Traditionally, the two main answers to this question are Roman Catholic and Protestant. The view of Rome is that the church gave the Scriptures, and the church controls the interpretation. Thus, Gigot, affirming the inerrancy of the Bible, goes on to state:

> It will be seen, therefore, that though the inspiration of any writer and the sacred character of his work would be antecedent to its recognition by the Church yet we are dependent upon the Church for our knowledge of the existence of this inspiration. She is the appointed witness and guardian of revelation. From her alone we know what books belong to the Bible. At the Council of Trent she enumerated the books which must be considered "as sacred and canonical." They are the seventy-two books found in the Catholic editions, forty-five in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. Protestant copies usually lack the seven books (viz: Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and I, II Machabees) and parts of books (viz: Esther, x, 4-xvi, 24, and Daniel iii, 29-40; xiii, l-xiv, 42) which are not found in the Jewish editions of the Old Testament.[43]

The Protestant view is that the Bible authenticates the church, not vice versa. The church therefore is the product of the revealed word and is the guardian of it only as the agency for its proclamation. The church is indeed the witness to the revelation, the Bible, but as one who receives it, not as one who determines it.

We have thus two divergent views of the church, the Bible, and authority. The Catholic-Protestant lines are not hard and fast. All too many Presbyterian and Baptist churches, for example, "out-pope" the Vatican in their authoritarianism. In the 17th century, Milton could say, "New presbyter is but

[43] Francis E. Gigot, "Bible," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, II. (New York, New York: The Encyclopedia Press, (1907) 1913), p. 543.

old priest writ large." Something more fundamental than the church is behind the differing views of authority.

John Calvin was concerned with this question. How shall we have the complete establishment of authority?

> But since we are not favoured with daily oracles from heaven, and since it is only in the Scriptures that the Lord hath been pleased to preserve his truth in perpetual remembrance, it obtains the same complete credit and authority with believers, when they are satisfied of its divine origins, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself.[44]

How are they so satisfied? For Calvin, to question God's authority, and the preservation of the Bible "safe and uncorrupted to the present age," was to manifest "contempt of the Holy Spirit."[45] The church is not the determiner, although such a doctrine was being set forth:

> But such cavillers are completely refuted even by one word of the Apostle. He testifies that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. ii. 20). If the doctrine of the prophets and apostles be the foundation of the Church, it must have been certain, antecedently to the existence of the Church.[46]

Rome was and is ready to concede this antecedence; the question is the locale of authority. Calvin held that it is in the witness of the Spirit.

Calvin's position was one which the Westminster Assembly set forth in more developed form, especially in *The Confession of Faith*, Chapter I, "Of the Holy Scripture." The Assembly's statement is thus a watershed in church history:

> IV. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth, itself) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.
>
> V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

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44. John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Book I, Chapter VII, I, Vol. I. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian Board of Education, 1936). p. 85.
45. Ibid., I, p. 86.
46. *Ibid.*, I, Chapter VIII, II; I, p. 86.

> VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from the Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.
>
> IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, (which is not manifold, but one,) it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.
>
> X. The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

A great many proof-texts were appended to this statement; they bear out the accuracy of the Confession's summation of the doctrine. However, it must at the same time be pointed out that all these same texts were recognized by Roman Catholic exegetes; the difference was that this witness of the Spirit had and has in their doctrine the confirming influence and authority of the church. At this point, it is important to note that all churches stress in some fashion the relationship of the Spirit to the church. This is clearly Scriptural. The Council of Jerusalem set forth its conclusions with this affirmation: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (Acts 15:28). The church is the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 3:9-17). However, so too is the individual (I Cor. 6:18-20). Is the church prior, or the individual, or the Holy Spirit? If Rome has erred in giving priority to the church, Protestantism has erred in giving it to the individual. He who informs both is the Holy Spirit. Paul calls attention to this in I Corinthians 2:10-12:

> 10. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.
> 11. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.
> 12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Paul tells us plainly, *first*, that God has revealed His counsel to us through the Spirit. *Second*, nothing in the Godhead is hidden from the Spirit, and this Spirit imparts to us all things needful for us. Paul is speaking here of God's

secret purpose *for us* (I Cor. 1:1-2:9). *Third*, only through the Spirit of God can we understand the things of God. *Fourth*, this understanding is practical: we understand God's grace and generosity; "we know the things that are freely given to us of God."

However, the church has been unwilling to face the implications of this fact, and its reluctance is in part understandable. Not every church has been as plain-spoken in its stand as Rome, but, in some fashion, every church wants to control the people and somehow insure a "sound" channel for the operations of the Spirit. We can add that the rigidity and oppressiveness of control in some Protestant churches often puts Rome to shame: the word and the Spirit are subordinated to church policies and rules.

Having said this, another fact must be cited. In every church tradition, revolt has been endemic. Because every church has in some form a doctrine of the Spirit, all have a potential of "outbreaks." Even those heretical groups which deny the personality of the Spirit have not been immune. We can thus say that the charismatic movement, whatever our opinion of it, has been and is *an inevitable fact*. Given the living Spirit and the word, it is inescapable that "eruptions" will take place. The church has been like a volcanic mountain trying to suppress a totally active volcano: all the life in it comes from the volcano, which the mountain seeks to contain. The greater the suppression, the greater will be the explosive eruption.

We cannot deny the authority of the church, of teachers, pastors, and all like powers. They are God-ordained. However, we cannot limit God's voice and the workings of His Spirit to such authorities. God Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the source of all authority. The word is God's authoritative revelation, and the Spirit does not contradict that word: it confirms and authenticates that word for us.

Men find it easiest to set up a human authority which goes from the top down, from the church to the people, the ruler to the subjects, from the dictatorship of the proletariat to the workers, and so on. In a very real sense, God's own authority operates in a like manner: from the top down. God sets up degrees of authority in human society, *but all are equally under God's authority*. The ruler and the ruled are equally under God's authoritative word and power. There is no higher revelation to senators, and a lesser one to citizens, nor a higher one to pastors than to their flocks. In fact, Paul tells us, that God, in His predestinating wisdom, *confounds* the wisdom of this world by choosing, (and filling with His Spirit,) the foolish and the weak, to make of them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (I Cor. 1:18-31). The power (*dunamis*) of God is manifested to such (I Cor. 1:18).

Moses declared, "would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29). The gift of the Spirit (John 20:22) fulfills this hope and prayer.

Such a perspective fills churchmen with a sense of dread, and a fear of anarchy. Church control seems preferable to the Holy Spirit. Church history in the sense of church controls is not a happy picture, although not a hopeless one. What is clear is that the attempt by the church to ensure a Spirit-governed order has all too often produced a church-controlled disorder and decay. To trust in the Spirit is to trust in God. It does *not* preclude the disorders of sin, but it does place reliance on the over-ruling power of the Spirit.

Clearly, the Lord places government, *on the human level*, in the hands of the faithful. The basic tax and governmental power is the tithe: this authority rests with the believer. The church does not control it, nor the state. Again, the family is the basic institution under God; power here rests with fathers and mothers. The civil tax is severely limited to half a shekel for all males twenty years of age and older (Ex. 30:11-16), and the church's tithe is one-tenth of the tithe (Num. 18:21-28). Obviously, the Lord in His law limits the power of the church and state and makes basic the power of the believer.

The Scripture speaks to every *believer* wherever or whoever he is. Should we be surprised that the Spirit is no less direct? Will this lead to problems? In a sinful world, most certainly it will. It will, however, lead also to God's solutions. We must affirm the authority and the freedom of the word and the Spirit.

15. The Spirit of Adoption

In Romans 8:15, we have an important statement concerning man and his relationship to the Spirit; "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." In the verse preceding this, Romans 8:14, St. Paul makes clear that it is the Holy Spirit he is speaking about: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Moreover, in the preceding verses, Romans 8:1-13, Paul makes clear that there are, at the very least, two kinds of *influences* at work on man, if not two kinds of powers and *spirits*.

At this point, modern man has a problem. For him, the real world is the material world, and anything that can be called a "spirit," from a ghost, or a demon, or some such being, to the Holy Spirit, is to some degree seen as vague and unreal. The real world is seen as the world of man; all things non-physical are suspect, and are seen as aspects of the life of man, not as supernatural and objective realities. Whereas Scripture tells us that all things live, and move, and have their being in God (Acts 17:28), modern thinking would have it, after Kant, that all things live, and move, and have their being in man. Hence, "the spirit of bondage" and "the Spirit of adoption" are seen by some as aspects of the life of man.

Many evangelicals disagree with such a perspective, but only to a degree. Thus, the Reformed scholar Charles Hodge saw "the Spirit of adoption" as the

Holy Spirit, but "the spirit of bondage" was reduced by him to a fearful and slavish state of mind.[47] Murray saw no reason why the "though" should not be interpreted thus: "Ye did not receive the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of bondage but as the Spirit of adoption."[48] This is a striking interpretation; there is some ground for it in John 16:8-11; our Lord speaks of the convicting (and thus binding) work of the Spirit. Paul, however, speaks in Romans of a conflict which is more than internal; it is between sin and death on the one hand, and righteousness and life on the other, but this is more than a psychological struggle. It is theological, and it involves a cosmic struggle (however futile) against God and His government. It is "enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7), and it is not only present in all the sons of Adam, but it exists among spiritual beings as well. To limit such activity to physical creatures alone is not warranted.

Calvin slipped badly in interpreting this verse, because he equated "the spirit of bondage" with the Old Testament era and the law, something he elsewhere denied.[49] Lenski saw the contrast as between the Holy Spirit and "a slavery-spirit" which is a product of sin and the law.[50] Alford saw that the reference was *not* to the Old Testament or to the law:

> The state of *the natural man* is *bondage*: The Holy Spirit given to them, the agent of their birth into, and sustainer of, a new state, was not a spirit of bondage back again into fear, a spirit merely to retain them in, or take them back into their old state, viz., a state of slavery:–to *whom*, or whether to *different masters*, is not here in question, but the *state* merely–the object of the gift of the Holy Spirit was not to lead them *back* into this...*unto fear*...so as to bring about or result in fear..., *but ye received the Spirit* of (the Spirit *whose effect* was)...*adoption*...[51]

Alford is right: the contrast is not between the Old and New Testaments, or between law and the Spirit, but rather between the natural man's spirit and the Holy Spirit. The spirit of the natural man is "enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7); this is true of all the unregenerate sons of Adam. They live in terms of the tempter's plan of salvation (Gen. 3:1-5), and theirs is the spirit of bondage, rebellion, enmity against God, and the spirit of the tempter.

Modern man wants autonomy from God and man. As a result, if he deigns to acknowledge the existence of God, the Spirit, Satan, and evil spirits, it will be to regard them as resources to use. Occultists and Satanists act as though

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47. Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. (New York, New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son (1882) 1893. pp. 417-419.
48. John Murray: *The Epistle to the Romans*. Vol. 1. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959). p. 297.
49. John Calvin: *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 298.
50. R.C.H. Lenski: *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1945). p. 521.
51. Henry Alford: *The New Testament for English Readers*. (Chicago, Illinois, Moody Press). p. 908.

the powers they seek to establish a relationship with are simply resources to be exploited by man. Their unwillingness to face up to the terrifying consequences of their actions is due to their refusal to acknowledge that they, who sought to use these evil forces and spirit, are rather being used by them. Such a blindness leads finally to outright possession.

A like attitude is prevalent among churchmen. However much disguised, their "autonomy" is all too often the governing fact in their lives. The Holy Spirit is thus treated as a resource, as something to be exploited, rather than as the commanding power and authority in our lives.

We are plainly told that angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). Angels and demons are creatures who are subordinate to man. When men rebel against God, they also rebel against their status under God. From being above these spirits, they become lower than them, and God subjects them to their control (I Sam. 16:14-16).

Those who are redeemed are freed from all such evil spirits and are under the Holy Spirit. "Autonomous" man seeks to regard himself as the determiner of all things, as his own god, determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). St. Paul, however, tells us that, with respect to God's order, we are passive. We *receive* either the spirit of bondage, or we *receive* the Spirit of adoption. We are active in relationship to this world, but passive in relationship to God, who either gives us the evil spirit which befits our nature, or, by His grace, the Spirit of adoption.

This Spirit of adoption places us in a new life and a new community, the Kingdom of God. By adoption, we become members of the household and family of God. Previously, the spirit of bondage or slavery was the governing factor, power, and person in our lives. Now it is God the Spirit. The Spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of joy and hope; He is the Spirit of promise and deliverance. Zephaniah tells us of God singing over His people in these joyful words:

> 17. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.
> 20. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD. (Zephaniah 3:17,20)

The Holy Spirit is a Person, God; He delivers us, who are persons created in the image of God. His deliverance is a joyful act. We cannot share in the richness of that joy if we blind ourselves to His reality as the adopting Person in our lives. We are His possession. When we know Him as our adopting Person, we can know with Nehemiah that the joy of the LORD is our strength (Neh. 8:10).

16. The Spirit and the Resurrection

One of the surprising facts about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the frequent slighting of His part in the resurrection. In Romans 1:4, Paul tells us that Jesus Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." In I Peter 3:18, we also have a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection. St. Paul in Romans 8:10-11, not only makes this same fact clear, but he also relates it to our regeneration and resurrection:

> 10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
> 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

There is *first*, a contrast made here between "the body," i.e., the humanity of the old Adam, and the Holy Spirit. Moffatt paraphrases "the body is dead because of sin" thus: "the body is a dead thing owing to Adam's sin." There are two humanities, even as there are two Adams. On the one hand, we have the humanity of the first Adam, which is born into sin and death, and, on the other, we have the humanity of the last Adam, born into righteousness and life (I Cor. 15:45-50). Each is a "body;" the redeemed belong to the living body of Jesus Christ, the last Adam; the unregenerate belong to the dead body of Adam. It is dead, because it is in sin and under the sentence of death.

Second, the cause of death is sin, and the cause of life is righteousness or justice, Christ's righteousness imputed to us and redeeming us from the curse or death penalty of the law. This "body" is called "dead" because it embodies the principle of death, the tempter's program (Gen. 3:1-5). By rejecting the Lord, unregenerate man is not only *sentenced* to die, but he is marked by a love of death, a suicidal urge which leads him to frustrate and destroy all his own plans and hopes (Prov. 3:36). Because of sin, man makes bad weather for himself: he creates his own problems. Thus, a young person who attained a greatly desired success very early promptly turned suicidal. Cured of junk food, liquor, and cigarettes and coffee binges from morning till night, placed on health foods and vitamins, this person then went into cocaine. Because of enhanced financial means and opportunities, this person's suicidal progress had more open and dramatic development than in most people. It illustrates all the same the inability of the sinner to be good even to himself or herself.

Third, the situation is highly personal. It is the Adam-man, the Adam body, who is dead because of sin, and it is the Holy Spirit who is *life*. The Spirit is *life*, *zoe*. Sin forfeits life, because it denies and works against God's justice or righteousness. God's justice is thus inseparable from life: His justice or righteousness is set forth in His law. The Spirit is inseparable from God's law; to deny the one is to deny the other. "The Spirit is life because of

righteousness." Christ's righteousness or justice redeems us; by His atoning work, His righteousness is imputed to us. By the Spirit and our growth in grace and sanctification, the Spirit's revivifying power is active in us. The Spirit gives life and power. "That life which is imparted in regeneration, is gradually developed until it has its full consummation at the resurrection."[52] Our regeneration marks the beginning of eternal life for us. It is Christ's act which gives us life; it is our righteous actions which make for growth in life. The Spirit gives us life, and therefore He gives us righteousness, because righteousness or justice is the life of God and the only true life of every creature.

Fourth, we are told very plainly that, even as the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead, that same Spirit will quicken, give life, or make alive our own mortal bodies also.

In John 10:17-18, our Lord says that He will lay down His life, and then take it up again, of His own accord; no *man* will determine either event. Here it is the Spirit, who is one with the Father and the Son, who is the resurrector. In John 6:40, Christ says that He will resurrect the believer at the last day, and in many verses, such as II Cor. 4:14, the Father is the resurrector. Here, it is the Spirit, with this difference: the making alive begins with our regeneration, and it culminates with our bodily resurrection.

However, we are told that, even now, it is our "mortal bodies" which are being made alive by the Holy Spirit. This is too important a point to pass over. The word *thnetos*, mortal, means subject to death. The text reads *thneta somata*; *soma* means the body, our physical nature, and, sometimes, the whole man; our *mortal bodies* places the emphasis on the perishable, created mortal bodies we are.

Some would defer this remarkable fact to the new creation; others refer it to the "rapture." The reference to the resurrection of the body at the end of history is obvious. "Shall quicken" is *zoopoiesei*, future active indicative. However, we have already been told that "the Spirit is life" to a body "dead by reason of sin." This resurrecting power is already at work in all our being, although its fullness comes only with the general resurrection. Alford rightly noted of v. 11, "it is not merely the resurrection of the body which is in the Apostle's view."[53] Calvin also made it clear that the reference could not be limited to the future, nor to the general resurrection alone:

> By *mortal bodies* he understands all those things which still remain in us, that are subject to death; for his usual practice is to give this name to the grosser part of us. We hence conclude, that he speaks not of the last resurrection, which shall be in a moment, but of the continued working

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52. Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. (New York, New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, (1882) 1893). p. 407.

53. Henry Alford: *The New Testament for English Readers*. (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press (reprint). p. 906.

> of the Spirit, by which he gradually mortifies the relics of the flesh and renews in us a celestial life.[54]

Clearly, Calvin limited the meaning to the growth in life before the general resurrection. What does this mean? Granting that the general resurrection is in view, we must still agree with Calvin on its historical reference.

Two texts give us a glimpse of the answer:

> 20. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.
> 21. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
> 22. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
> 23. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. (Isa. 65:20-23)

> 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 seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. (Zech. 14:20-21)

Another passage of like character (one among thousands) is Isaiah 2:1-4, with its promise of world peace: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" and its promise of a world-wide Kingdom of God.

These texts alone tell us that, *first*, regeneration, and the world-wide growth and power of Christ's Kingdom will produce longevity; those dying at a hundred shall be accounted as dying young, and accursed. Christ's people shall have a long life, "as the days of a tree." The Holy Spirit, who resurrected Christ, will regenerate Christ's new race, His new humanity, and, as they grow in faithfulness and power, give them a long life, and then at the end, the resurrection of the body. It is to this that Calvin has reference.

Second, the goal of the Spirit is the holiness or sanctification of the whole earth and all of life. Whereas "spiritual" religion seeks to raise men above "natural" existence and to make pale and ghostly Christians out of men, the Holy Spirit resurrects the physical body of our Lord, indwells our own bodies, works to make bells and pots holy unto the Lord, and looks ahead to the resurrection of our bodies. Clearly, we must say of the Holy Spirit, that He has very material concerns.

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[54] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 293.

Our Lord ate before His disciples after the resurrection, to prove that it was indeed He, and not a ghost (Luke 24:36-43), but many today want to reduce the whole of the Christian life to a ghostly level, separating it from the material realm as though an enemy god had created matter.

Third, Isaiah declares of the people of Christ, "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble" (Isa. 65:23). Our labor is never in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58), because He makes all things work together for good to them who love Him, who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). The prophecy of Isaiah promises more: it has a present reference. Here and now, when Christ's Kingdom prevails, and the Holy Spirit reigns in man's hearts, there will be an immediate fruition of our labors, i.e., in our life-time. This too is an aspect of the Spirit's work on resurrection and re-creation as set forth in Romans 8:10-12. This present enjoyment is stressed: we shall reap what we have sown, and we shall inhabit the houses we build.

Fourth, all this comes to pass because we are "the seed of the blessed of the Lord," and our offspring with us (Isa. 65:23). We are the blessed, the sanctified, the regenerated and the resurrected.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. He who made all things (Gen. 1:2) begins in Jesus Christ the remaking of all things. Christ's resurrection ensures our resurrection (I Cor. 15:12-27). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). To be made alive in Christ means that we are active in remaking all things in terms of His law-word.

17. "Try the Spirits"

It is our unhappy disposition to approach Scripture selectively, in terms of our needs and interests. As a result, we tend too often to overlook passages which do not appeal to us, or to concentrate on others which arouse our curiosity. One such text is I John 4:1-4:

> 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.
> 2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:
> 3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.
> 4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

There is no reference here to any "direct" spiritualistic confrontation between believers and these false, demonic spirits nor between them and the Holy Spirit. The problem was this: the early church was plagued with a rash of "spiritual" preachers. The Greco-Roman world believed in the goodness of the spirit, whereas the Bible teaches that God made all things, "physical" and

"spiritual," *very good* (Gen. 1:31). Because of the Fall, all things are equally fallen. In Christ's redemption, the whole man is saved, and, at the end of the world, with the resurrection, our bodies and "souls" are fully sanctified and perfected in and by Him. Greco-Roman salvation was in essence from the material world into a spiritual estate, or from the world of the flesh into the world of ideas, or the spirit.

The entrance of these "spiritual" preachers led to Docetism and Gnosticism, which sought to improve or modernize the faith by making it more scientific (Gnosticism), or more "spiritual" (Docetism). The Gnostics sought to reinterpret the Bible in terms of a Hellenic evolutionary world-view in which spirit or mind was the greater and truer reality. The Docetists held that the incarnation was not real; God simply used the form of a man, Jesus of Nazareth, as a veil or mask through which to speak and act; the union of God and matter was unthinkable. For them, the Christ or Logos had spoken in and through Jesus, but they would not confess that "Jesus is the Christ." Supposedly, they had a higher, truer, and more holy confession, one less demeaning to God.

Thus, we see two great confessions emerge out of the battles of the early church, confessions required of every believer. The *first*, is cited by Paul in Philippians 2:9-11, "Jesus is Lord," or, "Jesus Christ is Lord." As against the claims of civil rulers and of states to be sovereign or lord, to be man's Moloch (king) or Baal (lord and master), the church required the confession that Jesus Christ alone is lord or sovereign. The Christian had not only to confess that "Jesus is Lord," not Caesar, but that there is only "One *lord*, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). To confess *one lord* meant to challenge the sovereignty of the state.

Second, we have the confession now set forth by John, "Jesus is the Christ." The incarnation is real; God became man, and Jesus Christ is, as Chalcedon later declared (451 A.D.) in terms of this continuing confession, very God of very God and very man of very man. Here were two confessions and two battle lines. Jesus is the incarnate God; He is the lord or sovereign over all things. The true prophet or preacher is the one who sets forth Jesus Christ as incarnate God and as lord or sovereign over all things in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18-20).

Because there are many false prophets or presbyters at work in the world, John says, we must test or try every spirit to see whether it is of God. The testing is in terms of faithfulness to this confession. This confession is the witness of the Spirit, and of the written word of God. We are not to believe every spirit; because a thing is spiritual does not make it holy. "Christian Science" is a very "spiritual" religion; it denies the very reality of matter, and, in fact, of all things except Universal Mind, or God. This does not make it a more holy religion, for it is in fact a false one.

As against the Holy Spirit, we have a world of fallen spirits, many of whom are ready to talk in a semi-Christian sense, but without Christ, and we have had many false revelations of heaven and things to come which have a purported holiness, *but not the Christ.*

Indeed, one of the great plagues of the church over the centuries has been the stream of false prophets who have advocated a "higher" and more "spiritual" way. One such man, the Abbot Joachim of Flora, created a legion of cults over the centuries to plague Christendom. We have had a stream of cults advocating antinomianism, a contempt for marriage and the family, fostering socialism, despising property as materialism, and more. Some of these groups were the Bogomils, Cathars, Albigenses, the Spiritual Franciscans, the Brethren of the Free Spirit and the Apostolic Brethren, the Taborites, the Adamites, the Waldessians, and others.[55] All too often, Protestants have assumed that they have a kinship to these groups, a false belief, when their real kinship is to certain aspects of the early and medieval church which they sought in terms of Scripture to restore.

Some other groups arose in the early church to deny that Jesus is the Christ in the Biblical sense, holding, not that God became incarnate, but rather that man in Christ incarnated himself, or better, spiritualized himself into God. "Our Savior was therefore...a man who became God, rather than God who became man: this is the dogma corresponding to Pelagius' theory in the sphere of human conduct."[56]

All too many of these heretical and apostate groups have strongly stressed "spiritual" religion, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit in these cults has been separated from the word, and "new" revelations have been offered. Unhappily, the reaction of the church to such movements has been to distrust the doctrine of the Spirit, and, as it were, to try to put the Holy Spirit into a straight-jacket to prevent further "outbreaks."

John, however, tells us that the answer to the false spirits is the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God whom we know when we hear a faithful confession and preaching of Christ. We cannot cope with a world of fallen men and evil spirits apart from the Holy Spirit. Only by the Holy Spirit comes a true confession and faithful preaching. To confess Jesus Christ is to confess all His history, and the every word of Scripture which He requires (Matt. 4:4). John has already made this clear:

> 23. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

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55. See Igor Shafarevich: *The Socialist Phenomenon.* (New York, New York: Harper and Row, (1975) 1980).
56. F. W. Bussell: *Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages.* (London, England: Robert Scott, 1918). p. 701.

> 24. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. (I John 3:23-24)

The test is the totality of God's revelation as it culminates in Christ as against pretended revelations of alien spirits.

Of this test Westcott said:

> The test of the presence of the Divine Spirit is the confession of the Incarnation, or, more exactly, of the Incarnate Savior. The Gospel centres in a Person and not in any truth, even the greatest, about the Person. The Incarnate Savior is the pledge of the complete redemption and perfection of man, of the restoration of 'the body' to its proper place as the perfect organ of the spirit. Hence the Divine Spirit must bear witness to Him. The test of spirits is found in the confession of a fact which vindicates the fullness of life. The test of antichrist was found in the confession of a spiritual truth (ii.22f.).[57]

Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh is not of God. Such a spirit manifests rather the spirit of antichrist, or antichrist, which is already at work in the world (I John 4:3).

It is necessary at this point to consider the meaning of antichrist. Few terms in Scripture have been more inflated with meaning. Very commonly too, it is assumed that the *man of sin* in II Thessalonians 2:3-4 and *antichrist* are one and the same person; there is no reason for such a belief. *First*, the *man of sin* comes from within the church and leads a falling away within the church, where he rules and exalts himself above God. *Second*, antichrist means perhaps as many assume, a *false* Christ, or, more likely, one *opposed* to Christ. The usual assumption is that he is a false Christ, but *anti* is far better understood as *against* Christ. *Third*, it is an error to assume that there is a single historical person meant by antichrist rather than every person who is opposed to Christ. The Biblical references to antichrist are the following:

> Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. (I John 2:18)

> Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. (I John 2:22)

> And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (I John 4:3)

> For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. (II John 7)

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[57] Brooke Foss Westcott: *The Epistles of St. John*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952 reprint). p. 140.

Very literally, an antichrist is anyone opposed to the Messiah, and the God of the Messiah; it is anyone who denies the reality of the incarnation. The fact of history's last age, i.e., from the first to the second coming, is that the enmity against God now focuses on the incarnate Son. To deny Him is to deny the Father. All who deny Him are liars, deceivers, and antichrists, according to John.

We are called to overcome *them*, i.e., the antichrists (I John 4:4), "because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." He that is in the world, i.e., who dwells in the hearts of men, is Satan, and He that is in us is the indwelling Spirit. The prince of this world has been cast out of our lives, and the world is under judgment by Christ the King (John 12:31). Christ came to save the world (John 3:16) and to make it again God's Kingdom. Because of His victory, we can say, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

Calvin very tellingly saw the meaning of these verses. To cite his comments in part,

> 1. *Believe not every spirit*...The word *spirit* I take metonymically, as signifying him who boasts that he is endowed with the gift of the Spirit to perform his office as a prophet. For as it was not permitted to any one to speak in his own name, nor was credit given to speakers but as far as they were the organs of the Holy Spirit, in order that prophets might have more authority, God honored them with this name, as though he had separated them from mankind in general. Those, then, were called spirits, who, giving only a language to the oracles of the Holy Spirit, in a manner represented him. They brought nothing of their own, nor came they forth in their own name. But the design of this honorable title was, that God's word should not lose the respect due to it through the humble condition of the minister. For God would have his word to be always received from the mouth of man no otherwise than if he himself had appeared from heaven.
>
> Here Satan interposed, and having sent false teachers to adulterate God's word, he gave them also this name, that they might more easily deceive...
>
> *Try the spirits.* As all were not true prophets, the Apostle here declares that they ought to have been examined and tried. And he addresses not only the whole Church, but also every one of the faithful.
>
> But it may be asked, whence have we this discernment? They who answer, that the word of God is the rule by which everything that men bring forth ought to be tried, say something, but not the whole. I grant that doctrines ought to be tested by God's word; but except the Spirit of wisdom be present, to have God's word in our hands will avail little or nothing, for its meaning will not appear to us; as, for instance, gold is tried by fire or touchstone, but it can only be done by those who understand the art; for neither the touchstone nor the fire can be of any

> use to the unskillful. That we may be fit judges, we must necessarily be endowed with and directed by the Spirit of discernment.[58]

Men like to think of themselves as self-sufficient. They like to shut the door on the world and live unto themselves. They forget that they did not come into an empty world but are the heirs of the ages. The world of technology, roads, houses, and books is a world we have inherited, and every day we gain more as heirs because other men are at work. For food, light, water, and clothing, we are daily dependent on other men's work. The world was not empty when we came into it, and we dare not use it without leaving an increased inheritance as wise stewards thereof.

We are even less self-sufficient in the things of our minds. Not only do men past and present influence us, but we are surrounded as well by spiritual powers. Only a fool believes that he is immune to influences and powers. If we are not faithful to God's enscriptured word and His Holy Spirit, we will be under the power of alien spirits. We are therefore commanded to test the spirits, and, even more, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

Even more, we are called to be the people of God, and to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity. For us to follow after wayward men and spirits, or to lean on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5), is not only foolishness compounded but the madness of sin.

18. The Weak and the Strong

One of the weaknesses of all discussions of the doctrine of the Spirit is that studies of the doctrine are limited to texts dealing with the Holy Spirit. However, if, as we believe, all Scripture is given by the inspiration of the triune God and communicated to the writers thereof by the Holy Spirit, then no doctrine can be discussed or understood apart from Him. Moreover, all Scripture presupposes that the covenant people read the word in and by the Holy Spirit, and that He is basic to our every obedience.

This, certainly, is most clearly true of the doctrine of Paul concerning the weak and the strong. Paul has much to say on this, especially in Romans 14 and 15:1-13 and I Corinthians 8. *First*, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations," or, not to judge his doubtful thoughts (Rom. 14:1). The word *weak* is *astheneo*; it is not a flattering term: it means strengthless, or physically impotent. Paul is obviously making a judgment at the outset: some believers are clearly poorly equipped and very weak. Paul by no means allows the weak to regard their condition as normal: he calls them impotent. Elsewhere, he calls them babies (Heb. 5:13), and ignorant or unlearned (*idiotes*) in I Corinthians 14:16,23,24. To remain impotent is a sin,

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58. John Calvin: *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 229f.

but to despise these weak believers is also a sin. Growth is normal to life, and *power* is basic to our life in Christ (John 1:12). To be an impotent or powerless Christian is a contradiction in terms. Paul, in asking for our patience with the weak, is not asking that weakness be subsidized or indulged but that it be given the protection of grace in order to grow in strength. Hence, it is judgment that is forbidden, or doubtful disputations, not teaching and counsel to further growth. Paul himself gives such counsel from the Lord.

Second, the problems distressing or confusing the weak are then cited. These problems are several. One of them was the eating of meats "sacrificed" to idols; the slaughter of all animals in antiquity was a religious act, and, in this case, the vendors or meat-sellers were pagans. Another problem was the observance of days. In the early church, many men observed, for example, both the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath. Still another problem was the fact that many business and social dinner meetings were held at a pagan temple (I Cor. 8:10), and this was a serious problem for the weak (I Cor. 8:11-13). The line of demarcation to such people had to be a simplified one, because their ability to resist slipping back into paganism was still limited.

Third, Paul makes clear that all of us are God's servants, and it is the province of our Lord to judge us, not we one another. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: *for God is able to make him stand"* (Rom. 14:4). This is the key point. It is not our indulgence of the weak that makes them strong but the Lord. The Holy Spirit is the greatest teacher and strengthener. Discussions of the weak and the strong apart from this fact are in error: it is only the Lord who can make us stand.

This is a critically important point. The church has long been troubled by the problem of the weak and the strong. In fact, congregations tend to form in terms of such a division. The more zealous a congregation is in the faith, the sharper is its division here likely to be. Some churches gain great size by emphasizing a minimal Christianity which is aimed at babes who are kept in perpetual childhood. Others are intolerant of the weak and pride themselves on their strength. The congregations of the weak are no less intolerant of those who will not abide by their simple and sometimes childish "Thou shalt nots." Neither group has the necessary reliance on the Holy Spirit. Within the area of the 20th century movements which emphasize the Holy Spirit, the same divisions are still apparent. Although this is now changing, sometimes dramatically so, Pentecostal churches long tended to be congregations of the weak; only now is growth in sanctification gaining strong emphasis in such circles. On the other hand, many of the newer charismatic churches tend to represent the strong. One problem in all cases is that the Holy Spirit is tied more closely, in the thinking of almost all groups, with experience rather than

learning and growth. It can be said rather that the true experience in the Holy Spirit is one of learning and growth.

Fourth, just as the focal point of the doctrine of the Spirit cannot be a private experience but our sanctification or strengthening for God's service, so all our lives are to be God-centered:

> 7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.
> 8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's (Rom. 14:7-8)

We are God's property, and "members of the supernatural community of the Spirit."[59] Christ is the Lord of the living and "the dead." We are all one community and one body in Him. Thus, neither we, nor our local congregation, can be the focus of our living but always and only the Lord and His all-inclusive purposes.

The purpose of Christ's death and resurrection was this community and Kingdom (Rom. 14:9). How then can we make our private judgments the governing factor in His realm? It is He and His law which shall judge us all, and His plan includes His triumph and the submission of all to Him. Hence, instead of judging one another, let us avoid being a stumbling block to our brethren, even when we are right (Rom. 14:10-14). "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). If we do, then our good can "be evil spoken of" (Rom. 14:16).

Fifth, the problem with judgments on our part is that they focus attention on the failings of others rather than on growth in the knowledge of and obedience to God's law-word:

> 17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,
> 18. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.
> 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.
> 20. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense. (Rom. 14:17-20).

The emphasis must be on righteousness or justice, the law of God; on peace, which is Jesus Christ and His saving work; and on "joy in the Holy Ghost." Joy in the Holy Ghost is the joy of providential care, growth, and in the knowledge of Him and His holy purposes.

In God's sight, all permitted foods are clean, whether purchased from a pagan temple or killed at home; for those who are troubled by the origin of the meat in a pagan temple, such meats are a stumbling-block. Therefore, it is

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[59] John Knox, "Romans." in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 9. (New York, New York: Abingdon, 1954). p. 621.

wise, well, or advisable in such cases to avoid the meat or wine which may cause a brother to stumble (Rom. 14:20-21). St. Paul does not here require the church to impose the standard of the weak upon the strong; rather, he counsels the strong not to flaunt their strength. Such a behavior shows contempt for a brother.

Sixth, the basic principle must be this: "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). This faith cannot be our own thinking or believing, but the grace of God in us informed by His word, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Faith is the work of grace, not our believing, and faith thus results in humility, charity, and patience.

Seventh, this means patience with the weak. Even as Christ pleased not Himself, so we too are to be gracious to others (Rom. 15:1-12). Paul speaks of the Lord God as "the God of patience and consolation;" we are to show His Spirit and be of "one mind and one mouth" in our glorification of God. God is gracious to us, and to all Gentiles, giving them salvation and summoning them all to praise Him and serve Him.

Eighth, Paul's benediction brings forth the power which alone can solve the problem of the weak and the strong, the Holy Spirit: "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). This must be taken very seriously. Two examples can be cited, both of churches of professed faithfulness to Scripture. In the first group, charges and counter-charges were made and processed, and the result has been a long struggle, still unfinished. Lip service was paid to the Spirit by a preliminary prayer session which invoked the Spirit; then, putting that aside, all fell to work honing their intellectual hatchets to bury them in one another. In the second group, the difficulty was made an immediate matter of prayer. All discussion was forbidden for a set length of time. Three evenings of congregational prayer were ordered for all concerned, with limited fasting during those days. At the end of that time, the problem did not disappear, but, in due time, it was resolved with grace.

The question is a basic one. Are problems resolved by our strength, arguments, or processes, or are they resolved by the grace of God and His Spirit? Scripture does *not* ask us to despise or set aside our strength, arguments, or judicial processes, but rather to give priority to the triune God and to use all our assets under the direction of the Spirit.

The church in our time is constantly in turmoil because of troubles between the weak and the strong, the weak and the weak, and the strong and the strong. It is time for men in the church to take a back seat to the Holy Spirit.

19. The Spirit, the Law, and Judgment

A central text with respect to the doctrine of the Spirit is I Corinthians 2:12-16:

> 12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
> 13. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
> 14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
> 15. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.
> 16. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The word translated as *judgeth* and *judged* in v. 15, and as *discerned* in v. 14, is *anakrino*. It means to examine, discern, judge, and it can have reference as in I Corinthians 6:2 to a court of law, although it is there in noun form. As Paul uses it here, every facet of the meaning is in focus. It is part of the theological foundation for his rebuke to the church at Corinth. *All* believers have the power of the Holy Ghost; Paul is not here speaking of individuals nor only of church officers. In I Corinthians 6:2, Paul uses another form of the same word, *krino*: the saints are called to judge and govern the world.

Orr and Walther render *anakrino* as *investigate*, i.e., investigate in a spiritual manner, but they suggest also "judicially examine."[60] For Lenski, it means "investigate and value aright."[61] Grosheide renders it *judge* and stresses *all things*. The Spirit-possessed man is both able and permitted to judge all things. Because the Spirit Himself searches and judges all things, so too can the Spirit-controlled man.[62] According to Hodge, "to judge here means to discern, to appreciate, and to pass judgment upon...the right of private judgment in matters of religion is inseparable from the indwelling of the Spirit. Those who can see, have the right to see."[63] Calvin's comment on v. 15 stated in part:

> 15. *But the spiritual man judgeth all things.* Having stripped of all authority man's carnal judgment, he now teaches, that *the spiritual* alone are fit judges as to this matter, inasmuch as God is known only by

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60. William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther: *I Corinthians*. The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976). p. 258.
61. R.C.H. Lenski: *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Columbia, Ohio: Wartburg Press, (1937) 1946). p. 117.
62. F. W. Grosheid: *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1953) 1955). p. 74.
63. Charles Hodge: *An Exposition to the First Epistle of Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint). p. 44.

> his Spirit, and it is his peculiar province to distinguish between his own things and those of others, to approve of what is his own, and to make void all things else. The meaning, then, is this; "Away with all the discernment of the flesh as to this matter! It is the *spiritual man* alone that has such a firm and solid acquaintance with the mysteries of God, as to distinguish without fail between truth and falsehood–between the doctrine of God and the contrivances of man, so as not to fall into mistake. *He*, on the other hand, *is judged by no man* because the assurance of faith is not subject to men, as though they could make it totter at their nod, it being superior even to angels themselves." Observe, that this prerogative is not ascribed to the man as an individual, but to the word of God, which *the spiritual* follow in judging, and which is truly dictated to them by God with true discernment. Where *that* is afforded, a man's persuasion is placed beyond the range of human judgment. Observe, farther, the word rendered *judged*: by which the Apostle intimates, that we are not merely enlightened by the Lord to perceive the truth, but are also endowed with a spirit of discrimination, so as not to hang in doubt between truth and falsehood, but are able to determine what we ought to shun and what to follow.[64]

Calvin's emphasis is not on the individual's power of judgment but on the necessity of judgment in the Spirit and in faithfulness to the word of God. The prerogative in judgment belongs to God; hence, the spiritual man is the man who is faithful to the whole word of God in and by the Spirit of God.

We must note that Paul was writing to a church with serious moral problems; he was thus placing *no confidence* in private or ecclesiastical judgment as such. He rebukes not only the guilty individuals but the entire congregation for their moral indifference to the problem. Instead of mourning over sin, the congregation was "puffed up" or inflated with pride over their ostensible freedom from the law of God (I Cor. 5:1-2). Hence, Paul stresses the faithful preaching of the cross (i.e., of Christ's atonement and therefore of the meaning of God's law and grace) as the source of power (I Cor. 1:18).

The problem at Corinth was "fornication." A man had married "his father's wife" (I Cor. 5:1), i.e., his step-mother, whom his father had apparently divorced. Hodge ably summarized the situation:

> The offense was that a man had married his step-mother. His *father's wife* is a Scriptural paraphrase for step-mother, Lev. 18:8. That it was a case of marriage is to be inferred from the uniform use of the phrase *to have a woman* in the New Testament, which always means, to marry. (Matt. 14:4, 22, 28; I Cor. 7:2, 29.) Besides, although the connection continued, the offence is spoken of as past, vs. 2.3. Such a marriage Paul says was unheard of among the Gentiles, that is, it was regarded by them with abhorrence. Cicero, *pro Cluent*, 5,6, speaks of such a connection as an incredible crime, and as, with one exception, unheard of. It is probable from I Cor. 5:7, 12, that the father of the offender was still

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64. John Calvin: *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 117.

> alive. The crime, however, was not adultery, but incest; for otherwise the apostle would not have spoken of it as an unheard of offense, and made the atrocity of it to arise out of the relation of the woman to the offender's father. We have here therefore a clear recognition of the perpetual obligation of the Levitical law concerning marriage. The Scriptures are a perfect rule of duty; and, therefore, if they do not prohibit marriage between near relatives, such marriages are not sins in the sight of God. To deny, therefore, the permanency of the law recorded in Lev. 18, is not only to go contrary to the authority of the apostle, but also to teach that there is for the Christians no such crime as incest.[65]

Hodge's comment is of particular interest, because, in his day, Hodge, as against Thornwell, took a weaker view of the force of Biblical law. His comment makes notable our theological waywardness in the intervening years.

Three texts in the law in particular speak of the offense cited by St. Paul:

> Lev. 18:8. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.
>
> Deut. 22:30. A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.
>
> Deut. 27:20. Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

To discover or uncover his father's skirt has reference to a metaphor for marriage, i.e., to *cover* a woman with the skirt, as in Ruth 3:9. The *uncovering* refers to the invasion of a sexual relationship and union. How God regards this offense is seen by its citation as one of four kinds of sexual sin under the special curse of God: sexual relations with a step-mother; bestiality; incest with a sister; and cohabitation with a mother-in-law (Deut. 27:20-23).[66]

We see thus that St. Paul is emphatically making clear the connection between the Holy Spirit, the law of God, and the spiritual man. Thus, where the Holy Spirit is at work, the law of God is the delight of the spiritual man, and, where men resist or despise the Spirit, they resist and despise the law given by that Spirit.

"The spirit of the world" is the spirit of resistance to the every word of God (Matt. 4:4). Fallen man is ready to deal with God on man's terms, to make God a partner, or an ally, but never lord. The church becomes an instrument of the fall when it insists on treating Christ as savior, but not as lord, and sees God as the source of grace, but not law. When we receive the Spirit of God, however, we "know the things that are freely given to us of God" (v. 12). These gifts are His revelations of Himself in His enscriptured word and in His incarnate Word. It is the totality of "the wisdom of God" (v. 7). To reject the

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65. Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 81f.

66. P. C. Craigie: *The Book of Deuteronomy.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1976). p. 333.

totality of that revelation is to reject wisdom; it is to reject God. We cannot receive God on our terms, only on His terms.

In v. 13, Paul says that the things he and the other apostles spoke they taught, not "in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." As Hodge rightly saw, Paul here teaches "verbal inspiration." The apostles spoke with more than human wisdom, and more than redeemed man's wisdom. "Paul's direct assertion is that the words which he used, were taught by the Holy Ghost."[67] The apostles explained the doctrines taught by the Spirit in the words of the Spirit: they combined spiritual things with Spirit-given words, i.e., "comparing (or bringing together) spiritual things with spiritual (words)."

In so doing, the apostles knew that the unredeemed man will not receive "the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (v. 14). Thus, it is not only "Christ crucified" (I Cor. 1:23) which is a stumbling block and foolishness to the unregenerate, but all preaching, because the Spirit-given word is declared to men who are dead to the Spirit's meaning, self-blinded by sin. The essence of true preaching is this, that we proclaim the Spirit-given word to men in the confidence that He who gave the word will give the hearing; so to preach means that we have no confidence in our power, and all confidence in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now we come again to v. 15. The word *anakrino* is used again by St. Paul in I Corinthians 4:4; he rejects the judgments passed on him by men in Corinth, and all self-judgment, because "he that judgeth me is the Lord." We have thus a contrast: I Corinthians 2:15 says that the man who is in the Spirit judges *all things*, and I Corinthians 4:2-4 insists on the sole validity of God's judgment. The two are not contradictory. I Corinthians 2:15 has parallels in Proverbs 25:5, I Thessalonians 5:21, and I John 4:1. God alone is the Judge, and all our judgments must be in terms of His law-word (Rom. 2:1-3). The Spirit works in us to enable us, as our Lord requires, to "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

The Spirit gives us another mind, "the mind of Christ" (v. 16). Paul cites here (and in Romans 11:34) Isaiah 40:13, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD (Yahweh), or being his counsellor hath taught him?" The Spirit, Jehovah, and Christ are plainly equated. Hodge therefore stated, "We *have the mind of Christ*, therefore, means we have the mind of Jehovah."[68] Calvin is more specific as to the reference, i.e., who "we" are:

> *But we have the mind of Christ.* It is uncertain whether he speaks of believers universally, or of ministers exclusively. Either of these meanings will suit sufficiently well with the context, thought I prefer to

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67. Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
68. Ibid., p. 47.

> view it as referring more particularly to himself and other faithful ministers. He says, then, that the servants of the Lord are taught by the paramount authority of the Spirit, what is farthest removed from the judgment of the flesh, that they may speak fearlessly as from the mouth of the Lord,–which gift flows out afterwards by degrees to the whole Church.[69]

Paul is asserting his authority as an apostle who is inspired of the Holy Ghost as he writes to command the Corinthians, because he has "the mind of Christ." However, in his commentary on the same verse from Isaiah in Romans 11:34, Paul makes a more general application to all believers, according to Calvin. Man, inspired of the Spirit, can know the word of God, but not the secret things of God. Calvin noted:

> This caution, however, is not to be so applied as to weaken the certainty of faith, which proceeds not from the acumen of the human mind, but solely from the illumination of the Spirit; for Paul himself in another place, after having testified that all the mysteries of God far exceed the comprehension of our minds, immediately subjoins that the faithful understand the mind of the Lord, because they have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which has been given them by God, by whom they are instructed as to his goodness, which otherwise would be incomprehensible to them.[70]

In commenting on the text of Isaiah 40:13 itself, Calvin stressed the transcendence of God, and the necessity of our submission to Him. "Consequently, as we ought to contrast the power of God with our weakness, so our insolence ought to be repressed by his incomparable wisdom."[71]

In brief, while the Holy Spirit raises us up to great understanding and power, this understanding and power is always and totally in submission to the triune God and His word. Insofar as we are in strict conformity to the mind of the Lord as expressed in His every law-word and made known to us by the Holy Ghost, we are beyond the ability of the unregenerate to assess, discern, or judge. The unregenerate man lives in a very limited world. The central part of reality is closed to him, and he is self-blinded to it. The redeemed man thus is beyond the ken of all such. In terms of the law-word of God, and by the light of the Holy Spirit, the redeemed man has the key to the investigation, judgment, and rule of, and over all things, but he himself can be discerned and judged by no man.

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69. Calvin, *op. cit.*, p. 119f.
70. John Calvin: *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 446.
71. John Calvin: *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, Vol. III. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1948), 1957). p. 218f.

20. "Grieve Not the Holy Spirit of God"

In Ephesians 4:30, Paul declares, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." At this point, more than a few commentaries excel in their clarity of understanding; this is one of the better understood passages of Scripture. It tells us something about the blindness of the church that so few concern themselves over this text, or understand it.

Hodge pointed out that Ephesians was written, *first*, to bring readers to an understanding of the plan of redemption and its eternal purpose; *second*, to make them aware of the greatness of the grace and blessings all believers receive; *third*, to enable them to see that the distinction between Jews and Gentiles cannot be made; they are alike members of Christ, (or alike regenerate); the Kingdom is no longer the Old Israel but the New Israel of God; and *fourth*, to summon them to live in terms of God's holiness and righteousness, as sons of God, not as lost men.[72] It is the last two of these that Paul has very specifically in mind in Ephesians 4:30.

Paul in Ephesians lays down some theological premises in order to come to a very practical point. He speaks of the fact that in Christ they are now members of the new humanity of Jesus Christ and Heirs of all things (Eph. 2:11-22); they have peace with God and are all fellow-citizens of the household or family of God. Paul prays that his readers advance into Christian maturity (Eph. 3:14-21).

Then St. Paul proceeds to the critical need: community in Christ. The world of his day was, like ours, atomistic. Men came to the faith with humanistic presuppositions: their concerns were personal and man-centered, not Kingdom-oriented and God-centered. There is a necessity for Christians to promote the unity of the church (Eph. 4:1-16). Paul's doctrine of unity is not institutional: it is God-centered and law-governed. God has given the way of faith and unity in His law. The several gifts of church leaders, as well as of members, have as their purpose our unity in one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and in maturity in our sanctification (Eph. 4:4-16).

Paul then summons believers to break with their pagan ways and to follow the way set forth in God's law-word (Eph. 4:17-6:9). This means abandoning lust and lasciviousness, corrupt speech, bitterness and wrath, covetousness, drunkenness, theft, and more. It means that wives must submit to their husbands in the Lord, and husbands to the Lord, who is the only ground of their authority. Children are to obey their parents, servants their masters, and so on. The point of the submission is to further God's order (Eph. 5:21).

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[72] Charles Hodge: *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint). p. xvii.

Paul stresses certain things in calling for such a way of life. *First*, the Holy Spirit is the Lord of the church and its indwelling glory. Hence we are to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). This is not an institutional unity; such a unity a body of men in a church can have, but theirs must be, rather than an institutional unity, "the unity of the Spirit," which is only possible in full submission to the Spirit and His enscriptured word. It is He who gives us renewal, and He who guides and rebukes us.

Second, Paul reminds us, "we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). This membership in a common humanity has long been a goal of empires and also of humanists. Marxism professes such a hope. Other forms of humanism also speak of "the family of man." However, because fallen man is in sin, he is also divisive; the principle of the fall, every man his own god (Gen. 3:5), places all men in warfare against rival claimants to deity, their fellow men. As a result, attempts to achieve the family of man on humanistic (or fallen) grounds almost always involve a recourse to coercion. The result is total civil warfare in the family of man, not unity nor peace. The Christian is called to abandon this proud and arrogant individualism and isolationism, because he is now a member of the family of God (Eph. 2:19). If we are members of God's family, we assume the obligations of that family as the Father spells them out in His law-word.

Third, to be members one of another in Christ (Eph. 4:25) means to serve one another in faith and love, to submit our will to God's law-word and therefore to be governed by His Spirit (Eph. 4:1-4; 5:21). Paul insists on something which goes against the grain for the old Adam. He declares that the great and joyful fact of life is service, in submission to God, and one to another. What to fallen man is a repellant fact must become for us a way of life and our joy. The world does not gear us to thinking of such service as joy; rather, we are prone to regard it as an unpleasant chore. If we render service, we tend to long for relief from it. As a result, Paul warns us twice that we should not be "weary in well doing" (Gal. 6:9; II Thess. 3:13). The weariness occurs because the focal point of our lives is not the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33) but ourselves. We then resent the claims of the Kingdom upon us, and we regard being members of one another as a poetic image rather than a necessity and a reality.

Fourth, Paul not only insists that service should be our joy, but he requires in all things to be thankful "always for all things" (Eph. 5:20), because all duties, services, and problems are God-ordained and have in them His sovereign purpose and outcome (Rom. 8:28).

In other words, Paul says the Holy Spirit is *grieved* when we depart from this unity of faith, love, and service in Christ and choose rather our own personal and individualistic way. The Holy Spirit has redeemed us to serve the Lord as members one of another. If we do anything less, we grieve Him.

A debt-ridden church, a people who see no need to be responsible one to another, and a congregation of individualists grieve the Spirit.

In one church, an elderly woman, member of a founding family of the church generations before and the last of her line, became needy because of inflation. The stained glass windows in the church had been donated by her family years before, and much, much more. On seeing the woman's need, the pastor and session felt very moral when they took the initiative to get her welfare funds! Dare we believe that the Holy Spirit was not at the very least grieved, if not angry?

21. "Quench Not the Spirit"

Several texts cite the work of the Holy Spirit as intercessor, and as essential to our prayers and to our daily lives. Most notable are these:

> 26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
> 27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (Rom. 8:26-27)

> Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Eph. 6:18)

> 3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:
> 4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour:
> 5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:
> 6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any manner: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.
> 7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.
> 8. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. (I Thess. 4:3-8)

> 12. Now we exhort you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;
> 13. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.
> 14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.
> 15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.
> 16. Rejoice evermore.
> 17. Pray without ceasing.
> 18. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19. Quench not the Spirit. (I Thess. 5:12-19)

The Holy Spirit as God immanent among us and active in God's covenant people to accomplish God's covenant purposes, thus cannot be left out of our daily thinking. He is the basic power in our lives, and to act or think without the continuing recognition and awareness of the Holy Spirit is comparable to wearing a blindfold, and trying to perform our daily duties in a miserable darkness. We are told, *first*, that the Spirit teaches us how to pray (Rom. 8:26). Our best and truest instructor in prayer is thus God the Spirit, who is our intercessor when we pray. Paul does not say that the Spirit prays for us, but that He guides us, if we pray in Him, in what we should pray for. He causes us to pray from the depths of our being at times, "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26). Our infirmities in prayer are made a strength by the Spirit, because of His intercession. God, who is the searcher of all hearts (Jer. 17:10; Ps. 139:23; Ps. 7,9; Rev. 2:23), knows the mind of the Spirit, who is making intercession for us "according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27). This means that the best possible meaning is given to our prayers, because the Spirit guides us in prayer and then intercedes for us.

Second, in Ephesians 6:18, Paul's words need to be tied to the first two in v. 14, "Stand therefore," and pray for all the brethren. Prayer is a covenant privilege. We are to be mindful of all our covenant brethren in our prayers. It is then that we can pray in the power of the Spirit. If our prayer is too much concerned with our personal concerns, we forget the covenant, and we forget the meaning of the Spirit's work in us. The Spirit is given to us, but He is given to us as members of Christ's body, Kingdom, and covenant. To isolate ourselves from "all saints" is to grieve the Spirit and to quench His work in us.

Third, this is clearly brought out by Paul in I Thessalonians 4:3-8; the Spirit works to make us holy members of Christ and of one another. This means abstention from fornication in all its physical and mental ramifications. Husband and wife are to enjoy their sexuality in godly joy (Heb. 13:4), not in dishonor. Honesty in business dealings toward one another is a basic requirement. "Uncleanness" in sexuality, business practices, or in any other aspect of human relations is forbidden. The false use of one's wife, or the abuse financially of a fellow member, is to dishonor them and to despise God (I Thess. 4:8), because God has called us to holiness and given us His Spirit. Our ungodly use of people reflects our view of God. Thus, we dare not excuse ourselves nor excuse others for their exploitive use of people; all such behavior is an expression of our exploitive use of God. It must be clear to us that all too many in the church are ready exploiters of men, and therefore of God Himself. This is Paul's very clear and blunt assertion.

Fourth, this includes, Paul goes on to say, our obedience to those in authority over us, towards the disorderly, and also towards the weak and faint-hearted. We are not to return evil for evil but rather be godly and helpful

in our dealings with all men. The Holy Spirit calls us to community. We are to manifest that communion one towards another, as well as to "all men," i.e., those outside the covenant (I Thess. 5:12-19).

This by no means is to be read to mean that the life of the Christian is conflict-free. This was certainly not true of St. Paul, either in the church or in the world. The world has no love of God's truth, and, as a result, conflict is often unavoidable. In the face of this, we are to stand firmly in terms of God's truth but in the spirit of peace and helpfulness.

This cannot be done unless we have both a spirit of joy and "rejoice evermore," and also "pray without ceasing." Neither can be done apart from the Holy Spirit. We know that He who guides our prayers and makes intercession for us is that very God who makes all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28). When we read or cite Romans 8:28, we need to remember that Romans 8:26-27, which immediately precedes it, speaks of the guiding and intercessory work of the Spirit; they are inseparable.

Fifth, we are told, "quench not the Spirit" (I Thess. 5:19). The word *quench* has relationship to Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; and Acts 2:3, all of which associate the Spirit with *fire*. To *quench* the Spirit is an audacious thought. What does it mean? The Spirit is given to the *covenant people*. While we receive Him personally, we do not receive Him in isolation. Perhaps we can compare the gift of the Spirit to the gift of manna, both miraculous gifts, one of a Person, the other of food from God (Ex. 16:14f.). The manna could only be received and used on God's terms; this did not place any power over manna in the hands of the people. Rather, it compelled them to conform to God's word (Ex. 16:16-30). Similarly, the Spirit is a Person, power, and gift who can only be used on His terms. The "manna" of the Spirit is *quenched* when we despise God's word, when we cease to be members one of another (Eph. 4:25).

Some insight into this fact is also given in II Thessalonians 5:20-21, "despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." There were obviously two views current with respect to prophesying in the early church. Some despised them as disruptive of the life of the church. That such disturbances existed is clear from Paul's rebuke in I Corinthians 12-14. However, to despise all prophesying was clearly wrong, and not of the Spirit. Paul makes clear too that some in Corinth regarded all utterances as Spirit-filled and of equal authority. Neither view, he says, is right. They are to test all things in terms of God's word, and to "hold fast that which is good."

22. "I Will Not Leave You Orphans"

One of the striking verses of Scripture is John 14:18, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." The force of these words is increased when we realize that the word translated as *comfortless* is *orphanos*, orphans. The

word *orphanos* has been variously translated, as forlorn, desolate, comfortless, but also at times as orphans, its literal meaning. The meaning here is orphans. As Westcott noted, "Christ presents Himself to the disciples as a Father of 'children' (xiii. 33), no less than as a brother (xx. 17; comp. Hebr. ii. 11f.)...The very word which describes their sorrow confirms their sonship."[73]

By so speaking, our Lord affirmed, *first* His deity, and, *second*, the doctrine of adoption. Adoption by God is basic to Scripture and an aspect of covenant life. God is the great and perfect Father who is infallible where human parents are fallible. David says, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" (Ps. 27:10). God declares through Isaiah, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. 49:15). Again, God says of Israel, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea 11:1).

Now, in John 14:18, Jesus Christ speaks of Himself as the Father, affirming not only His adoption by grace of His followers, but His identity with the Father. He is more than their rabbi or Master: He is their covenant God and Father. It is true that the disciples of rabbis spoke of themselves as orphaned at the death of the rabbi, as did the followers of Socrates. The image was a common one.[74] There is a marked difference here, however. In the whole of the discourse, Jesus clearly speaks as one with God, and as the only way to the Father (John 14:6-9, etc.). It is clear thus that he is not a mere teacher leaving His followers. Moreover, the common pattern is dramatically reversed: His death will not leave them orphaned. He will come to them, at first briefly in His resurrection appearances, then permanently in the person of the Holy Spirit. Death cannot orphan them, nor contain Him. So spoke no rabbi, nor Socrates!

Brown, however, is very right when He speaks of the *condition* of Christ's coming back to them. These are set forth in John 14:15-21. *First*, the necessary conditions are to love Jesus and to keep his commandments (vv. 15,21). Antinomianism leaves men orphaned; faithfulness removes our orphaned estate. Only to those who love Him and keep His commandments will Jesus manifest Himself; to love Him means to keep His commandments. Love is faithfulness.

Second, to all such, our Lord promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete and His own abiding presence (vv. 16,18). The gift of the Spirit is not merely a temporal one: it is "for ever." Some heretical groups have

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[73] B. F. Westcott: *The Gospel According to St. John*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1881) 1954). p. 206.

[74] Raymond E. Brown: *The Gospel According to John (xiii-xxi)*. The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970). p. 640.

sometimes spoken of a "secret" second coming of Jesus; our Lord here, with an entirely different meaning, speaks of His second coming to every man in the person of the Holy Spirit. This coming is a forerunner of the great coming, and is a privilege enjoyed in time and eternity.

Third, our Lord states that the world will see neither the Holy Spirit, nor Himself, but both will be here (vv. 17 ,19). The world will neither hear nor see them, because they dwell within us. The Spirit in us is the Spirit of truth.

Fourth, we, however, will know and recognize the Spirit and Jesus (vv. 17, 19). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, because he carries on the earthly work of Jesus. While not physically visible, He is the great power in the lives of the faithful.

Fifth, the Holy Spirit and Jesus now dwell in the lives and hearts of believers (vv. 17,20). Christ is in the Father; Christ is in us, and we are in Christ (v. 20).

Pentecost is the fulfillment of John 14:18. Christ came at Pentecost in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The miracles performed thereafter were in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Acts 3:6). These miracles in His Name were a continuing witness to all that the Jesus Christ whom they had crucified was alive and active with power over sin and death (Acts 3:6).

There is another aspect of this sentence which must be noted, the implications of the word *orphans*. Calvin is here most telling:

> 18. *I will not leave you orphans.* This passage shows what men are, and what they can do, when they have been deprived of the protection of the Spirit. They are *orphans*, exposed to every kind of fraud and injustice, incapable of governing themselves, and, in short, unable of themselves to do any thing. The only remedy for so great a defect is, if Christ govern us by his Spirit, which he promises that he will do. First, then, the disciples are reminded of their weakness, that, distrusting themselves, they may rely on nothing else than the protection of Christ; and, secondly, having promised a remedy, he gives them good encouragement; for he declares that he will *never leave them.* When he says, *I will come to you*, he shows in what manner he dwells in his people, and in what manner he fills all things. It is, by the power of his Spirit; and hence it is evident, that the grace of the Spirit is striking proof of his Divinity.[75]

To be called *orphans* means that we are in need of a guardian, a conservator to watch over us and our estate. Orphans, together with widows, are commonly spoken of in Scripture as symbols of helplessness. Christ says, so too are we, apart from Him. Hence, the necessity of a guardian, the Holy Spirit. Both humanism and Christianity, advocate that men be strong and effectual. Humanism believes that man can gain moral strength and power in

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[75] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, II. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949). p. 94.

his own strength and by his own spirit. Scripture declares that this is possible only through the Holy Spirit.

The misguided confidence of many in their own wisdom, the church's wisdom, or their knowledge of Scripture, is often the cause of waywardness, because, without the Spirit, the best of us are orphans, prone to a helplessness we will not admit, so that our best knowledge is blindness without the Spirit. The Spirit draws us closer to the word, and to one another in Him.

Of this, Luther wrote:

> Thus all Christendom has this comforting promise that it will not be forsaken or left without aid and help. Even if it is bereft of all human consolation, help, and assistance, still Christ will not leave it desolate and unprotected. It seems as though for a time He were leaving His Christians without comfort and protection...Despite everything they feel and see, they should cling to the promise He gives them here when He says, "I will not stay away from you; and though I must depart from you for a little while physically, I will not remain away long. I will return to you soon and be with you forever. You shall be protected against all devils, the world, sin, and death; and you shall live and conquer with Me."[76]

Clearly, we are not alone; we are under protection and power, and we are called to victory (I John 5:4). But we must love Him and keep His commandments: this is the evidence that we have the adoption of grace.

23. The Fruits of the Spirit

It is difficult to conclude a study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Because it is He through and by whom God's revealed word is given, and who in the Old Testament is the key Person, and in the New, the great Paraclete, one can continue speaking and writing of the Spirit in relation to every facet of the faith in an especially vivid and personal manner.

We shall conclude, however, with an examination of the fruits of the Spirit, as stated by St. Paul:

> 16. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
> 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
> 18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
> 19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
> 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

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[76] Luther's Works, vol. 24: *Sermon on the Gospel of St. John*. Chapters 14-16. (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1961). p. 131.

> 21. Envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
> 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
> 23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
> 24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
> 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
> 26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:16-26)
>
> For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. (Ephesians 5:9)

These texts are much used by antinomians to justify their position. Supposedly too Galatians is one sustained attack by Paul on the law. Rather, it is an attack on the Judaizers and their unwillingness to see Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. "The yoke of bondage" is *not* God's law (Gal. 5:1), but rather the formal trust in the observance of circumcision and other outward marks of the covenant with Israel rather than a trust in Christ's work (Gal. 5:2-6). Israel had fallen into a religion of externalism rather than faithfulness. In fact, faithfulness had ceased to be from the heart and manifested in the total life of man and had become a matter of external rites. Hence, Paul had to remind them,

> 28. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh;
> 29. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Rom. 2:28-29)

Paul does not attack the law of God; he attacks the reduction of the law and of righteousness and holiness to a matter of externals. His use of circumcision makes this very clear. Circumcision is the cutting off of the foreskin; it is a symbolic castration of man. It means that our hope is not in ourselves, nor in generation, but in regeneration. The true circumcision people are Christ's redeemed ones: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). This is the meaning of circumcision, to "have no confidence in the flesh," in human nature, but rather to trust in Christ for salvation. Paul is not attacking the Old Testament law, but the humanistic trust in law by the Judaizers. Moreover, Paul criticizes the antinomianism, the lawlessness, of many in Galatia: he shows them what the works of human nature are: adultery, fornication, murder, and more, all acts in violation of God's law (Gal. 5:19-21). He prefaces this by summoning them to the true keeping of the law, which is love in action:

> 13. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.
> 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
> 15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. (Gal. 5:13-15)

The law is fulfilled, i.e., put into force, by love, because the law is the way of love, whereas devouring one another is the way of lawlessness.

In Galatians 5:18, Paul says that those who are led of the Spirit are "not under the law." To be under the law is to be under indictment; it means facing the death penalty. We still speak of "having the law on you," i.e., of putting someone under the law with a specific charge. Those who are led of the Spirit are the redeemed of God, Christ's covenant people, and they are not under indictment.

The Holy Spirit gave the law: it sets forth the righteousness or justice of the triune God. Paul tells us what it is that is *the antithesis* of life in the Spirit: *it is lawlessness*. The fruits of the Spirit do not therefore give us antinomianism. Paul begins by telling us that the love of our neighbor as ourselves (Lev. 19:18) is the fulfilling or putting into force of the law (Gal. 5:13-14; Rom. 13:8). He then cites the works of lawlessness, i.e., what a lawless heart eventuates in and produces (Gal. 5:19-21). After citing these works of lawless man, Paul cites the fruits or works of the Spirit, i.e., that which is the result of a life in which the law is written on the tables of our hearts (Ezek. 36:25-27; Gal. 5:22-26).

In Ephesians, Paul is writing to a church divided against itself, and also divided from the Lord by sin (Eph. 4:14-20, 25, 29-32). The fruit of the Spirit Paul here cites as *goodness*, *agathosune*, moral, law-keeping, uprightness, the mark of regenerate men. It is also *righteousness*, *dikaiosune*, being just, dedicated to justice, a consistency of life in terms of God's righteousness or justice. It is also *truth*, *aletheia*, life in reality, life in Christ, who is the Truth (John 14:6) incarnate. If our fruit or works be truth, then we are totally faithful to God and His every word. We rely on the righteousness of God in Christ for our salvation, and we joyfully keep His every word as our way of life.

Thus, the summons to manifest the fruits of the Spirit is not a call to a vague and antinomian spirituality, nor to mysticism, but a summing up of the whole of God's requirements of us in His law-word. The Spirit nowhere renounces His word.

In fact, Paul, the prisoner, appeals to the Ephesians, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1). Paul says this because, as Westcott noted, "The consummation depends on the co-operation of all to whom the truth has been made known."[77] Precisely. The Lord summons all who are His

to manifest the fruits of the Spirit, which means faithfulness to covenant law, so that they might be Dominion Men.

Thus, immediately after citing the fruits of the Spirit, Paul goes on to say

> 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
>
> 2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:1-2)

The English word *fault* has lost its original force, i.e., failure to do the right or lawful act. In the Greek, the word is *aition*, a crime, a legal ground for punishment. The reference is to a church member who breaks God's law. The church is faced thus with a law-breaker. The civil government may or may not punish what God calls a legal ground for punishment. The church is to *restore* (*Katartizo*) such a person. The word means to mend, put in order again, restore, or repair (as a broken bone), or to train thoroughly. The man who has committed the crime is to be the object of loving attempts to restore him into the grace of God and the way of obedience to the law of God. The lawless one is to be made law-abiding.

To do so, to restore a brother, is to "fulfill the law of Christ." The law of Christ is the law of God; it is the whole of Scripture. Christ in the Sermon on the Mount expounds the true meaning of the law as the Lawgiver; the law He gave at Sinai, with the Father and the Spirit, He now expounds clearly to a wilfully self-blinded world, to leave them without excuse.

The triune God does not change. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). The Spirit who created all things (Gen. 1:2), who gave the inspired and infallible word to the saints and prophets, from Genesis to Revelation, from Eden through Sinai to the close of the canon, is one Spirit with one unchanging covenant word and law.

We need to pray, in the words of the Whitsunday collect in the Book of Common Prayer,

> God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ our Savior, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

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[77] B. F. Westcott: *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1906) 1952). p. lxiv.

VII

THE COVENANT

1. The Covenant

The doctrine of the covenant is basic to Scripture. In fact, the Bible is a covenant book; it is the text of God's treaty with man. Because it is a covenant document, it is thereby a legal document.

A covenant is simply a treaty, contract, or legal relationship between two parties. Marriage, for example, is a covenant, and the vow includes the statement, "I do vow and covenant, before God and these witnesses..." An oath is a covenant fact. An oath of office is a covenant affirmation. The inclusion of an oath of office in the U.S. Constitution placed all officers of state, beginning with the President, in covenant with God. The oath invokes the penalties and blessings of Deuteronomy 28 for disobedience and obedience. However unheeding Americans may be today of God's covenant, the conditions of God's covenant and Deuteronomy 28 remain valid. Man's unconcern does not abrogate them.

A covenant is a contract between two parties. There are two possible kinds of covenants. *First*, a covenant can be between two parties of relative or comparable strength. Marriage is such a covenant. The headship of the man does not imply an inequality or a lesser ability on the part of the woman; it does indicate a difference in office. In antiquity, if there were no comparable status between a man and a woman, then it was not an endowered marriage but concubinage. Treaties between two nations were covenants between parties of relative status. A common law is required by a covenant; the covenant law is required of all concerned. Service one to the other is required. Such treaties were designed to give advantages to both parties, and to require certain responsibilities of both, including full-scale military aid against the enemy of either party.

The *second* type of covenant is between two radically unequal parties, a relationship where all the benefits are one-sided. Such a covenant is both a law relationship between two parties, and an act of grace. The greater gives his law to the lesser, and therewith his care and protection, as an act of grace. Such is the covenant between God and man. It is a law relationship and a grace relationship at one and the same time. God does not need man, nor his service. In His grace and mercy, He gives man His law; He enters into covenant with man. In a covenant, each party pledges himself to die for the other, if need be, to rescue the covenant party from death, captivity, or trouble. In a covenant between two families, a like obligation prevails.

Within a family, the members are in a covenant relationship also. This means that the kinsman redeemer must satisfy all debts and charges; he

redeems a forfeited inheritance; he avenges the wrong his kinfolk have suffered; and, if need be, he marries a bereft woman to raise up a seed for the covenant man. A covenant establishes a family relationship between two parties; it makes them one people. A covenant tie, in fact, is closer than a blood tie. When Jonathan entered into covenant with David (I Sam. 20:16), Jonathan thereby placed himself on David's side against Saul, his own father, and in favor of David's succession to the throne as against his own.

The covenant was not only *made*; it was *cut*. There was a shedding and a mingling of blood. Between two men, it could mean blood let from the veins of both, to be mingled or sucked, to signify oneness.[1] The meaning of this symbolism of blood was the requirement that a covenant man be ready to die for the covenant and his covenant or blood brother. Any and all violations of the covenant were capital offenses, and death was normally mandatory.

In some cultures, the marriage covenant was celebrated with a mingling and drinking of blood. In others, the drinking of wine by the bride and groom marked the covenant, the wine being a symbol of shed blood.[2] A marriage covenant often bound more than the two persons together; it united their families.

As we have seen, a covenant between unequal parties, in which the one party is far beyond the need of any help from the second, is *a covenant of grace.* In such a covenant, there is a difference in the method and meaning of contracting the covenant. The terms are set, not by negotiation, but exclusively by the word of the bestower of grace. His word is law. Moreover, the covenant blood is also specified by Him. Because God does not need man's life or work, for man to offer himself as the blood of the covenant is anathema; it is a capital insult to God and a denial that the covenant rests on His grace. Human sacrifice is a denial of the covenant grace and law (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-3). Animal sacrifice is specified, but the animals had to be those specified as "clean" by God (Lev. 3:1-5; Deut. 12:11; 15:19-23; 17:1; Lev. 22:18-20; Gen. 8:20; Ex. 20:24 etc.) The blood of the sacrificial animal could *not* be eaten or drunk (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10; 19:26; Deut. 12:16; 15:23; etc.) Blood is life; "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11). Pagans sought life by drinking the blood of animals and men. God's covenant people gain new life, not from the blood of men nor of animals, but only from God. It is the blood of Jesus Christ which saves us and makes us a new creation (I Peter 1:18-19; I Cor. 10:16; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; etc.). We are saved by Christ's life, and the blood of His atonement (Rom. 5:10-11).

Thus, in the covenant of grace, the law is given by grace, and the blood of the covenant is also by grace.

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[1] H. Clay Trumbull: *The Blood Covenant.* (Philadelphia, PA: J.D. Wattles, 1893).
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 191-200.

Since the sacrificial animals of the covenant were substitutes, their blood could not be touched. "For it is the life of all flesh, the blood of it is for the life thereof; therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off" (Lev. 17:14). It is only with the communion cup, typically and symbolically setting forth Christ's blood, that man can partake of the blood (I Cor. 10:16). It is "the cup of blessing" and of grace. It is the transfusion of blood or life which Christ's atonement makes and the communion cup sets forth. It is the free gift of life in the face of the sentence of death (Rom. 6:23).

Because all life is God's creation, and exists at His will, life cannot be taken (Ex. 20:13), nor blood shed (Lev. 17:3-6), *except in terms of His law.* For this reason, the law is clear that *man cannot kill* (Ex. 20:13). Only where God so authorizes it can life be taken, for crimes, in self-defense, in battle, and so on. Then it is God who requires it, and God whom the human agent in execution represents. Where food is concerned, again the blood had to be shed in a specified place and way (Lev. 17:3-6, etc.). Among some peoples, such as Armenians, this requirement remains to the present: the covenant continues, and so do its requirements.

This points to another characteristic of the covenant. Violations of or departures from a covenant do not end a covenant relationship: it can normally only be terminated by death. In most cases, this covenant rupture by one party requires that death be visited upon him by the other covenant member. The penalty for sin is death.

As we have seen, in marriage the wedding cup of wine represents the blood of the covenant. This custom is world-wide. Very often, some shedding of blood preceded the wedding; this occurred in such diverse places as Scotland, Arabia, and Borneo. In such traditions, the marriage was sealed, as in Scotland, when the cock's blood was shed.[3] The covenantal aspect of marriage required the death penalty for adultery (Lev. 20:10). Divorce was an option for lesser offenses (Deut. 24:1).

In the covenant of grace with God, man cannot walk away from the covenant. He is pursued relentlessly with God's curses and judgment of death (Deut. 27:14-26; 28:15-68). This death sentence culminated in the judgment of the covenant nation and its death, as in the fall of Jerusalem. Even then, God is not through with old Israel. As Romans 11 points out, the old people are cut off and judged unsparingly, but God intends in time to purify and restore them, as indeed all nations, tribes, and tongues shall be.

The covenant with God is inescapable for all the sons of Adam: they are judged by it, and it is the condition of their lives.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 199f.

2. Is There a Covenant of Works?

The Westminster Confession, one of the great documents of the Christian faith, has at one point been rightly criticized over the years. Its concept of a covenant of works is not only wrong but shows a misunderstanding of the nature of the covenant. The key references to this covenant of works are:

> II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.
> III. Man. by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.[4]

> I. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.[5]

> Q. 30. Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?
> A. God doth not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works; but of his mere love and mercy delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace.[6]

The idea that *any* covenant God makes with man can be anything other than a covenant of grace is wrong and deadly wrong. *First*, any covenant between God and man must be initiated and executed by God. It is thus an act of grace as well as of law; it requires works, but the works are the response of gratitude for the grace of law, for the grace of God's covenant. No covenant between God and man can side-step the fact that there is a radical difference between the two parties. Indeed, man is totally God's creation and creature; he can make no claim on God. A covenant between equals or relative equals is mutually entered into; there are benefits to both parties. It is a covenant of love as well as of law and works. Marriage is such a covenant: it brings, in true marriage, advantages to both parties. In such a covenant, a dissolution is possible, hence the law of divorce (Deut. 24:1); the mutuality of the covenant has been broken. Man, however, *cannot* terminate God's covenant; man does not institute it, and hence man cannot terminate it. Man's works of law are a legal *requirement* of the covenant, not a *condition* of it; that is, the works do not make the covenant, but they are required by the covenant. God's grace

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4. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapt. VII, "Of God's Covenant with Man."
5. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapt. XIX. "Of the Law of God."
6. Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 30

requires the response of faith, obedience, love, works, and more. Thus, the works of law, i.e., the obedience of faith, is a response, together with love, thanksgiving, and praise, to the covenant grace. The covenant or treaty between two parties, two nations, or a man and wife is not normally an act of grace. We do not marry someone because we are showing grace to them, although, with Christians, grace is present in their marriage, although not the reason for covenanting themselves to one another. We do not say, Go to now, I will show grace to this man or woman by marrying him or her. The motive of God's covenant is grace. It is thus never a covenant of works. The law of that gracious covenant always requires works of us, but the covenant is an act of grace, and all the blessings thereof are grace.

Second, this covenant of grace, because it is entirely made on God's initiative, and before man's very existence (Acts 15:18), is an act of predestination. Every aspect of the covenant, man's fall, reprobation, and redemption, is a part of God's eternal decree. To make the covenant at any time a covenant of works is to undermine God's sovereignty and predestination.

The key text used by the Westminster Assembly to present this concept of a covenant of works was Galatians 3:12, "And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them." Paul here cites Leviticus 18:5: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD." But this text is addressed to God's covenant people, His chosen people, the elect of grace. It is prefaced with the words, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD *your* God" (Lev. 18:2). The covenant name, LORD, Jehovah, or Yahweh, is used; the LORD declares to Israel, "I am *your* God," i.e., your covenant God. They are told in Leviticus 26:1-46 (and Deut. 28), that God's *blessing* and *curses* follow *obedience* and *disobedience*. To *live* in terms of *blessing* and *curses* is very different than living in terms of *works*. As workers, we are *paid* for our works; God *blesses* and *rewards*, or He *curses*, a very different kind of thing than a salary. It is absurd and morally wrong to equate this aspect of God's covenant with works.

Third, the Confession, in speaking of the covenant of works, says that "man by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant," the Lord gave him a second covenant, a covenant of grace. (Chapt. VII, III.) This is again a serious error. Man's incapacity in relationship to God did not come into being through the Fall. Neither in the state of innocence, nor the Fall, nor of grace, nor of glory, does man have any capacity to render anything to God in the way of works, or accrued benefit. Moreover, the life of Adam and Eve in Eden was God's grace, not a product of their obedience prior to the Fall. We too often overlook a key phrase in I Peter 3:7, "The grace of life." Life itself is a gift of God's grace, whether to the redeemed or to the reprobate. Leviticus 18:5 and Galatians 3:12 tell us that, when we walk in terms of

covenant faithfulness, we are spared God's judgment, and we receive God's blessings. If we do not obey the Lord, the very fact of life, a gift of grace, becomes for us a curse.

Fourth, Galatians 3:12 tells us, "The man that doeth them shall live in them," not by them. Sanday's comment is to the point: "His life shall spring out of them and be nourished by them, just as a tree strikes its roots into the earth."[7] It is a serious error to detach God's law, justice, judgment, or any other attribute from Him, and to naturalize them. Blessings and curses are not like gravity or karma, with a natural and automatic consequence. In the "natural" world, we can utilize one set of principles to "get around" another set. Thus, gravity, is not set aside by air flight, but gravity does not prevent air flight. In relationship to God, *nothing* man can do can circumnavigate blessings and curses. Only God, whose government is total, can alter his relationship to us, and it is all of grace and in His wisdom, judgment, and mercy.

Having said all this, it must now be added, in defense of the Westminster Divines, that they never intended the covenant of works to be seen as a covenant of merit. However, in view of the common Protestant hostility to Rome for its ostensible doctrine of works, any talk of a covenant of works carried a like connotation. Both Rome and Westminster could justly plead that their doctrine did not assert a salvation by works, but both could be justly charged with opening the door to such a concept, although Westminster limited it to the time of Eden. The term "covenant of works" was also thought of as a covenant of "Nature."[8] The rising philosophies of science were beginning to see "Nature" as a kind of semi-independent realm from God; the indications of Deism were very early present. They continue to the present in current ideas of "Nature," which is simply a collective noun for God's creation; it is not an independent entity. Thus, a concept of a covenant of works *or Nature* detaches the covenant from God's sovereign grace and law.

Thus, Adam's "breach" of the covenant was not a breach of a covenant of works or Nature, but a breach of God's grace. It was a personal affront and revolt against the grace of the person of God. Adam and Eve were confronted by the person of God (Gen. 3:8-9), and the judgment pronounced against them was specific and personal (Gen. 3:16-24). What we call "natural law" is not personal; if I put my hand, accidentally or intentionally, into fire, or against red hot steel, I am burned, and it makes no difference whether I am male or female, old or young, or believer or non-believer. God's curse for the violation of His covenant is personal and specific; it affects all creation, and all men, but each in a different way. The curse upon Eve is not the same as

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7. W. Sanday "Galatians," in C.J. Ellicott: *Commentary on the Whole Bible, VII. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan). p. 443f.*

8. John H. Leith: *Assembly at Westminster*. (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1973). p. 91.

that upon Adam. They suffer alike from sin and death, but, within that framework, specific differences occur. The judgment is particular and personal. The covenant is always and only instituted by God's grace. It always is a covenant of law, because covenants are a form of law, and therefore it always requires works. This, however, does not make it a covenant of works.

3. The Covenant and Land

God's covenant with man is not a neoplatonic and purely spiritual relationship. It has to do with man, God's creature living on God's creation, the earth. By its very nature a covenant is concerned with land.

A covenant is a law treaty; the law of the covenant is the law of the land and the inhabitants thereof. When a covenant is a treaty between two totally unequal powers, as of God with man, the covenant is an act of grace, and an aspect of that grace is the gift of land. The great kings of antiquity gave land to their vassals; in the medieval era, this fact was still a reality: feudal lords gave grants of land to their knights. The feudal lords did it for services rendered; God the Lord gives the covenant land as an act of grace.

The first example of a covenant grant of land is the Garden of Eden. In actuality, God declared, in Genesis 1:26-28, that the whole earth, and all things therein, were given to man as God's covenant vassal. This grant began with the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8) as a pilot project wherein man was to learn to apply his covenant responsibilities. The Garden was thus a training ground; the covenant grant included all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). Man's violation of the covenant meant the revocation of the grant. The earth would now be hostile to man, and, in the end, would bury and cover him who was to be the man of dominion over it (Gen. 3:16-19). As sin increased, as with Cain, the curse increased, and Cain, instead of being a dominion man, became a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth (Gen. 4:9-16).

The land promise was renewed to Noah (Gen. 9:1-7), and to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-7; 13:14-17). The promise to Noah, like Genesis 1:26-28, is concerning all the earth: it is a restatement of the original dominion mandate and covenant calling. However, even as then God gave a limited sphere of that earth to Adam as a test area, so now, to the chosen line, a limited sphere is again given. The promise to Abraham has reference to the general area of Palestine. This covenant grant is renewed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4), and to Jacob (Gen. 28:4, 13-15; 35:10-12; 48:4). Later, it is renewed to Moses (Ex. 3:8), and the whole of the law is given as the condition of blessing in the possession of the land grant (Lev. 26; Deut. 28).

With Joshua, we come again to a renewal of the land grant on the verge of the conquest of the land. The boundaries of the grant were greater than the

conquest, and were never fully achieved, although, in Solomon's day, Israel's sphere of influence did cover the area described in Joshua 1:4.

Certain covenant facts are clearly set forth in summary fashion in the commission to Joshua (Josh. 1:1-9). It is a commission or a *trust* in terms of the covenant of grace and law. God is the Lord of the land, not the Canaanite inhabitants, who are to be evicted on God's orders as lawless and rebellious tenants who are abusing the Lord's law and property. The dispossession of the Canaanites is ordered by the Lord of all the earth. Centuries later, Nebuchadnezzar spoke of the meaning of dispossession; it is "to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17).

The renewal of the land grant stresses certain facts: *first*, the Lord makes clear that He gives the land. It is the land "which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel" (Josh. 1:2). It is not Israel's conquest but God's grant that forms their title. *Second*, the covenant grant of land requires faithfulness to the covenant law: it is God's law, and therefore the earth's law. Accordingly, the commandment is explicit:

> 7. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.
>
> 8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. (Josh. 1:7-8)

Success and prosperity in the land are dependent upon faithfulness to the covenant. The earth itself will become a curse to those who violate the covenant; the covenant earth will fulfil or put into force God's covenant purposes, (Deut. 28:15-68) and hence the urgency of faithfulness to the covenant grace and law. The land is given for covenant purposes, not our own, and hence the urgency of knowing and keeping the covenant law.

Third, faithfulness ensures victory. The Lord God is faithful to His covenant. His faithfulness to the covenant people is never a lawless, antinomian faithfulness: it is at all times covenantal. His promise, thus, that "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5), does not apply to those who abuse or despise His covenant. To the faithful, however, the promises are remarkable:

> 3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

> 5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.
>
> 6. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.
>
> 9. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Josh. 1:3,5-6,9)

In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 we see how great the blessings are for faithfulness, and how radical and total are the curses. There are no half-hearted ways nor half-way measures with God.

This commission or trust to Joshua is given again, in briefer form, in the Great Commission or trust given by our Lord to His people, to the New Israel of God (Matt. 28:18-20). The covenant land grant is renewed, this time to include all nations and all the earth. The last Adam, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:45-50), restates the original dominion mandate of Genesis 1:26-28; the land grant is again total, but with a difference. The new Adam, who is both very man of very man, and very God of very God, has total power: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). All authority and power are His, so that the new people of the covenant, the new humanity in Christ, will see, if faithful, a far greater fulfillment of the promises than the people of the Old Israel ever imagined. Together with this power goes His presence: "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:20).

Revelation, of course, deals very extensively with the covenant land grant. The seven last plagues of Exodus were upon unbelieving Egypt. These are echoed in the seven plagues, woes, vials, or judgments upon Babylon the Great, on the covenant-denying world. The false heirs are to be dispossessed, and the true heirs to occupy the whole earth. The joyful proclamation is sounded: "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).

Certain general facts are apparent from this relationship of land and covenant. *First*, "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). It is neither private property, nor state property: it is God's property. We are stewards and trustees thereof, and strictly accountable.

Second, because God owns the land, and us, He is strictly entitled to all the firstfruits and the tithes. All things are to be used in faithfulness to His word, including the gleanings.

Third, because God owns the land, His Sabbaths of the land must be kept. As the creator and owner of all things, He determines their use, and their rest.

Fourth, because the land is the Lord's and he dwells among His people, we cannot defile the land: it must be kept holy, separated unto God and His law.

Numbers 35:34 declares, "Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: For I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel."[9]

Wilderness in the Bible means unsown, uncultivated land.[10] It is land which man has not yet brought under dominion in terms of God's law-word. The judgments pronounced through Isaiah upon the ungodly nations declared that their cities and lands would become a wilderness because of their sins (Isa. 5:24).

To separate the land grant from Scripture is to deny the doctrine of the covenant, and to falsify Scripture.

4. Covenant Faithfulness

1. I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.
2. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
3. In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.
4. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.
5. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.
6. Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.
7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.
8. The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands. (Psalm 138)

According to one of the prevalent myths about the Bible, the Old Testament is civil and social in its emphasis, whereas the New Testament gives us a more personal religion. Such a perspective overlooks the fact that our Lord called twelve disciples out, to replace the twelve patriarchs of Israel, established a covenant in His own blood with this new Israel, and then sent them out to bring all the earth under His dominion. The Old Testament, on the other hand, is full of much intensely personal faith within the context of the covenant. An example of this is Psalm 138.

It is a hymn of personal thanksgiving for God's *covenant* grace and mercy. The psalm is therefore important in what it says concerning the covenant and its meaning. It must be added that, in both Old and New Testaments, all expressions of personal faith are covenantal. David thanks God with all his

[9] W. D. Davies: *The Gospel and the Land.* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1974). pp. 27-29.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

heart for God's covenant kindness. This thanksgiving and confession is made in the face or presence of all "the gods," before all the religions, demonic forces, and peoples of the world. Because the Lord is David's mainstay, David witnesses in all his being to the mainstay of his life. In his worship and life, David acknowledges the faithfulness of God.

David's joy in God's covenant faithfulness is twofold. *First*, David knows God's unfailing faithfulness to His covenant promise (Ps. 138:7-8). Moreover, what the Lord has begun, He will complete. "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me" (Ps. 138:8). God's plan and purpose will not fail, because He is the Lord. That plan and purpose include the lowliest of His covenant people.

Second, David rejoices at the certainty that all the kings of the earth shall be brought into the covenant and will someday share in this praise of the Lord (Ps. 138:4-6). In Psalm 102:15ff., the same joy is present: the time shall come "When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD" (Ps. 102:22). Of the Christ it is said, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8). This prophecy is restated in Zechariah 9:10.

The key sentence, for the doctrine of the covenant, is in Psalm 138:2, "for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." The implications of this statement are startling. *The name* of God stands for His person. In a sense, God has no name in the sense of a description or classification: God is beyond all naming by man. To Moses, who asked for God's name, God's answer was, "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14), or, He Who Is, the self-existent and absolute Lord over all things. There can be nothing greater than or above God and His Name. He is the LORD, and there is none greater; there is no God nor being beside Him or over Him (Isa. 45:5). Here, however, David, inspired by the Lord Himself, makes an audacious statement. God has magnified His word above His Name. The *word* has reference to God's covenant, the covenant promises and the covenant law. Some commentators limit the scope of the word to God's promise to the House of David; others limit it still further to Christ, and the word of promise concerning the coming of Christ. The text gives us no limitation of meaning. Clearly, it is personal, and David rejoices in it accordingly; it would thus be inclusive of Christ and David's royal line. However, because David looks ahead, in terms of that exalted word, to the conversion of all kings and kingdoms in due time, we cannot exclude this aspect of this exalted word. It is, in brief, the totality of the covenant word. For us, it is the whole of Scripture, God's covenant word.

What then does this exaltation by God of His word above His very person mean?

A covenant is a binding covenant, a law that binds both parties to live and die in faithfulness to the covenant. Hence, the necessity of blood for the

making of a covenant. The penalty on man for the transgression of the covenant is death. Hence, with sin, death entered the world (Rom. 5:12).

With man's sin, and the sentence of death, the covenant was in effect rendered null and void. Man had despised the grace of the covenant and broken its law. God, however, remained faithful to the covenant. He sent His only-begotten Son to be born of a woman, to become, not only truly God as He always was, is, and shall be, but also to become truly man, the new Adam. The Second Person of the covenant Godhead came to make atonement for man, to create a new humanity out of the old, and to renew the covenant with that recreated humanity. So remarkable and great is God's faithfulness, grace, and mercy, that, even in the midst of judgment, Jeremiah could say,

> 22. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.
> 23. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.
> (Lam. 3:22-23)

It is of this covenant faithfulness that David says: "thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." There is not another sentence in all the Bible of like character. God, than whom nothing can be greater, declares that He Himself places His covenant word and promises above Himself!

This, all the more, accentuates the fearfulness of our unfaithfulness to His word. When the Lord is so faithful to His promises to us, our casual and wayward ways are all the more inexcusable and fearful.

5. The Blood of the Covenant

The covenant with God is a covenant of both law and grace. The Bible is a covenant book; Christianity is the religion of God's covenant with man. There is no understanding of Biblical faith apart from the doctrine of the covenant.

Certain things are necessary premises to any understanding of the covenant. *First* of all, the law of the covenant regulates man's relationship with God. Man can only approach God on God's terms as covenant Lord. In our democratic era, we have deliberately set aside the dignities of approach to superiors, and we have assumed that a "good heart" is a sufficient guarantee of communication. On one occasion, a high school boy spoke to a distinguished visitor of 70 years, a guest in his parent's home, familiarly, and by the visitor's first name. When mildly rebuked by someone, (not by his parents), he was amazed: I like him; I think he's great, as though his liking thereby placed the two of them on a plane of equality. God is always the Lord, and man, even with the adoption of grace into sonship, is still the creature. Man's only approach to God can be the God-ordained one; anything less than that is offensive to Almighty God. The very fact that the law of the covenant opens up the possibility of a relationship is an act of sovereign grace. For man

to treat that relationship casually, or to assume that his own terms and wishes (or heart) can govern that relationship with God, is not only an act of sin but also of arrogance.

Second, the covenant and its law governs the relationship of man with man. The covenant law governs our relationship with all men, without exception. This includes men who are redeemed members of the covenant as well as covenant outlaws. It also includes our relationship with ourselves. We are not our own; we are God's possession and property, whether in rebellion or in obedience, and his law governs all men. His law also governs all the earth, so that our relationship to the earth, trees, and all things else is under God's law. Our diet, farming, marriage, children, sexuality, war and peace, and everything else are under God's law. God's law does not allow us to exempt any area of life from His government.

Third, all this flows from the fact already indicated, namely, that God is the Creator, and we are His creatures and possession. Because God is the author and Lord of life, all the rules of life are of His making. At no point in our lives can we step outside of God's creation into one of our own making; hence, at every point, we are under God's law and government. The modern quest and lust for a man-made life and world is the desire to escape from a law-world of God's making into one where both the world and its law are fabricated by man's fiat word. This is man's impossible dream, and also the heart of his sin. The world and man, and every possibility and potentiality therein, remains inescapably God's law-world, and His predestined possibilities and potentialities.

Fourth, the penalties for offenses against God's covenant law differ in terms of their relationship to God and to man. There are a variety of penalties for *offenses* against men, i.e., penalties which can be enforced by either church or state. Thus, gossip or tale-bearing is strongly condemned (Lev. 19:16), but there is no civil penalty against it, unless it becomes perjury (Deut. 19:16-21; Prov. 19:5,9). Other offenses require such penalties as corporal punishment, others restitution, and some, the death penalty. The penalty is usually proportionate to the crime, although, in certain cases, God reserves to Himself all right to punish. Thus, there is a gradation of penalties for offenses against men. However, *all offenses against God* have a common penalty, death (Gen. 2:17). "Small" sins against my neighbor may have a minor penalty in the *civil* sense, but, in the *theological* sense, bring me under the death penalty before God, a penalty from which I am only rescued by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. *All sin* is treason against the covenant Lord, and all sin is therefore deserving of and subject to the death penalty. The church too often thinks humanistically about sin: what I do to my neighbor is regarded as supremely important, whereas my relationship to God is a trifling matter. I can overlook tithing, from this point of view, but I dare not dislike

my neighbor. In such a view of sin, the positions of God and man are reversed. Sin is not really seen as sin until we see it as *against God* in essence (Ps. 51:4).

Fifth, Because of God's covenant law, blood is central to the doctrine of the covenant. This is plainly set forth in Scripture:

> 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. (Lev. 17:11)
>
> And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (Heb. 9:22)

The word "almost" in Hebrews 9:22 refers to the fact that some things were ritually purged by fire and water also; however, we are told, there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. Release comes only with blood, or the death penalty. In Numbers 31:23, we have a reference to purification by fire; and in Exodus 19:10; and Leviticus 16:26,28 we have references to purification by water. All these texts deal with the purification of things, not people. Leviticus 22:6,7 calls for the purification of persons by water (or bathing), but not for sins of commission, but for contact with the dead, and with certain unclean creatures. The law, we are plainly told, requires the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. Significantly, the law and this text do not say the shedding of *our* blood. In certain instances, this is true. If a man sheds the blood of another man, i.e., kills him lawlessly, his blood must be shed (Gen. 9:6); certain offenses *against* man require the death penalty for expiation. However, the blood of man can never make restitution to God, nor effect remission of sin. Only the blood of the God-man, Jesus Christ, can do this. He comes as God to our rescue, to effect our rescue and redemption; as the perfect man and the new Adam, He pays the penalty for His new human race and remits their sins; He rescues them from sin and death and establishes them in righteousness and life. The remission of sin is only by the blood of Jesus Christ. However, the remission in the *theological* area does not remove God's requirement for restitution in the *civil* area. The thief and the murderer may find themselves saved by God's sovereign grace, and their sins remitted in relationship to God by Christ's atonement, but the thief must still make restitution for his theft, and the murderer must still pay for his crime with his life. God's covenant law requires this.

Sixth, all men are without exception bound by the covenant with Adam. Christ's atonement releases us from *the curse* of the law, its penalties before God, but not before men. The covenant requires us to pay the covenant price for sins, i.e., the civil price, restitution and/or death. The redeemed are re-instated into the covenant grace and privileges and given the Spirit to enable them to be righteous, i.e., to keep the law. The original covenant with Adam and all his seed was an act of grace and *a blessing*. To be restored into the covenant peace by God through Christ is *a double blessing*. To sin against

that double blessing means a fearful judgment. This is plainly stated in Hebrews 10:26-31:

> 26. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,
> 27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
> 28. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
> 29. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?
> 30. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.
> 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

For this reason, as Peter tells us, in every age "judgment must begin at the house of God" (I Peter 4:17). Our Lord states the reason for this very simply: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). This is the law of the covenant.

6. Covenant Curses and Blessings

Because the covenant is God's act of grace, for man to despise that grace means that God's curse is upon him. On the other hand, if man is faithful to the covenant and its law, God's blessing is upon him.

The curse of the law, i.e., its penalties, are upon all who despise the Lord of the covenant and His law-word. The *first* curse pronounced is *death* (Gen. 2:16-17). The process of death began to work in man from the moment of his fall, so that the entelechy of his life became death. Fallen man lives self-consciously under the shadow of death. This is a *moral* fact, because the cause of death and its entrance into the world is *sin*. Man, however, wishes to see himself as a victim, not a sinner, and he accordingly substitutes the universal and metaphysical reign of death for the reign of God. The universe supposedly evolved out of nothing, out of a cosmic silence and death, and death in time shall reclaim all things, including the sun, unless heroic man overcomes death through his science or knowledge. What began in Eden as a quest for false knowledge in defiance of God will supposedly lead to the conquest of death.

Although death is the ultimate, basic, and final curse, there are other curses on man for his contempt of God's law. There is, *second*, the curses of sickness, plagues, and epidemics (Deut. 28:21-22, 27-29, 59-61). Because salvation means the health of man in all his being, the converse is that sin means that man in all his being is sick. The sickness can be "mental" or

"physical"; in either case, it is the penalty for denying the principle and the source of all health, the triune God.

Third, the curse of the law includes drought, and the destruction of urban and farm life (Deut. 28:15-19, 23-24). The Almighty declares that the earth itself is a stewardship given to covenant man; all others will suffer God's plagues in order to dispossess them from God's inheritance. It is only the blessed meek who shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5).

Fourth, the curse of the law includes poverty and disasters (Deut. 28:15-19, 38-46). God does not bless His enemies with covenant blessings. We are accustomed to thinking of poverty as an exclusively economic matter. The Bible is emphatic that it is first of all a theological fact. This is not to say that every poor man is a sinner; the Bible is clear in denying this fact, and more than one saint, like the widow of Zarephath (I Kings 17:8-16), has been very poor. Poverty, however, like sickness, is a fact which besets an apostate nation. Because the enemies of God's covenant and law are in such nations usually in power, it is often the saints who suffer the most. Even then, the Lord is mindful of them, as He was of the widow of Zarephath.

Fifth, the curse of the law includes also war, invasion, defeat, and conquest, even captivity (Deut. 28:25-26, 36-38). This captivity will be first to evil rulers from our own midst, and then from an alien and conquering people. Having shown contempt for God, the apostate people are subjected to the contempt of men.

Sixth, in all these curses, a constant factor is present, *frustration*. Man, seeking his own will, despises God's law as a restraint upon him, only to find his way is the epitome of frustration.

> 28. The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:
> 29. And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways; and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.
> 30. Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein; thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.
> 31. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.
> 32. Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand.
> 33. The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always:

> 34. So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. (Deut. 28:28-34)

I find it startling and frightening that people can read these words and discount them because we are supposedly no longer under law, only in grace; surely, this is at least in part a grim fulfillment of *the curse of blindness* which is basic to all sin, the *seventh* aspect of the curse of the law.

The blessings of faithfulness to the law are very beautifully set forth in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. *First*, they all add up to "the grace of life" (I Peter 3:7). Our Lord says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus Christ is life (John 14:6), and men cannot have life apart from Him.

Second, the converse of all the curses we have as blessings: the principle of health, an earth which is rich toward us and skies which give us the weather that blesses, wealth and providential care, prosperity, protection against our enemies, fulfillment, and wisdom and insight. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Ps. 33:12).

Third, the blessing of the law includes providential care. The whole point of Deuteronomy 28:1-14 is that our total life is surrounded by God's care and blessing. It is the assurance that the very angels of God "are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). It means "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).

Fourth, the blessing of the law is that, because it is covenant law, it is also grace at one and the same time. It is a part of our life of grace and is thus an aspect of our walk with God.

When God entered into covenant with Abraham, through whom in due time the last Adam was to come, Abraham divided the sacrificial animals (except for the birds) "in the midst, and laid each piece one against another" (Gen. 15:9-10). Both parties were thus represented in this division. The covenant began with the death of the animals, to signify the judgment on any party to a covenant who denies the law of the covenant. In the theophany which followed, Abraham was told of the remarkable covenant blessings which were to be his, as well as the covenant judgment and captivity which should come upon his descendents (Gen. 25:12-21). A covenant confers not only privileges but also responsibilities.

Biblical faith was and is a covenant faith. We dare not forget therefore that "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). God has not become, in the centuries since the days of Moses and the years of our Lord, a toothless and doting old grandpa, whose concern it is to withdraw his children and grandchildren from the arena of life. Antinomianism is a denial of the covenant. It creates a god in terms of modern individualism, dissolving the

covenant, and modern romanticism with its emphasis on feeling rather than reality. It is a most startling blindness that people can read the Bible and believe that much of it is irrelevant to them because their supposed spirituality but actual sin has ostensibly given them life on a higher plane.

Ancient Israel tried to substitute the outward profession of animal sacrifices without faith, and God condemned it sharply through Micah:

> 6. Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?
> 7. Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
> 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:6-8)

Israel had taken a portion of the law and reduced it to an empty rite: sacrifices maintained a show of obedience, whereas the full obedience to God's justice or righteousness (His Law) went neglected. The people were ready to express extravagant obedience, i.e., to offer "the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul," an offering they knew God would not receive, but they would not obey His law-word. The Lord requires in His word, *wherein* He shows us what is good, how to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before Him. It is not humility to set aside His covenant law.

Today, instead of costly sacrifices, churchmen have an even cheaper substitute for covenant faithfulness. They indulge in pious gush, sing, "O, how I love Jesus," and then do as they please, and they wonder then why they and the land are not blessed.

To set aside the covenant law is to set aside the covenant God and His blessing, and to choose His curse.

The sad fact today is that most men, in and out of the church, *naturalize* God's curses and blessings. They ascribe "natural" disasters to mindless patterns and cycles in "nature," and this removes the onus from man. Man then becomes the victim of a Darwinian universe rather than the sinner he is. Despite the plain word of God, men insist on seeing things naturalistically. If their attention is called to Deuteronomy 28 (as I have often done), many who claim to believe the Bible dismiss it as a "special case" and applicable only to Israel, or else they say that God's dealings with men in the Christian era are more "spiritual" and "higher."

The same is true of blessings. Even men who pray for God's blessing are ready later to ascribe the results to themselves. Reality for them is naturalistic. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they are ready to say, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30). At best, they will only acknowledge a

"helping hand" from the Lord. Priority is with the natural order, and, at the center of the natural order is man. The words of St. Paul stand in judgment on all such men: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Cor. 4:7).

7. The Kinsman-Redeemer

The covenant establishes a bond, a very strong and binding relationship which commands the totality of the covenanter's life and loyalty. One duty of the covenanter is to be an avenger or *redeemer of blood* (goel haddam). The avenger or redeemer is the next of kin. The family is a natural covenant, and the role of the redeemer is spelled out in Leviticus 25:25. The key to the book of Ruth is the role of the kinsman-redeemer (see Ruth 3:9-13; 4:1-12). In I Kings 16:11, we read that Zimri killed the king and then slew all the house of Baasha, including kinsmen and friends, so that no family avenger or covenanted friend be left to avenge his murder.

The law requires the next of kin to avenge the murder of a man. It is a mistake to read this as primitivism. Just as the kinsman-redeemer has a responsibility to care for his own, so he has a responsibility to execute justice. It is part and parcel of the same responsibility that Paul speaks of in I Timothy 5:8: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." This law clearly means that we have the responsibility for the care of our families; this care includes justice. Where the law, as in Paul's day and our own, requires state courts to try and execute murderers, our responsibility then is to work to ensure that the crime, whether theft or murder, is prosecuted. In Biblical law, the avenger was still under civil law (Num. 35:6-34). For example, accidental deaths or manslaughter could not be avenged. Moreover, before the avenger did anything, there had to be a court trial which sentenced the murderer (Num. 35:12). The avenger thus had to play a part in the prosecution (Num. 35:24).

In the history of the role of the avenger or kinsman-redeemer in Israel, we find that the avenger could be a woman, if no man were living. If no one survived the murdered person, the court appointed a redeemer.[11] In other words, the prosecution of a murderer requires that the murdered man be represented in court. The Bible gives us examples of a father as redeemer (II Sam. 13:31-38); a son (II Kings 14:5-6); brothers (Judges 8:4-21; II Sam. 2:22ff.) and a king (I Kings 2:29-3:34). These instances are not necessarily in conformity to law, and we are not told of any legal process preceding these cases, although in one or two cases, this may have been possible.

[11] Haim-Hermann Cohn, "Blood Avenger," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 4. (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing Company, 1971). p. 1118.

This, briefly, is the status and function of the redeemer of blood in family life. It provides us with the pattern for the redeemer of blood in God's covenant. The obligations of a kinsman-redeemer in the law give us these facts:

1. He must be next of kin to the one whom he redeems.
2. He must pay all accrued charges, and satisfy every legal claim.
3. The redemption of an inheritance might require marriage.
4. He must avenge the wrongs his kinfolk have suffered.

A kinsman-redeemer must redeem a forfeited inheritance (Lev. 25:24-28).

A kinsman-redeemer must ransom his kinsmen from bondage (Lev. 25:47-54).

A kinsman-redeemer must avenge the death of his kinsman (Num. 35:12,19).[12]

The theological implications should be clear by now. In entering into covenant with man, God bound Himself to a relationship with man, a law-grace relationship. He made Himself man's covenant redeemer as well as judge. In the incarnation, God the Son became very man of very man as well as continuing as very God of very God. Thus, both parties to God's covenant with man are now represented in the one person of Jesus Christ. He is both the offended Lord of the covenant, the gracious King who in grace and mercy enters into covenant with man, and yet He is also the son of Mary and a member of the offending covenant partner, so that He is the Judge, and also the Judged, the Kinsman-Redeemer and the one in whose person all the elect members of God's covenant are to be redeemed. Jesus Christ is thus our next of kin, our Redeemer.

As such, He pays off all accrued charges, and He satisfies every legal claim, by His perfect righteousness and atoning death. The outlaws become family members by His justifying work and grace.

As the Bridegroom, He takes as His bride the church, so that the unfruitful and faithless becomes a holy bride to the Covenant Man. We are ransomed from bondage, and we are avenged.

The forfeited inheritance is in process of restoration. The world, created to be the Kingdom of God, was to have been covenant man's realm. Because of the fall, covenant-breakers have taken possession of the earth, rule the nations, and seek to govern without Christ and in contempt of Him and His law. History now is the work of Christ in dispossessing His enemies from His realm. A great shaking of all nations is in process to accomplish this task (Heb. 12:18-29). *The Book of Revelation* gives us the judgments of dispossession pronounced from the throne of Christ against all the nations.[13]

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[12] See M.M.B.: *Revelation*, vol. 1. (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Silver Publishing Company, n.d.). p. 62f.

[13] See R.J. Rushdoony: *Thy Kingdom Come*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, (1970) 1975).

Meanwhile, the Covenant Man, Jesus Christ, prepares His covenant people, the redeemed ones, for *possession*. They are called to victory (I John 5:4). Because they are members now of God's covenant family, they are chastened and even scourged, to discipline them for dominion (Heb. 12:1-11). The Father subjects His sons to this chastening to make them true sons and therefore heirs, to sanctify and prepare them for their work now, and for their eternal inheritance. This chastening of the sons is contrasted to the consuming fire that the Lord God is to all His enemies (Heb. 12:25-29). Both the chastening and the consuming judgment have as their focus God and Mount Sinai-Mount Zion, God's holiness and righteousness. Because a covenant is a law-treaty, and because God's covenant with man is an act of grace, the covenant in Christ is made more compelling in its power and fire than Sinai. Paul tell us that Sinai, after all could be touched, but not Mount Zion, the new Sinai of judgment (Heb. 12:18), for the very throne of heaven is now the true mountain of the covenant. It is "mount Sion,...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and...an innumerable company of angels...the general assembly of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and...God the Judge of all, and...the spirits of just men made perfect, and...Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24). Abel's blood cries out for vengeance (Gen. 4:10f), but the blood of Jesus Christ witnesses to our redemption, to the death penalty on all sin, and to His perfect work as Kinsman-Redeemer. All the Abels of history cry out for the Kinsman-Redeemer, and *Revelation* 6:9-11 tells us that Christ will in due time avenge them all. He is their Kinsman-Redeemer.

8. The Cities of Refuge

The city in the Bible and in much of the ancient world has a very different character than the modern metropolis or village. It was so radically different that any understanding of it escapes most people.

The modern city is a miscellaneous collection of peoples, representing very dissimilar faiths and interests. It is an economic and political entity. It can have also nationalistic orientations, but it is essentially cosmopolitan and open to all.

The ancient city clearly had economic and political motivations as well as racial ones, but it was essentially a religious entity. The people were in covenant one with another and had established a bond also with some particular gods. There could be great discrepancies in social status and power, but the people of a city were the people of a common faith.

For this reason, Biblical prophecy uses *the city* as a type of a particular faith. *Babylon the Great* is the Kingdom, church, or community of humanism (Rev. 17:5), whereas the Lord's city or community is the *new Jerusalem*

(Rev. 21:2), God's covenant realm. The city is thus seen in Scripture as a covenanted community.

There was a time when, in Europe as in the United States, *the church* was the building which commanded the commons or the public square. In New England, new towns could be build only with the approval of civil and religious authorities.

In a very real sense, we can say that present-day cities are still religious, but their religion is humanistic statism. Federal, state, county, and city buildings increasingly dominate the city as the church once did.

With this in mind, let us examine the meaning of the cities of refuge. The cities of refuge were places of safety for a man who was involved in the accidental death of another (Ex. 21:12-14). These places of asylum are cited and named in Numbers 35:6, 9-34; Joshua 20:1-9; 21:13,21,27,32,38; I Chronicles 6:57,67; Deuteronomy 4:41-43; 19:1-13; etc. From these texts it is clear *first*, that in an accidental death, the man "responsible" had to be protected in a place of refuge. Such cases are like that of a man whose axe-head flies off and kills a fellow-worker. If the man had known that his axe was defective and done nothing about it, he was guilty; if not, he was innocent and was entitled, after a hearing, to refuge.

Second, the cities of refuge were Levitical cities, cities set apart for the Levites, who were the religious instructors of Israel (Deut. 33:10). The guardians of the covenant law-word were thus also the guardians of the cities of refuge. The Levites were thus tied to the covenant refuge and peace; sanctuary was with the Levites, God's servants of His word, not with civil authorities.

Third, the city of refuge tried every man seeking refuge; if he were truly a murderer, he was handed over for execution; if innocent, he gained sanctuary. The covenant cities of refuge were thus places of both law and grace, judgment and release. God had spoken, and His word is true. The fleeing man could take refuge in God's appointed cities.

There is a reference to this fact in Hebrews 6:17-18:

> 17. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:
> 18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

To flee for refuge is *kataphuego*; the reference in Hebrews 6:18 is clearly to the cities of refuge. Not only so, it combines with it the sanctuary of the altar, i.e., laying hold upon the "horns" of the altar (Ex. 29:15).

Fourth, to enter the city of refuge thus meant to ask for judgment and grace. Any man who wanted to evade judgment would do better to flee to a foreign country, as some did, or into the wilderness. Entrance into a city of refuge was

an appeal to the covenant law for both judgment and grace. Paul uses this fact. God has given us a double assurance with respect to refuge, His promise or word, and His oath. There is, however, a difference. The man who fled to a city of refuge had killed accidentally; he wanted judgment to clear him, and grace to harbor him. We fly for refuge as guilty men, deserving judgment but assured of God's grace through Christ. We must confess ourselves sinners deserving to die who yet came for grace and release. Paul thus alters the status of the refugee dramatically; whether redeemed or not yet redeemed, they come to the place of refuge as guilty men.

Fifth, Christ and His cross are our city of refuge. Because He is the Covenant Man, He in whom both parties to the covenant are one, we find in Him our covering and refuge from judgment. The wrath of the law against sin falls upon Him; as members of His body, as His covenant-people, we have refuge from judgment, and freedom through grace.

A very interesting fact about the cities of refuge in Israel was that sanctuary was highly regarded as a covenant privilege. As a result, at all crossroads, signs were required, to point the way clearly to the nearest city of refuge. Moreover, the roads leading to the cities of refuge had to be straight and level, and always kept in good repair.[14]

On arrival, the refugee presented himself to the city elders, so that the entire premise of his flight was to seek justice and freedom, and to seek refuge in the covenant law. The covenant law was thus seen as both judgment and safeguard, as the preservation of God's covenant-order and as the source of covenant grace. The elders of the city provided him with accommodations, as well as protection.[15]

Throughout the centuries of church history, the church has functioned as a city of refuge. The virtual disappearance of this function of the church has been due to the decline of faith amongst the people and churchmen. The church is now neither a court nor a refuge.

The fact that Christ as the Covenant Man is our refuge does not eliminate the need for a church that sees its covenant duties with respect to both grace and law. The saints, Paul says, are to judge (rule, or govern) the world (I Cor. 6:2). The church must, as Christ's household, be His city of refuge to the world. It must therefore be the center of law and grace, and the voice of righteousness or justice.

All men in Israel had a stake in keeping the roads straight, level, and clear to the cities of refuge. They were a necessity needed by all, because justice and freedom were and are a concern to all. Where the church ceases to be the

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[14] Haim Hermann Cohn, "Cities of Refuge," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 5. (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing Company, 1971). p. 592f.
[15] Idem.

voice of God's righteousness, of His covenant law, grace, and peace, it is by-passed by men.

Put in modern terms, the cities of refuge provided *a change of venue*, a concept in fact which comes from the cities of refuge. Faced with a difficult or impossible situation, a man fled for justice to a city of refuge, for a change of venue.

Again, we have a relic of the cities of refuge in a common term for the church, *the sanctuary*. The root of the word, *holy*, has gained in *sanctuary* a meaning that identifies it as a holy place which is a place of refuge and immunity. The reference is to both the city of refuge and Jesus Christ. Not only did the church for centuries provide a refuge for men fleeing from the King or from a mob, but it also provided courts of justice. These courts, indeed, met a major part of the legal governmental needs of the community. It is a serious mistake on the part of historians to see only the abuses in church courts. Both in the medieval and Reformation eras, church courts were very important. They declined when they became instruments of power rather than of justice. For the same reason, civil courts are losing their position of respect with the people, and their days may be numbered.

9. Covenant Celebrations

Because covenants mean little to modern man, we fail to appreciate their importance in antiquity and especially in Scripture. A simple illustration will perhaps indicate their significance. If we lived in a hostile area where our life and possessions were an easy prey, we would be overwhelmingly grateful if the most powerful lord or king in that area took us under his protection. In the last century, more than a few travellers in Arabia and elsewhere were able to move about safely only because a powerful ruler entered, by an act of grace, into a covenant of salt with them. This was their safeguard in an otherwise hostile environment. One traveller in hostile mountain areas of Iran in the 1920s carried as his protection something from a powerful chieftain, *whose name he often invoked.*

Much of Scripture is understandable in terms of this. David declares, "the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (Ps. 20:1), a common statement in Scripture. Covenant man invokes *the protecting Name* of his covenant Lord as his defense. His security lies, not in himself, but in the great Name of the covenant Lord. To have the protection of the ruling chieftain of an area is a great asset, but to have, as one's covenant lord the God of all creation is the supreme asset and power.

It is, accordingly, a matter for *celebration*. It is a Name to inscribe upon banners, triumphantly (Ps. 20:5). David declares further,

> 1. Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

> 2. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (Ps. 29:1-2)

The covenant is a fact of joy, festival, and celebration. The annual festivals of Israel celebrated the glory of its covenant with God. The same was true of the weekly Sabbaths. The Sabbath was a day of rejoicing: It was the covenant day, the King's day of God the King, the day for celebrating covenant privilege and grace. Edersheim has noted:

> So far as we can gather, the religious observances of *Purim* commenced with a *fast* – 'the Fast of Esther' – on the 13th of Adar. But if *Purim* fell on a Sabbath or a Friday, the fast was relegated to the previous *Thursday*, as it was not lawful to fast, either on a Sabbath or the day preceding it.[16]

Sorrow, joylessness, and grief were not to be a part of the Sabbath, the covenant celebration of God's grace and our victory in Him. Edersheim stated, with respect to this fact,

> The return of the Sabbath sanctified the week of labor. It was to be welcomed as a king, or with songs as a bridegroom; and each household observed it as a season of sacred rest and of joy. True, Rabbinism made all this a matter of mere externals, converting it into an unbearable burden, by endless injunctions of what constituted work and of that which was supposed to produce joy, thereby utterly changing its sacred character. Still, the fundamental idea remained, like a broken pillar that shows where the palace hall stood, and what had been its noble proportions. As the head of the house returned on the Sabbath-eve from the synagogue to his home, he found it festively adorned, the Sabbath lamp brightly burning, and the table spread with the richest each household could afford. But first he blessed each child with the blessing of Israel. And next evening, when the Sabbath light faded out, he made solemn "separation" between the hallowed day and the working week, and so commenced his labor once more in the name of the Lord. Nor were the stranger, the poor, the widow, or the fatherless forgotten. How fully they were provided for, how each shared in what was to be considered not a burden but a privilege, and with what delicacy relief was administered – for all Israel were brethren, and fellow-citizens of their Jerusalem – those know best who have closely studied Jewish life, its ordinances and practices.[17]

The Sabbath is a day of rest, but it is important to understand that the rest is possible (and is commanded) because God's covenant care and provision allows man to rest one day in seven, one year in seven, and another year with the jubilee. The rest is thus a celebration of covenant grace and care. Israel was first taught this with respect to manna in the wilderness:

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16. A. Edersheim: *The Temple, Its Ministry and the Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ.* (New York: New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.). p. 322.
17. A. Edersheim: *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1953 reprint). p. 97.

15. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna; for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.
16. This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents.
17. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.
18. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.
19. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.
20. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank; and Moses was wroth with them.
21. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.
22. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.
23. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said. Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe: and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.
24. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.
25. And Moses said, Eat that to day, for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field.
26. Six days ye shall gather it: but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. (Ex. 16:15-26)

The rabbis rightly saw this incident as one which taught Israel the meaning of the Sabbath. It teaches, *first*, that the covenant God is mindful of His people every day of the week, and at all times. They are to look to Him for their day by day care. There is a clear echo of this in the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). The covenant Lord provides covenant care to His faithful people, all who are faithful to His covenant law.

Second, this care is such that they are commanded to devote a considerable part of their lives to a rest which is celebration, knowing that the Lord will provide sufficiently for their rest. We have here also the formal institution of the Sabbath just prior to the Ten Commandments. This is *not* an accidental fact. God obviously intends that His covenant people understand the meaning of the Sabbath from the manna experience. Manna is a covenant and Sabbath fact. As Keil and Delitzsch noted, "Israel was to take no care for the morrow (Matt. vi. 34), but to enjoy the daily bread received from God in obedience to the giver."[18]

Third, the sanctification of the covenant and the covenant law is God's gift of care, in this case the manna. In our case, it is His providential daily care.

The manna (and our providential care) give reason for rejoicing on the Sabbath. We rest in the certainty of His covenant grace and care to the covenant people.

Fourth, the wrath of God is spoken of by Asaph, who describes God's judgment on a people who forgot God's covenant faithfulness and despised the covenant salvation, law, and grace:

> 17. And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.
> 18. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.
> 19. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?
> 20. Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?
> 21. Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel:
> 22. Because, they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation;
> 23. Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,
> 24. And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.
> 25. Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.
> (Ps. 78:17-25)

Asaph makes clear that what the Lord condemns is covenant faithlessness, and this involves a man-centered rather than God-centered perspective. The sin of Israel in the wilderness was not their need of bread, but their doubt of God and "asking meat for their lust" (Ps. 78:18).

We will know when men are again covenantal in their lives when covenantal life becomes a joy and a celebration. The psalms tell us that, among God's faithful people, the Sabbath was a joyful celebration by a victorious people. Today, because churchmen deny God's covenant law, they thereby deny also His covenant grace. The Sabbath is no longer a festival of joy; indeed, the festival spirit has been replaced by rapture fever, a desire to escape from the world. Psalm 24 is an eloquent reminder of covenant joy. The earth is the Lord's who is the King of glory. Nothing can withstand His power and march, for He is Lord over all. Those who are wise crowd in to see Him, and by faithfulness to stand in His holy place. The Lord is strong and mighty in battle, and he is our God forever and ever. Covenantalism is a festival faith.

10. Oath and Covenant

In the modern world, the *oath* is a meaningless fact; for most men, it refers either to profanity, or to an oath of office. This fact witnesses to the

[18] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch: *The Pentateuch*, vol. II. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949 reprint). p. 68.

atomization of man and the politicization of society. Oaths were once basic to life in community, because oaths invoked the covenant of God.

A covenant had force only when the parties to the covenant by oath invoked curses and blessings upon themselves for disobedience or obedience. Since the fact of a covenant was in itself a blessing, often only the curses were invoked, as in Deuteronomy 27:9-26. In antiquity, virtually all law was covenant law, a covenant between men and their gods. The oath in each culture invoked the penalties of the covenant god for failure to perform in terms of the oath.

The oath is thus a self-invoked *covenantal curse*. The oath assumed blood, the blood of the covenant, a life and death tie. Sometimes blood was shed whenever an oath was taken. In India, the oath was taken over the blood of a cock, killed for this purpose, and whose blood was spilled on the ground. Arabs dipped their hands in the blood of a camel on taking an oath. Medieval man often swore with his hand placed on sacred relics, i.e., the relics of covenant saints. In many cultures, an oath was accompanied by drinking blood, and also by eating, so that communion with one's god was also in part an oath. Paul speaks of this aspect of communion when he declares:

> 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.
> 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
> 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (I Cor. 11:28-30)

Both Greeks and Jews raised their hand in taking an oath.[19]

An oath was so serious a matter that a man could clear himself of an offense by taking an oath (Ex. 22:10ff.). We have a reference to this also in Solomon's prayer (I Kings 8:31f.).

We have examples of oaths in I Samuel 14:44; 25:22; II Samuel 3:9,35; I Kings 2:23, and many, many other passages of Scripture. We have an oath at the observance of the covenant duties in II Chronicles 15:11-15.

Our Lord condemns the casual use of oaths in Matthew 5:34. This was not an absolute prohibition, but a ban on non-covenantal and purely personal uses of the oath, i.e., to back up our word, not to establish a covenantal word.[20] The Reformation view of oaths is summed up in Article XXXIX of The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England:

> As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge, that

[19] A. E. Crawley, "Oath (Introductory and Primitive)," in James Hastings, editor: *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. IX. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. and T. Clark, (1917) 1930). pp. 430-432.

[20] See W. Ernest Beet, "Oath (New Testament and Christian)," in *Ibid.*, vol. IX, p. 434-436.

> Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXII, "Of Lawful Oaths and Vows," gives us a fuller statement. In its first sentence, it summarizes the religious nature of oaths;

> I. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing, solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.
>
> II. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful and to be abhorred. Yet as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the Old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.
>
> III. Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.
>
> IV. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in any thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.
>
> V. A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.
>
> VI. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily; out of faith and conscience of duty; in way of thankfulness for mercy received; or for obtaining of what we want: whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties; or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.
>
> VII. No man may vow to do any thing forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise or ability from God. In which respects, popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

"A lawful oath is a part of religious worship" because it invokes the covenant God and His authority. An oath accompanies the establishment of a covenant.[21]

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[21] Meredith G. Kline: *By Oath Consigned.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1968). p. 16.

It should be apparent by now that an oath of office is a covenant fact. The U.S. Constitution, by requiring an oath of office, thereby continued the Puritan doctrine of a covenant nation and people. The oath was then still a serious and religious fact, carefully guarded by law. Originally, the oath of office was taken on an open Bible, opened to Deuteronomy 28. The oath of office is still used, even for those entering the bureaucracy, which means that, however empty the oath may be to these men, it still invokes all the curses of the law for disobedience.

There is another aspect of oaths. Every man who takes an oath (and an office) is responsible for the covenantal obedience of all those under him. This is why Moses was in peril of his life from God, because of Zipporah's rebellion and the uncircumcision of his son.[22]

Godly authority cannot be annulled by a vow. Hence, a wife or daughter could not make a vow without the permission of the husband or father (Num. 30:1-16).

A much misunderstood example of an oath is that which appears in two instances among the patriarchs, i.e., placing the hand under the thigh of the adjurer (Gen. 24:2,3,9; 47:29). This was not a relic of fertility cult worship; rather, it was, as the rabbis of old taught, an oath by circumcision, i.e., a covenant oath on the covenant sign.[23]

God Himself punishes all false oath takers and "will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). Perjury desecrates the name of God (Lev. 19:12). Examples of God's judgment on the violations of oaths appear in I Samuel 14:36ff.; II Samuel 21:1-2; I Kings 16:34 (cf. Josh. 6:26). God's view of the seriousness of oath and covenant violations is abundantly clear, as witness Ezekiel 17:16ff.

In the making of the covenant, God placed Himself under oath (Heb. 6:16-20); this signified His willingness to die for His covenant man. This God the Son did at Calvary. The significance of this must not be overlooked. God Himself kept His covenant oath to man to the death of Christ on the Cross. One who takes an oath so seriously cannot view any casualness with respect to oaths lightly. Rather, His wrath will blaze out against all such.

Our lives are a series of covenant oaths and vows. Baptism is clearly such an act, as is marriage, which includes vows to God as well as to one another. Communion is related to the oath also, and the words of institution from St. Paul invoke judgment for unworthy partaking. Civil and ecclesiastical offices also put us under oaths or vows.

Life is covenantal; we are therefore under oath at every turn. We are required to be faithful.

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22. *Ibid.*, p. 88f.

23. Moshe Greenberg, "Oath," in *Encyclopaedia Judiaca*, vol. 12. (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing House, 1971). p. 1296.

11. The Civil Government

One of the most powerful ideas in the modern world is the social contract doctrine. According to this theory, at one time, in the early history of mankind, society did not exist. All men lived in a state of anarchism. Every man was his own law and state, and men lived in a world without any ties between men other than of their own choosing. This state of nature proved to be limiting, inconvenient, and dangerous, and so men came together to subscribe to a social contract whereby all would be governed. Every man would surrender some freedom in return for mutual protection and a great security under a coercive contract which would give civil freedom to replace anarchic freedom.

This doctrine was developed as an alternative to and a replacement for the doctrine of the covenant. According to Scripture, God entered into covenant with man and gave man from the beginning the law of the covenant, so that the covenant is an act of both grace and law. Man's life is covenantal,i.e., bound to a law treaty with God; man is bound, in a sense, to a contract that is given to him by God and which man has no choice but to obey or to be judged a rebel.

The roots of the social contract doctrine are in the Renaissance, although its full popularity and popularization came with Rousseau. There are a number of important implications and consequences to this doctrine. *First*, by asserting an original state of anarchy as the state of nature, the social contract doctrine made popular the idea of the Noble Savage, an original state of innocence, and the state as the instrument of man's enslavement. Anarchism as a movement owes much to this aspect of this doctrine. *Second*, by asserting the idea of a contract among men, the social contract doctrine promoted humanistic views of civil government. Earlier, monarchies saw themselves as instances of a social contract between king and people. Constitutionalism was to a large degree an effort to renew or to create anew a social contract. The spirit of revolutions has been this urge to create a new contract between men. In the process, "men" have been redefined; for Marxism, this means the proletariat; for the Nazis, it meant the German race. Revolutionists present themselves as the true "people" who alone have the right to redefine the terms of the contract.

Third, the social contract has replaced God's law with man's law, and God's government with man's government. The monarchies opposed God's law as a usurpation of their royal prerogative, and the democracies stepped up this revolt by subverting every aspect of God's law which had survived from the middle ages and the Reformation. The social contract idea has thus been a major anti-Christian force.

Covenantalism begins with the presupposition of God's sovereignty and His law. God therefore gives His law to His covenant people. When God gave

His law (Ex. 20:1-23:33), He immediately required the establishment publicly of the covenant bond, and the acceptance thereof by Israel. The people heard the law, and they declared, "All the words which the LORD hath said will we do" (Ex. 24:3). Then the blood of the covenant was sprinkled on both the altar of God and on the people, binding both to the covenant and its law to the death (Ex. 24:5-8). They were now under God's law in the totality of their lives, "religiously," civilly, maritally, and in every way.

They were therefore ruled by judges, men who were like prophets, speaking and acting for God. They were men raised up by God (Judges 3:15; 6:11-16; etc.). The principle of government was the law of God (Deut. 17:18-20); this was true of kings, and therefore of all lesser rulers and judges.

This doctrine of civil government as an aspect of God's covenant has been basic to the history of Christendom. It is an easy matter to call attention to all the historical aberrations of rulers over the centuries, most of whom were not submissive to God's law. In spite of this, the social goal was faithfulness to God's covenant. The coronation ceremonies stressed the covenant, the U.S. Constitution requires an oath, a covenant fact, of the President. The basic and underlying concept of civil government has been covenantal, with heavy overtones of humanism. Since the development of the social contract doctrine, the covenantal aspects have become merely relics.

All modern political systems are now in crisis. Humanism has triumphed the world over. In some areas, ancient forms of paganism have eroded, with resulting political instability. In the West, the age of revolution is being followed by an era of dissolution.

The result is what one scholar has called the crisis of legitimacy in the modern state. *Truth* in some sense was once the foundation of society; this has given way to other considerations. In a world without meaning, truth does not exist, because brute actuality prevails. There is then also no *authority*. The social contract theorists have unwittingly created a growing state of anarchy, one far from the ideal dreamed of in doctrines of the withering away of the state.

The new situation is like that of *Judges*; men deny God as their lord and King, and every man does that which is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). God's authority being denied, every man as his own god is his own law also (Gen. 3:5). Concerning the collapse of authority in the modern world, Schaar writes:

> Concerning authority, I believe that genuine authority is all but lost to us today, and that perhaps we have lost even the concept of authority, so that we cannot know what honorable obedience consists in. This is no small loss, and no amount of liberation will make up for it, because if we do not know what authority is, we cannot know what liberty is either.[24]

His point is very telling: we cannot know what either liberty or authority is in a meaningless world.

Schaar is strongly favorable to Lincoln's views in his "Speech in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," February 22, 1861, which he sees as an example of "covenanted patriotism."[25] In that speech, however, Lincoln invokes the first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence as his political philosophy.[26] Those aspects of the Declaration which echoed the language of social contract most appealed to Lincoln. Schaar declares,

> Finally, Lincoln's idea proposes a strictly political definition of nationhood, one which liberates us from the parochialism of race and religion, and one which severs patriotic devotion from the cult of national power. It is, in my estimation, a calamity that this idea of patriotism has been so corrupted and subverted among us. The work of reviving, purifying, and establishing it is the supreme task of American political education.[27]

Schaar fails to see that precisely because we have been liberated from God and Christ we have also been liberated from authority and liberty. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17), and only there.

Man's authority and law lead to tyranny. God's law is covenant law: it has God's authority and is accompanied by God's sanctions, providence, curses, and blessing.

It is a serious fallacy to talk about a covenant faith and then limit its scope to the church. The civil order must be covenanted to God in faith and obedience or be subject to God's judgment. If we deny God's covenant and its rightful jurisdiction over every sphere of life, we deny Him His crown rights. If one link of a chain breaks, the chain is broken; "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). God's covenant law must cover all of life.

12. Blood and Life

One of the landmarks in the revelation of the meaning of the covenant is Genesis 22. A covenant is a law treaty between two parties which is ratified with blood. The absence of blood appears only in Eden, before the fall. In Genesis 15, the blood came from a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon (Gen. 15:9). In a covenant between men, both offered blood, from a finger, the wrist, or in some other way setting forth their common life and their allegiance to death. What we see in the sacrifice of Isaac, ordered

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24. John H. Schaar: *Legitimacy in the Modern State*. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1981). p. 2.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 291ff.
26. Roy P. Basler, editor: *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, IV. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953). p. 240.
27. Schaar: *op. cit.*, p. 296.

and then set aside by God, is that "All Biblical sacrifice rests on the idea that the gift of life to God, either in consecration or in expiation, is necessary to the action or the restoration of religion." However, man's sin disqualifies man from offering his own life in atonement, so that "the principle of vicariousness is brought into play: one life takes the place of another life."[28] God made clear to Abraham that He provides the atoning blood.

That blood is required of all men. As a warning to Egypt that their sins called for death, their death as sinners unless they submitted to God the Lord, the *first* plague on Egypt turned the waters into blood (Ex. 4:9; 7:17-21). From the first plague of blood to the last, God's purpose is clear: "against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD" (Ex. 12:12).[29] With the last plague, all the firstborn in Egypt were sentenced to death; the firstborn represented the totality, given over to judgment. Only those whose doorposts were sprinkled with the blood of the Passover lamb had atonement and were passed over by death (Ex. 12:7-22). The redeemed were to do nothing but seek shelter under the blood.

When at Sinai, God remade his covenant with the redeemed people; the blood was sprinkled over the people and over the altar (Ex. 24:5-8). Hebrews 9:19 tells us that, together with the people, *the book*, i.e., the law of God, was also sprinkled. Delitzsch erred badly here in saying that the "book, though containing divine words, was formed and written by human hands, and as such would be affected by human impurity, and need an atonement."[30] The blood was also sprinkled on the altar, representing God as the other party in the covenant. It is blasphemous to believe that God and His word need atonement. Rather, the law of God sets forth the righteousness of God and its requirement of blood, the death penalty for sin, as well as God's provision for atonement.

Moreover, our view of the blood of the covenant cannot be negative. *First*, of all, the covenant blood represents life. Because of the covenant, its grace, law, and blood, we now have a community of life with God. We are the creation of God, and of His covenant purpose as decreed from all eternity. The covenant must above all else mean grace and life to us. Leviticus 17:11 does not tell us that death is in the blood but that life is in the blood. The sprinkling of the doorposts and of the people is a sign of life, not of death. Where there was no blood, Egypt perished. Similarly, the communion cup, as the type and symbol of Christ's blood (I Cor. 11:25-26) is not to us a sign of death but life. Only if we drink unworthily is it damnation (I Cor. 11:29).

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[28] Geerhardus Vos: *Biblical Theology, Old and New Testaments.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 107.

[29] Jacob Bryant stressed this warfare against the gods in *Observations Upon the Plagues Inflicted Upon the Egyptians.* (London, England, 1794). pp. 1-35.

[30] F. Delitzsch: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews.* Vol. II. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952 reprint). p. 120.

Second, the covenant blood is a reminder of grace and law. God in His grace has given us His law as our way of life. We have a privileged life, and we are told how to walk in terms of it. The Book of Common Prayer thus precedes the service of communion with the reading of the Ten Commandments, with the people responding. The law is the way of sanctification or holiness, and blessing (Deut. 28:1-14). The Law of the phylactery is important here (Ex. 13:9): on their foreheads and on their arm, meaning in their mind or thought and in their action, covenant Israel was to be faithful to the law. In fact, the Hebrews wore upon their forehead and on their arm a very small leather case containing the record of the Passover covenant. The passages in the case were Exodus 13:3-10, 11-16, and Deuteronomy 6:4-9,13-22.[31]

In times of persecution a red thread could be substituted for the phylactery, because the red thread was a symbol of God's covenant law, grace, and atonement.[32] The red or scarlet "thread" thus meant redemption and life for Rahab (Josh. 2:18). Early Christians used phylacteries also; theirs contained a portion of the Gospels, usually part of John 1, and these were worn around the neck. In later centuries, and at the Council or Synod of Laodicea this practice was condemned. Augustine and Chrysostom also condemned it. This was done in part to mark a separation from the Jews, but the practice reveals how seriously the law was regarded.[33] At Laodicea (c. 343-381 A.D.), there was hostility against the Jews. In Canon XXXVI, the use of phylacteries was forbidden on pain of excommunication.[34]

Third, blood is life (Lev. 17:11), and it is also a sign of Christ's life shed for the remission of sins. The Passover blood is the atoning blood of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 5:7). The sacredness of the atonement, and of *the sign of life and the atonement*, blood, is very clear in the law.

The law is emphatic that blood cannot be eaten (Lev. 3:17, 7:26). Moreover, the law requires the reverential shedding of the blood of animals, at the door of the sanctuary. This is still done by farmers in Armenia.

> 3. What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp,
>
> 4. And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer an offering unto the Lord before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people;

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31. H. Clay Trumbull: *The Blood Covenant*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: John D. Wattles, (1885) 1893). p. 233f.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
34. Henry R. Percival, editor: *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, editors: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series*, Vol. XIV. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans,). p. 151.

> 5. To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the LORD.
> 6. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savor unto the LORD. (Lev. 17:3-6)

To kill sacrificial animals without offering them to the Lord involves blood-guilt. All such are to be *cast off*, a punishment reserved for serious offenses such as manslaughter and murder.[35] All blood that typifies life through God's appointed substitute must be treated according to His law. If a man is out hunting, and kills an animal or bird, he must pour out the blood and cover it with dust (Lev. 17:13).

Fourth, again and again we are told that the offering of the blood is to make "a sweet savor unto the LORD" (Lev. 17:6). This means to have communion with the Lord in the Lord's appointed way. The whole burnt-offering meant total surrender to the Lord in covenant faithfulness.[36] To please God we must obey Him in His appointed way.

Fifth, the blood typified God's covenant redemption, but it was a type not the reality. Hence, Scripture again and again stressed faithfulness, obedience, trust, and a love of instruction with the covenant bond (Ps. 50:7-17; Isa. 1:11; 25:6; Jer. 7:21-23; Hosea 6:4-7; Deut. 30:1-6; Prov. 3:1-4; 7:2,3; Rom. 2:26-29; 4:11,12; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 3:7-9; etc.).

Sixth, to be recipients of the power of the blood is to receive life. The old hymn says, There is power in the blood, and rightly so. The blood is the application of Christ's atonement to our account, and our release from the penalties of sin, guilt, and death. In the Old Testament, this blood was sprinkled over the people (Ex. 24:5-8); now, we drink the communion cup. The wine is a symbol of Christ's shed blood. It means that we now have life and communion with God in Christ.

The sprinkled book or law (Heb. 9:19) reminds us that the covenant people are the people of the law because they are the people redeemed by the blood of Christ. We live; we are the recipients of God's grace, and we are therefore the people of the covenant law.

13. The Covenant and Seed

The word *seed* is an important one in Scripture. Its obvious meaning is posterity. It means not only the male semen (Lev. 15:16-18, 32) but also the children (Lev. 18:21; 22:4), so that a man's posterity and semen are called by the same term. Sometimes the word is used to symbolize a class of people, as

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35. R. K. Harrison: *Leviticus*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1980). p. 178.
36. Trumbull: *op. cit.*, p. 248f.

in Isaiah 1:4, "a seed of evildoers," "a seed of falsehood" (Isa. 57:4), and so on. Such usage presupposes a unity in the race and culture.

We have a like usage with respect to covenantal seed. In I John 3:9, we are told, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The one born of God does not continually commit sin, or abide in sin; he cannot "go on sinning" as an habitual thing.[37] Just as there is a unity of nature in fallen humanity, so too there is unity among those born of God. The reason for this difference from Adam's fallen seed among covenant men is that God's "seed remaineth" in them. This "seed" is Jesus Christ, whom Paul, in Galatians 3:16 declares is the promised covenant seed of Abraham. All in whom Christ indwells are thus separated unto God, and they cannot live in sin, or go on sinning as an habitual thing, even though they will at times stumble and sin. Thus, there are two seeds as there are two Adams, the Adam at the beginning of history, and Jesus Christ.

As we saw earlier, there is a promise of land to the chosen seed: all of the Promised Land in the Old Testament (Gen. 15:1-21), and the whole world in the New Testament (Matt. 28:18-20). In Revelation, the process of dispossession of the ungodly from God's earth is set forth.

The covenant requires that we, who by grace are made members of the covenant and given God's law, give our total allegiance to the Lord of the covenant. The covenant is for life and unto death. The whole of our life must belong to the covenant Lord, and all our possessions, and we must be ready to die for the covenant Lord. This includes our children: they are God's property, and they must be marked by the covenant sign in their flesh (Gen. 17:13). How total God's claim to our children is appears in Genesis 22; God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his son. Because the covenant requires a total community of life and interest, as well as a surrender to covenantal requirements, Abraham began to comply. God had by grace made Abraham a member of the covenant; He had given Abraham riches, a son, and the promise of a great land inheritance, and He had heretofore asked nothing of Abraham except a general loyalty. God, however, prevented the sacrifice, which had made clear what the covenant would *require*. What God prevented Abraham from doing, He Himself did, giving His only begotten Son for the redemption of the covenant people and world (John 3:16). Since God withholds nothing in His covenant faithfulness, man can withhold nothing from God which God requires.

Therefore, immediately after the recital of the Ten Commandments, Moses cites their covenant duty concerning their children. They are God's *seed*, not because they are necessarily regenerate, but because they belong to God as

[37] Alexander Ross: *Commentary on the Epistles of James and John*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1954). p. 185.

children in His covenant. Thus, circumcision, and, later, infant baptism, set forth God's *ownership* of our children. They belong to God. Hannah saw this clearly, saying to Eli, concerning Samuel "For this lad I prayed, and the LORD has granted me what I prayed Him for; I have therefore handed him back to the LORD; as long as he lives he is returned to the LORD" (I Sam. 1:27-28).

The family members of any covenant man or women are declared by Paul to be *holy* (I Cor. 7:14), not in the sense that they have any special grace but because God separates the possessions of a covenant person to Himself. If, however, the unbelieving spouse, or any unbelieving children, separates themselves from the covenant person, they are to be allowed to depart, because they thereby reject not only the believer but God's covenant (I Cor. 7:15). They are then open to clear judgment.

The covenant children must be taught the covenant faith. Immediately after the review of the Ten Commandments, the covenant law in summary, Moses cites God's covenant requirement concerning children:

> 4. Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD:
> 5. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
> 6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:
> 7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up....
>
> 20. And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?
> 21. Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:
> 22. And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:
> 23. And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.
> 24. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.
> 25. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us. (Deut. 6:4-7, 20-25)

First of all, children or seed are clearly very important to God's covenant. Because it is, as Abraham was told (Gen. 17:13), *an everlasting covenant*, the children are essential to its continuity, to the continuity of the dominion mandate, and to the obligation to withhold nothing from the Lord.

Second, the life of the family must revolve around the faith. The family must live and talk the faith (Deut. 6:6-7). As Craigie noted, "the commandments were to permeate every sphere of the life of man."[38]

Third, in Deuteronomy 6:20-25, we have a son's question and a father's answer to illustrate the family's covenantal teaching duty. The answer to the question, Why the law, and what is its meaning? is that the law is a covenant privilege. Egypt received signs and wonders in the form of judgment, and Israel in the form of deliverance (or salvation) and the law, "for our good always" (Deut. 6:24). God's purpose in the salvation of Israel and in the giving of the law was to grant His covenant people the Promised Land (Deut. 6:23). The covenant law gives us the way of possession of the promise, and our obedience manifests our gratitude and faith.

Fourth, "it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us" (Deut. 6:25). This righteousness means a faithful covenant relationship with God. The word righteousness, *tsedagah*, according to von Rad, "denotes a man's correct attitude towards claims which others or another - in this case God - have upon him." Man, recognizing God's claims upon him, and that he stands before God only by God's covenant grace, is recognized as righteous.[39]

All this must be taught to covenant children. We are not our own (I Cor. 6:19,20; 7:23); neither are our children our own. They must be reared "In the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The Lord can accept or reject them, but, in either case, it is the Lord's prerogative to do as He wills with His vessels.

Our duty as covenant-keepers is to give ourselves, our possessions, and our children to the Lord. The covenant requires it.

14. The Covenant and Election

As we have seen, the doctrine of the social contract is a humanistic substitute for the doctrine of the covenant. In the social contract, both parties play a contributing and determining role to the formation of the contract. There is thus an implicit equality in the social contract doctrine. This implicit equality was a contributing factor to the revolutionary ferment which followed the doctrine. The old order sees revolution as a violation of order; the revolutionist sees revolution as the exercise of a sovereign right to negate an invalid contract. In a social contract, both parties say, at the onset, "I choose," and either can say, at a given point, "I reject the contract as invalid for me."

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[38] P. C. Craigie: *The Book of Deuteronomy*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1976). p. 170.

[39] Gerhard von Rad: *Deuteronomy*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1966). p. 65.

The covenant rests on the doctrine of God, because it is established by God in terms of His nature, purpose, and will. In God's covenant, only one party, God, can say, "I choose." Man can only say, "I am chosen by His sovereign grace." The choice is entirely God's; man's response must be faith, obedience, and service. As a result, God instructs Israel as to their duty (Deut. 7:1-5), and declares:

> 6. For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.
> 7. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:
> 8. But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of the bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
> 9. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;
> 10. And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.
> 11. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.(Deut. 7:6-11)

Because Israel was God's covenant people, they could not marry outside the covenant. In fact, they were to be in a state of war with God's enemies. The world was to be conquered, either by conversion, or dominion over it. The covenant does two things to a covenant people: it marks their election by sovereign grace, and it declares them to be holy because God separates them to Himself. This juridical holiness must be followed by our personal holiness, and this means obedience, keeping God's commandments or laws. In Deuteronomy 7:9, we have this holiness which is required of covenant man described in summary: "love him and keep his commandments." Our Lord reminds His disciples of this requirement of covenantal holiness at the Last Supper: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). In Deuteronomy 7:10, we are told that failure to do so means to hate God, and it incurs His destroying judgment. We have thus some obvious parallels stated:

> love – Obedience to His commandments
> obedience – blessings
> hate – disobedience to His commandments
> disobedience – curses

The covenant requires us to read history in terms of this fact.

H.H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election*, said "election is for service." This is emphatically true. The covenant cannot be viewed as a benefit for man, whatever the blessings thereof. Sigmund Freud said of

marriage that it was a good solution to the sex problem; marriage so viewed ceases soon to be marriage. If salvation is viewed as a solution to the problem of where we spend eternity, there is not salvation. The covenant and its salvation are God-centered: we are saved to serve God. Our election is for the glory of God.

Because our redemption is by God's election, it is God's work that saves us. Hence, the covenant is inclusive of our children, who must be surrendered, with all that we are and have, to the Lord. Genesis 17:13-14 requires the circumcision of male infants. In Colossians 2:10-12, baptism is described as "the circumcision of Christ," indicating the fact of continuity between circumcision and baptism. Both rest on election.

The covenant is a *legal* fact; it is a treaty made by sovereign grace. It is, however, more than that: it is also a highly personal fact, as Deuteronomy 7:7-8 makes clear. God's covenant election and grace are inseparable from His love. Hence, violations of the covenant result in more than legal penalties; they precipitate an intense wrath. A man whom a debtor fails to repay will react to the fact with a reference to a legal collection agency or a lawyer; he may also be irked and even angry, but his reaction will not be the personal hurt and anger aroused by knowledge of his wife's flagrant adulteries. God repeatedly compares covenant-breaking with adultery and whoredom to make clear His intense and personal wrath. It is thus one thing for me to break a 55-mile-an-hour speed law, another to break any law of God. The speed limit is the calculated legislation of an impersonal state; my violation of it *can* result in a monetary fine, if I am caught. When I pay my fine, the matter is closed. An offense against God is a personal affront, an act of carelessness for His love at the very least, or a contempt of His person.

The covenant in Adam and Noah is made with all men, so that all men are covenant-breakers apart from Christ. Ezekiel 16:48,49 says of Jerusalem that Sodom is her sister, and in Matthew 10:15 our Lord lists Sodom as a city to be judged on Judgment Day together with the cities of Judea. The *new* covenant is simply the *broken* covenant re-established with a *new people.* Jocz, in commenting on Ezekiel 16:62, observed, "'My covenant' is the covenant that on God's part was never broken, and the Name YHVH in the text guarantees His irrevocable decision."[40] After the Babylonian Captivity, God re-established His covenant with a remnant of the people, and after the coming of Jesus Christ, God again re-established His covenant with a remnant.

It is an "everlasting covenant" (Gen. 9:16; 17:7,13,19; Lev. 24:8; etc.). It is everlasting, because God made the covenant; by His sovereign grace, He creates, calls unto Himself a faithful people in every age and elects them to a covenant status. God, who cannot change (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8), has a

[40] Jakob Jocz: *The Covenant.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1968). p. 58.

covenant whose purpose is for time and eternity. God never breaks the covenant He made, and, by His election, He ensures in every age that His covenant purposes will be fulfilled by an elect people. Even in Elijah's loneliest hour, God assures Elijah that there are "seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (I Kings 19:18).

Thus, election is inseparable from the covenant. It is because God is the sovereign Lord who creates us and enters into covenant with us that the covenant cannot be broken. God is always faithful.

Where the doctrine of election is weakened, so too is the doctrine of the covenant. The result is free will thinking, and the sovereignty of man's choice and decision. Moreover, the doctrine of election and predestination cannot be separated from the covenant without weakening the fact of sovereign grace, and without damaging the covenantal purpose of election.

15. The Marriage Covenant

The fact that marriage is a covenant is too seldom recognized or appreciated. Some marriage vows still include the covenantal reference, as witness the order in the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*, which requires both bride and groom to declare, in their vows, "I do vow and covenant, Before God and these witnesses..." The modern outlook is alien to marriage as a covenant. A man-centered emphasis will see marriage as a purely human sexual arrangement, and it will as readily dispense with marriage if it interferes with a humanistic sexuality.

In the Bible, however, marriage is a covenant. Two verses in particular pinpoint the Biblical doctrine:

> 10. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;
> 11. Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:
>
> 16. To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;
> 17. Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. (Prov. 2:10-11, 16-17)
>
> Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. (Malachi 2:14)

The adulterous wife in Proverbs 2:16f. is referred to as a "stranger." This does not mean that she is an alien or a foreigner, but rather that, by her adultery, she has become an outsider to the covenant of God, an outlaw. She has sinned against "the covenant of God." This has reference, as Kidner pointed out, to God's "covenant with Israel, including in its obligations the

seventh commandment."[41] The reference is not to the marriage covenant but to God's covenant with Israel, and to God's covenant law, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18).

Because God the Creator has entered into covenant with man, with Adam, Noah, Moses and Israel, all men are therefore under the covenant law; all men either obey it or else they are judged by it. However, every area of life and thought is governed by God's covenant and is subordinate to it. In some of these areas, subordinate covenants exist by God's requirement, i.e., the civil covenant, the church covenant, and the marriage covenant. No more than we can step outside of God and His government can we step outside of His covenant. God's law and government are coterminous with Him.

In Malachi 2:14, the meaning is different. Marriage is here seen as "a *covenant* to which *the Lord was witness.*"[42] It is the subordinate covenant, marriage, that is in view, and God is the key witness to that covenant.

Our concern here is *not* a discussion of the laws of marriage and divorce. Rather, the key fact is that marriage is a covenant subordinate to God's covenant and its law. The laws governing marriage must therefore be derived exclusively from the law of God, Biblical law. There are differences between the orthodox believers of various churches as to the interpretation of the Biblical laws governing marriage; however, all who are orthodox are agreed that God's law must prevail.

Marriage, however, is in the modern world a *civil contract.* This is a very important and revolutionary fact. True, in most "democracies" a religious service can supplement that civil ceremony, or the marriage covenant made by a pastor can be ratified by a state license. There is, all the same, a key fact here. In the political realm, humanism has replaced the theological covenant with God by a humanistic civil contract. The governing fact in such a civil contract is the will of the two parties with the concurrence of the state. God's law is replaced by human will.

Let us go a step farther. A major fact of the Reformation era was the change made with respect to the sacraments, reduced from seven to two. Among those things declassified as a sacrament was marriage. There were sound theological reasons for this, as well as some errors. A sacrament is defined usually as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Many would add that this sign is one ordained by God in the Old Testament, and by Christ in the New. No church has won the argument over sacraments, because it is all too easy to stretch or limit the definition. Thus, I Peter 3:7 speaks of husband and wife, in their godly union as "being heirs together of the grace of life." Does this make marriage a sacrament? Both Catholics and

41. Derek Kidner: *Proverbs.* Chicago, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964). p. 62.
42. Joyce Baldwin: *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, (1972) 1978). p. 239.

Protestants subscribe to I Peter 3:7, but they classify its meaning differently. I do not say this in order to give assent to the Catholic view of sacraments by any means. Rather, the point is that an abstract definition leads to problems, whereas to say, We do what the Lord commands us to do, does not.

Clearly, marriage makes us heirs together of the grace of life; marriage *can* become a means of grace. Having said this, we must add that all life in faithfulness to God's covenant makes us heirs of grace. This, however, does not obliterate the distinction between an ordinary family meal and the Last Supper. Catholics by calling marriage a sacrament sought to stress its role as a means of grace; Puritanism, by its strong emphasis on the family, worked to implement the role of family life as a means of grace. It would perhaps be more fruitful to speak of covenant ordinances or rites (baptism and communion), and of all life in the covenant as a life of grace and an heirship in grace. Clearly, marriage, a subordinate covenant, is a means of grace according to I Peter 3:7.

Marriage as a covenant means that the man and woman are subordinate to God and His covenant. While God is mindful of the welfare and comfort of a man and woman, the point of marriage is not their self-satisfaction but His calling. Eve was created and given to Adam to be a "help meet" (Gen. 2:18) in his calling. They were together to serve God. Because theirs was a covenant relationship, it was a legal relationship, because the covenant is a treaty of law. As such, God as the suzerain determines the purpose and meaning of the relationship.

Rome governed marriages for reasons of state and in the belief that public welfare required the protection of marriage. By public welfare, in essence state welfare was in mind.[43] From reasons of state, a man-centered view, we have moved to an even more radical humanism, marriage for reasons of private will. Freud once observed of his own marriage that it was a good solution to the sex question. On similarly totally personal grounds, many have since felt that the abandonment of marriage is the better solution to the sex problem. The civil contract has become the purely personal contract.

In ancient paganism, while God's covenant was denied, marriage still retained a covenantal nature. Blood was shed to make the marriage covenant, and a cup of wine, symbolizing blood, was shared by the bride and groom to seal the covenant. Many of these ancient practices survived in Christian form, and the marriage covenant was placed in the context of the covenant of God. In one of the most ancient bits of Scottish minstrelsy we read:

> Jok tuk Jynny be the hand,
> And cryd and feist, and slew ane cok,

[43] Gaimes Post: *Studies in Medieval Thought, Public Law and the State.* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964). p. 283.

And maid a brydell up alland:
Now half I gottin your Jynny, quoth Jok.[44]

Marriage in this sense also meant an entrance into authority. Macrobius, a Roman and possibly a Christian, writing c. 400-420 A.D. commented concerning the bride, "For on the first day of a marriage the bride is in retirement, but on the next day she must begin to assume authority in her husband's house and offer sacrifice."[45] This reminds us of Proverbs 31:10ff., and the virtuous wife. The civil contract concept changed the focus of marriage *from God's calling to human satisfaction.* In terms of this, the modern era has seen the wife become merely an ornament, and, with "women's liberation," seek her own separation from the contract. From a contract for the man's pleasure, it has become a contract for mutual satisfaction and to be broken upon dissatisfaction. Between the world of the covenant and that of the contract, there is a world of difference.

16. The Plague of Blood

The first plague on Egypt (Ex. 4:9; 7:14-25) turned the waters of the Nile River and of all Egypt into blood. The common approach of all too many scholars is to try to explain away this miracle. We are regularly told that, in the flood season, the Nile rises and brings down large quantities of a red marl, a reddish brown soil deposit, and that this was taken for blood.[46] Even some ostensibly evangelical scholars echo this nonsense. The Nile flood, with the silt which darkened the waters, was an annual fact; no one in Egypt would have been confused by that fact! Obviously, it is supposed by these scholars that men in earlier times were incomparably backward idiots.

In all the argument about the nature of the Nile's color, which was red, according to the Bible, because it was changed into blood, an obvious fact is overlooked, *The reason* why the first plague involved blood. Blood signifies life (Lev. 17:11,14), but it can also signify death. Blood is shed to make a covenant, or, to cut a covenant (Gen. 15:9-21). The blood of the covenant signifies life to all who are faithful members of the covenant; the covenant Lord pledges His blood to be faithful to the covenant. The blood also sets forth the judgment which falls upon all who are faithless to God's covenant.

God comes to Moses, to declare His purpose to redeem His covenant people (Ex. 3:1-22). This redemption involves also judgment on their oppressors, the Egyptians.

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44. H. Clay Trumbull: *The Blood Covenant.* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: John D. Wattles, 1893). p. 200.
45. Macrobius: *The Saturnalia.* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969). p. 104.
46. Ronald E. Clements: *Exodus.* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1972). p. 45.

It is thus not an accident that the first plague is a plague of blood upon the sacred Nile, the symbol of Egypt's strength and prosperity.[47] *First* of all, Moses smote the waters of the Nile, a clear symbol of judgment. The rod of God's authority was laid against the very life-blood of Egypt, the waters of the Nile. The symbolism is a very obvious one.

Second, the Nile as a sacred river is defiled, and all Egypt with it. The symbol of smiting the Nile meant that all Egypt would be smitten if they did not repent. The river, the canals (called "Niles"), pools, and reservoirs were all defiled.

Third, this pollution of the Nile was a portent of its uselessness in giving fertility to Egypt. Successive plagues destroyed Egypt's fertility, culminating in the death of the firstborn. Fertility was to be replaced by death.

Fourth, this *bloody Nile* meant death to Egypt, but life to Israel. It signified that the Lord of the covenant was redeeming His people, despite their waywardness (Ex. 7:17).

Thus, the fact that the first plague was a plague of blood makes clear that the judgment was covenantal. The following plagues brought death to the land, culminating in the tenth plague. Here we have the coincidence of salvation and judgment, the Passover deliverance, and the death of the firstborn.

In a covenant of blood, both parties avow by the shedding of blood to be ready to give their life to help, redeem, or save one another. God, in the Passover Lamb, signified His readiness to be faithful unto death to His covenant people, so that Passover blood signifies the blood of Christ. Paul makes very clear that Christ is the Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7), come to give His life for the redemption of His covenant people.

The blood of the atonement is thus the blood of redemption for the covenant people, and the blood of judgment and execution for all who reject the Lord. Christ's death makes all the greater the judgment which now confronts the nations (Heb. 12:26-29).

Israel was not receptive to Moses and had been unwilling to stand with Moses and Aaron (Ex. 5:19-23). The difference God made between Israel and Egypt was an act of grace; He made the difference, not Israel (Ex. 11:7). Because of God's sovereign acts of judgment, the greater men of Egypt came and bowed down before Moses, beseeching him to take Israel and leave the land of Egypt (Ex. 11:8). The judgment upon Egypt had been total. It extended "even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of the beasts" (Ex. 11:5). Cassuto noted:

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[47] See Jacob Bryant: *Observations Upon the Plagues Inflicted Upon the Egyptians.* (London, England, 1794). pp. 15-35.

> This expression, 'the maid-servant behind the mill', is common in Egyptian literature in the sense of 'the poorest of the poor', (it occurs, for example, in the opening section of the instructions of Ptah-Hotep). Thou hast said that I, Moses shall die on the day that I see your face; However, I declare to you in the name of my God that I shall not die, but all the first-born of Egypt will die, and even your first-born son shall perish. Not only the first-born of human beings shall die, but also *all the first-born* of the cattle, even the first-born of animals to which you attribute a divine character, like the bulls of Apis and the cows of Hathor; then you will realize that I execute judgments upon all the gods of Egypt.[48]

Israel was delivered from this plague of blood despite its sins. However, because God's delivering grace for the nation brought no response of trust from the people, they were in due time sentenced to die in the wilderness (Num. 14:28-33). The first-born of Egypt were slain for rejecting the Lord, i.e., because Egypt refused God's demands through Moses, all their first-born were slain. However, in due time, ungrateful Israel received a more drastic judgment. All of the generation of adults who left Egypt were sentenced to death in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb. Peter tells us that judgment begins at the house of God (I Peter 4:17). Grace despised leads to fearful judgment.

There is, however, a difference in the judgment of Egypt and the judgment of Israel. In severity, Israel's judgment is in one sense more drastic: all those adults rescued from Egypt (save two) were sentenced to die landless and homeless, whereas the Egyptians remained alive in their own homes and land after the death of their first-born. There is another aspect, however. The first-born signify the totality, and the future. In slaying the first-born of Egypt, God made Egypt irrelevant and dead to His purposes. In keeping the young of Israel alive and giving them the Promised Land, God restricted the plague of blood to Israel's past.

Paul makes reference to the plague of blood in writing about the Christian Passover, the Lord's Table. Christ, by His atoning death, took upon Himself the death penalty, the plague of blood, and made remission for the sins of the covenant people. The cup and the bread "do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26).

> 27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
> 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.
> 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
> 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

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[48] Umberto Cassuto: *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus.* (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1967). p. 133.

31. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (I Cor. 11:27-32)

The context of these verses includes the first passover and the plague of blood or death. To eat or drink unworthily is to incur damnation and death like the first-born of Egypt. Through the centuries, this has been taken very seriously, and a variety of practices have resulted. Fairly early in the history of the church, many received the bread but abstained from the cup in fear of being under the plague of blood because of their sins and shortcomings. Eventually this became a standard practice. With the Reformation, communion in both kinds was restored, but with many it led to a total abstinence from participation. This abstinence was not uncommon in colonial America, and a famous abstainer was George Washington. In the lifetime of some of us, this practice still existed and was overcome, not by any theological growth, but by a shift from an inner-directed to a group -directed psychology. Despite its deficiencies, the older view still saw the relationship between the Passover-Communion blood and cup and the plague of blood or death.

However, to be under the Passover blood and grace is to be in life and to be separated from death. There is no neutral ground between life and death. To be in life is to be under grace and law. We have a different status, and a different way of life. We have been separated from the old Adam and the body of death, and made members of Christ and His body, the body of everlasting life. We are then a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). We are covered by the atoning blood and thus freed from the plague of blood. The Passover blood and the communion cup both represent the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. The first plague of blood on the Nile, and the tenth plague of death on the first-born, as well as the judgment of death upon those who partake of the Lord's cup unworthily, have as their culmination the feast of vultures in Revelation 19:17-18. The plague of blood upon Egypt is a small foretaste of God's judgment upon the apostate and ungodly nations and their peoples. Hence, the summons to us is, "come out from her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). The humanistic world order, Babylon the Great, is under sentence of death.

17. The Covenant and the Name

As we have seen, covenants are of two kinds historically, between equals, and between a great power and an inferior one, i.e., between God and man. Both the Bible and other history, as well as etymology, give us reason to believe that the original meaning of *covenant* may be *fetter* (*berith*), a bond or imposed treaty. This is implied in Ezekiel 20:37, "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." M.

Weinfeld has pointed out that the *berith* or covenant "implies first and foremost the notion of 'imposition,' 'liability,' or 'obligation,'"[49]

The making of a covenant is closely related to the naming of the man or the people with whom God makes a covenant. To name is to classify; thus, when Adam was required by God to name the animals (Gen. 2:19-20), Adam's duty was to understand the classification of the animals in terms of God's creative purpose and order. This calling was a covenant task, Adam having been named, and all his posterity classified in him (Gen. 5:2), was now to set forth God's order in the naming of the animals.

Naming is an aspect of making a covenant. The covenant calls for a new name, a new blood, and a new identity, relationship, and life. In a variety of pagan covenants as well as in Scripture, this fact is evident. In some cultures, the boy who is entering manhood and the male covenant of the tribe, gains a new name in the process as a part of the blood ceremony. In New South Wales, the native boys entering the covenant received a white stone and a new name. We are clearly reminded of Revelation 2:17.[50]

Duncan said that "The expression 'give name to' is very common in Babylonian, Hebrew and Egyptian cultures in the sense of 'giving life to."[51] God created and named the whole of humanity in Adam: "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gen. 5:2). Thus, when the Lord God makes a covenant, He makes (and later remakes) man and gives man his name, life, and identity.

God's calling of a man into the covenant is His remaking of man and His naming of man. Abram was given that name with his calling (Gen. 12:1); later, the Lord expanded the name to Abraham (Gen. 17:5). Jacob was separated by God to His covenant (Gen. 28:10-22), and, in due time, renamed Israel by God (Gen. 32:28). God, however, refused to be named by Jacob because He is the Namer, not the named, the Definer, not the defined. With Moses too God refused to give a name simply identifying Himself as He Who Is, I Am That I Am (Ex. 3:13-14). The gods of the nations had names; they were definable because they were the creatures of men. When God threatened to blot out the name of the nation Israel (Deut. 9:14), He meant that He would separate them from Himself and His covenant, because Israel sought an identity apart from God. God threatened to deny Israel their covenant identity and life.

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49. M. Weinfeld, "berith" in G. Johannes Botterweek and Helmer Ringgren: *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. II. John T. Willis, translator. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1975) 1977 revised edition.). p. 255.
50. H. Clay Trumbull: *The Blood Covenant*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: John D. Wattles (1885) 1893. pp. 335-337.
51. J. Garrow Duncan: *New Light on Hebrew Origins*. (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936). p. 40f.

Very early, the promise of a new name is seen as the promise of a renewed life in the covenant. Isaiah later has much to say about it, as in Isaiah 60:14. In Isaiah 62:2, we are again told "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name." R.B.Y. Scott commented on this, "a new name means a new people."[52] McKenzie pointed out the fact that "the new Jerusalem receives a new name," a fact also pointed out by Ezekiel 48:35.[53]

To give a name, or a new name, to someone means to identify them and to give them life, or new life. We see the significance of the name in a key passage, with reference to the work of the seventy whom our Lord sent out as the new Moses. These seventy disciples replaced the seventy elders of Israel (Ex. 18:25; 24:1ff., Num. 11:16), so that there is now a new Sanhedrin and a new high priest, Jesus Christ. The seventy were sent out to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and to manifest its power by preaching and healing (Luke 10:1-16).

> 17. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.
>
> 18. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.
>
> 19. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
>
> 20. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. (Luke 10:17-20)

The success of their mission signaled a new life in history. The power of Satan was broken; the spirits were in subjection to the humanity of the new Adam. Satan's power is over the old Adam's seed, but the new Adam now rules. No evil, natural or spiritual, can touch His ruler-ambassadors. However, our Lord tells the seventy, rejoice, not in these historical facts, but because your names now are not the names of death but the names of life, new names which are a part of the new creation.

The power of the seventy was in the great Name of Jesus Christ. The seventy belonged to Christ and to His name. Those who come in their own name the world receives, because they are a part of the same evil world (John 5:43). The power of the Christian is in *the Name* of Christ (John 15:16). Because of their reliance on and life in the Name of Christ, His followers were soon called Christians (Acts 11:26).

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[52] R.B.Y. Scott, "Isaiah," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. V. (New York, New York: Abingdon Press, 1956). p. 118.

[53] John L. McKenzie: *Second Isaiah.* The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968). p. 176.

The Christian is one who has been recreated by God through Christ because God is in covenant with him. As a result, every believer has a new life and a new name written in heaven. The world cannot know that name, because the name is covenantal and has reference to a life, power, and status the world cannot see and refuses to recognize (Rev. 2:17). The Father's name is in the foreheads of all His people (Rev. 14:1;22:4); they are in effect unalterably branded and identified as God's possession and inheritance. Through Jesus Christ, the whole family of God is named, created, identified, and separated unto God (Eph. 3:15).

The Name of the Lord is thus a covenant privilege, and our new names declare us to be irrevocably Christ's people (John 10:28). In Jesus Christ, God reveals Himself to man and redefines the people of the renewed covenant in terms of Christ. To invoke the Name of Christ is thus to invoke the covenant and its grace and power.

18. Breaking the Covenant

Weinfeld, in his analysis of the word *covenant* or *berith*, commented, "the Bible itself does not conceive of a law code without a covenant at its base."[54] We can add that the Bible does not conceive of life itself, or any aspect thereof, apart from God's covenant. All of man's life is to be governed by God's covenant and by covenant law.

We have seen, in examining naming as a covenant act, that God gives to those with whom He makes a covenant both life and a name. In addition, among other things, covenant clothing is required, in that tassels or fringes had to be an outward mark of the covenant man in his attire (Num. 15:37-41). We have an example of the relationship of clothing and the making of covenants in I Samuel 18:3-4:

> 3. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.
>
> 4. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

McCarter's comments on this by-pass the covenant reality, as do most commentators. McCarter sees this as a transfer of the royal succession by Jonathan to David and as an act of legal symbolism.[55]

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[54] M. Weinfeld, "berith," in G. Johannes Botterweek and Helmer Ringgren: *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. II. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1975) 1977 revised edition). p. 273.

[55] P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.: *I Samuel, with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible, vol. 8. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980). p. 305.

Clearly, Jonathan may have recognized this as a possibility. Certainly, Saul did, and his anger blazed out against Jonathan for abetting a man who might well supplant him as I Samuel 20:30-31 makes clear:

> 30. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?
> 31. For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom, Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

Saul knew that he had been set aside by God; David was the obviously blessed replacement. Saul's concern is not his disfavor with God but bitterness over the possibility that his Kingdom and his wives would become David's, including, he tells Jonathan, Jonathan's own mother, a rebellious young woman.

However, the gift of clothing by Jonathan to David is not related to the succession but is a princely act. Jonathan is the governing party in the covenant. Despite his victory over Goliath, David was still far from a status comparable to the royal family, and, for this reason he at first declined Saul's daughter, Michal, as a bride. He did not have the means, as a younger son, and without the years to accumulate possessions, to provide an adequate dowry. Saul therefore specified an act of suicidal bravery as the dowry (I Sam. 18:20-30). Neither in the marriage to Michal, nor even less so in the covenant with Jonathan, was David in any legal or social position to initiate the act.

Jonathan, as the greater party, initiated the covenant with David as an act of grace. As the one initiating the covenant, he accordingly clothed David with his own raiment and weapons.

By this act, Jonathan made David a member of his own household and family, his blood brother. In this sense, Jonathan did make David into a potential heir. David was thus doubly an heir, by the anointing of Samuel (I Sam. 16:12-13), and by Jonathan's covenant with him. Scripture records both facts, but grounds David's heirship in God's covenant grace.

The New Testament has much to say about our *heirship* as the people of the renewed covenant in Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; 4:7; Eph. 3:6; Heb. 6:17; James 2:5; Titus 3:7; Heb. 1:14; 11:7; etc). The covenant makes us a new creation, with a new name; it makes us members of a royal priesthood (Ex. 19:6; Rev. 1:6; etc.), and it makes us into heirs of the Kingdom of God.

Moreover, whenever a king in antiquity made any man into a member of his household by entering into covenant with him, he clothed him. This point is made clearly by our Lord in Matthew 22:1-14, in the Parable of the Marriage Feast. The guests could not be a part of the royal family's celebration without garments provided by the king. Commentators have misunderstood the meaning of the royal robes because of their narrow

scholarship. F.W. Buckler's *The Epiphany of the Cross (1938)* is most instructive as to the meaning of kingship, and membership in a royal household.

God as the covenant Lord and King alone can rule over us. Gideon saw this clearly in rejecting the kingship offered to him, declaring, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you" (Judges 8:23). When human kings were finally accepted, it was with a recognition that the nation had rejected God (I Sam. 8:1ff.). The fact that God used the human kings to accomplish His purpose does not alter the fact of at least compromise on the people's part.

Because God is the king, all things must be in terms of His covenant law. The covenant is a binding law: it binds both parties. When the covenant law is broken by the transgressions of one party, the document itself is destroyed. In Babylonian legal literature, the term for breaking or canceling a contract was "break the tablet," i.e., the literal destruction of the tablet.[56] Because the worship of the golden calf meant the breaking of the covenant, Moses, not simply in anger, but as a legal and necessary act, broke the tablets of the law (Ex. 32:19). Moses' anger was real: it was indignation over sin; his destruction of the tablets, however, was a necessary legal act.

A covenant-breaker with a king had to face, not only the destruction of the contract tablet, but also his own destruction as a covenant-breaker. Thus, we see two legal acts ensue after the golden calf apostasy: *first*, the destruction of the tablets, and, *second*, the destruction at once of the leaders of the apostasy and rebellion. According to Exodus 32:26-29,

> 26. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.
> 27. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.
> 28. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.
> 29. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

First, Moses summons men to his side, to execute the offenders, in the name of the Lord, the covenant King. A legal execution has been ordered. *Second*, all who come to Moses' side, the Levites, are told "consecrate yourselves," a term used "almost without exception of the consecration of priests" (cf. Judg. 17:5,12; I Kings 13:33).[57] Thus, they performed a religious function in killing

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56. Weinfeld., p. 276.

57. J. Coert Rylaarsdam, "Exodus," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. I. (New York, New York: Abingdon Press, 1952). p. 1069.

those who so baldly and flagrantly held God's covenant in contempt. *Third*, no human relationship could govern their actions, because the covenant has priority over all things.

When Jonathan made a covenant with David, he stripped himself to clothe David and to make David a member of his household and family. When God makes a covenant with man, He ratifies that covenant with the blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. His law must therefore govern the totality of our lives, our churches, families, and nations. If we break God's covenant, God will break us.

19. The Covenant and the Body

A covenant in antiquity and in Scripture is seen as the most important and governing fact in a man's life. We can understand how important marriage is in the Bible by the fact that it is held to be a covenant between husband and wife (Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 16:8; Mal. 2:14). The making of any covenant was an important act and hence a ritual of consequence. It involved a variety of acts at times, such as the shedding of blood, the gift of clothing, and more. A covenant, whether between a man and a woman, a king and his subjects, a general and his soldiers, or between God and man, meant and means a commitment normally unto death and therefore a dramatic reorientation of one's life, *a changed life*. It could mean, as evidence of that changed life, a physical change in the body, as witness circumcision. The covenant marked a man. This marking could be an act of *grace*, manifesting love and mercy, and it could be an act of *supremacy and power*. An example of the latter is in I Samuel 11:1-3:

> 1. Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.
> 2. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.
> 3. And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

When besieged by Ammonite forces, the Israelites of Jabesh offered to become covenant subjects of the Ammonite king, Nahash. By this offer, they showed plainly their lack of faith; their covenant with God was despised, and they sought a covenant with a king who in their eyes was stronger than God. Nahash recognized their expediency. These circumcised men could not uncircumcise themselves: the covenant sign was as permanent as the covenant with God the Lord. Expediency wants to pay no price and gain all advantages. Nahash, with real contempt, agreed, and seriously agreed, with the offer to covenant with him, but, as the superior party, he set the condition,

or prescribed the covenant mark. It was to be no harmless tattoo, but the blinding of every person's right eye. To avoid his military destruction and to gain his covenant protection, they had to pay a price.

Moreover, their blinding was to be "a reproach upon all Israel." It would show that neither the God of Israel, nor the covenanted brothers of Israel, could rescue the men of Jabesh. Furthermore, Nahash gave seven days respite to Jabesh, to allow them to try to raise up a rescue army out of Israel. Saul did come to their rescue, but the Ammonite premise was a shrewd one. Had Israel not rescued Jabesh, and Nahash believed them to be incapable of doing so, it would have stressed the impotence of God and Israel, and the value of a covenant with Nahash.

In any case, a covenant involved the whole of man; it was a "body and soul" commitment, and body markings which manifested a man's covenant with his god were commonplace in the Near East.[58] Because God as covenant Lord is the owner of all things, including our bodies, His covenant law forbids any and all mutilations of the body, whether for mourning, or as a covenant mark with men or gods. Only His covenant mark, circumcision for men, is lawful (Lev. 19:28).

St. Paul refers to the matter of marks or tattoos in an unusual sense. In Galatians 6:17, as against all Judiazers and all critics, Paul asserts his own unusual covenant mark or sign, *stigma* in the Greek. "From henceforth, let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Paul as a prisoner had been unlawfully beaten and bore those scars. These were for him covenant marks or tattoos witnessing to his covenant with the Lord Jesus.

Circumcision and baptism set forth regeneration (Titus 3:5; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11). Circumcision marks the body, and baptism symbolically cleanses it to make it new. The conclusion of God's covenant sign or mark is the resurrection of the body. This is why Paul asks, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" (I Cor. 15:29). If we deny the resurrection of the body, Paul says, then we deny baptism and declare it unnecessary. We can then content ourselves with a mental or spiritual baptism, and a purely spiritual communion (as do the Quakers) because the body has then no place in the covenant.

But God calls for the marking of the body as the covenant sign, and the symbolic cleansing of the body, because it is to be resurrected and made new. For like reason, the world and time are marked by God's covenant. These two signs are the Sabbath (Ex. 31:16f.) and the rainbow (Gen. 9:17). The rainbow is in particular a telling and much neglected sign or covenant mark in the physical world. *First*, God says that when He sees the rainbow, He will

[58] H. Clay Trumbull: *The Blood Covenant*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: John C. Wattles, 1893). p. 217f.

remember His covenant (Gen. 9:11-17). The assurance rests not on our perception but God's infallible word and perception. Grace and nature are linked together in God's covenant purpose.[59]

Second, because man did not create the rainbow, man cannot destroy it. "The inviolable oath is symbolized by the inviolable bow."[60]

Third, "The beneficiaries to the covenant are not only Noah and his descendants but also the nonrational animal world, demonstrating that understanding of the covenant is not basic to its validity."[61] This is why too that babes can be baptized into the covenant.

Fourth, this sign is one, with the promise, which is "given and maintained by God alone."[62] No confession is required from Noah. God who made the earth will keep it and renew it. It is His decree which governs, not man's will.

What this covenant sign points to is the new creation, a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1). God's covenant looks to a glorious consummation in which all things are made new (Rev. 21:5).

Indeed, all covenant signs witness to this fact. The Sabbath is a witness to the great rest of the new creation (Heb. 2:7-3:11). One of the aspects of baptism in the early church, taken over from Jewish customs at the Feast of Tabernacles, was a crowning.[63] The early church gave a number of descriptions of baptism: the "ransoming of prisoners, forgiveness of sins... rebirth of the soul, shining vesture, ineffaceable seal, vehicle to heaven, delights of Paradise, pledge of kingship, gift of adoption," and more (Cyril of Jerusalem).[64] While at times future reality and present fact were confused, there was still an awareness of the far-reaching implications of this covenant sign.

20. The Covenant and the Mediator

As we have seen, a covenant of grace is between a greater and a lesser party, sometimes between a great ruler and the people, but, more normally and normatively, between God and man. God manifests His grace by entering into covenant with man and by giving man His law, *the royal law*, a man's privileged and blessed way of life and holiness.

Precisely because such a covenant involves so great a difference between the two parties, a judge, ruler, umpire, arbitrator, or *mediator* between the two

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59. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch: *The Pentateuch*, vol. 1. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1949). p. 154.
60. Harold G. Stigers: *A Commentary on Genesis.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976). p. 118.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
62. Idem.
63. Jean Danielson, S.J.: *Primitive Christian Symbols.* (Baltimore, Maryland: Helion Press, 1964). p. 18.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

parties is required. The New Testament word for mediator is *mesites* in the Greek, a go-between literally. Another word is *brabeno, brabeutes,* rule, ruler, arbitrator, umpire. In Colossians 3:15, it is the peace of God which we are to allow to *rule* in our hearts. The word for rule is *brabeueto.* Not only do we have an external and objective mediator in Jesus Christ, God the Son, but we have His Spirit mediating in our hearts, ruling and arbitrating between God and us.

The Old Testament gives us a history of types, of men who as forerunners of Jesus Christ, mediated between God and man as "stand-ins" for the Coming One. In Exodus 24, Moses mediates between God and Israel in the making of the covenant. It is Moses therefore who sprinkled the blood of the covenant over both the altar of God and the covenant people (Ex. 24:4-8). In Joshua 24, Joshua performs a like function: he reminds the people of the law, the terms of the covenant, and has them renew their oath of faithfulness. In II Kings 11:13-20, we have Jehoiada the priest acting as the mediator and judge. Accordingly, Athaliah is ordered executed, because Jehoiada as priest-mediator, was also a judge. Precisely because priests are mediators, they are also judges. Hence, the Old Testament priests functioned also as judges. The word *judges* in Exodus 21:22 is *pahleel,* judge, from or related to *pahlal,* to judge, intercede, or pray. The Bible sees judgment as an act of mediation, mediating the law of God to man. Thus, it is linked also to intercession and prayer. One can say that both priests and judges have a mediatorial calling. Judges today are mediators of humanism. In Exodus 21:6, and in 22:8 and 9, the word for *judges* is *elohim,* or gods; the judges are in their persons representatives of and must faithfully mediate the righteousness of God.

In Deuteronomy 17:8-13, the association is very clear. *Judge* here is the Hebrew *shahfat,* to judge, to sentence. The reference is to the judicial mediation of both Israel's Judge and the priests. The Levites too had judicial functions (Deut. 17:8-13; II Chron. 19:8-11). Their task is *mishpat,* the verdict or judgment of God's law.

We have one very remarkable (and neglected) text in which God declares Himself to be the mediator and covenant-man between man and the animals, and, by implication, the inanimate earth:

> And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. (Hosea 2:18)

First, this text has reference to Adam's covenant-breaking, to man's fall. Because of man's sin, the ground was cursed, and all nature now is at war with man (Gen. 3:14-19). Man is at war with himself, with other men, and faces as well a recalcitrant natural order.

Second, when man makes peace with God in the person of the God-man mediator, Jesus Christ, and when, in faithfulness to the Lord man establishes dominion in terms of God's law-word, God will make a covenant of peace between man and the animal world, and the earth itself in all its aspects. This is a promise repeatedly made, as witness:

> For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. (Job 5:23)
>
> And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. (Lev. 26:6)
>
> He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. (Ps. 46:9)
>
> And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isa. 2:4)
>
> 6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.
> 7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
> 8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.
> 9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:6-9)
>
> The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. (Isa. 65:25)
>
> And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. (Ezek. 34:25)
>
> 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. (Zech. 9:10)
>
> 19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.
> 20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.
> 21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:19-21)

Paul tells us in Romans 8:19-20 that the whole of creation waits for the day of that renewed covenant. It is amazing how these texts and more are spiritualized into nothing by men who declare that they "believe the Bible!"

It was God who as mediator between man and the world declared that man had broken that covenant peace, and therefore God as Judge and mediator pronounced that peace to be broken and passed sentence on man and the tempter (Gen. 3:14-19).

Third, God as the Mediator-Judge had called upon the animal world and the weather to destroy Israel's crops (Hosea 2:8-12). At the same time, God used foreign powers to judge Israel (Hosea 1:4-5).[65]

Fourth, we are thus told graphically that harmony with God means harmony within man, between men, between men and the animals, and between man and the inanimate world. When God the Son makes us to be at peace with God the Father, and we then walk in faithfulness to the covenant law, we have peace on all sides. Christ mediates between us and God the Father; God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, mediate between us and the world we live in.

Fifth, this means that covenant man cannot have any unmediated relationship to anything, including himself. It is the essence of original sin to be as God (Gen. 3:1-5), to seek an independent and law-making power over and relationship to everything. However, God and His covenant law-word must stand over us and between us and everything. For a man or a woman, a husband and a wife, and parents and children, to seek an independent, unmediated, ungoverned, and unjudged relationship with one another, or with anything, is covenant-breaking and is sin.

The covenant is total. God's covenant, like God takes priority over us and over our every relationship. The Judge over our every relationship is therefore our covenant Lord and Mediator. To defile what belongs to the covenant Lord is to strike at Him. It is a serious and capital offense therefore to "defile My Land" (Jer. 2:7;16:18; etc.). Concerning sexual offenses, God says,

> 24. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you:
>
> 25. And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. (Lev. 18:24-25)

The land will "spue out" all who defile it (Lev. 18:28). Unless the whole of God's law is kept, God's earth will "spue out" its inhabitants (Lev. 20:22). Deuteronomy 28 is also emphatic about this same fact. In brief, we have no neutral, unmediated relationship with anything under the sun. All things are the Lord's, and they serve His purpose.

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[65] Theodore Laetsch: *The Minor Prophets*. (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1956). p. 34.

21. Messiahship, Covenant, and Sovereignty

The doctrine of the covenant requires the Messiah. In a covenant of grace, God and man are brought together, and man binds himself to obey God's covenant law. The covenant law has as its purpose God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. This man failed to do in Eden and outside of Eden, so that man became a covenant-breaker. The purpose of the Messiah is to save God's covenant partner, man, to restore man in God's grace and calling, and to empower man to fulfil his calling. Jocz has summed up the matter thus:

> Messiahship implies the realization of God's reign upon earth. What the king of Israel was unable to accomplish, namely the establishment of YHVH's overlordship over the nations, is ultimately brought about by God's Anointed at the end of days. The messianic hope in the prophetic writings seems to be sustained by this kind of reasoning. If this is so, then the psalms that have the kingship of God as their theme may be regarded as messianic psalms.[66]

Our English word *messiah* comes from a Hebrew word, *anointed.* Anointing was an act of consecration into power and rule; the anointing was from God, and into service to God.

Anointing was accompanied by a cleansing, and it meant a dedication, as to holy war (Deut. 23:9ff.; II Kings 9:11-13; etc.). Anointing also conferred dominion, most frequently as a king. It also meant the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (I Sam. 10:1,9; 16:13; Isa. 61:1; Zech. 4:1-14; Acts 10:38; I John 2:20,27.). The Holy Spirit is also the Giver of life, so that anointing the sick with oil in part invoked the Spirit's power.

The work of the Messiah is very clearly seen in relationship to the Garden of Eden. What there existed is to be restored and expanded to the whole earth and on a greater and more pervasive basis. *First*, in Eden man dwelt in peace with the animals, and with all living things. With the triumph of the Messiah, the curse will recede, and man shall live in peace with the animals, and the animals one with another (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25; etc.).

Second, men shall dwell in peace one with another (Isa. 2:1-4; 32:1-8; 65:17-24). Wars shall cease, and the righteousness or justice of God, and man's knowledge of Him, shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

Third, this peace will be accompanied by a prosperity unknown to Eden (Amos 9:13; Isa. 4:2; 32:15,20; 55:13; Ps. 72:16). All the riches of the rebellious peoples will be brought into the Messiah's kingdom (Isa. 61:6).[67]

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66. Jakob Jocz: *The Covenant, A Theology of Human Destiny.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1968). p. 69.
67. F. F. Bruce: "Messiah," in J. D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1962) 1973). p. 812.

The movement, however, is not backward to Eden but forward to the New Jerusalem. In Revelation 21 and 22, we have a vision of Eden transfigured into the great community of the Messiah. The curse is gone, and all the nations bring their glory and honor into it. The new Jerusalem has a permanence lacking in Eden, and the reason for it is that the figure of the old Adam is replaced by the throne of God and of the Lamb. The Messiah is the last Adam, and the Redeemer of man (I Cor. 15:45-50).

Jesus Christ thus came in terms of the covenant, not to replace the covenant but to become the new covenant man and to create by regeneration a new covenant people to replace the old humanity. Because this renewed covenant is established by Christ in His own blood, it cannot perish nor be broken as was the old covenant. This is an important fact which even rabbinic commentaries noted. Thus, Saadia Ben Joseph, an early 10th century Jewish scholar, wrote of Jeremiah's prophecy, Jeremiah 31:31, "It would only be different from the first covenant in this respect: that it would not be broken this time as it was the first time."[68] Maimonides, while seeing the Messiah in a Jewish context and as a Jewish restoration, saw also two key aspects thereof as the sovereignty of the Messiah, and the rule of His law.[69]

The key fact here is sovereignty. God is the sovereign or lord over heaven and earth and all things therein. In His grace and mercy, God the Lord enters into a covenant with His creature, man. This, an act of sovereign grace, has added to it in the person of Jesus Christ the presence of the sovereign Lord on both sides of the covenant. What began as a covenant of grace to Adam and his successors now becomes a covenant of equals in God the Father and God the Son.

Man's place in this renewed covenant is still totally of grace, but the covenant now has an eternal permanence, because man's covenant Head and Lord is also the second person of the Godhead.

As against the power of sin in us and in the world around us, we have the incarnate Lord to assure us of victory. We are built upon the Rock of ages, upon Jesus Christ, who says of his assembly, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), i.e., hold out against it. The church in Christ has the sovereign conqueror to serve. Christ can and does judge, chasten, and cleanse His people, but the world cannot hold out against them when they are faithful members of their Sovereign.

The covenant in Christ is thus the manifestation of Christ's sovereignty on earth. This has political implications, as John Knox saw. As he stated it, concerning Scotland as a covenant nation, "This is the league betwixt God and us, that He alone shall be our God, and we shall be His people: He shall

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68. Saadia Gaon: *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*. Samuel Rosenblatt, translator. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, (1948) 1955). p. 167.

69. Moses Maimonides: *The Code of Maimonides, Book 14, The Book of Judges*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1949). p. 238.

communicate with us of His graces and goodness; We shall serve Him in body and spirit: He shall be our safeguard from death and damnation; We shall seek to Him, and shall fly from all strange gods."[70] Knox very apparently agreed with William Tyndale that "God would fulfill his promises to man on the condition that man would endeavor to keep God's law."[71]

The political implication of Christ's coming is that the sovereign has come to claim His realm. *Revelation* gives us a view of history as a series of judgments against the world. The Lord delivered Old Israel from Egypt after striking it with ten destroying plagues, of which the last seven affected Egypt only and spared Israel. *Revelation* declares that the non-Christian would be dispossessed by seven judgments, woes, vials, or bowls. With these judgments goes the proclamation, "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). The sovereign or lord moves against the lawless covenant-breaking humanity of the Old Adam, to judge and to dispossess them, and, in faithfulness to His new humanity, to give them the kingdom. "The meek shall inherit the earth: and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:11; cf. Matt. 5:5).

No realm can be withheld from Christ's reign. The covenant is a total treaty. To this day, treaties technically have priority over the U.S. Constitution, because in theory a treaty, like marriage, is a radical bond between two parties. Hence, the Bible legislates against covenants or treaties with ungodly nations (Ex. 23:31-33; Deut. 7:1-4; Ex. 34:12,13,15,16), and the word used for treaties is covenants. God's covenant must govern every aspect of life, and the political order, because the covenant Lord alone is sovereign.

Where covenant thinking recedes, there too the doctrine of the sovereignty of the triune God recedes.

22. Covenant Salvation

The purpose of the covenant is to reveal God's grace and salvation. The covenant is not only a covenant of grace and law, but a covenant of salvation. God binds Himself to redeem His people out of all their troubles, if they are faithful to Him.

The covenant creates all the conditions of life, so that, whether a man is faithful or faithless to the covenant Lord, his life is determined by his relationship to the Lord and to the covenant. God's covenant with Noah embraces all men and every living creature (Gen. 9:9-17). It is an everlasting covenant, and a sovereign act of grace and government.

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70. Richard Greaves: *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980). p. 116.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 122; cf. 7, 15, 21, 170.

Later developments of the covenant made clear how narrow the circle of the faithful was, and, within that circle, there were many faithless ones. Because the covenant is the sovereign act of the Lord of all creation, Man's liberty within the covenant is simply the freedom to be blessed or to be cursed. A telling statement of this appears in Jeremiah. God had ordered the release of all Hebrew bondservants; the law forbad retaining any believer as a bondservant beyond the beginning of the Sabbatical year. King Zedekiah and the nation were reminded of this fact (Jer. 34:8-11). In the face of the threat of the Babylonian army, there was a superficial conformity; the captives were released. When the Babylonians left, the bondservants were again made captive. God therefore proclaims the liberty of judgment for Judah:

> 12. Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
> 13. Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of the bondmen, saying,
> 14. At the end of the seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear.
> 15. And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name:
> 16. But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.
> 17. Therefore thus saith the LORD: Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine: and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.
> 18. And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,
> 19. The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which had passed between the parts of the calf;
> 20. I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.
> 21. And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you.
> 22. Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with

> fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant. (Jer. 34:12-22)

The law requires the release of bondservants after six years (Ex. 21:2; Deut. 15:1,12-15); this is the *covenant* law; whether or not all the law-breakers had actually been present at a covenant renewal, and had passed between a calf cut in twain, is not important; all were still under the covenant and its law. When Abraham divided the covenant sacrifices, to signify the faithfulness unto death required by the covenant, birds of prey descended upon the cut halves. This filled Abraham with horror (Gen. 15:10-12), because such a fate, to be the feast of vultures, awaits covenant breakers. The Lord now refers through Jeremiah to this judgment: the men of Judah will have their bodies devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey (Jer. 34:20). For men then as now, this indignity was a horrifying one. This prophecy of c. 588 B.C. was very literally fulfilled.

John Bright renders Jeremiah 34:17 thus: "You have not obeyed me by proclaiming emancipation each to his brother, and each to his neighbor. So, believe me, I am going to proclaim your 'emancipation' - Yahweh's word - to the sword, to disease and starvation!"[72] James Moffatt translated it thus, "Therefore, the Eternal declares, since you would not obey me and proclaim freedom, each to his brother and fellow, I now proclaim you free, says the Eternal - free to fall under the sword, the pestilence, and the famine!" Laetsch rendered it, "Therefore thus says the LORD: You have not obeyed me in proclaiming a release to your brothers and your neighbor. Behold, I am proclaiming a release for you to the sword, to pestilence, to famine...!"

These alternatives of blessing and cursing are both temporal and eternal. Life in time gives us either the covenant salvation or the covenant judgment. Beyond time, the alternatives are heaven and hell. There is no neutrality. The rejection and crucifixion of our Lord led to history's most fearful judgment on Jerusalem (Matt. 24:21). As John Murray noted, "A covenant that yields its blessings to all indiscriminately cannot be kept or broken."[73]

God's covenant salvation requires the response of faith and obedience, of faithfulness. When God declares that He is our God, he requires us to be His people (Ex. 6:6-7). There are some who hold that Christ nullifies all obligations on our part by His atonement. Murray held that, because in Hebrews 9:16,17, the idea of a testament is used, i.e., a last will, the meaning is thus very different. "Here we have the most express witness to the fact that the new covenant is to be interpreted as a unilateral disposition and, therefore, totally foreign to the idea of a mutual contract."[74] However, the idea of a

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[72] John Bright: *Jeremiah*. The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965). p. 220.

[73] John Murray, "Covenant," in J. D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1962) 1973). p. 265.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

mutual or jointly made contract is never present in Scripture. The covenant is always an act of grace on God's part; man receives the covenant as God's gift and requirement. There is always the requirement of faithfulness to the covenant on both sides, but it is not a mutual contract at any point. Man never took the initiative in the creation of the covenant, nor did man determine the conditions of blessing and cursing.

Jocz rightly noted that in Scripture election is a responsibility, rather than a privilege, a calling rather than a subsidy.[75] The same is true of salvation. Covenant salvation is deliverance from judgment into service. Salvation is not a pleasant gift which we can stop and pick up by the side of the road of life. Individualistic doctrines of salvation offer salvation as an option for man, a great boon which man can take time to appropriate. As such, salvation is an asset which man can acquire or reject, an option which he can exercise or refuse to exercise.

Such a perspective is anti-covenantal. In Adam, all men are in a covenant of death. The Shorter Catechism, Qs. 16-20, summarizes the matter clearly:

> Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?
> A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.
>
> Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall being mankind?
> A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.
>
> Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereunto man fell?
> A. The sinfulness of that estate whereunto man fell, consists in, the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.
>
> Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereunto man fell?
> A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.
>
> Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?
> A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

The colonial child understood this because his schooling began with a covenant fact: "In Adam's fall, we sinned all." As a covenant fact, his sin could only be remedied by the covenant Savior. Instead of being an anarchistic and free person, he was a creature in God's universe and totally subject to the covenantal character of life. But this, instead of being a burden,

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[75] Jakob Jocz: *The Covenant.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1968). p. 40.

he saw as his only hope. In a world man never made, God's covenant is grace, life, and peace.

VIII

THE THEOLOGICAL NATURE OF SIN

1. The Religious Nature of Sin

During the 1940s through 1951, I was a missionary on an Indian Reservation, to Paiute and Shoshone Indians. When I arrived, I asked the handful of Christian Indians about the faith of the other Indians. Many, I was told, still had ties to the old Indian healing cults and the medicine men; a fair number, resented by the others, were "members" of the peyote groups. However, I was informed, most were into "the whiskey religion." This was said with a little humor and more seriousness. The same statement was made by some drinking Indians. Indian faith being very humanistic, it was logically held that, whatever a man depended on for his sense of well-being, was his religion.

This observation was a very sound one. Our definitions of sin are too often primarily moralistic rather than theological. *Sin is a religious fact.* At the heart of sin is a religious purpose. In Genesis 3:1-5, this is plainly set forth: the heart of the tempter's plan and faith was the right of every man to be his own god. "Ye shall be as God, knowing (or, determining for yourself) good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

Negatively considered, sin is the violation of God's law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). The Westminster Shorter Catechism, no. 14, declares, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God" (Rom. 4:15; James 2:10; James 4:17; I John 3:4). Sin is thus a hostile act against God which involves the violation of God's law. Two words used in the Greek for sin are important to an understanding of sin. *First,* there is *anomia,* anti-law. In anomia, there is a deliberate and principled lawlessness which seeks to overthrow God's law and to replace it with man's will. *Anomia* or lawlessness is basic to fallen man. The redeemed man is not lawless. *Second,* there is *hamartia,* missing, or falling short, of the mark. In *hamartia,* there can be an attempt to hit the mark and there is at least a basic direction towards the law. The Christian can and does in this life commit sin, *hamartia,* but he is not lawless. *Hamartia,* also refers to specific sins, i.e., false witness, murder, theft, adultery, etc. The redeemed man commits specific sins, but he does not abide in, or habitually commit, specific sins, because growth in freedom from sin marks his life.

Positively considered, sin is a religious act, the affirmation of another way of life. In 1937, L. J. Sherrill cited in passing a study by Dr. G. V. Hamilton in 1929 which showed that many if not most women were committing adultery, not out of love or for any greater pleasure, but on the principle of

"spousal freedom."[1] It is regrettable that the implications of this have not been pursued. Certainly, the fact of sinning on principle, sinning religiously, is an everyday fact. The sexual revolutionaries are emphatic that *life and living* require fornication, adultery, and a variety of perversions. It is held that people who do not sin sexually are "afraid to live." Similar statements are made with respect to the use of drugs. Juveniles, on being urged to participate in various offenses by others, (i.e., theft, malicious destruction, rape, and even assault and murder), are told, "What are you afraid of?" *Sin is equated with life and freedom.* Joseph, summoning his brothers to obedience, declared, "This do, and live" (Gen. 42:18), and God repeatedly makes similar declarations throughout the law and the prophets. The summons to sin, from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-5) to the present, is a like affirmation: This do, and live. Sin is thus held to be an affirmation of life, whereas the keeping of God's law is held to be an affirmation of death.

Sin is thus *a religious necessity* for all men in revolt against God. This is a fact of critical importance, because it means that every attempt to build a social order apart from and in defiance of God and His law is doomed to radical lawlessness. The principle which it religiously affirms (Gen. 3:5, man as his own god,) is in essence anarchistic and lawless. It leads to tyranny and to social upheavals.

To counteract that drive into lawlessness, elite men choose to play god over other men. They claim to exercise the general will of the gods (for men) for the general welfare and thereby become the great tyrants of society. In the name of the democratic consensus, the general will, or the dictatorship of the proletariat, they claim to incarnate in themselves the will of the masses. Since the will of fallen man is evil, the conglomerate and ostensibly concentrated will is the maximization of evil. The modern state is thus a positively evil force.

Sin is moreover *a way of life*, or, more accurately a way of death. Because sin is equated with life and freedom, it is seen as a necessary factor in the experience of man. This can mean the actual commission of a variety of lawless *acts*; it always does mean a life outside of God, the abolition of God from relevancy to everyday life. It is the secularization of man, his life, and his world. *Secular* can mean worldly, as against religious, and also that one is not bound by monastic vows. Secular man is man outside of God, or man seeking to live outside of God, bound by no law-word of God, and essentially free to pick and choose from whatever God or man may have to offer.

Secularism says in effect that man can create a life and world in independence from God. Creative man is seen as having a duty to regard life as an adventure into the unknown, made by charts created en route by man in

[1] Lewis Joseph Sherrill: *Family and Church.* (New York, New York: Abingdon Press, 1937). p. 116f.

terms of his will, and terminating in a self-created goal which is totally determined by man. Concepts of personal self-realization, social goals such as the Great Society, the communist state, and aquarian man, are all forms of secularism or sin.

The tempter's goal of Genesis 3:5 was presented as a highly moral and religious goal. At the heart of all sin there is a redefinition of all good. The universe of sin is a radically different realm than God's world, because, long before sin becomes an *act*, it is a *faith*, but not in God. It is a faith that life must be lived on man's terms, that joy and happiness require the fulfillment of man's ways, and hopes, and that law must come, not from God, but from man.

Sin results in acts, but it cannot be reduced to *act*, for to do so is to diminish man and religion both. Because sin is in essence religious, so too righteousness or justice is in essence religious. The unity of faith and life requires us to see that sin has religious implications and roots, even as righteousness does.

Scripture always speaks of God's wrath against sin and sinners, because God knows the religious nature of all sin: it is an act of war or of revolt against Him and His law and government. Sin can and does affect man. Our sins affect our family and our fellow men, but, essentially, they are directed against God. Hence, David confessed, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. 51:4). A secular churchman, committing, like David, an act of adultery, would justify his sin on humanistic grounds: loneliness, the attractiveness of the woman and his vulnerability, and other like humanistic excuses. David saw his sin for what all sin is: an act against God and His law in favor of our law. It is an act of revolt and revolution against God and His Kingdom. The appeal of sin is sinning *against* God and affirming our will and our own way of life. Sin is not weakness but an assault against God, or at the least, an attempt to evade His government in favor of our own.

2. The Origin of Sin

In discussing the origin of sin, it is important to say first of all that no attempt to "defend" God from the charge that He is the author of sin is either necessary or wise. It is a very poor god who needs man's defense. Second, any discussion of the origin of sin must of necessity be simply an attempt to understand what Scripture teaches, and no more. Scripture never speaks to us as abstract theologians but always as God's creatures, with a duty to believe in Him and to obey Him. If we approach the Bible on any other basis, we are in sin, and we are blind to its meaning.

A number of texts are used to declare that God cannot be regarded as the author of sin and that He hates sin. Some of these are:

> Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity. (Job 34:10)
>
> For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD, thy God. (Deut. 25:16)
>
> He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. (Deut. 32:4)
>
> ...the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. (Ps. 92:15)
>
> For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. (Ps. 5:4)
>
> The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. (Ps. 11:5)
>
> And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD. (Zech. 8:17)
>
> Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. (James 1:13)

As against such verses, Isaiah 45:7 is often cited "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." The Hebrew word used by Isaiah is *ra*, which is used in Genesis 2:9,17, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in Gen. 3:22; 6:5; 8:21, and many other texts when the roots of sin are cited. All the same, Calvin's comment has merit to it:

> *Making peace, and creating evil.* By the words "light" and "darkness" he describes metaphorically not only peace and war, but adverse and prosperous events of any kind; and he extends the word *peace*, according to the custom of Hebrew writers, to all success and prosperity. This is made abundantly clear by the contrast; for he contrasts "peace" not only with war, but with adverse events of every sort. Fanatics torture this word *evil*, as if God were the author of evil, that is, of sin; but it is very obvious how ridiculously they abuse this passage of the Prophet. This is sufficiently explained by the contrast, the parts of which must agree with each other; for he contrasts "peace" with "evil," that is, with afflictions, wars, and other adverse occurrences. If he contrasted "righteousness" with "evil," there would be some plausibility in their reasoning, but this is a manifest contrast of things that are opposite to each other. Consequently, we ought not to reject the ordinary distinction, that God is the author of the "evil" of punishment, but not of the "evil" of guilt.[2]

However, we must add that Calvin's observation, while calling attention to what is a real part of the text, misses Isaiah's point, one which the rabbis long

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[2] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1948) 1957). p. 402f.

ago had seen. We have here God's denial of dualism, a very great temptation to religionists of that day. The rabbis, to protect God's sovereignty, declared, "Man should bless God for the evil which occurs in the same way that he blesses Him for the good" (Ber. 33b). The Jewish liturgy has since changed Isa. 45:7 to read, "make peace and create all that exists," which may imply that evil is only the absence of good.[3]

A further point is often made. Evil is not a *thing*, and hence not a creature. It is a relationship, or, better, a ruptured or broken relationship. God created heaven and earth, and all things therein, but sin is not properly a part of that creation, but rather the disruption of relationships between Creator and man, and between man and his fellow men.

The merit of this distinction is that it points us in the right direction. Let us remember the Westminster Shorter Catechism's definition (no.14) of sin: "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." The source of definition is God. Sin and righteousness cannot be defined abstractly: both describe man's relationship to God, and to his fellow men under God. Just as God is beyond definition, because He is the infinite and absolute source of all things, and the definer of all, so God is beyond men's judgment, because God is the Judge, not the prisoner before the court.

God's law is the expression of His being. The unchanging God (Mal. 3:6) cannot depart from His own Being: He always Is, "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). His Being is righteousness. Sin is our relationship to Him, not something apart from Him, so that we have no law above God, in terms of which God can be called a sinner. In the sense that God's eternal decree is the source of all creation, events, thoughts, and possibilities, the origin of sin as a possibility and a "fact" is in God's creative purpose. With respect to the responsibility for sin, God is not its author.

Because sin is revolt *against* God and His law, sin is totally an alien and impossible concept to ascribe to God, in commission or in origin, i.e., *moral* origin. The question thus is not an admissible one.

We have an interesting statement on the origin and nature of sin in Jude 6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." The word translated as "first estate" is *arche*. It means (1) beginning, or (2) rule, power, or principality. The beginning and the rulership of the fallen angels was to serve God in their appointed place. This they rejected, seeking independence from God, which means seeking to be their own gods, determining good and evil for themselves (Gen. 3:5). Sin began in the creature's attempt to play creator, and the nature of sin is this proud attempt to seize the throne and the government of the universe, beginning

[3] Editorial Staff, "Good and Evil," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Vol 7. (New York, New York: Macmillan, 1971). p. 777

with self-government. Man having been created by God in God's image, in knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion (Gen. 1:27,28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24), it is man's calling to develop and apply the implications of the image, that is, the *moral nature* of God; instead, man seeks rather to claim, not God's moral nature by imitation, but God's *being*. Man thus seeks a metaphysical imitation of God rather than a moral or ethical one. Man the sinner seeks to be as God, rather than godly.

In I John 3:8 we are told, "He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." "The beginning" is again the word *arche*. The devil's origin and estate is here seen as almost identical with his sin, so that revolt and independence marked him at once. The purpose of Christ's coming is to destroy this independence, which is sin and death, and to replace it with life and righteousness to man in his God-ordained place and calling. The atonement is the beginning of that destruction of the tempter's work; we fulfil it in all our being, in our calling.

Sin thus has its origin in eternity, in heaven, with the fall of the angels. Our Lord describes the devil thus:

> Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Sin is equated with (1) murder, or death, and (2) with lies. Sin has its result in death, because it is the antithesis of life, *and therefore of God, who is life*, and the antithesis of truth, and *therefore of God, who is the truth* (John 14:6). Sin is separation from God, and hence hell is the conclusion of sin.

We have a further reference to Satan and sin in I Timothy 3:6, where Paul warns against the quick advancement of a novice in the faith, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." The reference here is to pride and conceit. Sin demands more than God ordains, and the demand can be great or small, but, at its heart, there is always the claim to be one's own god and law. Instead of seeking the communicable moral attributes of God, sin seeks the incommunicable metaphysical attributes of God. Man being a creature, he is totally the "product" of God's creative purpose, and thus totally subject to the will and law of his Maker. Sin is a rejection of creaturehood and a demand for transcendence over and beyond the limitations of the creature. This is the root and origin of sin.

Sin thus is always a theocentric fact: it always has relationship to God and His law-word. Sin, before it ever eventuates in an act, is the rejection of God and His word by man. It begins in the heart of the creature who rejects His Creator.

3. Total Depravity

The doctrine of total depravity is commonly misunderstood. Its critics assume that total depravity means the incapacity of any unregenerate man ever to do one thing which is in any sense good or just. John Calvin, who is often held to be the author of such an opinion, said, in fact,

> In the first place, I do not deny, that whatever excellence appears in unbelievers, they are the gifts of God. I am not so at variance with the common opinion of mankind, as to contend that there is no difference between the justice, moderation, and equity of Titus or Trajan, and the rage, intemperance, and cruelty of Caligula, or Nero, or Domitian; between the obscenities of Tiberius and the continence of Vespasian; and, not to dwell on particular virtues or vices, between the observance and the contempt of moral obligation and positive laws. For so great is the difference between just and unjust, that it is visible even in the lifeless image of it. For what order will be left in the world, if these opposites be confounded together? Such a distinction as this, therefore, between virtuous and vicious actions, has not only been engraven by the Lord in the heart of every man, but has also been frequently confirmed by his providential dispensations. We see how he confers many blessings of the present life on those who practice virtue among men. Not that this external resemblance of virtue merits the least favor from him; but he is pleased to discover his great esteem of true righteousness, by not permitting that which is external and hypocritical to remain without a temporal reward. Whence it follows, as we have just acknowledged, that these virtues, whatever they may be, or rather images of virtues, are the gifts of God; since there is nothing in any respect laudable which does not proceed from him.[4]

Calvin thus held, *first*, that virtue in some sense is present among many unbelievers in this life. To hold otherwise would mean to deny the reality of development and decay, of process and growth, in history. *Second*, Calvin held that these virtuous actions are the gift of God in some sense, rooted either in His image or in His eternal decree. *Third*, while no man's virtues have any claim on God, all the same, in His sovereign grace, God gives temporal rewards to unbelievers for their virtues, even where their practice is no more than "external and hypocritical." *Fourth*, to deny these things would be to destroy order in the world.

Clearly, not even John Calvin, the supposed author of such an opinion, held that total depravity means that the unbelievers are without even one trace of virtue. The caricatures of Calvin's view are a major hindrance to understanding an important teaching of Scripture.

What the doctrine of total depravity sets forth is that the extent of the corruption of sin and death is total. Every aspect of man's being is affected and governed by sin. Mind and body, reason and emotions, will, sexuality,

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[4] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, Chapter XIV, Section II; Vol II. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). p. 4f.

and all things else are changed, altered, and warped by the Fall. Thomism and Arminianism disagree; for them, the mind of man is immune to the taint of sin, so that man can be reasoned with. If this were true, philosophy should be the great instrument for the conversion of men. Reason would replace the Holy Spirit as the instrument of salvation. The fact is, however, that people cannot be reasoned into salvation. The Bible declares that both the heart and the understanding of fallen man are darkened:

> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (Romans 1:21)
>
> 17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
> 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. (Eph. 4:17-18)

Man, in all his being, is tainted by sin and infected with death, when he is in the estate of sin or the Fall. To ignore this fact is to sentence ourselves to impotence in dealing with men. We will then trust in our reason, or in some other humanistic idea of common ground, rather than in the effectual word of our sovereign God.

It is important to understand how total depravity operates, in order to escape its consequences in history. We cannot fully appreciate what salvation is until we know what we are saved from. A man who is caught, when on the verge of falling into a dark, six-foot sandy pit, will be only mildly grateful until he learns that, at the bottom of that pit are hungry, man-eating crocodiles. A pit he might otherwise have clambered out of now suddenly appears as a horror and sure death. We can here consider only one aspect of what we are saved from, i.e., total depravity, but it is important for us to know, not only what we are *saved from* but what we are *saved for.*

Our original sin is the tempter's religion, "Ye shall be as gods (or, God), knowing (or, determining for yourself what constitutes) good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). This is the faith which dominates the total life of fallen man and is the underlying presupposition of all his reasoning. As a result, life has a false center. Instead of God, it is man. The universe becomes in such thinking anthropocentric. Life is good, *if I have* what I want, money, husband, wife, or children, position, prestige, or whatever else a man's heart may desire. Life is evil, if I am frustrated in my desire to realize any of these things.

Thus, that which saddens, grieves, or makes unhappy most people is not sin, but failure to realize their sin. This is the effect of total depravity: it gives us a false center. Now, unless we recognize what total depravity is and does, we still carry its basic presupposition over into our Christian life. The major part of the grief which necessitate pastoral care is not caused by sin, but by failure to attain the goals of sin. The implicit or explicit complaint and cry is

this: "Now that I am a Christian, why doesn't God give me all the good things I want? I don't ask for much!" However modest the request, everything is asked for, namely, that life, and the goodness of life, be determined by our wants and wishes. The *thing* required may indeed be modest: a spouse, a trip now and then, easier circumstances, and so on, but the *principle* is totally immodest and proud; my definition of needs is the standard of my happiness, and of my judgment whether or not God and man are just.

The whole point of regeneration and sanctification is the creation and then the development of a new center. Paul says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or, creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). Again "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

All too often, however, people carry into Christianity all their old bundle of egocentric hopes and expect God to bless and fulfil them. These hopes may be morally sound hopes. There is no sin in wanting a son, for example, but there is a sin in holding that our relationship with God requires Him to answer our prayers and give us what we want. There is no sin in wanting a better house, but there is a sin in discontentment with what God provides. Paul writes that "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Tim. 6:6), because contentment means recognizing the priority of the will of God. Contentment does not mean a lack of initiative nor an unwillingness to work for our betterment. It does mean that we recognize God's will as supreme, and His government as best for us, and we therefore *rest* in Him as our Sabbath and our peace.

If we refuse to grow in terms of God's grace, or if we drag our heels at the prospects of growth, we add to our misery. In the regenerate and unregenerate alike, discontent is a poison which kills every possible joy in life. In the believer, to this discontent is added the reproach of a regenerate conscience, which reminds us continually how ungracious and ungrateful we are.

Today, men's unwillingness to recognize the fact of total depravity not only pollutes their personal lives but their social lives as well. Failure to recognize that fallen man has a radically false center leads men to create supposedly noble political and social institutions and programs which become market-places of corruption. The nobler the professed goals, the greater the delusion, and hence the greater the ensuing corruption. Every era which neglects to understand the meaning of total depravity is condemned to suffer from the effects of it.

On the personal level, the relationship of love and total depravity is too seldom appreciated. Love is greatly idealized in the modern era, but perhaps never before has it been so great a problem to man. The union of total

depravity with love means a demand that the other person gratify us, because we are the center. All too many marriages have ego gratification as their hidden purpose rather than a godly union. Ego gratification in marriage leads to a mutual hostility rather than love, because the needs and demands of the other conflict with or threaten ours.

Total depravity destroys communication. Too often conversation is autobiography, not friendship. People will complain of having 'poured out their guts' to someone else, only to be rebuffed, without ever realizing that the pouring out was a proclamation of their religion of the self, of the great god, I, me, myself, my ego. Communication collapses when its center is man's ego, and where it moves within the false world of the self, rather than the realities of God's world. We have a short span in this world; speech and thought are great privileges. If we use our time and language in a vain effort to get the world and other people to serve us, we live in vain, and we are more than miserable. The whole point and meaning of life, as well as man's chief end, is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

4. Sin as Deprivation

An important and potent interpretation of sin is that it is not, as Scripture holds, an evil will, but rather deprivation. Delinquent children are those who have been deprived of love, it is held, or adequate housing. The criminal is seen as a product of social deprivation, and social problems generally have the same cause.

The remedy then becomes social legislation designed to equalize wealth, housing, education, and privileges. The twentieth century has seen the rapid triumph of this opinion, and the rapid social decay, disorder, and lawlessness it coddles and abets. Sin as deprivation rests on environmentalism. The classic modern examples of environmentalism are Marxism, Behaviorism, welfare economics, and like creeds.

Our concern, however, must begin with the roots of this concept. All too many who readily condemn the political and social aspects of this doctrine of sin as deprivation still hold to it in the personal realm. Ask people what it is in their lives which makes them unhappy, and they will quickly list a number of things which add up to one fact: they feel *deprived* of certain things.

Very, very rare today is the person who would say that his problem, and the root of his or her unhappiness, is *sin* In fact, the unhappy person will be offended at such a statement. Their sensitive needs have not been appreciated! Sinners are indeed very sensitive people, totally sensitive to their "needs," but very insensitive to the requirements of God, and the feelings of other people. Sensitive people almost invariably fall into this category. Sensitivity usually means a finely tuned awareness of our every egocentric feeling and impulse. Such people are usually very easily hurt, because every

frustration of their wishes, every failure to make the desired impression, or to be the center of attention, is seen as an offense. To see ourselves, our wishes, and our feelings as the center of the universe is to invite hurting and offense. It also insures isolation.

Isolation and a failure to communicate are basic to the world of existentionalism and of sin. Where every man sees himself as god, and the world as duty-bound to recognize his centrality, each lives in a walled-in world of egoism. Each demands that the world enjoy him and serve him forever.

A psychiatrist, Dr. Clifford T. Sager, M.D., has called attention to one kind of sexual failure he has encountered. This was a fear of orgasm, a fear of enjoying the sexual relationship with the loved one. Citing a specific case, Sager notes, "She indicated in the follow-up that she *did not want* to have an orgasm with him, and that this was why she was withdrawing from treatment. She felt that for her to climax with him would give him a means of control over her which she did not want him to have."[5] We can add that marriage commonly affects men in the same way. Love and marriage are a bond, and the man who wants an ungodly freedom will resent the marital bonds. All the eagerness and longing he felt for his beloved before marriage now cool off into an aloofness and detachment.

To be a creature is to be *dependent* upon God, man, and the world we live in. When the creature attempts to be as God, he logically seeks to be independent of God, man, and the world and will seek rather to make them dependent upon him. It culminates in the insane position of Rilke, who wrote:

> What will you do, God, when I die?
> When I, your pitcher, broken lie?
> When I, your drink, go stale or dry?
> I am your garb, the trade you ply,
> you lose your meaning, losing me.[6]

A rejection of dependence is also a rejection of friendship and a demand for subservience. Friendship sooner or later requires interdependence and creatureliness. To demand perfection of friends means to demand accountability to ourselves, as though we were God.

Now a state made up of godless men, each bent on playing god, will be a state which at one and the same time is radically elitist and radically equalitarian. The demand for independence of God and man leads to legislation which levels all things: let none be higher than I! At the same time, this requirement of independence requires that each claim a supremacy: as

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5. Clifford T. Sager, M.D.: "Sexual Dysfunctions in the Single Persons," in Edward T. Adelson, M.D.: *Sexuality and Psychoanalysis*. (New York, New York: Breinner/Mazel, 1975). p. 128.

6. Rainer Maria Rilke: *Poems from the Book of Hours*. Translated by Babette Deutsch. (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1941). p. 29.

George Orwell summed it up in *Animal Farm*, some pigs are more equal than others!

The Bible never allows us to forget our creatureliness. The word for *bondage* or slavery has an interesting usage. *Desmos* or bondage refers to actual chains or bonds, to captivity. At the same time, the word is used to refer to godly community in Christ. Thus, in Ephesians 4:3, Paul writes that Christians must endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the *bond* of peace." The word used here for *bond* is *sundesmos*, together bound. We encounter the same word in Col. 3:14, and Col. 2:19. Peter, in Acts 8:23, speaks of the "bond of iniquity." The creature can never escape bonds and dependency. If he refuses to be dependent upon God, and, in God, dependent upon other men and the physical world around him, he will, in his pursuit of independence, become instead bound only to sin. Our true freedom is from sin and death into the bond of Christ and of righteousness (Gal. 5:1; John 8:31-32; II Cor. 3:17; James 1:25). The service of God is our freedom.

Man the sinner sees not only sin as freedom, but also as pleasure. The freedom of sin is not freedom from the problems and consequences which always accompany sin: those are ever present. It is the supposed freedom from God and His law. The pleasure of sin is in the supposed independence from God and man. It is believed that forbidden fruit is always the sweeter, not because men find those sins in themselves worthwhile, but in the implicit declaration of independence from God and man that sin involves. People will steal things they do not want or need, and commit adultery or fornication with people they do not like, in order to show their independence from God and man, and from any law other than their own.

They refuse to be *deprived* of their "right" to be as God, to play god. They sin to cancel a deprivation, the deprivation of autonomy: "I've gotta be free, I've gotta be me," so goes their refrain.

The concept of deprivation, as it governs men, warps society dramatically. The Garden of Eden required *work* of Adam and Eve; it was a sinless order, but emphatically not a workless place. The Garden of Eden was a pilot project of the Kingdom of God. Man was there to learn the requirements of God's realm in order to occupy and develop the whole of the world-wilderness in terms of them. Eden required tilling and care, harvesting, and more. The basic work of tool-making and housing faced Adam, and he had no resources other than his mind and hands with which to capitalize himself. He was under God's command (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:16-20), and he was called and required to serve and obey His Maker. He was a priest, prophet, and king, but always and only *under God*. Adam's world was therefore a *service society*, the service of God, and mutual work and service under God.

The effect of sin was to create a *demand society*, and to restructure society in terms of demands. Hence, whereas all relationships and institutions were

ordained by God to further communion and community between God and man, and in the service of God, now all relationships and institutions are under the pressure of demands.

People marry in terms of implicit demands: marriage is to serve their need for fulfillment, not God's purpose. The purpose of education becomes self-realization, not the service of God and man. The function of the church is to help people, not for people to grow in God's grace and in obedience to Him. The work we do is to enable us to live well, not to exercise dominion under God in our particular sphere. The state must re-order the world to gratify man's demands rather than institute God's justice or righteousness.

The deprivation doctrine leads to demands, demands made to alleviate deprivation. Sin on the other hand calls for salvation and righteousness as its solution. Between the two doctrines, a gulf exists, and each creates a radically different world and culture. The roots of both are in the heart of man.

5. Sin and Society

One of the prevailing myths of our time is the supposed neutrality of society to religion. Religion is held to be the concern of the church and of private man. In the world of the arts and sciences, economics and commerce, and in the state, man moves into a supposed neutral realm. This, depending on the person's viewpoint, is the sphere of reason, common grace, natural law, or some other supposed common and neutral ground. The world has been separated from God, in such thinking, and becomes a common ground where God and man can interact, but which cannot be usurped as God's territory.

Such a perspective is a form of unbelief. It denies the sovereignty of God, and reduces religion to a very limited sphere. To illustrate, let us suppose that a man is an adulterer, has defrauded his wife of her inheritance, and is planning to divorce her and marry a younger woman. In a neutral world, his sin against his wife is purely a matter of internal relationship within a marriage; as a citizen, employer or employee, and a neighbor, he can be a "good man." However, from a Biblical perspective, this is impossible. No demarcation of areas or spheres exists before God, and no area of neutrality. At every point, in time and eternity, heaven or hell, or in waking and sleeping, man stands before the Lord, his maker and judge. He is one man, God's creature, wherever he is, under one law, God's law. Man gains no diplomatic immunity nor sanctuary before God by moving from one sphere to another: in every sphere, he stands before God, and accountable to Him.

Just as sin is total in the life of man, affecting his total being, so sin is total in the life of society. Total depravity means that every aspect of a man's life *and society* is tainted by sin, so that death haunts every son of Adam, *and every culture* created by the sons of Adam. Technology does not eliminate

this death-bound nature of society; rather, it expedites and enhances the workings of sin.

If a society lacks a sound doctrine of sin, it will then lack also a sound doctrine of social order and freedom. Historian Stephen E. Berk, in discussing American Puritanism, noted,

> While New England Puritans often wrote and spoke of liberty, they certainly intended no democratic or equalitarian meaning of the term. They referred to the liberty of godly societies to follow divine commandments. John Winthrop distinguished this "civil or federal" liberty from the liberty which was "inconsistent or incompatible with authority," condemning the latter as mere license. In the 1760s, the liberal Puritan Jonathan Mayhew justified resistance to the crown in terms of the Puritan concept of liberty. Disobedience to authority which violated the strictures of God was both "lawful and glorious." Even the American Revolution could be supported as a cause in keeping with Puritan liberty. If England's rulers had failed to keep their covenant with God, if they were interfering with regular, divinely-constituted government in Massachusetts, then resistance was a God given right. Puritan patriots did not, therefore, embrace the revolution as a democratic movement. They merely regarded it as scrupulous resistance to unlawful authority.[7]

As Berk ably and tellingly points out, orthodox Puritans had a deep aversion to democracy. But they also came to distrust Federalism, as it developed the authority of the state. It was the Unitarians who were largely Federalist.[8] Earlier, the Puritans had favored Federalism because of their emphasis on authority.[9]

Because of the Puritan view of sin, freedom was not seen in humanistic terms, but as freedom under God, the covenant freedom "of godly societies to follow divine commandments." *Freedom meant the rule of God's law.* Order thus was a matter of faith and obedience, whereby sin and the fall were nullified, and God's Kingdom established.

Humanism denies the Biblical doctrine of sin. As a result, man, who is seen as autonomous, requires freedom from God to be himself. Freedom is in this sense anti-God and anti-Christ. Social order then requires, not a godly society, but rather either a statist order or an anarchistic one, because freedom and order require the destruction of all constraints upon man except those imposed by man himself.

Humanism reduces the "the question of morality," of right and wrong, to a human judgment and decision. As a dictionary of ideas states it,

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[7] Stephen E. Berk: *Calvinism versus Democracy, Timothy Dwight and the Origins of American Evangelical Orthodoxy.* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1974). p. 6f.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 7, 170.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

> This is the basic question of all morality, whether it be European or Oriental, whether it affects ideas concerning a divinity, behavior with regard to the State or one's neighbors, or the rules of a parlor game.[10]

However, Biblical faith does not see morality as a question but as a command from God and the response of obedience from man, the creature. Humanism sees morality essentially as having to do with two areas of relationship: *first*, with regard to the State, and, *second*, with regard to other men. It is now adding a *third* area of moral concern, our relationship to the environment. In terms of Scripture, however, all sin has to do with our relationship to God, because God is the creator, governor, and lord over all things. In our treatment of all things, including ourselves, we deal with God and His law. As David expresses it in Psalm 51:4, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." God's law covers all relationships, personal, civil, commercial, environmental, and more; hence all morality has to do with God, and all sin is against God.

However, if man's freedom is *from* God, then sin is obedience to God, and virtue is our declaration of independence from God. This is the rationale of the sexual revolution and what Berger has called "the resurgence of sacred sexuality." Humanistic man affirms himself religiously by breaking with God's law and by regarding his sin as a religious celebration. Sexuality then becomes the key component in "being human;" refusal to sin is called being afraid of our bodies. "To get in touch with one's body' is an imperative of regained health, beyond that of deepened humanity. Sexual liberation is thus linked to liberation in a more basic way; it becomes a method of achieving a freer humanity, individually and perhaps even politically."[11]

In politics and economies, the same definitions prevail: freedom from God constitutes morality, and sin is obedience to God. In revolutionary societies, this is more openly held than elsewhere. In others, the same goal prevails, although hypocritically veiled and often concealed under nominally Christian affirmations. Everywhere, the theme and motive of politics and economics is set forth in a way best summarized by Psalm 2:2-3:

> 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,
> 3. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

Sin can be described as the affirmation of a sovereignty in contradiction to God's sovereignty. Statist sovereignty is a direct attack on God's lordship and law-making prerogative. Sovereignty, law-making, and total jurisdiction, all prerogatives of God, are now routine claims of state, and modern statism is not comprehensible apart from this religious claim.

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[10] G. Grigson, C. H. Gibbs-Smith, editors: *Ideas*. (New York, New York: Hawthorne Books, 1957). p. 340.

[11] Peter L. Berger: *Facing Up to Modernity, Excursions in Society, Politics and Religion*. (New York, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977). p. 203f.

There is no neutrality in any area of life. All areas are equally under God and His law, and any and every attempt to limit God's jurisdiction, or to withdraw any sphere of life and thought into a supposed area of neutrality is sin, and it is an act of war against God.

Clearly, the modern world is at war with God. The antinomian church is no less at war against the Lord, because it limits His sovereign prerogatives of law-making and jurisdiction.

However, there is no greater form of folly than to assume that such warfare is a one-way affair. No man is at war with God without paying the price thereof. History is littered with the wreckage of states and cultures which warred against God. The modern church and state had better take warning.

6. Sin as Personal Fulfillment

No little attention has been given in the 20th century to the matter of "being a real person." A variety of psychological cults have devoted themselves to this supposed problem. The individual in the 20th century is supposedly in quest of personhood and is "finding" himself out of the morass of religion, morality, superstition, and the like.

All of this is, of course, radically anti-Christian. What is called for is the development of a "free personality," i.e., an individual who makes his own decisions as an autonomous, creative, and ultimate individual. Ego-building is basic to all such cults. In fact, it has become routine to define delinquent and criminal actions by persons young and old as a "cry for help" from a wounded ego. In terms of this, we are asked to view the delinquent, the homosexual, the murderer, and other offenders as first of all social victims whose egos need self-confidence and greater freedom. Their offenses are held to be an attempt to strike back at barriers. Thus, sin is converted into sickness, and the criminal offender into a victim.

The uniqueness of the individual is seen as his supposed ultimacy. Anything which limits or frustrates the self-realization of the unique person is held to be wrong.

According to Scripture, however, man, instead of being an independent being, is totally dependent upon God. At every point of his life and being, and in every atom and moment thereof, man is totally dependent upon God. No declaration of independence by man can ever dissolve any aspect of that dependence. Man's sin and unbelief do not remove his dependence upon God: rather, his relationship is merely changed from grace to judgment. The uniqueness of man is not himself: it is in his relationship to God as His image-bearer and covenant creature.[12]

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[12] Helmut Berkhardt: *The Biblical Doctrine of Regeneration.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974). p. 27.

Man's sin is to pretend to be a god, his own god, determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). This claim to be God means also the claim to infallibility. This is rarely openly stated, but it is no less true. Berger has noted:

> The broad tradition of liberal ideology, all the way back to the Enlightenment, has an especially close relationship to the process of modernization. Indeed, the argument can be made that this tradition embodies the myth of modernity more than any other. It is not surprising, then, that it has been singularly blind to the importance and at times even the very existence of mediating structures. Liberalism is, above all, a faith in rationality. Its designs for society are highly rational, abstract, universalistic.[13]

The ultimate test of all things is in this perspective reason. Reason may, in process, often prove fallible, but the ultimate judge over all things is held to be reason, so that, while a deferred infallibility is "modestly" maintained, reason replaces God.

With others, the scientific method becomes man's potentially infallible tool for the exercise of his authority and ultimacy. Even when humanism, in its Freudian disintegration, assails man, it still retains ultimacy for him. Freud denied the validity of reason by seeing it as a facade for the unconscious. However, he transferred infallibility, in a more rigorous form, from man's reason to man's unconscious. The unconscious became for Freud a well-spring of infallible knowledge concerning man as an individual, concerning man's primordial history, and concerning man's present life.[14]

The modern state, not only in the earlier doctrine of the divine right of kings, but even more in democratic theory, in Marxism, and in fascism asserts its own ultimacy and infallibility. In one form or another, we have the ancient pagan doctrine, *vox populi vox dei*, the voice of the people is the voice of God. The state, declares itself to be that voice.

Today, of course, we are seeing the disintegration of that humanism. Drucker sees present events as possibly foreshadowing "the end of the Age of the Infallible Society."[15] At any rate, this presumption and sin is still very much a part of our world.

The modern quest for personhood is thus a quest for sin. It is the attempt to supplant God's ultimacy with man's.

In the process, God is often retained to some degree. In paganism, as well as in some forms of church faith, God becomes, rather than the lord and creator of all things, "an actual experience...The power in the experience

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[13] Berger, *op. cit.*, p. 135f.

[14] R. J. Rushdoony: *Freud.* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company (1965) 1978).

[15] Peter Drucker: *Adventures of a Bystander.* (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1978). p. 140.

leads to endowment with form." This is the perspective of phenomenology.[16] In such a perspective, God is a resource for man, and not lord, and to regard God as a resource is sin, for it is an assumption of sovereignty on our part.

All too often, however, the motivating force in religion is based on this presupposition of personal sovereignty. Men then go to religion and God to fill a personal need. Like food and water, God becomes a resource to meet and serve human wants. Personal fulfillment is stressed as an important religious motivation. All this, however, is in radical contradiction to Biblical faith. We do not approach God to fulfil our needs but to be commanded and used for His kingdom and glory. It is not the chief end of God to glorify man and to enjoy him forever, but rather the reverse. The Westminster Larger Catechism declares, "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever." Paul declares, "For of him and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36).

The cult of personality, however, reduces God from sovereignty to an experience and a resource. Such a faith colors all life and reality. The function of God and the world then is to provide us with the stage, our appointed scenario, and the required props for us to fulfil ourselves. But the fulfillment of man is the social ideal of the fall, and it only aggravates and extends the scope of the fall further into history. Personal fulfillment as a personal and social goal converts sin into a virtue and ensures social disintegration.

The proliferation of crime and discontent is related to the cult of being a real person, because this cult requires the conscious and religious practice of sin, i.e., playing at being God, as a religious act. The emphasis in life is then on the individual, the person. Marriage then becomes expendable if it is held to conflict with personal fulfillment. As Stern has noted, marriage, once the foundation of society, has been sacrificed by many in favor of new definitions of personal pleasure. The goal is "intimacy without vulnerability, love without commitment or responsibility."[17] Men seek rebirth without cost, and adults crawl into big cribs to play at being reborn.[18] The cult of personality creates a people who are the *takers* of the world, not the doers. As a result their defeat is sure.[19]

We are told by our Lord that it is the meek who are blessed, and who shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5). The word *meek* (*praus*) means gentled, tamed, broken to harness, and humble. The word cannot be read humanistically. Meekness is in relationship to God as lord. Because the blessed meek are faithful and obedient to God and His word, they are heirs of the earth in and

16. Gerardus Van der Leeuw: *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, 17, 3. (New York, New York: Macmillan, 1938). p. 156f.
17. Aaron Stern, M.D.: *ME, The Narcissistic American*. (New York, New York: Ballantine Books, 1979). p. 2f.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

under Him. The reverse of, or antonym to, meek is sinful, and the lot of the sinner is disinheritance. What they have shall be taken from them (Matt. 13:12).

The cult of personality thus leads to the destruction of man. By its atomism, it isolates man from God and society, works to dissolve marriage and other relationships, and to exalt man as his own religious goal. The consequence of sin is always death.

7. Sin and Matter

According to a very prevalent heresy, sin is associated with matter, and virtue with spirit. The "spiritual" life is held to be superior, and people are encouraged to be "above" material concerns. The logical conclusion of such a belief is asceticism and the monastic way, but, in most cases, churchmen do not go so far. Rather, the inference remains that Christians should not be too interested in nor enjoy food, clothing, sex, and other material concerns.

The roots of such a view are not Biblical. Rather, they are neoplatonic or else Manichaean. For the Manichaeans, the world was divided into two kinds of being. The one supreme or great being was spirit, which is good, and the other is matter, which is bad. All men were seen as a mixture of the two. Virtue meant separating ourselves from all things material.

From the Biblical perspective, this is false. Both "spirit" and "matter," i.e., the totality of creation, was made wholly good by the Lord (Gen. 1:31; I Tim. 4:4). The problem in creation is not matter but sin, a very different thing. In fact, the origin of sin is in a purely spiritual being, Satan, and sin began and begins in the mind of man, not in his flesh or body (The Bible at times uses the word *flesh* to mean human nature, at other times, to refer to man.) Paul makes clear how false this "spiritual" religion is, and condemns it strongly:

> 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
> 2. Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
> 3. Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. (I Tim. 4:1-3)

First, the Holy Spirit Himself issues this warning concerning false spirituality. Because the Bible speaks of the *spirit* of man, we dare not confuse man's spirit with the Holy Spirit and assume a common nature or character. Man's spirit is *wind* or *breath*; it is his life. The life of God is very different from man's life, and the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is righteousness and all things else that the Godhead is by nature. Man's life is either sinful, or, by God's grace, godly, but, in either case, it is derivative and

has no inherent virtue of its own. Man would not be good or righteous if he were totally a spiritual being, without any materiality, unless God's grace made him so.

Second, this spiritual religion is called the doctrine of devils and seducing spirits. All who hold to it are apostate finally, given to hypocrisy and lies, and an evil and seared conscience. Clearly, such views are more than heretical: they are evil, apostate, and anti-Biblical.

Third, this false spirituality leads such men to forbid marriage as too materialistic, and counsels such things as vegetarianism as a religious principle. If we worship life as such, if spirit as such be holy for us, we will deplore the eating of animals as the taking of life.

This false spirituality is very common in and out of the church. Many non-Christians write about the fall of man as a sexual act, thereby manifesting their Manichaean presuppositions. More than a few churchmen assume that sexual desire is evil, whereas in Scripture it is only the lawless use of sexual desire which is sinful. Paul and the apostolic fellowship specifically tell us in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

There is no sin in the enjoyment of beauty, whether it be in mountains, forests, fields, or a person of the other sex; the sin is in the lawless use of things. There is no sin, and, in fact, much pleasure, in enjoying the loveliness of another person's home and possessions; the sin comes in coveting and wrongfully seeking to gain those things.

It is a serious error to place sin in sex, or material things, or in objects. It is rooted in the heart. Luther very aptly answered such false thinking, declaring:

> Do not suppose that abuses are eliminated by destroying the object which is abused. Men can go wrong with wine and women. Shall we than prohibit wine and abolish women? The sun, the moon, the stars have been worshiped. Shall we then pluck them out of the sky?[20]

If we have a neoplatonic or Manichaean view of sin, then our answer to evil becomes *controls*. Modern politics has a strong vein of such apostate reasoning. Pagan thinking, and Manichaean and neoplatonic faiths, held usually to the eternity of the world and its constituent elements. This meant that both the evil matter and good spirit would be forever on the world scene. Thus, no change could eliminate evil: it could only be dealt with by suppression. *Control and suppression thus became the cardinal religious, social, and political instruments. Coercion then replaces conversion, and the essence of virtuous action becomes coercive legislation.*

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[20] Roland H. Bainton: *Here I Stand, A Life of Martin Luther*. (New York, New York: Abingdon, 1950). p. 214.

Modern man sees the errors of the church's past in this area, not in any valid sense, but by way of dissent as to the sphere of coercion. Ecclesiastical coercive activities have been replaced by far more severe statist coercion.

The Biblical perspective is radically different. The solution to the problem of sin is *not coercion but regeneration.* Society is not on an endless treadmill, with no solution to the problem of sin save endless coercion. Man can be made a new creation in and through Jesus Christ.

Some will object that Biblical law requires coercion. The answer is that, with all forms of humanism, there being no doctrine of true regeneration, not only is there coercion, but the coercion is directed against groups and classes of people, i.e., capitalists, fascists, communists, and the like. Biblical law legislates rather against offenses, actual crimes, and requires either restitution or death. The coercion is in terms of an offense, not a human condition, faith, or class.

The non-Christian views of evil lead to perpetual war for perpetual peace. They resolve nothing.

To ascribe sin to material things is thus a doctrine with very deadly consequences. It led Origen to castrate himself, in the hope of stilling lust, only to find that it was not in his testicles but in his heart. It led the Manichaeans to condemn marriage, and all things material, which meant condemning life itself. As Ladurie noted, "Because everything was forbidden, one act was no worse than another," and in essence then all things were permitted![21]

In the life of the individual, a false doctrine of sin leads to a defeated life. If we are forever fighting sin in the belief that it is something physical, we are without hope. Being physical creatures, our only solution to the problem of sin is then death. As Christians, however, we know that sin is not a natural fact, but a moral fact. Man was created wholly good in Eden, and in Jesus Christ is recreated to an even greater holiness and righteousness. For the Manichaean, sin is an eternal fact; for us, it is something Christ destroyed on the cross, together with death, and which we in Him see progressively destroyed in our lives.

8. Sin and False Perfectionism

I Timothy 4:1-3 clearly strikes at the neoplationism and the Eastern dualistic faiths already widely in evidence in Paul's day. It also condemns at the same time any and all depreciations of this life and this world, whatever their motive. A false perfectionism has all too often led to a depreciation and even condemnation of an earthly and physical life.

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[21] Le Roy Ladurie: *Montaillon, The Promised Land of Error.* (New York, New York: George Braziller, 1978). pp. 158, 171f. 327.

In the very troubled 16th century, an Armenian ecclesiastical leader, teacher, and poet, Nerses Mokatzi (i.e., of Mok or Mog), expressed a wholesome faith in his poem, *The Dispute Between Heaven and Earth.* Heaven and earth are presented as brothers. A prose summary of the poem concludes thus:

> *Heaven*–The Nine Orders of Angels are all here with me.
> *Earth*–In my realm are the apostles and the prophets.
> *Heaven*–I am the Heaven of Seven Regions; the Sun, the Moon, and the Creator-God sitting on His throne all have their abode in me.
> *Earth*–Your Seven Regions will be shaken from their foundation. The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars will be cast into the darkness and your Creator-God, with His throne, will descend to me. The judgment will be held in my domain.
> Heaven then bent down its head
> To the Earth in adoration,
> You too, children of the Earth,
> Bow to her in Adoration.
> What is higher than the Earth?
> Praise and love bring to enwreathe her.
> For today we walk on her
> And to-morrow sleep beneath her.[22]

Such a religious delight in God's creation is not as common now as it should be. The influence of Pietism has led to a depreciation of this world, and of things material. Despite common opinion, such a false spirituality is perhaps more common now than in previous generations. In the world of art, we see a revolt against the natural world and realism in favor of an empty spirituality and general meaninglessness. We have its counterpart in the religious realm. Instead of obedience to God's word, the religious response is held to be "spirituality," which can mean anything.

Thus, more than a few evangelicals view sexuality thus: In heaven, we are as the angels; there is no marriage (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25). Hence, marriage is a lower and earthly thing, necessary for those who "burn" (I Cor. 7:9), but definitely not a high and spiritual condition. We are forbidden to forbid marriage (I Tim. 4:3), but we cannot escape its unspiritual nature.

This opinion is surprisingly wide-spread. Not only do Christians hold to it, but non-Christians as well. For them, sexuality, instead of being unspiritual is irrational, and hence feared on that ground. Not surprisingly, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and other science-fiction depictions of the future, find substitutes for maternal child-birth, marriage, and even sexuality.

This antipathy extends even to normal sexual feelings. Desire is somehow bad, or at best a lower impulse. Luther once answered someone, who asked a question about sexual thoughts thus: there is no sin in having birds fly over

[22] Anon., "Armenia: Its Epics, Folk Songs and Medieval Poetry," in *Hye Endanik*, November-December, 1979. p. 31. San Lazzaro, Venezia, Italia.

our heads, but if we allow the birds to build nests in our hair, then we are in trouble!

Again, it is implicitly held by some that the enjoyment of good food, clothing, or housing is somehow unspiritual. A considerable body of people now insist on our moral responsibility to live as meagerly as possible, and to share the difference with the poor. Only by the misinterpretation of Scripture can they justify such a position.

Such people will also condemn church buildings, some also private housing, and all debt. Now Scripture does require a limit on debt (Deut. 15:1-4; Romans 13:8), but not for ascetic reasons. The ascetic is hostile to possessions; the Bible is not (Deut. 8:18).

Some of these attitudes were apparent in a religious conference of 1980:

> Hertfordshire, England: A strong challenge to evangelical Christians in affluent circumstances to simplify their lifestyles was the major theme of a statement adopted by the International Consultation of Simple Lifestyle here, sponsored jointly by the subunits of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship.
>
> The statement also called for Christians to take part in "political action to bring about a radical change in the present unjust trade and economic structures."
>
> The 2,500-word statement endorsed by 85 participants from 27 countries, was termed the strongest call yet by evangelicals to take a stand against economic injustice and to support a "redistribution of world wealth."
>
> The statement said: "We intend to reexamine our income and expenditures, in order to manage on less and give away more. We lay down no rules and regulations, for either ourselves or others. Yet we resolve to renounce waste and oppose extravagance in personal living, clothing and housing, travel and church buildings. We also accept the distinction between necessities and luxuries, creative hobbies and empty status symbols, occasional celebrations and normal routines."
>
> But the statement also made clear the group's conviction that the issues of poverty and wealth are not merely matters of individual concern, but are "issues of power and powerlessness. Without a shift of power through structural change, these problems cannot be solved."[23]

This statement is absurd at a number of points. The distinction between "necessities and luxuries" is entirely a relative one. The necessities of the conference members would be luxuries to many peoples. However, the heart of the problem goes deeper. *First*, the presupposition is that godly wealth is somehow wrong. Men such as Abraham, Jesse, and Aquila were wealthy;

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[23] *The Presbyterian Journal*, April 16, 1980, p. 4, "Lausanne, WEF Units Ask Simple Lifestyle."

Scripture never implies that their wealth was immoral, or that good living is a sin. There is never an injunction to live meagerly. There is a requirement that we be *content* in our poverty or our wealth (I Tim. 6:4-8). Gain, we are told, is not godliness, and neither is envy. Envy is repeatedly forbidden in Scripture (Ps. 37:1; Prov. 3:31; 24:1,19; Rom. 13:13; I Peter 2:1; cf. Job 5:2; Ps. 106:16; Prov. 14:30; Isa. 26:11; James 3:16).

Second, neither asceticism nor redistribution can increase the world's goods, despite this tacit assumption on the part of the conference. Indeed, they can seriously limit available resources. The goods these men want to redistribute are a product of invested capital plus work. Now talk about work and capital is as "unspiritual" to these men as talk about the godly nature of sexuality and desire in faithful covenant men and women, but it is a 'fact of life'! Asceticism and sacrifice do not produce food nor goods: work and capital do. Every "redistribution of world wealth" has sharply decreased food and supplies and often brought in hunger and famine by destroying productivity.

False perfectionism demands an end to all human ills, not by God's salvation through Jesus Christ, followed by the establishment of God's law order, but by means of humanistic and equalitarian measures.

We must not forget that Scripture condemns these perfectionist doctrines as coming from "seducing spirits" and "devils" (I Tim. 4:1). The word *seducing* is *planos*, wandering or deceiving. *Devils* is *daimonion*, a pagan inferior god. Thus, to call this false perfectionism "the doctrine of devils" is to declare it to be paganism. It is the infiltration of an alien faith into the church. In this sense, these calls to redistribute wealth and to become ascetics for liberation theology represent an alien religion, the doctrine of demons. Instead of representing a higher state of Christianity, it represents rather its debasement and defilement.

Paul, in Hebrews 13:9 warns, "Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." The heart of man is established by grace and sanctified by obedience to God's law, not by the counsels of liberation theology. The church has indeed come to a sorry point that it welcomes the counsel of socialism as gospel, and turns on God's law as a strange word!

One of the signers of the Hertfordshire statement was Ronald J. Sider, author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (1977). For Sider, sin is a class trait, it seems, a property of the wealthy and of capitalists. Sin, however, cannot be defined by man but only by God. "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God" (Shorter Catechism, no. 14). As I John 3:4 declares it, "sin is the transgression of the law" (the law of God), not a violation of the prescriptions of men.

9. Sin as a Political Asset

The Christian views sin with horror and dismay: it is to him the personal and social roadblock to God's Kingdom, and also the very smell of death. It should be remembered, however, that, to fallen man, sin is a way of life. It means freedom and pleasure.

However, because fallen men are still God's creatures and made in His image, they cannot avoid an inner condemnation and guilt because of sin. They are therefore moved to sin by their fallen nature, and, in terms of Genesis 3:5, see it as their freedom as well as a pleasure. At the same time, they are haunted by a sense of guilt. Not surprisingly, however much veiled, the key problem in psychotherapy since Freud has been *guilt*. Man the sinner refuses to acknowledge his sin, but, all the same, he is plagued by guilt at every turn. As a result, his mental and emotional problems have at their root a deep-seated sense of guilt. The role of psychotherapy, as well as of many psychological and religious cults, is the vain attempt to relieve the sense of guilt without facing the problem of sin. Moreover, in the effort to escape from the sense of guilt, men resort to a variety of other devises, including liquor and drugs. Nothing works, however, because what is sought is relief from *guilt* not salvation from *sin*.

Guilt is a debilitating and incapacitating force. Guilt makes men indecisive and impotent. Culturally, a guilt-ridden society is past-oriented, as are all guilty men. Guilt chains a man to his past, whereas salvation enables a man to grow and to put his past to a godly use and focus (Rom. 8:28). Guilt is perhaps the most pervasive and unrelenting form of slavery man has known.

II Peter 2:19 states it thus:

> 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.

Peter tells us that the ungodly see sin as the means to and promise of liberty, and they promote their way of life as the road to freedom. They are themselves slaves of corruption. J.B. Phillips renders the latter part of this verse thus: "For a man is the slave of whatever masters him." Our Lord makes very clear that sin is slavery (John 8:31-36), and that "whosoever committeth sin is the servant (or, slave) of sin" (John 8:34).

Now, with rare exceptions, the goal of the political process through the centuries has been the enslavement of men. This goal has been partially disguised and partially justified by a variety of "noble" ideals. The goal is said to be justice, peace, law and order, democracy, the public welfare, the redistribution of wealth, and so on, and the enslavers often and commonly delude even themselves into believing that their motives are selfless, pure, and noble. It is, however, the love of power which governs them. Moreover,

however much they may believe in their professed goals, they believe even more that the people by and large are too foolish or ignorant to know what is best for them.

How then can people be persuaded to adopt or to support their political program? The appeal is to the sense of guilt. Make men feel guilty because they live reasonably well when others are in want. Of course, those who live well are probably living so as a result of their honest work and thrift, and they may be already generous in their religious and charitable giving. The goal then is to make them feel that their "middle class work ethic" is somehow a reproach, and all private charity evil.

Again, we are asked to feel guilty about men in prison. We are told how many are of particular racial groups, and this is somehow our fault, no matter how many laws these convicts violated.

Colonialism is another source of guilt trips. Somehow, all advanced nations, whether formerly colonial powers or not, are supposedly guilty of these so-called sins of colonialism, some real, many more invented. Even more, all Europeans and whites are asked to see themselves as racists and exploiters, and therefore guilty. Arguments are not lacking to make all other races feel guilty also.

Guilty men are not free men: they are slaves. Slavery means greater ease in the exercise of political power. The forms of freedom are maintained, and the ballot box is common to the U.S.S.R. as well as the democracies, but the substance of freedom is denied.

The substance of freedom is very clear: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). The salvation of Jesus Christ frees us from the slavery of sin and guilt, and the fear of death. It makes us free from bondage to the past, and able to live in the present with power and an orientation to the future under God.

This means that no religion has a greater political significance than Christianity. Because no other religion offers salvation from sin and therefore guilt, no other religion can free man from slavery in any sphere, including political. Rather, non-Christian religions become instruments of enslavement. A guilty conscience means political power for those who govern the minds of men. For this reason, rulers have been able to live at ease with all other religions, and with a closeness which makes for a reinforcement of political centralism and power.

Within the church, all preaching aimed at renewing and perpetuating the sense of guilt among church members is antichristian and demonic. Some men are ready to utilize the sense of guilt to raise larger sums of money, both in the church and in other institutions. In one church, I found that several large donors had only a nominal relationship to the church and were immoral men. The basis of the appeal to them was this: 'You certainly want to help us to

build a better church and community, stronger families, and a more religious and moral people. These are our goals, and we know they are your also, and this is why we believe you will be interested in helping us.' A man guilty of habitual adultery, and more, (all more or less concealed), would be anxious to cover his guilt by money, and by commending "the good" the church was doing for the community and its homes.

To *atone* is literally *to cover* in the Bible, and, if our sins are not covered and blotted out by Jesus Christ, we will seek to cover them in other ways. Since Adam and Eve sought to cover themselves in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:7-8), man have sought a variety of ways to cover their sins.

Basic to all non-Christian politics are, *first*, a false covering, and, *second*, the cultivation of guilt. By cultivating guilt, the state seeks to make its citizenry impotent and enslaved. A false sense of guilt, moreover, has no solution and no escape is possible from it, as long as it is held. The state then offers a false covering to that cultivated guilt: a statist program of noble ideals which in practice means the further enslavement of the people, and the increase of statist powers.

After the May, 1980, black riots in Miami, Florida, black leaders and white politicians were on television to threaten people with more violence if certain demands were not met. Nothing was said about the fact that lawlessness in a courtroom by a white jury is not solved by nor does it condone lawlessness in the streets by blacks. Nothing was said about the fact that the black unemployment was caused by federal legislation, especially the minimum wage law. We were asked to feel guilty, and to give the federal government more powers to increase our enslavement and to aggravate the ills of blacks and whites alike.

The sinner is thus the building block of political tyranny. It is his sense of guilt which provides the instrument of control by statist tyranny. There is no remedy for political enslavement apart from Jesus Christ. His salvation and

His law are the cornerstones of freedom. *Only* if the Son makes us free can we indeed be free (John 8:36).

10. Fables

I was startled today when, in the course of a long-distance telephone conversation, the caller referred to a problem in the church over Amyraldism. Moise Amyraut was a French Protestant theologian of the 17th century at Saumur. Amyraut (1596-1664) attempted to reconcile the universal offer of salvation with limited or particular atonement. His views have had an extensive influence (on Wardlaw, Fuller, T. Scott, Milner, American Congregationalists of the early 19th century, New-School Presbyterians, and others), but have always been on the edges of orthodoxy rather than a part of it. Amyraut has his defenders today, as witness Brian G. Armstrong.[24] It

would be very wrong to deny that there are important issues at stake in the matter. There were very real and legitimate concerns as well as weaknesses both in Amyraut and his critics. However, one can have an illegitimate concern about legitimate doctrines and problems.

In this particular church, and in many like it, the only valid theological questions are ancient ones. This large and independent church, with a membership of a few thousand, has no contemporary concerns or battles. It can rehearse the ancient and hoary arguments for and against Amyraldism, but it is unconcerned over liberation theology, the current U.S. legislation against churches and Christian Schools, and many like matters. Its religiosity is marked by a studied irrelevance by the church staff and most of the members.

Now Paul, in rebuking the Galatians, made clear that their concern with angels (Gal. 1:8) was wrong, however accurate it may have sought to be. While their errors were real, Paul calls them rather "foolish Galatians" (Gal. 3:1), viewing their essential position as foolishness above all else. Again, in I Timothy 1:4, Paul warns against giving "heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith." We are too ready to assume that Paul means by *fables* what our English word now means primarily, a falsity or a lie. A secondary meaning still remains: a fable is a moral tale or teaching. Both meanings are present in the Greek, but the second perhaps predominates. A *fable*, *muthos*, is a tale, talk, legend, or myth. The word is related probably to *muer*, to teach, instigate, or instruct. Paul is *not* saying that the *genealogies* are manufactured, or are lies, nor that the *fables* or talk are again matters of fiction. This may be, but it is not his concern. His point is that all such teachings "minister *questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.*" This is Paul's point. All teaching and study which ministers questions, "furnish disputes" (according to the Berkeley Version), or leads merely to "speculations"[25] is dismissed by Paul as illegitimate.

Again, in I Timothy 4:7, we are warned against "profane and old wives' fables" and ordered to exercise ourselves unto godliness. Here the reference seems to be to the false doctrine that physical things are evil and not from God (I Tim. 4:1-6).

In II Timothy 4:3,4, Paul speaks of those who cannot endure sound doctrine, who "heap to themselves teachers," have "itching ears," "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." The contrast here is between the truth, Jesus Christ and His word and salvation, as

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[24.] Brian J. Armstrong: *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy, Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth Century France.* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). p. 69.

[25.] J. B. Phillips: *The New Testament in Modern English.*

against all teaching *in the church* which obscures sound doctrine. Paul is dealing with the waywardness of the seemingly faithful church.

In Titus 1:14, Paul warns against "Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." He has reference to the Judaizers in the church, and their false doctrine of justification. The word is taught, but falsely, and man's lives are turned away from the truth in the name of faithfulness to God's word.

II Peter 1:16 warns against "cunning devised fables." Again, the reference is to *teachings* which are cleverly devised to offer a seeming defense of God's word, whereas they undermine it.

The key is in I Timothy 1:4. The *fables* are all teachings which minister questions rather than godly growth and learning. Thus, we can say that predestination is a true doctrine, but it has often been turned into a fable by Reformed scholars. In Amyrant's day, justification, the key doctrine of the Reformation, was at best of secondary importance. In fact, in the controversies with Roman Catholicism, all kinds of topics were discussed: transubstantiation, auricular confession, the nature and authority of the church, the doctrine of Scripture, and more. Justification was neglected. Armstrong comments:

> One finds literally hundreds of accounts of conferences between leading Protestant and Catholic churchmen, but we have yet to find one in the seventeenth century which had for its topic the doctrine of justification. This almost total silence led Rebelliau to conclude that by then "upon this famous principle of justification by faith, for which Luther initiated the Reformation, it is certain that it had been discovered that the disagreement here was merely a matter of words."[26]

Armstrong disagrees with this judgment, but the lack of concern is still revealing. Moreover, of these futile discussions we would have to say that Paul's judgment of I Timothy 1:4 is true: it was talk which ministered questions, not godly edification. Not surprisingly, these same reformed theologians separated dogmatics from ethics.[27] As a result, their ethics was influenced by the humanists.[28]

The same is true today. Liberation theology is very popular in seminaries and churches which teach fables. Such teachers isolate themselves into a world of questions, and the mark of a good scholar becomes his ability to raise as many questions as possible. Ancient controversies are rehearsed in order to display greater theological sensitivities and knowledge. Meanwhile, when they deign to concern themselves with the moral problems of our time, they turn to the Marxists and other humanists for their answers. By means of this,

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26. Armstrong: *op. cit.*, p. 224.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 124f.

they believe that they manifest their "relevancy" and a Christian heart full of sympathy and love (while devoid of common sense and Scripture).

The world of theological discourse and study, modernist, reformed, and Arminian, has largely become the world of fables.

Fables, after all, give freedom for speculative theology. Instead of being bound by the law-word of God and the simplicity of faith, the scholar is freed to soar into the realms of intellectual explorations, sensitivity, and debate. James Moffatt rendered the latter portion of I Timothy 1:4 thus: "such studies bear upon speculations rather than on the divine order which belongs to faith." Exactly so. One friendly scholar once counselled me to enhance my status and work by writing for scholars and to further critical analysis, in other words, to turn the word of God into a fable or talk whose goal is to minister questions and stimulate questions! Scripture is clear-cut: all such instructions is *condemned*, and it is sin.

11. The View of Sins as Virtues

No study of the doctrine of sin can afford to overlook the extent to which particular sins are viewed by humanism as virtues. *The principle of sin* is basic to humanism: every man shall be his own god, determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). Not surprisingly, *particular sins* have also been justified.

The Middle Ages spoke much about *the seven deadly sins*. Although they do not appear in the Bible in such summary fashion, they are clearly seen as sin, with one qualification. The list is as follows: pride, envy, wrath or anger (or hate), lechery, covetousness, gluttony, and sloth. Anger is not necessarily a sin; the Bible speaks of the wrath of God, and gives examples of holy anger. Perhaps asceticism led to gluttony being given a higher status than other offenses (such as sacrilege). At any rate, these sins have gained more than a little respectability since then.

Pride and irreligious ambition are now seen as virtues, not sins. At one time, schoolboys memorized Cardinal Wolsey's famous farewell to Cromwell as a routine part of their education, and it was regarded as a great moral statement by Shakespeare concerning the vainglory of pride and ambition. It was, in fact, one of the best known passages in Shakespeare. Wolsey declares:

> Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.
> Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:
> By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,
> The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?
> Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee;
> Corruption wins not more than honesty.
> Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
> To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not:

Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's and truth's; if thou fall'st, O, Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr.....
O Cromwell, Cromwell!
Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal
I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.[29]

On some occasions, when I have quoted these lines, I have had some puzzled responses. Pride and ambition have become such great humanistic virtues that Shakespeare's lines ring falsely in many younger ears.

Envy has been institutionalized into a major political force, and a virtue. Helmut Schoeck, in *Envy* (1970), has shown how envy is basic to our modern political motives and is responsible for our social decay. However, few are ready to concede that envy is wrong. Schoeck's work has largely fallen on unheeding ears. The same is true of covetousness: our politics, advertising, and social pressures work to increase covetousness, not to control it.

Not only has the sexual revolution justified sexual sins from a humanistic perspective, but theologians, "Christian" psychologists, and pastors have sometimes concurred.

Contempt for authority, rebellion, as well as ingratitude, and much more are now justified where these sins further self-promotion and personal gains. Duty is rarely stressed as a virtue. In fact, a sense of duty is seen by too many as foolishness.

This brings us to a key aspect of their concurrence. Our purpose here is not to chronicle further the decay in various areas of moral requirements, but rather to come to an understanding of the religious principles thereof. Man is a religious creature: what he does he does out of a religious motivation.

Let us look at this motivation by examining something in the economic realm. All through the post-World War II era until rather recently (at least until c. 1975), there were countless people who approved of inflation. They saw it as a major asset, and they voted for those politicians who favored inflationary policies. Inflation paid off for them: it cheapened their debts and increased the monetary price of their property as well as raising their salaries. The common response to those of us who are anti-inflationists (and hostile to paper money) was simply this: A little inflation is a good thing; it simply needs intelligent controlling to become the greatest possible asset to an economy.

It is not my purpose here to go into the economic falsity of this opinion, except to say that to expect inflation to stay small, once started, is like expecting a pregnancy to stay small. A little bit of pregnancy leads either to

[29] William Shakespeare: *King Henry VIII*, Act III, Scene II.

full pregnancy, or to the murder of abortion, and inflation leads either to a runaway inflation or a deflationary collapse.

Basic to the idea that, "A little inflation is a good thing," is the belief that a little sin is a good thing, and that the sinner can control it. This is the key, *controlled* sin, with man as master over it, using it for his advantage. Keynes was fully aware of the end results of inflation; all the same, he advocated controlled sinning as economic health or virtue.

This concept is very prevalent. It is basic to situation ethics, but also to those who would deny any adherence to situation ethics. Thus I have had repeated reports of various neo-evangelical pastors and psychologists (not to mention modernist ones) who have counselled, in various situations, a "little adultery" as a wise and necessary step. Their rationale has been that adultery as a general rule is unwise and immoral, but, in certain circumstances, it can provide a "necessary" relief to a difficult situation.

First, we can grant the often difficult situation, but the governing principle cannot be circumstances but the law of God. The commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). In Deut. 5:18, the law reads, "Neither shalt thou commit adultery." In both cases, it is an implication and consequence of this primary and governing declaration: "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). God's law requires obedience not because of our advantage but because God is the Lord. True, there are blessings for obedience, and curses for disobedience, but we must say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). The doctrine of controlled sinning, whether present in economics or sexual matters, is humanistic to the core. It presupposes man as the lord. Man's attitude towards sin is thereby governed by personal advantage, not God's law. Hence, if a little sin, whether in economics, sex, speech, theft, or anything else, is seen as beneficial to man's interests, it is justified and vindicated. In all of this, the presupposition is that man is the lord, and, like God, can make all things, including his sins, work together for good (cf. Rom. 8:28).

Second, our Lord is clear that, not only is man not the lord over his life, or over sin, but he is rather the slave of sin. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (or, slave) of sin" (John 8:34). The commentators are almost all agreed that our Lord does not refer to a single act of sin; such a conclusion is arbitrary on their part. They hold that a single act of sin does not enslave, only the continuous commission of sin. Let them argue this point with Adam! His one sin certainly enslaved him. Some would render the first part of John 8:34, "everyone who continues to commit sin is the slave of sin." But sin is in the singular. The reference is not to one who commits *sins* but *sin*. Behind the commission of a particular sin, as with Adam and Eve, is bondage to sin as a principle. Thus, a particular act is the outcome of an inner condition. Before a nation starts inflation, it has already abandoned a sound monetary policy.

Before a man commits one act of adultery, he has already decided that adultery is to be preferred to marital fidelity.

Moreover, every act of sin involves a decision. Basic to that decision is a principle of lordship. *Before* the commission of sin, Adam and Eve had decided on their lordship, *first*, and, *second*, on the advantages of sin for them. They sought to be as God (Gen. 3:5), and they concluded that the fruit of the tree was "good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3:6). *After* the fall, both pleaded the weakness of the moment, and circumstances (Gen. 3:9-13). It was, in their eyes, a single act, whereas in reality it was their new principle of life and the fabric of their being and action. So too now men seek to isolate a sin from their lives and being and reduce it to the act of an existential moment and to the pressure of circumstances. This is also an aspect of the doctrine of controlled sinning: sin is held to be separate from our persons instead of an expression thereof.

12. Sin and Sins

As we have seen, there is a difference between sin as a principle, and particular sins. These two kinds of sin are clearly in view in Scripture, but the difference is sometimes also linguistic, as in I John 3:4, "Whosoever committeth sin (*hamartian*) transgresseth (*anomian*) also the law (or, does lawlessness); for sin (*hamartia*) is the transgression of the law (or, is lawlessness, *anomia*)." *Anomia* is anti-law, against the law; it is sin in principle, the will to be a god and to determine for ourselves what constitutes good and evil. *Hamartia* is missing the mark, falling short, or particular sins. To commit particular sins habitually is thus more than falling short. John tells us; it is lawlessness or *anomia*; it is aiming in the other direction, at a man-made target.

There is thus both a difference between particular sins, and sin in principle, and an identity. Westcott said, of this verse,

> Sin and lawlessness are convertible terms. Sin is not an arbitrary conception. It is the assertion of the selfish will against a paramount authority. He who sins breaks not only by accident or in an isolated detail, but essentially the 'law' which he was created to fulfil.
>
> This 'law' which expresses the divine ideal of man's constitution and growth has three chief applications. There is the 'law' of each man's personal being; there is the 'law' of his relation to things without him, there is the 'law' of his relation to God. To isolate any part of this threefold law is to sin, for all parts are divine. (James ii. 10).
>
> The Mosaic law was directed in a representative fashion to each of these spheres of duty. It touched upon man's dealing with himself: upon his treatment of creation (of men, animals and crops): upon his duty

> towards God. In this way it was fitted to bring home to men the divine side of all action.
>
> The origin of sin in selfishness is vividly illustrated by St. James (i. 14f.), who shows also that the neglect of duty, the violation of the law of growth, is sin (James iv. 17). So St. John lays down that 'unrighteousness,' the failure to fulfil our obligations to others, is sin (c. v. 17).[30]

Sin, however, is much more than "selfishness;" it is the self as god.

There is thus both an identity between sin as a principle and particular sins, in that one (particular sin) is an expression of the other (*anomia*, or lawlessness), or the lingering effects of the old and fallen man in us, and there is also a very great difference.

Ross' comment is of interest in calling attention to the particularity of John's reference to sin:

> We notice how frequently John uses in this chapter the emphatic expression *every* one that, translated "whosoever" in vv. 6, 9, 10 and 15. Westcott suggests that "in each case where this characteristic form of language occurs there is apparently a reference to some who had questioned the application of a general principle in particular cases." Here John says with decided emphasis that there is no special class of specially illuminated men who are superior to the obligation to keep the law of God.[31]

Ross adds, on v. 5, "Not only does the man who habitually sins throw off the yoke of God's law but he stultifies the whole purpose of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh"[32] To abide in sin, or to sin continually (*hamartia* as a practice), is evidence, John says, of lawlessness, and it means that the professed believer is in reality not of Christ, but of the Enemy, the devil, whose continual life and being is sin (I John 3:6-10).

Sanctification means obeying God's law instead of sinning. As Amos N. Wilder stated it, "To purify ourselves (vs. 3) means to refrain from disobedience of the divine law." He added further, "The gravity of sin or sinful acts is emphasized by the identifying of them with *lawlessness*, a term which seems to have connoted sin in all its enormity and blasphemy if we judge by the characterization of the Antichrist in II Thess. 2:7-8 as 'the lawless one,' and his activity as 'the mystery of lawlessness'"[33] Wilder's comment is excellent, except that the reference in II Thess. 2:3-8 is to "the

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30. B. F. Westcott: *The Epistles of St. John*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1883) 1952). p. 102.
31. Alexander Ross: *Commentary on the Epistles of James and John*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952). p. 182f.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
33. G. A. Buttrick, editor: *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 12. Amos N. Wilder, "I John." (New York, New York: Abingdon, 1957). p. 256.

man of sin," not to antichrist. The "man of sin" (*hamartias*); he is the "lawless one" (*anomos*).

To commit sin (*hamartia*) means, John tells us, either failure to abide in Christ, (i.e., it is a stepping out of Him into the works of the old man), or it is evidence of our actual lawlessness (*anomia*). The "Christian", if he abides in sin, i.e., sins habitually or continually, is guilty of unbelief and lawlessness; he belongs to the enemy.

Too often, the emphasis of the church has been on particular sins to an undue degree. To a considerable degree, this is dictated by a practical necessity. The pastor and elders must deal with the actual sins of members, which can be a variety of *acts*: irresponsibility, gossip, adultery, slander, and so on. It is necessary to do so. In so doing, however, sin in its essence, sin in principle, is lost sight of. The new "convert" thus comes into the church repenting of particular sins but failing to come to grips with his essential lawlessness. He may be disgusted with his particular sin or sins without facing at all the fact of his principle of sin, his desire to be his own god and to determine good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). One man was ostensibly converted in the aftermath of an ugly personal crisis created by his adultery. His reaction to his varied and extensive personal acts of adultery was, "It was a mess," as indeed it was. He found it a wiser course to decide to "honor" marriage, be faithful to his wife, and keep his growing estate intact. Christianity made sense to him; it was the practical and safe way to live, and he believed himself to be a convert to evangelical Christianity. In brief, he had thoroughly repented of his particular sin (adultery), but he had not faced the fact of the principle of sin. He had abandoned adultery in order to remain in control of his life, wealth, children, and wife. The principle of sin in him had not been affected, only his extensive (and finally public) acts of a particular sin, adultery.

This point has been made at some length, because a serious weakness in preaching has always been its failure to deal with the principle of sin as set forth in Genesis 3:1-5. In the past, and in some quarters still, there has been an undue stress on particular sins, although in all too many churches there is now no preaching on either the principle of sin or particular sins.

In both kinds of sin, priority is given to man. It is an insistence that "my will be done." In the Christian, his growth in sanctification means an immediate and swift correction and amendment. It means that he recognizes what sin and sins mean, and what their relationship is. In Christ, he is a new creation, and therefore, the new principle of his life is not lawlessness, *anomia*, but the obedience of faith. With Christ, he says, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7,9).

The Christian works to mortify, or put to death morally, his members on earth, those aspects of his being which move morally in terms of the old man.

Since Paul in Colossians repudiated asceticism, he was not, in Colossians 3:5 calling for anything of the kind. Instead of being guided by external regulations which had nothing to do with the basic problem of man, his sin and his need of salvation, they, the Colossians, as a redeemed people, must have *dominion* in Christ over their being. Hence, only so can they destroy in themselves fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection or passion, evil concupiscence or desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Not only covetousness, but all these particular sins must be associated with *idolatry*, because the principle of sin is idolatry in its essence, the desire of fallen man to be as God, to be his own god (Gen. 3:5). Behind every particular sin stands this idolatry.

13. Sin and Fantasy

One of the glorious lines of the Virgin Mary's Magnificat is Luke 1:51: "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." The Greek word *dianoia* is literally a thinking over, but it is here used in the sense of an independent reasoning, a reasoning without God, and hence "the imagination of their hearts."

As I have pointed out elsewhere and repeatedly, the Bible has nothing good to say about imagination (Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 29:19; 31:21; Jer. 23:17; I Chron. 28:9; Rom. 1:21; II Cor. 10:5). Because ours is an age with a will to fiction, the role of imagination is extremely important.

Men who will not be governed by God's word will not be governed by reality, because reality is not of their making. God having created all things, reality reflects the mind of God, not man. Hence, it is the essence of sin to resort to imagination to escape God's law world.

This problem is a very urgently practical one, because every facet of the life of modern man is governed by imagination. This is basic to humanism, and it affects all men born of Adam (Gen. 6:5), and especially modern man. Because Christians are born into a fallen world, and often educated by it, imagination replaces reality in their thinking and governs it.

To illustrate: As I travel, I encounter a very large number of cases, virtually all alike, of near impotence in the face of reality. Since the writing of *Revolt Against Maturity* (1977), *The Word of Flux* (1975), and one or more tapes on the subject of the will to fiction, and imagination, I have had telephone calls and personal visits concerned with this problem. Men in their twenties and thirties, including newly-weds, are impotent with their often very beautiful wives *unless* they resort to fantasy. Other women are fantasized to replace the real women.

Why should an unreal female be exciting, and a far better and real woman not be so? The key is the essence of imagination: the fantasy woman is totally the creation and creature of man, whereas the real woman is God's creation

and creature. It is essential to imagination to create a man-made world and a man-ordained decree of predestination. It is the essence of sin to demand such a world.

Moreover, fantasy refused to pay any attention to reality, because to accept reality is to accept God finally. As a result, all kinds of myths are propagated to replace reality. George Gilder, in *Naked Nomads*, made clear that the bachelor is physically, mentally, and morally the most unstable person in society. He is responsible for the most crimes, has the highest suicide rate, and is a very unstable person. The myth has it that he is the free "swinging," and happy playboy.

Another myth is that of the "happy hooker." According to a recent press report,

> San Francisco (UPI). A Federally funded study of 100 San Francisco prostitutes has revealed that half are under the age of 16, and most are white, middle class and unhappy.
>
> More than half the women were victims of incest or sexual abuse between the ages of 3 and 16 and came from families with "excessive amounts of problems."
>
> One young prostitute she (Silbert) discovered was only 11 years old and came from an upper middle-class family.
>
> She told the researcher, in a taped interview, "you know, when you're beaten by pimps and tricks and raped by strangers it's easier to take, because you know they're not supposed to care."
>
> "But when you're beaten by your parents and raped by your father it's much harder because they are the people who are supposed to care and don't."[34]

Such reports are not new; they go back at least a century and half, if not longer. Still the myth of the "happy hooker" continues for humanistic religious reasons. Imagination or fantasy must replace reality.

But this replacement of reality by fantasy is not limited to the sexual sphere. It is basic to the total life of modern man. It governs his law and his politics. Is it not a fantasy to believe that man's law can replace God's law? Is it not a vain imagination to assume that, by setting aside God and His law, man can have a just social order? The only difference between Marxism and American democratic indifferentism is that the Marxists are more open and honest about setting God's reality aside in favor of their fantasy. The world today is dedicated to its sinful fantasies.

These fantasies, because they deny God's reality, are doomed. The Virgin Mary says, "He hath scattered the proud." This scattering and confusion has prevailed since the dispersion of the peoples at the Tower of Babel. Mary rejoices in a glorious historical process which is God-ordained, and she sees

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34. "Hookers' Lives Far From Happy," in *Sacramento (California) Bee*, Thursday June 26, 1980, p. A-17.

it triumphing over all the enemies of God in due time. They are broken up, scattered, dispersed and confused.

These are the proud, or the arrogant, *huperephanos*. Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." We fail to see the meaning of this sentence, unless we realize that pride has no sense of reality and is therefore as surely doomed as a blind man on a strange mountain pass.

Paganism, however, has exalted pride and despised humility. Aristotle saw pride as the mark of the great-souled man. While earlier Greek thought, as in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, saw pride as a moral evil, later thought rejoiced in pride, and the Stoics in particular stressed it. Pride is seen by our Lord as evil (Mark 7:22) and an outworking of a depraved heart.

Some time back, Girdlestone called attention to Scripture's very telling uses of the word *torah*, usually translated as *law*, a meaning very important to our study here:

> In 2 Sam. 7 there is recorded, first, the promise of God to keep an unfailing covenant with the seed of David, whose throne should be established for ever; and secondly, David's expression of thankfulness on account of this promise. In the opening of his song of praise (vv. 18,19) he says, 'Who am I, O Lord God and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou has spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the *manner* of man, O Lord God?' The parallel passage (I Chron. 17:17) runs thus: 'For thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the *estate* of a man of high degree.' The word translated manner in the one passage and estate in the other, is *torah*, which is generally rendered 'law'. The first passage might be rendered, 'And this is the law (or order) of the man,' and the second, 'Thou hast regarded me according to the law (or order) of the man from on high.'[35]

What Scripture here declares is that the law, order, manner, and estate of man is Jesus Christ and His prophetic law word. Reality is not from man but from the triune God, and it is set forth for us in the incarnate Word and His written word.

Jesus Christ orders life in terms of God's reality, whereas man's imagination seeks to re-order it in terms of the evil fantasies of man as god. Because fantasies are often "private," men fail to see their implications. Private fantasies become public acts and policies, and unreality thereby governs life. Judgment then is inescapable.

This collision course with reality is inescapable for individuals, groups, institutions, churches, and nations that live out their fantasies. The world was not made by man, and it will never serve man's fantasies.

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[35] Robert Baker Girdlestone: *Synonyms of the Old Testament, Their Bearing on Christian Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1897) 1976). p. 47.

14. Sin and Passover

The Hebrew of the Old Testament has about twenty words for sin. Of these, the most common is *chatha*, to *miss the mark*, which is similar to the Greek *hamartia*. Other words signify bent, crooked, or evil; iniquity; transgression; evil; rebellion; wickedness; breach of trust; vanity, and so on.

A curious historical fact emerges. When God forgives sins, He covers or hides sins (Micah 7:18; Ps. 32:1,5; 85:2; Prov. 10:12; 17:9; 19:11; 28:13; Job 31:33). The rabbis of old used a word for sin *averah*, from the root *avar*, to pass over, because they rightly saw sin as a rejection or passing over of God's will.[36] This was a particularly telling insight into the nature of sin. How apt this is appears in Isaiah 7:10-14:

> 10. Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,
> 11. Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.
> 12. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.
> 13. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?
> 14. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Our concern here is not with the Messianic prophecy, but with Ahaz's sin.

Before dealing with Ahaz's sin, let us consider Ahaz's predicament. Syria, using Israel or Ephraim as its ally, was conspiring against the Kingdom of Judah, and Ahaz its king. They intended to besiege Jerusalem, seize it, destroy its walls to make it defenseless, and set up in Ahaz's stead a puppet king. This usurper is not even named; he is such a non-entity in himself that he is merely call "the son of Tabeel" (Isa. 7:6).

Thus, we have here, *first* the counsel of Syria. *Second*, we have the counsel of Ahaz, a name which is an abbreviated form of Jehoahaz. His reign is described for us in II Kings 16 and II Chronicles 28 as an evil one. Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel, were trying to force Ahaz and Judah into an anti-Assyrian alliance. Meanwhile, Ahaz was trying to commend himself to Assyria by placing an Assyrian cult-altar in the temple court. Ahaz hoped that the Assyrian destruction of his northern rivals, combined with his compliance to Assyria policies, would make him the powerful ruler in that area. Ahaz not only lost to Syria and Israel, but Assyria drained Judah by its levies. At the same time Edom and Philistia made invasions into Judah. The counsel of Syria was godless, and the counsel of Ahaz was not only godless but stupid as well.

A *third* counsel was set forth, the counsel of God. God makes clear the futility of the efforts of Syria (Isa. 7:1-9), and then the Lord gives his counsel

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[36] Louis Jacobs, "Sin," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14. (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing Company, 1971). p. 1591.

as a command. The Lord speaks through Isaiah, but so imperative and direct is His word that we read, "the LORD spake again unto Ahaz" (Isa. 7:10).

Thus, we not only have God's counsel set forth (Isa. 7:1-9), but Ahaz is ordered to ask for a sign from God (Isa. 7:11). Alexander's comment on this is excellent:

> A *sign* is not necessarily a miracle, not necessarily a prophecy, but a sensible pledge of the truth of something else, whether present, past, or future; sometimes consisting in a miracle (Isa. xxxviii. 8; Judges vi. xxxvii; Exod. iv. 8). but sometimes in a mere prediction (Exod. iii. 12; I Sam. ii. xxxiv.; 2 Kings xix. 29), and sometimes only in a symbol, especially a symbolical name or action (Isa. xxxviii. 18, xx. 3; Ezek. iv. 8)...He is allowed to choose, not only the place of its exhibition, but the sign itself. The offer is a general one, including all the kinds of signs which have been mentioned, though the only one which would have answered the purpose of accrediting the Prophet, was a present miracle, as in the case of Moses (Exod. iv. 30).[37]

Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, because he did not want what went with the sign, God's counsel. Under the pretense of piety, he rejects a sign. Young stated the case very plainly:

> But Ahaz will not ask; he has no intention of obeying. He turns from God, but he turns knowing precisely what God's will is and what God requires of him. He is commanded to believe; the gospel is preached to him. That he refuses to believe is to be attributed to the fact that he hates the Lord and leans upon his own understanding.[38]

With a show of humility, Ahaz passes over the counsel of God.

Ahaz quoted Deut. 6:16 to Isaiah, "Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah." There is an irony here: Ahaz used Scripture to deny God, and to accuse God Himself of tempting Ahaz. Centuries later, our Lord used Deut. 6:16 to answer Satan (Matt. 4:7)[39] Ahaz treated God as though He were the evil one!

Ahaz's sin was to pass over the counsel of God for his own counsel. This was, of course, Adam's sin also: he chose to be his own god and follow his own counsel in contempt of God and His command (Gen. 3:5).

In this sense, *sin is the counsel of man.* The counsel of man may superficially agree with the counsel of God, but it is neither righteousness nor holiness unless it be faithfulness to God's counsel and word. To illustrate, we have seen of late, although they are not new, pragmatic counsels of morality. With the rising incidence of venereal diseases, with the high cost of illicit sexuality as in such prominent court trials as the Lee Marvin case, and a long

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[37] Joseph Addison Alexander: *Commentaries on the Prophecies of Isaiah.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, (1847) 1953). p. 164f.

[38] Edward Joseph Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965). p. 280.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

assortment of like reasons, some men have ruefully concluded that extra-marital sex is too costly. Like conclusions have been made about theft; there are enough ways to finagle wealth without inviting trouble from the law. Such counsels, *if* they produce an outward morality (a questionable point), still do not represent anything but sin. They are man's counsel, not God's.

As we have seen, sin is man's attempt to *passover* God's will. God's forgiveness of sins is also a *passover*; God in Christ passes over our sins, because the penalty has been paid, atonement made, by Jesus Christ. Our sins are forgiven. Not only so, but we ourselves are made a new creation. We thus have not only *atonement* but *regeneration*. Man's "passover" is without atonement or regeneration. It passes over God's law, and God's judgment on sin. It treats sin as something to be overlooked or forgiven without restitution. The humanist or sinner says, "Forgive and forget." and "I'm okay, you're okay."

This is seen as *realpolitik*. A classic example of this was Julius Caesar, who gained power on a platform of *clementia*. Rome had undergone a centuries-old civil war, as well as massive corruption. To heal the breach, Julius Caesar required mercy and appeasement. All records of political fraud and theft were destroyed, and men were restored to office. It was a policy of forgive and forget.

But Caesar's mercy and grace were antinomian. He could neither atone for any man's sin nor regenerate any man, himself included. Men whose sins he had passed over banded together pharisaically to kill Caesar for his sins.[40]

The world seeks a false passover for sin. We, however, are able to say joyfully, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7). For this reason, we are barred from passing over God's law, neglecting His Person, and living for ourselves. It becomes our life in Christ rather to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33).

15. Sin as Privilege and Right

The movement of history is towards epistemological self-consciousness; man's personal movement often works to obscure and prevent this self-knowledge. As a result, man seldom is able to admit to himself what he is, and what his sin means. It requires the work of the Holy Spirit for him to come to any self-understanding in these matters, and it is sanctification, the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in him, which develops this understanding.

In Genesis 3:1-5, we see the meaning of sin, and its appeal to man. One clear aspect in the tempter's program is the presentation of sin as *privilege*. God, the tempter held, has reserved a form of life and freedom for Himself.

[40] Ethelbert Stauffer: *Christ and the Caesars*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, (1952) 1955). pp. 42-53.

This is the privilege of determining good and evil for oneself, of being above and beyond any external law. God, the tempter held, is very jealous of this privilege, but it is in reality open to all men.

The doctrine of sin as privilege means that man has a "divine" freedom from law and moral responsibility to do as he pleases. This privilege separates him from the world around him, and makes him a sovereign. Whereas for covenant man, it is the image of God in us which is our privilege, and which sets us apart from the rest of creation, for covenant-denying man it is sin, the attempt to be as God, which sets man apart. Man is thus seen as the creature whose passion is to be as God.

The history of sin as privilege is a curious one. Very early, men who gained power held that sin is *a privilege of power*. Thus, royalty or nobility, or tribal or clan chiefs, held that certain actions were privileges of position which were forbidden to others. They held it to be their right to expropriate property (eminent domain) or possess the womenfolk, of those under them. One form of this was the *jus primae noctis*, or, in French terminology, the *droit de seigneur* ("lord's right"). This custom gave to the head man of the tribe or group, or some religious leader, the "right" to sleep with a woman on the first night of her marriage. This was common to many cultures, and may have been true in Europe into the middle ages, although many scholars question its European history. Although the ritual custom is gone, the actual practice on the part of men in high office or positions of power continues. Even more, many girls feel that lawless sexuality with an important person is a privilege, and "groupies" commonly beset famous personalities, seeking such a "privilege."

Certainly, the history of royalty, in Europe and elsewhere, shows clearly that such a concept of sin as privilege was commonplace. Even within the past decade a prominent historian took exception to Otto J. Scott's *James I*, because of Scott's discussion of James' homosexuality. The historian felt that homosexuality was a royal privilege. Royal mistresses had a standing, because royal sin was privileged. For centuries, royal marriages were permitted which were consanguineous and were, in terms of existing laws, incestuous; royalty had sin as one of its privileges.

The nobility and aristocracy shared this privilege to a degree. Virtue was seen as a socially necessary bondage, to be imposed on those of lesser degree. The story of Voltaire and his man-servant is well known. Voltaire barred talk of agnostic and cynical nature in the presence of his servant, lest the servant lose those moral virtues which Voltaire found advantageous and useful in a servant.

The concept of sin as privilege became steadily democratized. The French Revolution was a major force towards that goal. The wealthy merchant classes now appropriated the doctrine of sin as privilege, joining the ranks of

the nobility and royalty. The result, in the 19th century, was the era of the courtesans. As Joanna Richardson noted, "Sexual license had always been a privilege of the aristocracy, an element in their education; but now it was claimed by the middle classes, who had risen to wealth and power."[41] At the same time, the artist joined the courtesan and the aristocracy in viewing sin as a privilege, and as liberation. The "apotheosis of the courtesan,"[42] marked the glorification of sin as the liberating and deifying force for man. The courtesans were painted to appear as both goddesses and courtesans at one and the same time. "A famous mistress, a wild way of life, became status symbols. The Duc de Grammont-Caderousse, so it was reported, lit a cigar on a racecourse with an English 1,000 pound note (sic), which he had won, because the crackling paper got on his nerves."[43]

By the end of the century, the area of privilege was extended. Neo-mercantilism began its development. The merchant barons began to see the free market as too confined; they were entitled to *privileges* as their *rights*. The result was the state subsidization of corporate interests. Later, unions and farmers sought like subsidies, so that the 20th century has seen the prevalence of attempts by all to gain statist support for their claims to privilege.

The democratization of sin as privilege has been marked in the 20th century. The lower classes now claim the same privileges which once belonged to royalty, and these privileges have descended down through the nobility, aristocracy, and middle classes to them. This is not to imply in any way that these sins did not previously mark the lower classes, to an even greater degree than at present. It is the rationale which is different. What was once theft is now a civil right and social justice. The state once served the will of the royalty and the nobility, then, down through the middle class, to the present time, where the state and its laws and subsidies are seen as necessarily serving the will of all. *Justice* has been replaced on all levels by another concept, *human rights*. Instead of the law of God governing all men, human rights, the law of man, must govern all. The sexual revolution extended this concept of human rights replacing God's law into the sexual and marital sphere.

The doctrine of sin as privilege and right is thus basic to modern man. Liberation means freedom from God's law. I once heard, in the early 1970s, a student declare to a group of middle aged people that they could not be free unless they practiced a number of adulterous and perverted acts as an assertion of freedom rather than as sin.

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41. Joanna Richardson: *The Courtesans*. (London, England: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1967). p. 221.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

None of this should surprise us. The entire point of the tempter's program in Genesis 3:1-5 is that what God calls sin is a freedom, privilege, and right which belongs to man, but which God jealously restricts to Himself.

For the covenant man, however, it is *righteousness* which is man's privilege. God's covenant is a law covenant; a covenant is a legal relationship. A covenant between the infinite and eternal God and man, His *creature* and creation, is also an act of grace at one and the same time. The law sets forth the righteousness or justice of God, and it is given to man as a privilege, a covenant privilege. The covenant man grows in epistemological self-consciousness as he grows in sanctification, in faithful obedience to God's covenant or law. He then finds his peace, joy, and strength in the privilege of righteousness.

There is thus a diametrically different view of what constitutes right and privilege between God's covenant-keepers and all covenant-deniers.

16. The Kingdom of Sin, or the Kingdom of Man

Because men are sinners who justify their sin and call it human self-realization, they fight epistemological self-consciousness. They do not want to know themselves as sinners. They therefore suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18-21). Thus, on the one hand, they profess to be the champions of true righteousness or justice, and, on the other, work to subvert all things of God and man alike. Being suicidal, as Proverbs 8:36 makes clear, they both work zealously to promote a humanistic order, while at the same time ensuring its death in more ways than one.

In Revelation 17:5, we have an acknowledgment of this fact. The Kingdom of Man, or Babylon the Great has as its first designation the word "mystery." Mystery, or *musterion* in the Greek, means that which is known only to the initiates. The Kingdom of Man is the natural consequence of man's sin. Man defied and rebelled against God's Kingdom to establish his own independent kingdom on the principle of sin (Gen. 3:1-5). This principle is the governing fact in the life of every unregenerate man. Why then should it be a mystery, and why is paganism, and the Western world since the Enlightenment, so readily prone to conspiracies? The fall, having been a conspiracy against God, leaves fallen man prone to conspiracy, because he is conscious of his subversive and rebellious status. In our time, governing forces continue their conspiratorial basis, and the general public, although prone to agree with the humanistic conspiracies, is left out of the informed circle.

The reason for this is twofold. *First*, the image of God in man witnesses always to the truth and against the demonic plans to establish fully a realm based on the principle of sin. Hence, man sins, but will not acknowledge the implication of sin. The Kingdom of Man is "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev. 17:5). The word *abominations* has reference

to that which is disgusting and unclean. The sinner justifies his sin and terms it clean, the new cleanness. Whether it be idolatry, abortion, homosexuality, or any other abomination, the covenant defiler not only practices it but justifies it as clean, and morally sound. Righteousness or justice is of God; the logic of man's fall requires man, like Walter Kaufmann in *Without Guilt and Justice* (1973), to deny the very idea of justice, and of good and evil. The reaction of most fallen men to such an honest position is uneasy and negative; it is the position implicit in their nature and thought, but it is at the same time a position of such clear epistemological self-consciousness that they are unwilling to adopt it. The sinner wants the Kingdom of Man in God's name; he charts a course of sin, and yet he insists that here is enough goodness to commend him to God. "I'll take my chances with God," more than one man has said, whose disgusted wife, no Christian herself, would give him no chances at all!

Second, because most men are unwilling to pursue the course of sin to its logical conclusion, the few who are so willing become a conspiratorial elite, guiding the rest for their own "welfare" into the fullness of the kingdom of sin. Max Stirner, in 1844, in *The Ego and His Own*, challenged the moral atheists who denied God but would not practice incest or other such acts. God being "gone," morality was also gone; therefore, everything is permitted. The implications of such a position are far-reaching. If God's law is gone, what law remains? If a fetus, an unborn child is expendable, whose life is not also expendable? When men begin to unite in their desire for a kingdom or realm independent from God, then, says the Lord, "nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Gen. 11:6). This is frightening to most sinners, who lack epistemological self-consciousness. As a result, humanism's elite become conspiratorial. Their goals are in tune with humanistic mass man, but too openly illustrative of the principle of sin to please them.

Igor Shafarevich, has called attention to the fact that the logical goal of socialism is not only the death of property, religion, and of the family, but of life itself. It is a murderous and suicidal faith.[44] It is what Samuel Warner, has called "the urge to mass destruction." We see the social consequences of such a faith all around us.

Sin leads to tyranny, because sin denies that there can be any law of God or man governing man; every man is his own god, determining good and evil for himself, in terms of his will (Gen. 3:5). The Nimrods of history are the result. Nimrod is spoken of a mighty hunter before the Lord, not the clearest of translations. Stigers comments that hunter (from *gibbor*) can be better rendered *tyrant*; Nimrod is derived from *marad*, rebel, so that rebellion

[44] Igor Shafarevich, "Socialism in our Past and Future," in Alexander Solzhenitsyn, etc,: *From Under the Rubble*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, 1974). pp. 26-66.

against God was basic to his life and rule, and, for men, this meant tyranny. It was Nimrod who founded Babel with its open and avowed purpose of supplanting God's Kingdom with the Kingdom of Man.

The tempter, in Genesis 3:5, identifies knowledge with the sinful attempt to determine good and evil independently from God. This is for humanism the definition of true knowledge: it must deny God and seek to establish an independent and autonomous premise for all learning. Not surprisingly, modern educators stress the need for a *humanistic* philosophy of education. Four educators united in 1972 to write an essay on "Humanism: Capstone of an Educated Person."[45] Three other educators in 1966 declared that values are beyond good and evil, true or false: they are personal, and products of our experience. They are born out of the flux of life itself. Values will thus vary from person to person, and will evolve.[46]

In such a society, every man (so taught) is a potential tyrant, and the logical conclusion of such a society is death.

17. Sin and Law (1)

Sin is in fallen man the principle of life and freedom. It means his opportunity to be his own god, determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). However, because man is God's creation, and made originally in His image (Gen. 1:26-28), man is very uneasy in his sin. As a result, man has a variable and unhappy attitude in his relationship to sin, one which readily fluctuates and changes.

A common attitude is tolerance for sin. We are, as more than one person has insisted, all inclined to have our faults and weaknesses, and we need to be tolerant of the weaknesses of others, even though they may seem offensive to us. Such people try to convert tolerance for sin into a virtue. They pose as understanding men, with grace and kindliness in their hearts for their weaker brethren. Those who disagree with them are accused of being short on love and grace. In brief, their tolerance for sin is turned into an attribute of *nobility*. The seriousness of sin is downgraded, the law of God is by-passed, and the sin of toleration is converted into a mark of nobility. Of course, from the temptation in Eden to the present, sin has always presented itself as virtue. Paul speaks of Satan himself presenting his person as "an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). If Satan sees himself as the light of the world, then his works will also be seen as light.

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45. See Stephen N. Stivers, L. Gerald Buchan, C. Robert Dettloff and Donald C. Orlich, "Humanism: Capstone of an Educated Person," in Donald A. Read and Sidney B. Simon, editors: *Humanistic Education Sourcebook*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975). pp. 363-369.

46. Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin and Sidney B. Simon, "Values and Valuing" in *ibid.*, pp. 72-81.

Another attitude towards sin is intolerance, or, more commonly, selective intolerance. Again, sin is not viewed in terms of God's total law, but in terms of a personal intolerance. Very often, some particular sins are singled out for particular wrath and zealous crusading. We are expected to see in all such people a great righteousness, or a great love of "social justice," and such intolerance becomes a convenient facade for Phariseeism and self-righteousness. The areas of intolerance vary: some will single out something like smoking, others racial bigotry. The issues may be important or trifling, but, in either case, the intolerance is there, as well as an evasion of the meaning of sin. Our Lord says, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19). These people would have us believe that something peripheral, like smoking or racism, is responsible for all our evils. (The something peripheral can be capitalism or communism also.) They love to blame everything except *the principle of sin*; rather, they concentrate on *some particular sins* or imagined sins. There is a great advantage in this. The particular sin occurs only in *some* people, be they many or few; the principle of sin is in all of us. In Adam I, sin rules us; in Adam II, we sanctify ourselves and work by God's grace to overcome its workings in us. But, in all of us, sin is a reality, something we are familiar with. By intolerance, we localize sin in others.

Yet another common attitude towards sin is in terms of law, man-made law. Man then limits sin to particular sins and proceeds to legislate against these specified sins. Some of the sins may indeed be real, others a product of a social outlook. In either case, the solution is seen in legislation and government by man over man. The 20th century has seen massive efforts to reform man and society by law; these efforts are uniformly disastrous, because humanism has no concern for the heart of man, which is sinful. Moreover, it refuses to believe that man is a sinner: sin is localized into particular forms of "anti-social behavior," i.e., it is against man or the state, not against God and His law.

Thus, fallen man has a pressing problem: he cannot live with sin, nor can he live without it. Sin is the fallen man's principle of life, but it is also the nemesis of his life and society. Fallen man cannot exorcise sin without exorcising and condemning himself, which he refuses to do. His life and world are thus haunted by his own nature.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 14, tells us:

> Q. What is sin?
> A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Paul, in Romans 7:10, declares, "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." In this great and pregnant sentence, Paul tells us, *first*, that the purpose of the law, as ordained by God, is *life.* God created

man to be His vicegerent and to exercise dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). The law sets forth God's holiness and righteousness or justice, His way of life for man. David sings joyfully of the blessings of the law in Psalm 19:7-11,

> 7. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
> 8. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
> 9. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
> 10. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey comb.
> 11. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Thus the law, life, righteousness or justice, perfection, purity, and sight are all associated one with another.

Second, Paul is equally emphatic that, for the sinner, God's law is death, i.e., it is an indictment with a death penalty. The sinner cannot see God and live. When the Angel of the Lord came to Manoah and his wife, Manoah fearfully cried out, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judges 13:22). God's presence brings death to the sinner. When He comes by His Spirit, i.e., when the Third Person of the Trinity comes into our lives, He brings death to the old man in us, and then life to the new man: we are dead in Christ, and a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). The same is true of God's law: it brings us face to face with our death penalty, and the result is either a judgment unto life, or a judgment unto death, either our death and regeneration in Christ, or our eternal condemnation by Christ.

Third, Paul says of the law, "I found (it) to be unto death," The law is registered on man's being. Man by his fall made sin his principle of life and freedom.

Although man today seeks by science and psychology to remake himself, he remains forever God's creation and God's creature. This means that God's law is registered on man's being. This witness in man's being incites him to more sin. As Murray phrased it, "The more law is registered in our consciousness the more sin is aroused to action."[47] The law is seen by the sinner as bondage, as God's chains, and so, because the sinner sees sin as his principle of freedom, the law incites him to more sin.

Fourth, in spite of all this, the inescapable fact of his being, which is God's handiwork, witnesses to and *judges* the sinner. Thus, in his own being, he is under judgment. God's witness in man is an inescapable witness which cannot be silenced (Rom. 1:17-23). Thus, the sinner always feels himself to

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[47] John Murray: *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 252.

be under judgment. If he knows no other verse of Scripture, he will know and quote Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." He wants to eliminate judgment from the world. His efforts are a failure. Because God's handiwork and law are written in all of creation, and in every atom of man's being, the sinner finds that he himself is the great and authentic haunted house, wherein the law of God cries out from the stones and boards thereof.

18. Sin and the Law (2)

Too many people, when they approach *Romans*, especially chapter 7, act as though Paul here is setting forth God's law as the great problem and evil, rather than man's sin, man's rebellion against God and His law. It is important therefore to examine further what Paul says concerning sin and the law. In Romans 7:14-16, Paul writes:

> 14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.
> 15. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do.
> 16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Paul does not allow us to condemn the law; it is the law which condemns us. As Hodge wrote, of Romans 7:9,12, "The law of God is a transcript of his own nature - holy, just, and good. The clearer our views of its extent and excellence, the deeper will be our sense of our own unworthiness."[48] The fact that the law cannot save us is not due to some inability in the law, but an inability in us. We are *dead* in sin, *dead* to life in God. The fact that the law incites us to sin is an indictment of us, not of the law. In a regenerate man, the law incites to righteousness.

Thus, Paul's *first* declaration is that "the law is spiritual." By "spiritual" Paul does not have reference to a Greek mind-body dualism. The word does not refer to some higher aspect of our being or nature. "It is spiritual in the sense of being Divine, as partaking of the nature of the Holy Spirit, its divine Author."[49] To say that "the law is spiritual" is to say that it is of God, and, even more, expressive of His nature. Moreover, Paul is very emphatic here: "For *we know* that the law is spiritual." We are not allowed to by-pass this great reality. The law is God's law: man cannot condemn it; it condemns man.

Second, Paul says, "but I am carnal." Hodge commented:

> As *spiritual* expresses the nature of the law, so *carnal* must express the nature, and not the material. *I am carnal* means I am under the power of the flesh. And by *flesh* is meant not the body, not our sensuous nature merely, but our whole nature as fallen and corrupt. It includes all that

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[48] Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the Epistles to the Romans*. (New York, New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893). p. 355.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

> belongs to men, apart from the Holy Spirit. In the language of the New Testament, the *pneumatikoi, spiritual* are those who are under the control of the Spirit of God; and the *sarikoi* are those who are under the control of their own nature. As, however, even in the renewed, this control of the Spirit is never perfect, as the flesh even in them retains much of its original power, they are forced to acknowledge that they too are carnal. There is no believer, however advanced in holiness, who cannot adopt the language here used by the apostle. In I Cor. iii. 3, in addressing believers, he says, "Are ye not carnal?" In the imperfection of human language the same word must be taken in different senses. Sometimes *carnal* means entirely or exclusively under the control of the flesh. It designates those in whom the flesh is the only principle of action. At other times it has a modified sense, and is applicable to those who, although under the dominion of the Spirit, are still polluted and influenced by the flesh.[50]

Thus, Paul precludes himself and all men from judging the law; the law judges them because they are sinners. Man is a creature, a fallen creature. He has broken God's law and is therefore under condemnation.

Third, Paul adds, that he is "sold under sin." This means sold into slavery, given up to its service and life. Our Lord says, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). This means that man cannot free himself from sin: there is no escape. Sin has become so basic to his being morally that he cannot separate himself from it: he *is* a sinner. The law is not bondage: sin is. The law brings home to man his bondage; it indicts and condemns.

But, *fourth*, so too does his own being, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do." The sinner finds that sin has *dominion* over him. The promise to the regenerate is, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law (i.e., under the indictment of the law), but under grace (i.e., in and under the power of God's grace)" (Rom. 6:14). The sinner, in all his being, is under the indictment of the law, and under its dominion. He is in bondage, and he finds himself doing what he knows he should not do, and to a degree does not want to do. An unregenerate man confessed his compulsive adultery to me, saying: my wife is sensationally beautiful and sexy, but I can't avoid wanting to sleep with every cheap tramp I run across; they excite me, and my wife bores me. I must be crazy, or something. He was right up to a point: at least one or two of the women he was sexually involved with were painfully poor "competition" to his wife. However, while he was ready to say he might be "crazy, or something," he was more ready to ascribe it to a strong male sexual urge, certainly not to *sin*. What was clear was that he was about to lose a beautiful wife who was a "show-piece" and a source of pride, despite his belief that he was a fool not to keep her, and be faithful to her. "What I hate, that I do." No amount of rational evaluation can nullify the will to death which is sin (Prov.

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50. Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

8:36). It is not only God's creative stamp in all of us which witnesses against us, nor is it only His law. All of us, because we are God's creatures, are a walking indictment to ourselves also.

Fifth, Paul concludes, "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." *I consent*, I speak with or say the same thing as the law, because I am the creation and handiwork of the God of the law. The sinner affirms the law in all his being. The word *consent*, *sumphemi*, to speak with, is only once used in the New Testament, by Paul here. It implies a close agreement, like members of a chorus speaking together. This is an amazing image: the law speaks, and the sinner is part of a great chorus which amplifies and repeats the sentences of God's law. David tells us that this consent is part of a cosmic chorus:

> 5. Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.
> 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.
> 7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from they presence?
> 8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
> 9. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
> 10. Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
> 11. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
> 12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. (Ps. 139:5-12)

As Deborah sang, "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20).

Paul gives us in Romans a mighty indictment of sin and a vindication of God's law (Rom. 3:31). He sets forth the sovereignty of God in His grace, and in the redemption of man. Sin is serious, because God's law is serious. Sovereign grace is necessary for salvation, because sin is death, and the sinner is "sold under sin" and is a captive to his sin. Sin, adopted by man as the principle of deity and freedom, becomes for him instead death and slavery. Sin leaves man beset by self-frustration, a contradiction to himself, and a witness against himself.

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:57).

19. Sin and Desecration

In 1980, a strange book, extensively confirmed by one of its authors, a psychiatrist, reported on the practice of Satanism in Victoria, British Columbia. The cult practices human sacrifice, although, more commonly

aborted babies are used in simulated sacrifices. The Satanists thrive on man's despair of life and of any hope in good or righteousness. A sentence attributed to Satan is:

> Think so much, no time to pray,

A motto which sums up the despair of dead-end humanistic thinking. Another is:

> I go where everybody's afraid.

Basic to the life of this cult is the desecration of everything holy and righteous. This means even defecation on the Bible and the cross. The sacred must be desecrated to make room for the free sway of evil; this means a calculated assault on all that Christian know to be holy, and on God's law.

In all this, Dr. Pazder noted the "banality of evil," using Hannah Ahrendt's phrase. This he found to be the superficial aspect of evil, and its principle disguise. Evil is dangerous, but it is also "small and mean and unoriginal," all of which leads us to under-rate both evil and Satan. Of particular interest is Dr. Pazder's account of the cult and its inner workings: "Nothing really spontaneous is allowed to happen."[51]

To assess this and like evidences which constantly appear and quietly disappear, two texts of Scripture are especially pertinent. The first is Genesis 3:1-5, the tempter's program for creation, with every man as his own god, knowing or determining good and evil for himself. The second is II Corinthians 11:14, which tell us that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

To say the least, we have some amazing contradictions between the voluminous evidences of Satanism, and the avowed "creed" thereof as set forth in Scripture. The "creed" says, *first*, every man is his own god, and his own source of law, determining for himself what constitutes good and evil. *Second* it is an affirmation of the most radical and total kind of freedom imaginable. *Third*, it presents this total war against God and His law as the way of "light," and the leader in that revolution as "an angel of light." In fact, the popular name for Satan in such cults is *Lucifer*, a name coming from the Latin, *lux*, light, and *fere*, bear, i.e., the bearer or bringer of light. The thesis is that it is Lucifer, not God, who can truly say, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). At the same time, these Satanists prefer darkness for their rites!

At the same time, the testimonies of many ex-Satanists, historian, and of Michelle Smith and Dr. Pazder is to an excessive ritualism and an absence of all spontaneity. Occultist power in all its forms requires a rigid adherence to a form; any departure from this form nullifies the ritual. Thus, the "creed" of

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[51] Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder, M.D.: *Michelle Remembers*. (New York, New York: Congdon and Lattes, 1980). pp. 116f., 226, 239, 261, 101, 104n, 118, 142, 226ff., etc.

Satanism and all forms of evil calls for total freedom while requiring the most slavish formalism in ritual.

The key to this rigidity and hatred of spontaneity is in the desire to negate all good. This requires the dramatic suppression of everything good. Genesis 1 tells us that God created everything good (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Thus, the essential and *metaphysical* nature of all things is *good*. The fall of man does not affect the *being* of things, i.e., their God-given nature. The fall affects rather the *moral* sphere. All creation remains in its being *good* after the fall, although *morally* fallen. In the regeneration of man, and of all creation (Matt. 19:28), the *metaphysical* goodness of all things is united again with a *moral* goodness.

Because of this metaphysical goodness of all things, because Manichaeanism, with its belief that half of all being is metaphysically evil is false, man's being constantly witnesses against himself (Rom. 1:17ff.). Hence, the devotees of evil cannot trust spontaneity: the being of fallen man testifies against the moral nature of that man. Hence too the need to use small children, girls especially, in such cults. Such baby girls represent all that the Satanists want to believe that righteousness and holiness are: weak, helpless, subordinate, and fearful. They believe that such little girls can be readily polluted, turned into evil monsters, and dedicated to evil. This, symbolically, represents the triumph of reason over ostensible goodness and innocence.

The slightest outcropping of any natural feeling and love in the child destroys the validity of the ritual, and hence the rigid suppression of everything in all participants: the ritual of evil must govern all. The natural order, although fallen, evidences its metaphysical goodness in countless ways. Hence, the sinner seeks *perversion*, the degradation of the natural. Paul in Romans 1:24 says of homosexuals that they leave (*aphiemi, apo*, from, *hiemi* to send), forsake, or abandon, they proscribe the natural use of sexuality because of their desire to deny the metaphysical goodness of their being. It is their way of denying God and His creation grace and goodness. All the same, that metaphysical goodness expresses itself in spite of the historical and moral fall. One central expression of this is in the life of the family, in the natural love of a mother for her child, and of a child for his mother. Another and a God-given order wells up in all such expressions of love. Hence, among all occultists, everything is done to destroy this expression, or to pollute it. In the case of Michelle Smith, at age four, her mother, a Satanist, gave her to Satan; the cult's priestess did everything then to break down every trace of love for her mother in little Michelle.[52] *Freedom was seen as a deliverance from God's order into Lucifer's totally lawless order*, lawless in that it is totally anti-God. Camus stated it thus: "Since God claims all that is good in man, it is necessary to deride what is good and choose what is evil."[53] *Freedom is*

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

thus sought in evil, but evil is not only morally untenable and under condemnation, but it is in hostility to the metaphysical goodness of being. Hence, as Proverbs 8:36 declares, "he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." Evil is always suicidal.

Desecration, as we have seen, is basic to Satanism, but the only thing the Satanist succeeds in desecrating is himself, his own moral being. Evil cannot strike at the omnipotent and almighty God. As a result, it seeks to strike at God's people, His creation, His church, Bible, and the cross. It also seeks to desecrate God's image in one's own being. More than a few such evil-doers seek, self-consciously and deliberately, a way to pollute themselves further. The Emperor Nero longed for some new way to defile himself, some new perversion to practice, and there are no lack of Neros now.

It is important to return to the two Satanic mottoes cited earlier, because here we come face to face with the power of evil in the lives of the godly. These two sentences are, "Think so much, no time to pray," and, "I go where everybody's afraid." Fear opens the door to doubts about God's omnipotence and government. It renders us susceptible to all the evils which fear can open up, including despair. Fear is thus a mighty instrument of evil wherever that fear is not a fear of God but a fear held apart from God, a fear of evil. That which we fear we tend to ascribe great power, and even omnipotence to; the fear of the Lord is therefore clean (Ps. 19:9), and the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7), because we thereby recognize God's sovereignty and omnipotence. The fear of evil, accordingly is a sin.

Similarly, to substitute our thinking for prayer is to assume that the government is upon our shoulders, not Christ's (Isa. 9:6), and that it is our thinking and planning which is crucial rather than God's government and plan.

Fear and prayerlessness desecrate us.

20. The Eschatology of Sin

Eschatology, the doctrine of last things, is normally an aspect of Christian theology, but humanism is not lacking in eschatological thinking. Humanistic eschatology sees a double possibility. *First*, the natural direction of the universe is to run down. There is a continuous diminution of energy, and a cosmic decline, which looks ahead to a final state of collapse. This doctrine of decay has been used by humanists to criticize as fallacious the Biblical doctrine of the renewal of all things as the curse of sin is progressively lifted, and the culminating re-creation of all things by Christ at His Second Coming. However, the humanists have not been without their own doctrine of renewal. This first alternative, cosmic decay, is seen by most humanists as more than

[53] Albert Camus: *The Rebel*. (New York, New York: Vintage Books, 1956). p. 47.

a possibility: it is held to be a certainty, although some would question the second law of thermodynamics.

Second, there is the possibility of a man-made, scientifically engineered renewal of all things. Kenneth Heuer, a British astronomer, is one such scientist who believes in this renewal. Man can arrest decay by constructing some day his own sun, an artificial sun, operating on subatomic energy.[54] Given enough time, others hold, death itself can be overcome.[55]

This possibility of a new creation via humanism is usually held to be a potential attainable by means of a scientific statism. As a result, we have a religious establishment of this faith in science. To attain a humanistic control over the universe, tax funds go increasingly for various forms of research, from medical research to space exploration. The goals are envisioned in humanistic terms.

Moreover, in more than a few areas, scientific research is followed with messianic expectations. When Paul Ehrlich announced the discovery of a cure for syphilis in 1911, the news was greeted with ecstatic joy. The possibility of sinning without serious or any consequences was seen by humanists as a landmark in history. In due time, all venereal diseases would be abolished, and a painful penalty would be removed. Later, the same happy expectation greeted the announcement of penicillin. Similarly, the development of the birth control pill was openly hailed by many as the death of sexual inhibition and as a major step in the liberation of women. It was believed that, with the "liberation" of sex from consequences, guilt feelings would also in due time disappear, and men and women would enter into an earthly paradise, a humanistic garden of delights.

It is important therefore to glance at what happens when sin has its way. Does it lead indeed to a Garden of Delight, to use the expression or idea of late medieval heretics?

The evidences of the sexual revolution point all too clearly to mental and emotional instabilities, and a burned-out generation. Having talked with many such relics, I can summarize the consequences. Sin at first has an exciting quality: it is a revolt against God, family, and society; it is seen as an affirmation of freedom and as the triumph of autonomous man. However, to war against God is to deny a transcendental meaning to all things. Good and evil, and all meaning, are self-determined and subject to self-ordained change and abandonment. God's meaning having been stripped from all things, all things become quickly meaningless, including freedom and revolt. Boredom and a sense of emptiness are the concomitants of unbelief, and

54. Kenneth Heuer, "The End of the World," in *Panorama*, The Laurel Review, no. 1, December 1957; adapter from Heuer's chapter five of *The Next Fifty Billion Years*. (Viking Press, 1957). p. 83.

55. See R. J. Rushdoony: *The Mythology of Science*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1967).

meaninglessness poisons all of life. All that remains is a hatred of life, and of all who love and enjoy life. One result is the proliferation of crimes without cause, or existential crime. Existential crime means the assault or murder of a total stranger (usually), or arson against any object, for no other reason than the resentment of the living dead against the living. In a minor incident, one woman launched into a savage and pornographic verbal attack on another woman, whom she barely knew, because, she said, the other woman's obvious happiness was hateful to her. The object of this attack was a younger woman of very real and active faith; everything about her was instantly hateful to the attacking woman, whose life was a self-created masterpiece of emptiness and evil. The present era is seeing the escalation of crimes of pure destruction.

Those who make a *formal* religion of their unbelief, the occultists and Satanists, very strongly reveal the devastating consequences of their sin. Let us look again at Dr. Pazder's account of Satanism. A young woman, who at the age of four had been given by her mother to a Church of Satan, recounts some years later what had occurred. Ritual murder and human sacrifice were practiced, although apparently at least much of the time aborted babies were used in these rites (in Canada).[56] Four characteristics of life in this Satanic circle stand out. *First*, the sacred was systematically desecrated in order to make room for evil to take hold. There was a calculated assault on everything good. As a result of this, evil was made to look less evil, indeed, to appear as banal and trite, and hence of no great matter.[57] If virtue is made to be a farce and a joke, then evil becomes a commonplace matter, and nothing to fight about or to feel strongly about at any time. Evil thus has a disguise, the disguise of trivialness. Those who attack the trivial as a momentous matter are made to look ridiculous.

Second, the Satanic counsel is, "Think so much, no time to pray."[58] The master plan is to isolate man from God, and also from man. Prayer is in part a cry for help; this kind of cry to God and man is contrary to the plan that every man be his own god (Gen. 3:5).

Third, Satan's premise is, "I go where everybody's afraid." The people lost in despair, who no longer care about anything, are the readiest recruits for the Church of Satan.[59] Despair means a loss of belief in meaning. It is a denial of Romans 8:28, that God makes all things work together for good to them who love Him, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Despair holds rather to the death of the good and of all meaning, or else it says all good is

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56. Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder, M.D.: *Michelle Remembers*. (New York, New York: Congdon and Lattes, 1980). pp. 37, 40, 53ff., 6f., 83, 109, 116n, 125f., 146, 177f., 199, 249f., 266, 300.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 116,239.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 256.

evil unless it serves me, and all meaning is void unless it becomes my private version of meaning.

Fourth, "Nothing really spontaneous is allowed to happen."[60] This seems paradoxical. Sin sees itself as the radical affirmation of freedom, and yet it becomes the nemesis of all spontaneity. Comte, with his dream of a church of humanity, had a total plan and ritual for man. Marx, in the name of freedom, laid the foundations for man's total enslavement; Hitler did it in the name of science. Freud denied freedom to man; all human dreams, thoughts, and actions were seen as reflexes and products of the id, the ego, and the superego. The decline or corruption of Christian faith is the decline of freedom also.

In the eschatology of sin, man is hated and mistrusted; man as he is, however much fallen, is still a product of the great enemy, God. As a result, everything in man's being witnesses to God, even though that witness is clouded by sin. In Biblical faith, a man must die in Christ to be born again in Him. Satanism too has its rituals of death, or human sacrifice. In the Church of Satan, Satan declares, "We begin by bringing death."[61] The Satanists can kill, but they cannot make alive. Nietzsche called for the death of man and the birth of superman, the man-made god who would live in a world beyond good and evil, a world beyond God. Neither he nor anyone else could bring superman to birth, but they did and do unleash hatred and death against God's image-bearer and creature, man. The death of man is the secret goal of humanism in its every form. Its eschatology is an eschatology of death. Wisdom declares from of old, "he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36).

Sin thus has an apocalyptic eschatology. The wars of the 20th century, its revolutions, slave-labor camps, mass murders, and more are evidences of its will to mass destruction, and the end is not yet.

Sin, however does not govern the universe: the triune God does. As a result, we can say with Asaph, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of (i.e., all future) wrath shalt thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10). Sin has no future. Jesus Christ, who is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8), shall put down and destroy all sin, and finally death itself (I Cor. 15:24-26). History shall culminate in the death of sin, and the death of death. In Jesus Christ, the old man and the old creation are sentenced to death, but in and through Him the grace of God unto salvation regenerates the elect and re-creates the heavens and the earth. The Lord God declares, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

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60. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

21. Sin and Righteousness

The purpose of these studies of sin has been to set forth the *religious* meaning of sin, its *theological* meaning. Too often, studies of sin concentrate on its ecclesiastical meaning; with modernists, on its sociological and political meaning. In either case, the result is a very limited and humanistic emphasis, not a God-centered one.

There are many areas of sin which have either not been discussed or have been barely mentioned. One of the contributing factors in our current inflation has been the indifference of the churches. Inflation is a form of theft. Modernists and neo-evangelicals have contributed to the rise of this evil by advocating solutions to social problems which require theft in the form of taxation. Evangelicals have contributed to this evil by their refusal to see it as a violation of God's law against theft, and against just weights and just measures. The federal government, and virtually every modern state as well, has added to its sin of theft the sin of false witness. Statistics, released annually, tell us what the rate of inflation is. Supposedly, inflation in the 1970s was over 10% one year and below it nine years. However, any comparison of 1970 and 1980 prices makes clear this is a lie. A house I bought in 1971, sold in 1976, which was resold in 1979 and 1980, increased about five times in price, or a little more. Food and clothing prices also increased, from two to four times, and so on. Does a lie gain dignity when released by a federal or state agency, or by the leaders of a church? If we fail to name falsity a lie, are we not accomplices in the lie? Psalm 50:18 makes clear that silence before evil is consent thereto.

Salvation from sin is Jesus Christ in His person and in His word. By His atonement, our Lord redeems us and He makes us moreover into a new creation. By His law-word, he shows us the way of holiness, His law, and by His Spirit He empowers us to obey Him.

No more than we can limit the lordship of Christ to the church and the inner realm can we limit the scope of sin to these realms. Sin is total war against the triune God, and the war against sin must be waged in every area of life and thought.

All sin is a violation of God's covenant with man. Sin thus is a breach of the covenant and requires restitution, both in the death of the offender, and in the recompense of the offended. As Kenneth Grayston noted, "The violator of the covenant becomes the debtor of the righteous who can claim recompense and vengeance."[62]

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[62] W. Gunther, "Sin," in Colin Brown, editor: *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, III. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan (1978) 1979). p. 526.

Man as covenant-breaker is debtor to God, and under sentence of death for treason. God in Christ makes the recompense and pays the death penalty *to restore us* to covenant communion and obedience.

As the Shorter Catechism, A-14, states it, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." In I John 3:4, it is stated very clearly: "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Sin is rebellion against God in word, thought, and deed. The antithesis of sin is the obedience of faith, for "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

Sin is an act, but it is much more than an act. It is a total and wilful choice against God, an affirmation of an autonomous standard of good and evil in defiance of God's law (Gen. 3:5).

The scope of the consequence of sin, the fall, is total. St. Paul tells us that the whole creation groans and travails in expectation of its final deliverance into the new creation (Rom. 8:19-23). The war against sin therefore must also be total. We are required to plant our feet on all things and to claim them for Christ, and to place all things under the ministrations and requirements of His word (Joshua 1:2-9; Matt. 28:18-20).

We have had for generations now a cheap view of sin. The meaning of sin has been limited, and often trivialized, so that the seriousness of sin has been overlooked. I recall some years ago, hearing with a great sense of shock, a man declare that everyone who smokes goes to hell; even with my youth and only a few minutes of exposure to the man, I knew him for what he was, a harsh and hypocritical man with a minimal knowledge of the Bible. He was a self-elected St. Peter, determined to limit heaven to those who pleased him; he viewed many of the Old Testament saints with disgust, wanted to discourage interest in the Old Testament, and to limit all understanding of the New Testament to his own blindness.

While this is an extreme example, it illustrates a point. Our doctrine of sin depends on our doctrine of justice or righteousness. If our concept of justice is a limited, humanistic, or trifling one, then our doctrine of the violation of justice, *sin*, is a trifling one. What antinomianism does is to deny God's definition of justice or righteousness, *His law*, and hence it trivializes sin. Where righteousness has a meager or a vague content, so too does sin.

Paul uses the words *adikia* and *asebia*, as do others in the New Testament. *Dike* is righteousness or justice. *Adikia*, anti-justice, is used 27 times in the New Testament. The term is a legal word, rooted in legal process, and it has reference to God's law. *Asebia* means ungodliness. In Romans 1:18ff., Paul uses these two terms. Sin or ungodliness or unrighteousness is enmity to God and the contempt for and violation of God's law.

As W. Gunther pointed out, "2 Tim. 2:19 warns the community that unrighteousness is not compatible with calling on God's name."[63] "Let every

one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Tim. 2:19). The word translated *iniquity* is *adikias*, unrighteousness or injustice, i.e., the violation of God's law. To teach antinomianism or unrighteousness is condemned by our Lord (Matt. 5:19).

We are called to righteousness. The purpose of God's grace unto salvation is the reign of justice or righteousness: "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21). Antinomianism is a contempt for and a denial of God's grace.

22. The Lie

A book by a feminist on murderous women contains some very strange statements. The authoress declares, for example, that in Iowa a woman may receive a five year prison sentence for a misdemeanor, whereas a man may receive no more than a year. Book reviewer Joseph W. Bishop Jr. checked the Iowa Code, Section 903.1, and found no such distinction made. He concluded, for this and other reasons, "I am led to question her claims to scholarship."[64]

A birth control and pro-abortion organization sent out a fund-raising letter, in which it was stated by the president thereof that anti-abortionists, or Right-to-Lifers, were setting fires to medical clinics, using bribery to get the names of women who have had an abortion to harass them, creating trouble and indulging in violence in hospitals, and so on. None of these charges were substantiated with any evidence, nor did the organization answer critics who challenged their "facts."[65]

The unhappy fact is that this kind of misrepresentation is not unusual. It is commonplace in political campaigns, and routine in the press. It is, moreover, *sin*, a plain violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Ex. 20:16).

Lying is a cheap and easy sin in the catalogue of sins against our fellow men. There are clearer risks and problems involved in, for example, murder, theft, and adultery. The hatred a sinner feels for God and man therefore vents itself most readily in words. This is why St. James speaks of *words* as a key area of sin, and a symptomatic one, revelatory of the heart of a man (James 3:1-18). Our Lord calls attention to the same fact:

> 34. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

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63. *Ibid.*, p. 526.
64. Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. "Forty Whacks," in *New York*, vol. 17, no. 47, December 1, 1980, p. 66.
65. John D. Lofton, Jr., "Planned Parenthood Uses the Big Lie to Smear Right-Life Movement, in *Conservative Digest*, vol. 6, no. 11, November 1980, p. 19.

> 35. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasures bringeth forth evil things. (Matt. 12:34-35)

But this is not all. Our Lord makes clear to the Pharisees and all His enemies that their sins are grounded on a lie.

> 43. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my words.
> 44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.
> 45. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. (John 8:43-45)

Man's life is established on a faith, a principle. This faith governs our being and our understanding. The presupposition which is the ground of our being is personal because we are persons. We are children of God in Christ, because for us He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The universe is the creation of the personal God, and hence truth is not an abstraction: it is personal also; it is the Lord. Our Lord says therefore, that if God is our Father, we will love and know His Son (John 8:42).

However, if we cannot "understand" His words, it is because the ground we stand on, our presupposition, is alien ground. The word *understand* (from the Anglo-Saxon) is very interesting. That which we understand is the ground of our thinking and acting; the word says we stand under it, although also standing in terms of it, and on it. We stand under our presupposition and concept of the truth in that we are products of it; our lives and our thinking are a consequence of it. Covenant men are therefore the children of God, whereas covenant-deniers are children of the devil. Christ's enemies cannot understand His words nor comprehend His thinking, because they begin and end with an alien faith; they are the children of the devil in their thinking, and they think in terms of their father's presuppositions (Gen. 3:1-5). They are repelled by Christ's words.

Their truth is a lie, because Satan is the father of lies. Satan is a murderer and a liar; he is the one who brought death into the world with his lies. It is "because" Christ tells the truth that they will not believe Him; it is because he is the truth that they reject Him in favor of their "truth," which is a lie. Of Satan, our Lord says, "there is no truth in him." There is not an iota nor a fragment of truth in rebellion against God.

In Revelation 22:15, we are told of those who in particular are outside the new creation: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Those who are blessed are those who "do his commandments" (Rev. 22:14). Since this is a letter to the churches, John and Christ here speak to those who are in the

church, and they cite certain groups who are excluded, whatever outward profession of faith they may make.

These are *dogs*, or homosexuals, and *sorcerers* (*magos*), occultists, pretenders to magical powers, and the like. *Whoremongers* (*pornoi; pornos*) means those who pursue illicit sexuality. *Murders* (*phoneis, phoneus*) is clear in its meaning: man-killers; *idolaters* (*idololatrai, eidoldatres*) covers every form of idolatry. The culminating indictment and exclusion is of "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." The classification of all such with homosexuals, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, and idolaters as the culminating offense indicates how serious the Lord views this offense. Lying is lightly regarded by men, and seriously regarded by God. In this catalogue of sins, a lie has the same root as do the other sins, and is revelatory of the man's depravity.

In the modern era, as epistomological self-consciousness develops, lying has had its champions. Genesis 3:5 is the premise of all fallen men: every man is his own god, determining or "knowing" what is good and evil for himself. The great champion of the lie was Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). For him, man must live beyond God's definition of good and evil; this means recognizing untruth (as the Bible would define it) as a necessary condition of life. In Nietzsche's words:

> The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it: it is here, perhaps, that our new language sounds most strangely. 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 (to which the synthetic judgments *a priori* belong), are the most indispensable to us; that without a recognition of logical fictions, without a comparison of reality with the purely *imagined* world of the absolute and immutable, without constant counterfeiting of the world by means of numbers, man could not live–that the renunciation of false opinions would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life. *To recognize untruth as a condition of life*: that is certainly to impugn the traditional ideas of value in a dangerous manner, and a philosophy which ventures to do so, has thereby alone placed itself beyond good and evil.[66]

To renounce lying is for Nietzsche to renounce life itself. The implications of this are too often passed over. Man as his own god reserves for himself as a condition of life the freedom to lie. Because God's creative word brings all being into existence, man the sinner must claim the right to send forth his own creative word, the lie. It means life to him, because it means the power to remake reality after his own image. Hence, the sinner lies to refashion reality. Hence too the fallen civil orders, states, lie by law and issue their plans and administrative and legal fiats, determined to remake the world. From Satan, Cain, the Tower of Babel, the United Nations, and all modern states, this fiat

66. Friedrich Nietzsche: "Beyond Good and Evil" 4, in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. (New York, New York: Random House, Modern Library). p. 4.

word is seen as man's one hope. These are they who love and make a lie (Rev. 22:15) or, all who love the principle of lying, and who practice it. The lie is man's autonomous word. It is man's belief that there can be a successful and living word, a truth outside of Jesus Christ. The lie is a religious fact: it denies God's reality, and the consequences and judgments which are a part of that reality. But all this is ordained for judgment. Of God's new creation, we are told, "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" (Rev. 21:27). Again we see the culminating offense as *the lie*. Sin begins with Satan's lie (Gen. 3:1-5); it culminates in the madness of the lie, man, pretending to be god, issues a supposedly creative word to remake reality. But all things remain forever God's creation, and, in due time, all the champions of the lie shall hide themselves vainly, saying to the mountains and rocks,

> 16. ...Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:
> 17. For the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand? (Rev. 6:16-17)

The lie, like all sin, is a false covering. In the end, it leaves the man naked and ashamed (Gen. 3:7-19).

IX

THE ORDO SALUTIS

1. The Ordo Salutis

The *Ordo Salutis*, or, order of salvation, describes the process by which Christ's work of salvation is made manifest in the life of the redeemed man. Berkhof calls it the "process" whereby it is "subjectively realized," adding, "It aims at describing in their logical order and also in their interrelations, the various movements of the Holy Spirit in the application of the work of redemption. The emphasis is not on what man does in appropriating the grace of God, but on what God does in applying it."[1] Most Reformed theologians begin with either regeneration or calling, and then go on to conversion, which includes faith and repentance. With faith they discuss justification, simply because faith 'mediates' justification, and also adoption. They continue with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and conclude with glorification.[2] Hoeksema's order is as follows: 1) regeneration, 2) calling, 3) faith, 4) conversion, 5) justification, 6) sanctification, 7) preservation and perseverance, and then 8) glorification.[3] Hoeksema rightly warns that "This order must not be understood in a purely temporal sense, as if the benefits of salvation were granted to the sinner in a definite order of time."[4] What is important is that the sovereignty of God in salvation be recognized, and this has been the great and valuable function of Reformed discussions of the *Ordo Salutis*. As Berkhof noted, "The Arminian order of salvation, while ostensibly ascribing the work of salvation to God, really make it contingent on the attitude and the work of man."[5]

The warnings of Hoeksema and Berkhof are very much to the point. Neither God, nor His eternal decree, nor any working of the mind of God are subject to temporal process and order, and to ascribe such an order to God's being and eternal purpose is a serious error. To place undue emphasis on what our theological logic tells us that the order should be results in constipated theologies. The purpose of the *Ordo Salutis* is not to probe and fathom the precise workings of God's mind but to set forth His sovereignty in salvation. Our salvation does not begin when we experience it, nor is our awareness of our conversion either the beginning or the cause thereof. It is humanism to make the work of salvation dependent upon man's response, but it is also a

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1. Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1941) 1946). p. 415f.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
3. Herman Hoeksma: *Reformed Dogmatics*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966). p. 451.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 446.
5. Berkhof: *op. cit.*, p. 421.

subtle form of humanism when theologians attempt to force their conception of God's logic onto God. Scripture does not give us a map of the order of salvation. It does set forth God's sovereignty therein. It thereby tells us enough to preserve God's priority and sovereignty in salvation. For the theologian to go beyond that is presumption.

It is necessary to emphasize this fact. Within the hour, a telephone conversation with a graduate student at a seminary revealed some interesting things. A widely known and important professor of Old Testament speaks of the law as a "parenthesis" in God's history of redemption. This "reformed" scholar eliminates vast segments of Scripture as merely interim law and ethics. What does this leave him in the way of "valid" teaching? The answer is speculative "exegesis" (or, better, eisegesis) and speculative theology. Thus, he holds, it is "possible" to say that, in Genesis 1:26, when we read that "And God said, Let us make man in our image," He was talking to the angels. Whom then does the "our" include, the three persons of the Godhead, the angels, or is it merely "the plural of majesty?" This is constipated theology, and it is presumption.

The theological calling is not to dissection. Most seminary professors to the contrary, the Bible is not a subject for autopsy. Legitimate scholarship does not ask such questions as, is Gen. 1:26 addressed to the angels? or, what has happened to the earthly body of Jesus in the ascension? or the like. Anyone who feels that the medieval scholars, who debated the number of angels dancing on the head of a pin were the epitome of the irrelevant, has not yet seen what irrelevancy can attain. A visit to any seminary, modernist or 'orthodox', will give him a new vision of the depths which studied irrelevance and arrogance can attain.

The theological calling is not to dissection and autopsies: it is to declare and proclaim the word of God. *To declare and proclaim* is a task of urgency, not of scholarship. It is important and necessary for the seminary student to be trained in careful exegesis: it is his privilege and duty to know the Scriptures, thoroughly, precisely, and in detail. But should a sermon be exegetical or declaratory? The preaching in Scripture is not exegetical; the apostles knew their Bible well, but, beginning with Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40), their preaching was a proclamation. It was the Gospel, *good news*. Paul says, "we declare unto you glad tidings" (Acts 13:32). He tells the Athenians, of the Unknown God, "Him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23). God's word is always a declaration. Jeremiah says, "Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off" (Jer. 31:10).

Neither a precise, scholarly exegesis, nor an entertaining sermon designed to please people, is anything other than dishonoring to God. Both deny the urgency and the power of His word. Both bypass the joy of salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit. Declaratory preaching does *not* mean imprecise or

watered-down preaching. Rather, the greater our knowledge of the word, the clearer our declaration.

Our point in all of this is a simple one: the *Ordo Salutis* is not a matter for dissection but proclamation. It is our God who saves us. Every aspect of our salvation, from eternity to eternity and all through time, is of His ordination and predestination, and it is a glorious, seamless garment. The *Ordo Salutis* sets forth our salvation, wealth, power, and security in Jesus Christ. It is not a matter for disputation but exultation. Hence Paul, in the midst of persecution and distress, could say, "for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

The *Ordo Salutis* tells us that God is God, and that we can rejoice in our salvation: no man can alter or abate it. It is the work of God Almighty.

2. Salvation

In looking up "salvation" in both the Table of Contents and the Index of several major and able works in dogmatics and systematic theology, I found no entry whatsoever. These books were important studies by resolutely orthodox theologians. Why this conspicuous absence of comment on salvation as such?

The reason for the absence is simply that the academic mind is so given to critical analysis that it approaches all things in a dissecting spirit. Thus, instead of a single statement on "salvation," we have careful, often accurate, details about its components. The scholars will protest that such an analysis is necessary for students, in order for them to grasp the meaning of the whole. To a degree, there is truth in this claim. However, who of us can ever know a living man by seeing only his dissected cadaver in an anatomy classroom? Could any man from poor Yorick's skull know Yorick, or have any echo of his infinite jest? The best place to begin with any doctrine of Scripture is in Scripture. Paul, the best of theologians, was asked by a trembling Philippian jailer, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." (Acts 16:30-32).

The strength of fundamentalism has been its reliance on the simplicity of Scripture; its weakness has been its implicit humanism, its Arminian theology. Salvation is to believe on the *Lord* Jesus Christ. He is the Lord, our God and Creator, our absolute property owner (John 1:1-3). Only God can save, because only God can govern, control, and determine all things. If a savior cannot predestine and control all things, his salvation is at best a very temporary thing, and no salvation at all.

Salvation is to believe on the *Lord Jesus* Christ. He is not only very God of very God but very man of very man. He is the incarnate one, God made flesh, and undergoing all our suffering unto death (Heb. 5:8-9). Even more, He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). We, who were created by God for His service, rebelled and sought to become our own gods (Gen. 3:5). Yet God in His sovereign grace and mercy redeems His chosen ones in Jesus Christ. Through Him, our New Adam, we have access to the throne of grace in His perfect work as mediator and covenant head (Heb. 4:14-16).

Salvation is to believe in the *Lord Jesus Christ.* He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Great King, the Promised One. The headship man could not maintain in Adam, the Christ gains for all eternity, and we enjoy it in Him, so that dominion is once again man's life. The Messiah is the anointed and chosen one, and we are chosen in Him, so that our election is in terms of His work and our calling in Him.

Salvation means rescue, victory, health, and redemption. It means that we are rescued from sin and death into righteousness and eternal life. It means "safety, health, and prosperity."[6]

Both Old and New Testaments speak of salvation. The Old Testament makes clear:

> That it implies every kind of assistance for body and soul, and that it was freely offered to God's people, Ps. xxviii. 9; Isa. xxxvii. 35; to the needy, Ps. lxxii. 4,13, to the meek, Ps. lxxvi. 9 to the contrite, Ps. xxv. 18, but not to the wicked, Ps. xviii. 41, unless they repented and turned to him. Salvation consisted not only of deliverance from enemies, and from the snares of the wicked, Ps. xxxvii. 40; lix. 2; cvi. 20, but also of forgiveness, Ps. lxxix. 9, of answers to prayer, Ps. lxix. 13, of spiritual gifts, Ps. lxviii. 19, of joy, Ps. li.12, of truth, Ps. xxv. 5, and of righteousness, Ps. xxiv. 5; Isa. xiv. 8; xlvi. 13; li.5.[7]

Girdlestone and others to the contrary, the coming of our Lord did not mean a diminishing of salvation and its limitation to a purely spiritual realm.

Salvation is total: we are transferred from death to life, from sin to righteousness, by the justification of God through Jesus Christ. Christ our sacrifice takes upon Himself our death penalty, and God declares that our sins are remitted, and our legal standing before Him is as righteous men. *We are saved.* This does not mean that our problems are over. A man snatched from a burning house and certain death has only his life; all else is gone. He must now work to establish the capital or substance of his saved life. So too the redeemed man must now put on holiness, work in obedience to God's word,

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[6] G. Walters, "Salvation," in J. D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1962). p. 766.

[7] R. Baker Girdlestone, in Patrick Fairbairn, editor: *Fairbairn's Imperial Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. VI. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1957 reprint edition). p. 70.

to grow in terms of the new life which is his and become a rich man in grace, faith, and obedience to His Savior.

To be saved is to be *free* from the burden of sin and guilt. Fallen man is under God's curse. Having been created in God's image, he is tormented by his own being when he departs from God's law-word. The problem of psychotherapy from Sigmund Freud on has been the problem of guilt. Fallen man cannot escape his guilt and its burden by any means humanism can devise. As a result, his life is governed by efforts to escape from that burden. Personally, and socially, politically and economically, he seeks escape either in masochism, i.e., in self-punishment and self-atonement, or in sadism, by projecting his sin and guilt on others and by punishing them. But he cannot escape. The burden of sin and guilt remains to destroy his life and his every social order.

From Cain through the Tower of Babel to the present, every social order established by fallen man is an applied plan of salvation. No Christian can live in peace with such an order. It is a state of war against His God and Savior.

Even more, every humanistic plan of salvation and its every social order, school, and institution, is doomed to failure. Every such failure is a crisis of confidence, an earthquake. Only when an earthquake struck his prison did the trembling Philippian jailer ask, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) Paul thus spoke the timely and relevant word.

In Scripture, the good news of salvation is not an autopsy report, nor a classroom analysis. It is always God's word to perishing man in the earthquakes and hurricanes of history. As Moses declares, "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men" (Ps. 90:3). The good news of salvation is never an abstract word but the most relevant word in history. It is the lifeboat to the drowning, and breath and life to the perishing.

Thus, while in our study of the *Ordo Salutis*, we shall of necessity deal with the many facets of salvation, it will also of necessity be with an eye always on its unity. The good news is salvation through Jesus Christ. He is the Lord and Savior. There are many facets to the *one word* of salvation, but it is always one word, an integral and inseparable unity. God through Moses declares that His law is one *word* (Deut. 4:2). The whole of His revelation and salvation is one word. The Gospel is not dissection nor autopsy: it is salvation through Jesus Christ: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

3. Humanistic Salvation

Salvation is a concern of man in one area after another. Men seek a "new life" or a "changed life," and, whether it be travel, the sexual revolution, or psychiatric therapy, the goal in these and other activities is some form of

salvation. The language of redemption creeps into every area of man's life. Thus, Ken Tucker, a 26-year-old critic of popular music, writes:

> Rock fans tend to admire their favorite artists to the point of idolatry, a tendency easy to fall into when an art like the best rock and roll has the ability to change your life. To idolize is part of the fun of rock, but the intensity of devotion makes for some exceedingly bitter feelings when the idol falters. The idolater is then less apt to be quite so enthusiastic the next time a new, likely object of adoration appears. That's one way rock fans "mature" and drift away from the fold and onto jazz or classical or Barry Manilow. I've got nothing against any of the above, but as a committed rock fan, it's saddening every time another rock fan defects.[8]

Such statements should not surprise. Man was created by the triune God and is *a religious creature*. Even in his fall, man is inescapably God's creation and creature, and religiously motivated. However, instead of glorifying and worshipping their Creator, men worship their own will and their rebellion (Rom. 1:21-23).

Men recognize, even in their sin, the need for a changed life, but, instead of seeking the change in repentance, they seek it in changing the environment, manipulating their own being, and in changed conditions and persons around them. Man's chronic discontent is his sinful expression of this need for a change. It results in a variety of activities, from personal activities to social and political revolution. Men want a new life on their own terms.

Basic to these terms is independence from their Creator. In one way or another, men seek to establish, theologically, scientifically, and otherwise, grounds for man's freedom from God. The justification of independence takes some very curious turns. With the invention of the computer, fantasy ran wild. In the 1950s and early 1960s, articles were commonplace, and talk more so, about the possibility of an independent mind developing in a computer. Although it was always clear that a computer is a machine which will only do what it is programmed to do, men all the same theorized about the possibilities of mental independence by computers.

Even more, film and television plots used the idea of a robot with an independent mind, with some kind of soul. One television story had a military robot become a pacifist and turn against the militarists!

The meaning of such thinking is all too clear. Its premise is this: if a robot can develop a mind with independence from its creator, how much more easily can a man gain independence from his Maker, God! Thus, the wish is that the robot become free from his maker so that man can say that he too is free from his Maker.

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[8] *Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Sound Section*, Sunday April 22, 1979, pp. 1, 8.

The root of man's problem is, of course, precisely this fact, his declaration of independence from God in response to the tempter's plan (Gen. 3:1-5). For salvation, the sinner affirms more of the same sin which brought in death. For him, life and salvation mean freedom from God, *the freedom to be a god*, independent of God and man. Katherine Anne Porter tells us, concerning Gertrude Stein, that she did "a good deal of quarreling, *for when she quarreled she seemed to have felt more real.*"[9] All too many people seem to feel "more real" when they quarrel; hence the frequent appeal of wars. The peaceniks of the 1960s were no different: they protested against war as belligerently and offensively as possible, more anxious to quarrel with people than to persuade them.

We see this salvationist urge to absolute freedom very extensively in modern art. Mondrian said that "It is the task of art to express a clear vision of reality."[10] In brief, the artist sees himself as a prophet who gives men their vision of life. However, the artist also sees it as necessary to be independent, and to insure his independence by being arrogant and offensive. The architect, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe held, "I think we should treat our clients as children." Gay's observation is to the point: "The innovator must, almost by definition, offend reigning taste."[11] Art, salvation, and life are seen as requiring a radical and anarchic independence from God and man, from past, present, and future, in the name of freedom. According to Gay, "The riot of modern subjectivity is a symptom of dreadful freedom, the outcry of lost men in an incomprehensible world in which standards have decayed and reason has abandoned its claims to order the chaos of experience."[12]

The goal of all this is *art (and life) as destruction, i.e., as suicide*. Mondrian held, "I think the destructive element is too much neglected in art."[13] The goal of independence turns out to be destruction, just as the end result of sin, man's declaration of independence from God, is death. The salvation men seek is *from* God; unless the sovereign grace of God is at work in man's heart, the plain meaning of man's fall is that man seeks salvation *from* God, and the tempter's program is precisely such a plan of salvation (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 4:1-11).

Thus, in and out of the world of religions, salvation is a common human concern, but we cannot understand what it is that we face in such faiths, and what we face in the remnants of the old Adam in us, unless we see it for what it is, *a desire for salvation from God*. The disastrous course of history manifests this desire. Man's will to autonomy and antinomianism, his desire

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9. Katherine Anne Porter, "Gertrude Stein: A Self Portrait," in Morton Dauwen Zabel, editor: *Literary Opinion in America*, I. (New York, New York: Harper Torchbooks (1951) 1962 Italics added). p. 346.
10. Peter Gay: *Art and Act*. (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1976). p. 197.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 142f.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

to be his own god and law, is governed by this false hope. It is suicidal. As the Lord declared of old, "all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36). But the love of sin is the love of death, and the desire for salvation on any other ground than that of Scripture, through Christ's atonement, is a lust for suicide.

"The best rock and roll has the ability to change your life," says Tucker. Politics, rock and roll, psychiatry, the sexual revolution, and more, all promise to change our lives. However, every change apart from Christ is a step further into the consequences of the fall: into death.

4. Salvation: Anthropology or Theology?

In the modern era, man's thinking has become increasingly anthropocentric, man-centered, so that Scripture itself has been subjected to an anti-theological interpretation. The purpose of Scripture is not to provide man with a life or fire insurance contract, setting forth all his valid claims, rights, and benefits, but rather to declare God's necessary word to man, His creature, so that man might know and obey His sovereign Lord. Paul tells us, with respect to Scripture,

> 16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
> 17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (II Tim. 3:16-17)

First, we are told that the Bible is the inspired word of God. *Second*, the Bible is "profitable" in that it perfects or matures man in God's service, "unto all good works." Thus, the Bible is not man-centered, nor is man. Man's salvation has as its purpose the training and harnessing of man to God's calling. *Third*, some of these areas wherein man is to be instructed, trained, and put to service "unto all good works" are then specified. They include *doctrine*, i.e., a knowledge of Scripture so that we can apply it; *reproof*, so that we can be corrected and made right in all our ways; *correction* or amendment, because the word of God tells us how to correct our ways and wherein to walk; and *instruction in righteousness*, i.e., training in God's justice, in whatever conforms to the full and revealed revelation of God.

Thus, neither salvation nor the Bible free us from the death penalty of the law into our own devices, but rather summon us to be, in all our being, the faithful and obedient people of the Most High. "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 neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27).

Modern man, however, has become man-centered in his thinking. Theology also has in fact become increasingly anthropology. To illustrate, Lewis B. Smedes, professor of theology and ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, in discussing homosexuality, set forth eight theses:

> I. Human life is inlaid with certain channels which form the limits of certain kinds of behavior.
> II. Heterosexual union is the inlaid channel within which human sexuality is meant to be given its full expression.
> III. The question of whether or not a homosexual person is responsible for his or her sexual orientation is not pertinent to the question of the rightness of homosexual behavior.
> IV. Sufferings endured unfairly by homosexual people are not a reason for moral approval of homosexual activity.
> V. That personal relationships between people in homosexual union can be loving and enduring does not determine whether the sexual nature of the union is morally right.
> VI. The judgment that homosexual activity embodies a disorder in human sexuality does not imply that all persons who engage in it are equally accountable for doing so.
> VII. That homosexual behavior is judged morally wrong by the Bible is not a warrant for excluding homosexual people from their vocations as teachers in public schools.
> VIII. The calling of the Christian community to acknowledge homosexual believers as Christians is not a reason for concluding that homosexual persons are not disqualified from the Christian ministry.[14]

This is logical thinking, but its premise is not theological but humanistic. There is no absolute law-word from God, no unchanging word, for Smedes. The *law* depends on the human content. Thus, Smedes holds, "homosexual people may be deprived of a civil right only if it can be shown on *evidence accepted by believers and non-believers* that a teachers's homosexuality is very likely seriously to harm his or her students."[15] For Smedes, God's word *at best* may govern the church; in civil society, the moral decision is made by all men, believer and non-believer alike, and their word is law, not God's word. How determinative the human context is for Smedes appears in his opening comment on Thesis VIII:

> This thesis does not say that every homosexual person is disqualified from the Christian ministry. It leaves open the possibility that some homosexual persons might, in spite of their homosexuality, be thus qualified for some special reason. It also leaves open the possibility that one's homosexuality, by itself, openly admitted, might disqualify him or her. What Thesis VIII asserts is that qualification for participation within the Christian community is not identical to qualification for the ministry.[16]

Clearly, ultimacy does not reside in God and His law but in man, in the human condition. Smedes does not see Scripture as God's law-word. For him, it is man, and man's *faith*, which is somehow detached from Scripture into a free-floating association. Writing later of the decision of the General Assembly of

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[14] Lewis B. Smedes, "Homosexuality: Sorting Out the Issues," in *The Reformed Journal*, vol. 28., no. 1, January 1978, pp. 8-12.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 12, italics added.
[16] *Idem.*

the United Presbyterian Church concerning the ordination of homosexuals to the ministry, Smedes said:

> The data coming from psychology may tell us more about what homosexuality is than the Bible tells us. Any sophomore today is likely to know more about homosexuality than St. Paul knew. But, said the Presbyterians, very correctly, when it comes to deciding rights and wrongs, "What is really important is not what homosexuality is, but what we believe about it." Do we value it? Do we think it bad? Do we think it morally neutral? It all depends on whose moral authority we live by. And in the last analysis, we live here by faith. It was on this basis that the Presbyterian Assembly concluded that "homosexuality is not God's wish for humanity...it is neither a gift from God nor a state or condition like race, it is a result of our living in a fallen world."[17]

Indeed, Smedes is right at one point: "It all depends on whose moral authority we live by." In the name of *faith*, we are asked to live by man's authority and judgment. In another context, Smedes calls homosexuality, a disorder: "The disorder is not an immoral condition as much as a tragic condition."[18] In other words, for Smedes, whatever God and Scripture may say, homosexuality is not a sin but a tragic condition, a disorder. This means that, instead of being the *sinner* God declares him to be, the homosexual is a victim, and apparently a victim of God's making! Smedes is a minister in the Christian Reformed Church.

Other churchmen are bolder in condemning the Bible as a hate-creating book:

> The United Church of Christ has gone on record at its synod meeting as affirming civil liberties without discrimination relating to sexual or affectional preference and called upon individual members, local churches and others to work in that direction.
> The Rev. Lincoln Y. Reed, senior minister of the First Congregational Church of Portland, agrees, and backs a statement that deplores the use of scripture to generate hatred for gay and bisexual persons.
> He told his congregation in a sermon a year ago that they should "live and let live."[19]

Such thinking may call itself theology, but it is anthropology. In theology, the command word, the law word, comes from the triune God alone, and we are saved, not for our sakes, but for His Kingdom and glory. With the psalmist, we must declare, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" (Ps. 115:1).

Salvation cannot be preached as a human asset, offering peace of mind, a solution to problems, and a happy estate of privileges, but as the summons of

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[17] Lewis B. Smedes, "The San Diego Decision: Presbyterian and Homosexuality," in *The Reformed Journal*, vol. 28, no. 8, August 1978, p. 16.
[18] Lewis B. Smedes, "A Reply," in *The Reformed Journal*, vol. 28, no. 5, May 1978, p. 13.
[19] Jean Henniger, "What It's Like to be a Lesbian," in the Portland *Oregonian, Northwest Magazine*, Sunday, March 11, 1979, p. 7.

Almighty God to appear before Him, be judged and re-created by Him, for His sovereign purpose and service. To be born again is to be commanded, with a command Book placed in our hands: "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). It is humanism to pass over the requirement to serve the Lord and produce fruit for His Kingdom, and to claim the answers to prayer promised here by our Lord. Rather, the meaning is that, as we are faithful and productive in His service, we are blessed in our requests to the Lord and answered by Him in order to prosper us in our service.

Salvation does not deliver us from the Kingdom of Man, the realm of sin and death, to walk independently in a neutral world. Rather, it transfers us by the legal act of atonement and justification, and by the regenerating power of the Spirit, into the Kingdom of God and His service. In the fullness of the new creation, that service will be totally free from the effects of the curse (Rev. 22:3). Meanwhile, as we move out from under the curse by faith and obedience, we move into blessing and freedom *under God* and to His glory.

5. Cosmic Salvation

Salvation is a cosmic fact, because Jesus Christ is Lord over all creation, and nothing exists apart from His government or decree. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Again and again Scripture attests to this fact, as the following texts declare:

> By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Ps. 33:6)
>
> For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. (Col. 1:16)
>
> Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (Rev. 4:11)
>
> 1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
> 2. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. (Heb. 1:1-2)

Even as the whole of creation was affected by man's fall, including the ground beneath his feet (Gen. 3:17-19), so all of creation is affected by Christ's

triumph over sin and death. The end time is "the times of the restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21).

Man was created to be God's vicegerent or king, priest, and prophet over creation. From this calling, man departed, seeking an independent crown and power. In Jesus Christ, the faithful and new Adam (I Cor. 15:21-49), mankind is not only redeemed but the original kingship of man is restored. This means that all redeemed men have a duty and calling in Jesus Christ to exercise dominion wherever they are, and in every area of life and thought. This Kingdom means the destruction of all God's enemies, for "he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (I Cor. 15:25). Then, when all enemies are thus conquered, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26).

For neoplatonism, the only possible kingdom is the spiritual realm, so that a flight from the world is advocated, and an avoidance of battle, since there is no concern for the material world. Moreover, a Stoic goal of passionless responses is demanded. Thus, when Attorney John Whitehead debated Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the atheist, and won a significant victory over her, a few Christians protested. Mrs. O'Hair, who advocated sending children to pornographic movies rather than Sunday School, is a rude and unfair debater. These protesting Christians objected to Whitehead calling Mrs. O'Hair "rude," and to the fact that he looked "disgusted" several times. They felt that such an expression is not Christian![20] One wonders how such people would feel about the Christ who, with a whip, angrily drove the money-changers out of the temple (Matt. 21:12, Mark 11:15), and called a king, Herod, a "fox" (Luke 13:32). Again, how would such people honestly react to witnessing Jesus call Peter "Satan" and an "offense" because of Peter's protective comment (Matt. 16:21-23)? No doubt they would crucify Him afresh for failing to live up to their imagination.

The God of Scripture, however, is Lord of all creation, and His salvation has all creation in view. The word from the throne is, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). The Lord who makes all things new summons us to allow nothing to remain outside of His Kingdom, law, and government, and to move forward in the confidence that, when they go in the power of the Lord and His word, "Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you" (Joshua 1:3).

From beginning to end, the Bible is full of many very amazing promises; many of these are summarized in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. The church too often refuses to take these promises seriously, and it works hard to spiritualize them into nothing. Consider, for example, Isaiah 2:2-4, with its often repeated promises and prophecies:

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[20] John Chalfant, "A Story of Courage," A 32-Year-Old Attorney takes on Madalyn Murray O'Hair," in *The CLA Defender*, vol. II, no. 3, pp. 6-8.

> 2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
> 3. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
> 4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

When an amillennialist pastor told a class that Isaiah 2:2-4 could not be taken literally, but must be interpreted spiritually, an amazed college student asked how that was possible. The pastor then attempted to give a "spiritual" meaning, which was a bald denial of the text. *First*, instead of triumphing in Christ, Christians would be defeated in history. *Second*, in this defeat, they would find spiritual victory. *Third*, he virtually concluded that the "no war" promise meant a policy of Christian non-resistance and surrender. None of this has anything to do with the text. All too often churchmen explain away Scripture's call to dominion and rule and insist on making a victory out of retreat and surrender. Their eschatologies and preaching become a rationalization of cowardice and defeatism.

Both Scripture and history give us evidences of "the day of the LORD," God's repeated judgments in history, which culminate in the Last Judgment. Isaiah 2:11-18 speaks of God's judgment thus:

> 11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
> 12. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:
> 13. An upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,
> 14. And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,
> 15. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,
> 16. And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.
> 17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day,
> 18. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

This is a remarkable passage for a number of reasons. *First*, God declares war, not only against all His enemies but also against the trees, mountains, and hills of the enemy's land. When men go to war, they are required to practice sanitation (Deut. 23:9-14), and to spare the fruit trees of the enemy (Deut. 20:19-20). God alone wages total war legitimately. Man makes himself and this world ultimate, and so God therefore moves against both man and

this world. Times of judgment, both Scripture and history testify, are times of "natural disasters."[21] God destroys and utterly abolishes in time all idols, both man-made and natural.

Second, within history God moves to bring down man's pretensions *and* to exalt Himself, "and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." Again and again man has been so humbled, and will in time be totally humbled. "The day of the LORD of hosts shall be *upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low.*"

Third, very clearly, to spiritualize away this judgment and triumph of the Lord *in time* as well as in eternity is to spiritualize God away into thin air. Then a lonely man faces indeed defeat, and has only a counsel of surrender and withdrawal from the world.

But the meaning of Christ's salvation is that man is restored into God's calling and creation mandate by the regenerating power of His Redeemer, and he is enabled to fulfil his task. In knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, he must exercise dominion over all things in the name of Christ the King.

Salvation is a cosmic fact, because Jesus Christ is the cosmic king and lord.

6. Polytheistic Salvation

Because of the prevalent myth of evolution, modern man regards polytheism and idolatry as the characteristics of more "primitive" cultures, when, in reality, they are the products of cultural decay and degeneration. Polytheism represents a loss of faith, a loss of all sense of unity in the cosmos, and it is a product of cultural relativism and even collapse.

We can understand polytheism clearly by looking at a modern polytheist, Clark Kerr, an economist, university professor, and one-time president of the University of California. For Kerr, the university has given way to the multiversity.[22] Since for Kerr God is not even a consideration, the unity of creation and of meaning is gone. The world is a multiverse, an area of conflicting, random things, so that the idea of a universe and a university is simply a relic of the idea of God. Not surprisingly, in this meaningless multiversity in a meaningless multiverse, by the mid-1970s the University of California at Berkeley was offering a course in comic books.[23] In a multiverse, meaning is dead, and unity is non-existent. Polytheism gives us "the chaotic world of many potencies."[24] In a polytheistic universe, or

[21] See RJ. Rushdoony: *The Biblical Philosophy of History.* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, (1969) 1979). p. 79f.
[22] Clark Kerr: *The Uses of the University.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963).
[23] Paul Copperman: *The Literacy Hoax.* (New York, New York: William Morrow, 1978). p. 107.
[24] Gerardus Van Der Leeuw: *Religion in Essence and Manifestation.* J. E. Turner, translator: (New York, New York: Macmillan, 1938). p. 169.

multiverse, there is no over-arching truth, justice, or right, only a continual clash of powers. These powers, having no truth, are pure arbitrariness, and hence tyranny.[25]

When we examine classic or Greek polytheism, we find that it was, according to Herodotus, a new thing in Greek thought, given its first formal appearance in Hesiod and Homer, who gave expression to the new faith:

> Whence each of the gods sprung, whether they existed always, and of what form they were, was, so to speak, unknown until yesterday. For I am of the opinion that Hesiod and Homer lived four hundred years before my time, and not more, and these were they who framed a theogony for the Greeks, and gave names to the gods, and assigned to them honors and arts, and declared their several forms. But the poets, said to have been before them, in my opinion, were after them. The first part of the above statement is derived from the Dodonaean priestesses; but the later, that relates to Hesiod and Homer, I say on my own authority.[26]

How radical was the breakdown of unity and coherence in the world of Homer is apparent in the fact that, even for the gods, "power is dependent on presence and cannot be deployed from a distance."[27] Since truth and meaning are gone, and only power remains, the only "truth" recognized by men and gods alike, and the only "right," is power, and the claims of power. Thus, Odysseus has some rights, but a slave girl or a commoner has none. Furthermore, it is basic to Greek religion that gods as powerful as Zeus and Athena are "interested only in powerful men."[28]

In any true sense, there can be no salvation in polytheism, only a limited rescue, because there can be no control by any being over a multiverse of potentialities, powers, and beings, as well as over the totality of time and space. Such a salvation is at best temporary. Aphrodite could briefly rescue Paris from battle with Menelaos, and plop him into Helen's lap, but she could not free him from the consequences of his sin, and his eventual death and judgment. It becomes soon apparent that polytheistic salvation is escapism.

Only the God who absolutely controls all creation, and apart from whom nothing can take place, can give effectual salvation, because only He ordains the beginning and the ending of all things. Thus, salvation is a Biblical doctrine; all other religions offer only escapism. They sidestep the problem of sin, and, as a result, substitute for salvation some supposedly blissful alternative which is merely more sin and escapism.

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[26] Henry Cary, translator: *Herodotus*, II. (New York, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879). p. 116.
[27] Howard W. Clarke: *The Art of the Odyssey*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968).
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

In the name of Biblical faith, however, all too many theologians offer a polytheistic doctrine and its alternative of escape. An example of such polytheism is Leonard Verduin. Verduin held that "the state is not subject to redemption...The state is...purely temporal and strictly secular - secular in the etymological sense of the word, of this age (saecula), for the here and now...This implies that there cannot be such a thing as a 'Christian state.'"[29]

By this logic, Verduin should have condemned marriage as secular and hence not Christian, and counselled Christians to seek a "higher" way by abstention from sex and marriage. Verduin, an ordained Christian Reformed pastor, held that "In the New Jerusalem there will be no king,"[30] despite the very plain statement of Revelation 22:3.

Polytheism in the church, all too prevalent, limits the scope of God's word, and it restricts salvation to a small segment of reality. In fact, polytheism is often insistent on the irrelevance of certain areas: they are beyond the frontiers of their little god. Salvation by these polytheistic churchmen is limited to the soul, and to the church. Politics, economics, education, and other areas have no gospel. They cannot be controlled by their little god, who has no word nor law for those areas. Even worse, these polytheistic churchmen maintain that their limited god and gospel is the true one!

As we have seen, polytheism requires the exercise of power as the only "truth" in all reality. It therefore has no gospel, and no law. There can be no governing law of God in a polytheistic cosmos. Like Clark Kerr's multiversity, a multiverse is open to any kind of truth while at heart destructive of all, since meaning is purely relative. In polytheism, salvation is replaced by imperialism, because the gospel has given way to power. The modern world, because it is a relativistic, polytheistic realm, is also the world of power politics and imperialism.

Churchmen, of course, carry no guns to win converts. For the gospel, the polytheists in the church substitute salesmanship and social services: buy the prospects with inducements and bribes. The gospel is replaced with an odyssey of experiences.

Moreover, in polytheism, as the relativism grows stronger, the gods become smaller, and disunity greater. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, on February 26, 1920, shortly before his marriage to Zelda Sayre on April 3, "Zelda's the only God I have left now."[31]

Idolatry is a reductionism; it reduces God to human dimensions by limiting Him, so that idolatry is a major step towards open polytheism. In idolatry, the deity is reduced to the level of man's understanding: a rational god is

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[29] Leonard Verduin: *The Anatomy of a Hybrid, a Study in Church-State Relationships.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1976). p. 35f.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[31] Sheilah Graham: *The Real F. Scott Fitzgerald.* (New York, New York: Grosset-Dunlap, 1976). p. 58.

provided, one whom man can understand and deal with. An idol presupposes a polytheistic world. Against a background of cosmic meaninglessness or malignity, a few pockets of meaning exist, and they are set forth in the idols. The idol is a limited god who offers a rational approach as a possible hope against universal conflict. Venus thus offers erotic love as a hope and meaning against the ocean of conflict and death.

Polytheism is thus a witness to a defeated world, a faith in the ultimate conflict of interests, and an effort to hold a brief corner of reason and meaning against an advancing universe of chaos and death. For churchmen to adopt polytheism to any degree is to prize defeat, not the Lord and His salvation.

7. The Evangel or Gospel

The *evangel* proclaimed by the Scripture is an *evangelinm*, a proclamation, good news, and, more specifically, "an *evangelinm* was the proclamation of the savior-king's accession to the throne." This was the meaning of the word, a Greek word, in the Hellenistic world of our Lord's day.[32] To understand the meaning of the *gospel* (*evangelion* in the Greek) in Scripture, we must understand its meaning at that time. The word is used again and again in the gospels and epistles, and it made no sense to the people of that day except as the proclamation of God's Kingdom, and the accession and ascension of Jesus Christ to the throne. The gospel set forth Jesus Christ, not as the future cosmic king, but as the ascended king on His throne, ruling all heaven and earth.

Amazingly, this reigning king is declared to be He who has destroyed sin and death, reigns in power from heaven, puts down all enemies under His feet during the course of history, and, at the end, destroys death itself (I Cor. 15:25-27). The gospel declares that the king has come with salvation, and He reigns absolutely and fully over all things (Ps. 2).

Moreover, as Pastor Gene Breed has pointed out, no man in antiquity could come before a king in mourning. To be in the presence of the king is a fact for joy, because rule and authority prevail. Hence, as we approach God, the Great King, we are told, in Psalm 100,

> 1. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
> 2. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
> 3. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
> 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
> 5. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

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[32] Gerardus Van Der Leeuw: *op. cit.*, p. 419.

As Pastor Breed has pointed out, we are to approach God in prayer and in worship as the Savior and King who rules and reigns on the throne. We therefore "enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise," because it is He who ordains all things unto their predestined end and His victory. Therefore, Paul declares,

> 4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice...
> 6. Be careful (or, anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Phil. 4:4,6)

However much we may feel our fear or grief, we are to approach the Lord by faith that He, as the King of kings, will prevail, and we in Him (Rom. 8:37).

In its original, classical meaning, *evangelion* meant the reward given for good tidings. One who brought news of victory was given the "gospel" or *evangelion*, a reward for the tidings which came with him. It is used in this classical sense of reward in the Septuagint of II Samuel 4:10. In Mark 1:14,15, we read:

> 14. Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
> 15. And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Both meanings of *gospel* or *evangelion* are in evidence here. *First*, our Lord comes with good news: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." The good news is "the kingdom of God." The king has come, and he summons out of the world His people, ordering them to repent, "and believe the gospel." *Second*, there is a reward, although Christ, who brings the good news, is the one who gives by His grace this gift to all who receive Him. Instead of the bringer of the good news being rewarded it is now the receiver who is given the gift. The first verse of Mark declares it to be "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). The *gospel* in the classical sense of *reward* was not the *right* of the bearer of good tidings but a gift of grace from the authorities who received it. Here, it is a gift of grace to the believers who receive it, and the King Himself is the bearer of the good news and is the gospel incarnate.

The gospel, however, is not only a gift, reward, or blessing, but also a judgment where men will not receive it. Our Lord declares:

> 15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
> 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16)

It is still good news, in that the judgment of the unrighteous and of injustice must always be seen as good news.

There is a gospel only because God the Creator is the absolute Lord over all things, and all His works are totally efficacious and beyond the ability of the creature to alter or recall. The gospel of Christ is thus "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). The gospel thus comes from the God of all power, and can only come to man "in power, and in the Holy Ghost," never "in word only" (I Thess. 1:5). It elects and reprobates, because the gospel is the sovereign word, the word of God and His eternal decree. It comes from the King and the Throne.

Moreover, the gospel is "the word of truth" (Eph. 1:13), because it is the word of the sovereign King of all creation, who is Himself the truth (John 14:6). The gospel thus is a throne proclamation. It presents an accomplished fact, a certainty valid for time and eternity. The gospel sets forth *the truth and the victory* of all history.

There is thus no other gospel, no other good news or reward, no other savior, and Paul declares that all who would preach another gospel, or alter the gospel of Christ, are accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

Thus, victory is inseparable from the gospel (I John 5:4), because Christ is King over all creation. There is one gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and, apart from Him, life, time, and history have no victory nor reward. To proclaim the gospel means thus to proclaim Christ as Lord and Savior. All areas of life and thought must serve and magnify Him, and all must be brought under His dominion. Even more, His rule must extend into every nook and cranny of our lives and minds, and we must bring captive "every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

The joyful declaration from heaven is, "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). In this certainty, our Lord pronounces the Great Commission, saying,

> 18. ...*All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
> 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
> 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:18-20)

This is *the gospel.* This gospel makes clear why the early church was at war with Rome, and Caesar at war with Jesus Christ. The "advent" of virtually every king and emperor in the ancient world was a *gospel*, the gospel of paganism. Salvation was seen as political, and hence the accession of the new ruler to the throne was the accession of a savior-king. The acclamation of medieval rulers echoed the Palm Sunday acclamation of Jesus Christ, because the medieval rulers saw themselves as the continuing reign of God on earth, as the anointed of God.[33] Later, the divine right of kings, and the doctrine of state sovereignty, continued this humanistic concept of the gospel. The

political order today offers a gospel, and it is not Jesus Christ. Men view the triumph of their candidate, and his inaugural address, as man's hope and as salvation. But God the King remains the only Lord, and His word the only law-word, and His Son's coming and victory the only gospel.

8. Election

One of the interesting facts about election is that, of the Greek words translated into English as *chosen*, *elect*, or the like, one of these words, *haireomai*, *hairesis*, is the source of our word *heretic*. While this is a rough generalization, it is all the same true that a covenant man is one whom God has chosen, whereas a heretic insists that choice is in his hands; he is the chooser. The heretic opposed the *ecclesia* or Kingdom in terms of self-chosen beliefs rather than God's established word. For the elect of God (in Hebrew, *bachir*; in the Greek, *eklectos*), God does the choosing; God ordains the way, the time, and all things else. For the heretic, man's choosing is basic.

This is particularly clearly set forth in John 15:16, "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." (The word here is *eklegomai*). Here again the meaning of election is very plain.

It means, *first*, that our election is not our choice, but God's choice. St. Paul tells us that, apart from our election and salvation in Jesus Christ, we are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). Dead men cannot make choices. The sinner, insofar as any ability to save himself is concerned, and insofar as his legal and moral standing before the law is concerned, is a dead man. He is given over to death and hell. His salvation is a miracle, and miracles are certainly not made by sinners or dead men!

Second, we are not only *chosen* by God the Son, but *ordained* by Him. To *ordain* (*tithemi*) means to appoint to a particular form of service. It is a serious distortion of Scripture to limit the meaning and scope of salvation and ordination to our rescue from reprobation. Such a focus is common to Calvinists and Arminians alike; men are saved from wrath, from hell, and are redeemed for heaven, we are often told. This is a dangerous partial truth which results in humanism. It reduces the goal of salvation to man, and man's security, whereas our Lord declares that it points beyond us.

Third, our Lord tells us that we are ordained *to bear fruit*, to be productive. We are compared here to fruit trees; a good tree bears fruit. A little earlier, our Lord compares us to the branches of a vine, Himself, "the true vine" (John 15:1). Again, the emphasis is not on being in the Lord or in the vine, but on bearing fruit. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and

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33. Ernst H. Kantorowicz: *Laudes Regiae, A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship*. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1946).

every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). Thus, God either casts us, as dead branches, into the fire (John 15:6), or else He prunes to make us more productive. Very plainly, all of God's dealings with us are designed, not to give us comfort in our salvation, but to make us productive. We cannot resist that purging and pruning without resisting God. Our desire to have a comfortable corner and an easy life have no standing before Him.

Fourth, the Lord's purpose is that our fruit remain, i.e., that our productivity be sound and of service to His Kingdom. The goal of God's election and electing activity with us is not our salvation but our place of work in His Kingdom. The saints of God, in the new creation, do not spend time and eternity indulging in pious gush about the joys of salvation, but in serving Him (Rev. 22:3). The chief end of God is not to glorify man and to enjoy him forever!

Fifth, our Lord speaks of prayer, not only at the conclusion of John 15:16, but also at the conclusion of His declaration about the vine and the branches:

> 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
> 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:7-8)

Here and in the following verses the emphasis is on bearing fruit. This makes clear to us what is meant by prayer. When we pray in terms of our calling and election, in terms of our place in God's Kingdom as working members thereof, *then* our prayers are heard. *Then* we are abiding in Him as working and productive members, and our prayers are related to our election.

Sixth, to become productive, we obey God's commandments (John 15:14). To be productive in Jesus Christ is not a vague and gushy fact: it is the reality of taking God's law-word seriously and applying it to every area of life and thought.

The word election has for us gained a political meaning which is rather appropriate to its theological implications. A man who is elected to office is chosen by others, although the political candidate has an element of choice lacking in the theological meaning. However, political election is not for the sake of election but *to fill an office*. Failure to fill that office faithfully can lead to a loss at the next election, and even impeachment, recall, and, sometimes, assassination. The elected official must not treat his election as an end in itself: he has been elected to the discharge of a calling and responsibility.

This, of course, is what Biblical election is about. Where the focus of election is simply our salvation, and nothing more, we have humanism, not the gospel. We also have the certainty of judgment, of being cast into the fire of judgment and reprobation (John 15:6).

9. Predestination

Election and predestination are closely related doctrines. Election refers to God's act of choice whereby an individual, group, or nation is set apart by God for a particular calling and task of God's appointment. Election thus has reference to individuals, to persons, singly or in groups. All men have an election, either to salvation or to reprobation, and their election includes every aspect of their lives.

Predestination has reference to God's fore-ordination of all things, His predetermination of all things in terms of His eternal decree. As James declared, at the Council of Jerusalem, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). They are all known to Him, because they are all ordained and predestined by Him (Isa. 45:6,7; Eph. 1:11; Prov. 16:4; Rom. 8: 28-39; 9:11,13,15,16,18,22,23, etc.).

Both election and predestination are unpopular doctrines with sinners, humanists, and Arminians. Their objections are based on the myth of man's free will, a concept so illogical that it requires tenacious and willful sin to maintain it, as well as moral blindness.

Man is a creature, not a god, and, as such, he has at best a very limited will. "Free will" is an absolute term, applicable only to God. Man's original sin is his claim to have the right to a free will in independence from God, to be able to determine his own future and to establish the nature of good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:1-5). The result of man's claim was to confirm God's predestination and decree: man faced inescapable death, because God willed and decreed it (Gen. 2:17; 3:19).

Man is not free to choose the time, place, family, or race of his birth, nor his aptitudes and future. Neither is man free to re-order reality in terms of his own plan and imagination. Man can work out God's plan and calling, and man can function in terms of God's ordination, but man's will has no existence outside of God nor any initiative apart from God's eternal decree. At no point or instant in his life can man step outside of God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28), and make an independent judgment, decision, act, or thought. There are no surprises in history for God. He never looks at any man in history to exclaim in surprise, "Imagine him thinking or doing that on his own!"

"Free will" is an absolute term, and an irrelevant term, to any discussion of Scripture. Anyone who uses the term "free will" is importing the religion of Satan into Biblical doctrine.

Moreover, the Bible *never* speaks of a single kind of will for all men in all of history. All men are created in the image of God: this is an inescapable fact about man. Because all men are created by God, all the variables in man's being are also of God's ordination, creation, and purpose. The variables, the changes or variations in man, are not only of God's ordination but also in

relation to God. Man thus has in his history a four-fold estate. Thomas Boston (1676-1732) wrote ably on *Human Nature in its Fourfold Estate*.

The *first* of this four estates or states of man was the state of innocence, before the Fall. The will of man in Eden was righteous but mutable; he was righteous but liable to fall, or peccable. The righteousness of Adam was sinless but capable of being lost. This does not mean that Adam, by means of a covenant of works, was righteous before God by works. No man other than Jesus Christ, the second and last Adam, has such a righteousness. Adam had no claim by works on God's covenant. His creation was an act of sovereign grace, and God's covenant with Adam was an act of grace (Gen. 1:28; 2:15-17). Adam's standing before God in that covenant was by grace, but Adam's works, if rebellious and lawless, could bring upon him the death penalty of the covenant and a changed estate.

Second, the state of innocence was followed by the state of depravity. The Fall affected every aspect of man's being, so that the depravity is total, i.e., pervasive and permeating and governing all of man's being. Whereas in the state of innocence man's will was good but liable to fall, in the state of depravity man's will is totally corrupt. St. Paul in Romans 3 gives us a catalogue of man's depravity: "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). It is a serious error thus to talk about free will in the abstract. The "freedom" of man in the state of depravity is to sin.

Third, redeemed man is in the state of grace. He is a new creation in Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). It is his will now to serve and glorify the Lord, not himself. He is still capable of sin, but only sin as *hamartia*, falling short, or missing the mark. The sin of man in the state of depravity is essentially *anomia*, anti-law, being against God and His law. His will is now governed by God's word, not his own lawless word (Gen. 3:5).

Fourth, in the state of glory man's will is entirely righteous, and he is perfectly sanctified by God's grace, so that he cannot sin. He is impeccable by grace, and his righteousness is the creaturely, foreordained righteous of God's calling. Thus, he serves God eternally (Rev. 22:4), free from the curse of sin, and delivered by God's grace from the penalty of death.

Thus, the "free will" argument obscures the facts concerning man. It presupposes a common will concerning man in his every estate and plainly violates the facts of man's nature and history as set forth by God.

At this point, it is necessary to point out that some who argue for "free will" mean by that *moral responsibility*. From God's calling of man (Gen. 2:15-17), through His confrontation with Adam and Eve after the Fall (Gen. 3:8-19), and to the present, man is held *accountable* to God for all his actions. Thus, we must emphatically hold, *first*, that all of Scripture teaches God's sovereignty in election and predestination, and, *second*, all of Scripture teaches man's accountability.

How can we reconcile these two things? The answer, *first*, is that we cannot, because to grasp the meaning and workings of God's mind and decree would require that we have a mind equal to God's mind. *Second*, we are specifically *forbidden* by God to raise the questions which come to us at this point. Romans 9:18-21 is emphatic on this point.

What is required of us is *first*, to believe both in God's predestination and our accountability, and, *second*, to obey God in all things. In brief, what is required of us is *faith*. Anselm's way is the Biblical way: I believe in order that I may understand. What we *understand* when we accept by faith the totality of God's word is the glory of God's ways and our place therein. We understand too why Calvin spoke of predestination, not as a matter for disputation, but for the comfort of the saints. It tells us that nothing is meaningless or pointless in God's plan and creation, and he makes "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Moreover, we neglect this doctrine at our peril. The only logical alternative to predestination is chance, and no life nor philosophy can be established on chance. Rather, men seek to replace God's predestination with predestination, or total planning and control, by man, by scientific, socialist man. The result is a move towards a totalitarian world order. Biblical doctrines, in brief, are never abstract, and never simply ecclesiastical in their meaning and import.

10. Regeneration

Life is at one and the same time continuity and discontinuity. Conception and birth are incidents of discontinuity set in the context of life, or continuity. Life involves both continuity and discontinuity. Thus, while theological analysis is needed to understand, clarify, and explain the steps in life's continuity and discontinuity, we will be in serious error if we assume that the lines of definition, however important, do more than dimly describe the lines of life. Because the meaning of continuity and discontinuity rest in God's eternal decree, we can at one and the same time understand them truly, but never exhaustively.

Regeneration is central to our faith: "Except a man be born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God...Ye must be born again" (John 3:5,7). The word regeneration, in the Greek, *palingenesia*, is found in Matthew 19:28, where it refers to the regeneration of all things, and in Titus 3:5, to the re-creation of God's elect in Christ.

The doctrine of regeneration is a part of the doctrine of the two Adams. The first Adam, a miraculous creation of God, sinned and fell (Gen. 3:1-6). The second or last Adam, also a miraculous creation by God (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:5-2:20) was sinless and righteous. The first Adam was created a mature man, in a mature creation which was without sin or death, although both were

potentially present. In the totality of his being, the first Adam was a miraculous creation. The last Adam was born a babe into a sinful fallen world, one ruled by sin and death. Only His conception was miraculous, in that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost; apart from that, natural processes prevailed. His birth was thus in continuity with the existing world of Adam I, while in profound discontinuity as well, in that He was born, and lived to the end (Heb. 4:15), without sin. Jesus Christ was thus the beginning of the new creation, and all who are regenerated by His grace and power are a new creation (II Cor. 5:17).

Regeneration is an *act of God*. Just as we are passive in our conception and generation, so we are passive in our regeneration. If in the natural process we are passive, how much more so in the supernatural?

What is regeneration? In what sense are we a new creature or creation? Do we, as Nicodemus suggested, enter again into our mother's womb, to be born (John 3:4)? The word *new* in II Cor. 5:17 is *kainos*, which means, not new in time, newly made, but of a new quality or nature. A good, well-kept house I sold in 1976 to a man with an income four times mine, or more, was made new in this sense: it was repainted, inside and out, and a professional gardener hired to care for the grounds. It was the same house, and yet new, and with a different appearance to it. This illustration but feebly conveys the meaning, except to indicate that it was the same house, yet very different. Regeneration does not make for a *metaphysical* change of being; the redeemed man is still a creature, with the same aptitudes, social situation, and life context. Similarly, he is *naturally* the same: his bald spot does not disappear, nor his years grow one less in age. The difference is *moral*: he is morally a new creation, with a new nature. He does not reform himself; he is made new in Jesus Christ.

Regeneration is a begetting again. It is spoken of as a miracle comparable to the virgin birth, which manifested a continuity with the old humanity of Adam through Mary, plus the miraculous conception, which manifested the beginning of a new humanity in Jesus Christ. This comparison of the miracle of regeneration to the miracle of the virgin birth appears in John 1:12,13:

> 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that 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.

While this text refers more to conversion than to regeneration, the comparison of man's new status before God to the virgin birth is clear. It is, like that miracle, an act of continuity in a perfect context, together with a dramatic discontinuity. The old humanity of Adam was hopelessly under the sway of sin and death; into that context comes the miracle of the new humanity of Jesus Christ.

Nicodemus, often abused for failing to understand, saw clearly the need for a miracle. But he also saw the difficulty of the context: "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). Granted that a man must be born again, how can his sinful past and nature be wiped out, short of a return to his mother's womb, i.e., by an amazing miracle? How else can a man wipe out his mental life, his deeply ingrained presuppositions, and his habits?

Our Lord makes clear that "The children of God must be begotten of God."[34] This birth is supernatural: the new man is "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6). However, our Lord makes clear that, while this rebirth is entirely from God (John 3:7-16), it is "of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5). Water plainly refers to actual water, a cleansing agent, and to baptism, which signifies our regeneration and publicly gives witness to God's saving act. Here again we have continuity, in the symbolism of the water, and discontinuity, in the miraculous work of the Spirit.

We cannot stop here, however. Our Lord uses the word *regeneration* in Matt. 19:28 to speak of the totality of the new creation. In Rev. 21:5, we are told, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." The goal of regeneration thus is, *first*, to create a new humanity in Jesus Christ, the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45). This new humanity is to conquer all things in Christ, who, as the federal head, shall put all His enemies under His feet, and then, at the end, having destroyed the power of sin, will destroy death itself at His coming again (I Cor. 15:25-26). *Second*, regeneration means the re-creation of the whole of creation, of heaven and earth, to become fully and perfectly the Kingdom of God. Our personal regeneration looks towards our exercise of dominion in Christ towards the universal regeneration.

Regeneration, effectual calling, and conversion coincide, because it is impossible for a man to be born again into lawlessness and impotence. Regeneration is the break made by God in a man's life with his past life in the old Adam. God's effectual calling ensures man's faithful obedience to the Lord, and a man's conversion will reveal a changed nature and direction in his life.

Other words in the New Testament set forth the same concept of regeneration: *gennao*, to beget, and *anagennao*, to beget again (John 3:3; 1:13; 3:3-8; I Peter 1:23; I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18); *apokueo*, to bring forth, James 1:18; *ktizo*, to create, Eph. 2:10; *kainos ktesis*, a new creature or creation, II Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15; *kainos anthropos*, a new man, Eph. 4:24; and *suzoopoieo*, to make alive with, Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13. These terms Berkhof noted, imply (1) that regeneration is God's work, and man is passive; (2)

[34] J. Stephen Hart: *A Companion to St. John's Gospel.* (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1952). p. 62f.

God's creative work produces a new life in Christ, and man shares Christ's life and calling to good work (Eph. 2:10); and (3) this new life comes forth and manifests itself in action.[35]

11. Effectual Calling

The word *call* (in the Greek, *kaleo*, from whence the English word *call* is derived) means to call, invite, or summon. The force of the word in part depends on the caller. It means a summons before a court, the naming of a man, and also to be called or destined by fate, appointed or chosen. If men without authority are the callers, then to call means to invite. Thus, the call by an evangelist to sinners can be no more than an appeal or an invitation. God's calling, on the other hand, is a predetermined summons which calls, ordains, predestines, and governs totally. This is made very clear in Romans 8:28-30:

> 28. 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.
>
> 29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
>
> 30. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

God's calling is inescapably effectual, because God is in all things absolutely effectual.

The Westminster Confession, X, 2, identifies regeneration and effectual calling, declaring:

> 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, until, 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.

This identification has considerable validity, in that in all of this man is passive, and both his regeneration and his calling are God's sovereign, redeeming act.

Moreover, as Berkhof pointed out, Paul in Romans 8:30 sees calling as regeneration.[36] Reformed scholars have made a distinction between regeneration and calling, not because the two are separate works of God, but because regeneration is a limited fact, i.e., has reference to the act of begetting, whereas calling is a more broad term in its implications. Thus, we

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[35] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946). p. 465.

[36] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946). p. 470.

may say that calling includes regeneration but is inclusive of more. Berkhof distinguished the two thus:

> Regeneration in the strictest sense of the word, that is, as *the begetting again*, takes place in the sub-conscious life of man, and is quite independent of any attitude which he may assume with reference to it. Calling, on the other hand, addresses itself to the consciousness, and implies a certain disposition of the conscious life. This follows from the fact that regeneration works from within, while calling comes from without. In the case of children we speak of regeneration rather than calling.[37]

Berkhof stated also that, in 20th century Reformed theology, the term regeneration is restricted to the divine act "by which the principle of that new life is called into action." Berkhof is clearly right in restricting the meaning of regeneration, but *calling* is a broader term than most theologians consider.

It is a man-centered reading of effectual calling to limit it to our being *chosen*. Indeed, much Reformed thought is highly productive of spiritual pride and arrogance, because it limits predestination and effectual calling to our being *chosen*. But we are not the focus, goal, or end of creation. The purpose of God's predestination, regeneration, and effectual calling focus rather on Himself and His Kingdom, not on us (Matt. 6:33). To limit the meaning of *calling* to our being chosen is to make a mockery of the doctrine. Our Lord makes the meaning very clear: "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). To understand *calling* in terms of our Lord's words, we must note, *first*, the calling, choice, and determination are entirely from the Lord. Man does not choose Christ; Christ chooses the man. He is the Lord, the Sovereign, and He alone can summon a man into His presence. None can come uninvited before the Great King.

Second, the purpose of our calling is that we bear fruit, that we become productive for His Kingdom. To bear fruit for the Kingdom means far more than working for the institutional church. A major evangelical radio broadcast of June 3, 1979, dealt with the believer's calling to be "Kingdom builders" and workers. However, the meaning of this calling was limited to being a pastor, missionary, church officer, Sunday School teacher, a member of various church organizations, and one who by prayer and giving supported the institutional church and its activities. The pastor was emphatic that these activities should be, like the church, "Christ-honoring and Bible-believing." The pastor and his audience would be horrified if called Romanists, but they do represent precisely the worst in Rome carried a few steps further. Outside the church, was the implication, there is no calling! But effectual calling is a calling of the total man and his total life to total service to the Lord wherever

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 471.

he is, and whatever his vocation. The original calling of unfallen man, in Eden, was to be a farmer, and also a cattleman: it was not a call to be the Rev. Dr. Adam of the First Church of Eden.

How is a man called? The Westminster Confession, X, 1, states it beautifully:

> All those whom God hath predestinated 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.

Effectual calling is an act of God, which whether gradual or sudden, is at one and the same time completely natural and supernatural, because it occurs totally within the context of life, and that context is totally God's creation. At every point, therefore, man's calling is the same, inseparable from the context of life, and inseparable from the providence of God. No more than God interrupts history to tap a man on the shoulder and regenerate him does God make a special intervention to determine a man's calling. Whether a man becomes a pastor or a plumber, he does so because this is his life in the Lord, and he seeks to advance God's dominion over every area, and to subdue the earth and the problems thereof. In recent generations, the plumbers have done more for the Kingdom than most pastors. Every material progress aids the Lord's purpose and will serve His Kingdom. Isaiah declares, "ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Isa. 61:6).

Third, our Lord not only declares that our calling is His sovereign act, is effectual, and makes us productive, but also that He has ordained "that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16). Paul encourages the redeemed in their calling, declaring, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Our lives are without futility in Christ, not without troubles, but without futility (Rom. 8:28).

Because *calling* is a royal summons, a command and a decree, its terms and effectiveness are determined by the Throne. A command from the Throne *requires* diligent observance and performance, and it is *governed* by the power of the Throne. We can thus never be inactive, nor excuse failure or weakness on our part. When the Lord called Joshua, He declared, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you....I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh. 1:3,5). This same promise is made

to all in many places, as in Leviticus 26: 1-13; Deut. 28:1-14, Hebrews 13:6, etc.

Fourth to remind us of His omnipotent purpose and control, our Lord adds "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). We are told to ask in His name, and thus in terms of His Kingdom and our calling therein. Our prayers are to be in the confidence of His effectual calling and His sovereign purpose. He has chosen us, commands us, and requires us to pray as the called of His grace and Kingdom.

12. Conversion: Faith and Repentance

As Berkhof pointed out, both Old and New Testament words for conversion indicate not only intense and deep feeling but a change of life and direction.

Regeneration refers to God's re-creating act in the life of man. Conversion refers to man's experience of that act, and his resulting activity, his changed life.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter IX, section IV, says of conversion:

> When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and, by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

Atonement and justification refer to the juridical or legal basis of our salvation. Regeneration speaks of the act of God whereby the justified man is made a new creation, so that he not only has a new legal status before God, but also a new life from Him, a new moral nature. Conversion refers to our experience of God's atonement, justification, effectual calling, and regeneration.

Conversion is commonly analyzed into its two basic aspects, faith and repentance.

Faith can never be reduced to "easy believism" nor mere opinion. Scripture is clear that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:14-26). This same point is made in precise detail in Romans 3 and 4, and in Hebrews 11. As Whitehouse pointed out, "Obedience, conformity to what God prescribes, is the inevitable concomitant of believing."[38]

Thus, faith cannot be opposed to works, unless the works are the product of self-righteousness rather than regeneration. Works cannot justify a man;

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[38] W. A. Whitehouse, "Faith," in Alan Richardson, editor: *A Theological Word Book of the Bible.* (New York, New York: Macmillan, (1950) 1960).

rather, good works are the necessary and inescapable fruits of righteousness, of justification and regeneration. The life of faith is marked by the fruits of faith (Matt. 7:16-20; John 15:16-17).

Furthermore, faith and sight cannot be sharply contrasted, as some would have it. Paul, in Hebrews 11, contrasts the natural sight of the sons of Adam with the vision or sight of faith, which moves in terms of "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Moreover, in Heb. 11:13, we read:

> 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.

Faith is plainly set forth as more *far-seeing* than unbelief! Thus, it is wrong to speak of "blind faith" where Scripture is concerned. Faith has the truer vision, and the more penetrating one, because it sees beyond the moment and the visible.

At its heart, faith is a confident trust and reliance on God: it means that we place our entire hope and life in His hands, as Abraham did with Isaac (Gen. 22). It means stepping out on the ice, putting our entire being on the line, in a firm trust in God and His word. That which outwardly seems incapable of sustaining, to be thin ice, we know from His word to be our sure foundation. Hence, "the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). Faith is faithfulness to God and His word: it is obedience. The converted man reveals his new nature by trusting in God rather than himself, or in any other man.

Abraham, we are told, "believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Abraham did more than give a verbal assent to God: the Hebrew word is *aman*; he said *amen* to God with all his being.

Repentance is clearly associated with faith. It means a change of mind, life, and direction. Having gone one way, we reverse ourselves and go another. Just as faith is not to be confused with "easy believism" or verbal assent, so repentance must not be confused with saying we are sorry. True repentance means a changed direction.

The Westminster Larger Catechism stresses this aspect of conversion and defines "repentance unto life" in these words in no. 76:

> Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit, and Word of God, whereby, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.

Both the Spirit and the Word are active in repentance, and their work results in obedience.

Thus, faith leans on or trusts in the Lord, repentance means a change of direction and works, so that the outcome of faith and repentance is a new and godly obedience. Some are insistent that faith must not be confused with orthodoxy, and this is true if by orthodoxy mere assent or traditionalism is meant. However, if by orthodoxy right thinking and right doing is meant, it must be said that faith and repentance lead to and require orthodoxy.

Regeneration is the precondition of conversion, of true faith and repentance. In regeneration, man is totally passive, and God acts. Conversion is the consequence in a man's life of regeneration, so that man plays a part in his conversion, as do other people. While God is the author of conversion, it involves also human activity and response.[39] Arminians look to this aspect of man's salvation, the conversion experience, and insist on giving the human response the same status as the eternal decree, God's regenerating act, and His legal acts of atonement and justification. The result is to undermine the meaning of conversion. However, just as man's natural birth cannot be of man's doing, so man's re-birth in Christ cannot be man's doing. In either case, we receive the gift of life.

A man may or may not know the day of his conversion; he cannot know when God regenerated him; but he cannot escape knowing that he is regenerated and converted. It is the same as knowing that we are alive, only now alive in Christ.

Regeneration and conversion are aspect of our restoration, which is completed with the resurrection of the dead. Conversion is a basic step in that restoration. According to Mantey, "The only normal man is the converted man."[40] This should be qualified by saying that the converted man is the only man who is on the way to the fullness of health, the totality of the redeemed life.

13. Justification

Justification is often discussed *after* regeneration and conversion because the emphasis is on justification by faith. The convert's *awareness* of justification and its meaning comes with faith, but it is a serious error to assume that it is *on account of faith*. Scripture never says that we are justified on account of faith, but only through or by faith.[41] Faith acknowledges that it is Jesus Christ and His righteousness which alone redeems us, but faith does not in itself justify us. The doctrine of justification by faith began as the rejection of humanistic salvation, by works, merit, knowledge, or anything in and of man. Unhappily, the term is now often popularly used to set forth the

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[39] Berkhof, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

[40] Julius R. Mantey, "Repentance and Conversion," in Carl F. H. Henry, editor: *Basic Christian Doctrines*. (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1962). p. 197.

[41] H. D. McDonald, "Justification by Faith," in Carl F. H. Henry, editor: *Basic Christian Doctrines*. (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1962). p. 218.

belief that it is man's faith which releases God's saving power and justification. The doctrine of justification by faith is thereby converted into exactly that which it originally sought to destroy. Instead of setting forth the Reformation doctrine, it now serves to undercut and destroy the Reformation. We are in process of a return to medieval pietism and its emphasis on feeling and experience, on man and his "works" which includes man's "faith" in this non-Biblical sense.

William Temple stated the case clearly when he said "The only thing of my very own which I can contribute to my redemption is the sin from which I need to be redeemed."[42]

The Westminster Larger Catechism, questions 70-73, gives us an excellent summary of this doctrine:

> 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.
>
> Q. 71. How is justification an act of God's free grace?
> A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a 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.

The Biblical doctrine is here very clearly summarized and set forth. We are told, *first*, that justification is the sovereign act of God. Nothing man has done or does contributes to his justification: it is totally from God. It is a legal act whereby our death penalty, and our guilty status before God's court, are wiped out by the perfect obedience and the atonement of Jesus Christ, our Adam, the head of the new humanity. Christ by His work and grace pays the penalty for His elect, and thus they stand before God as legally righteous. Justification simply affects a change of legal status, from guilty to righteous, not a moral change. It is regeneration which affects the moral change in us. Clearly, justification precedes conversion, although it is received by faith, with conversion.

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[42] William Temple: *Nature, Man and God,* p. 401. Cited by McDonald, *ibid.*, p. 213.

Second, Jesus Christ is the surety and substitute who makes atonement for us, to effect our justification. His justifying work is at one and the same time an act of sovereign and free grace and also of law. The law of God requires our death for sin, for rebellion, but God in His grace provides His only Son, imputing His righteousness to His people.

Third, justifying faith, which is born of God's Spirit and His word, is God's grace. It enables man to see his sin, his inability to save himself and is his trust in God's word and in the atoning work and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Justification by faith thus means that we rest entirely upon Christ and His righteousness for our salvation and for our righteousness before God.

Fourth, faith "justifies" thus in this sense only that it is the instrument whereby we know that Christ has made atonement for us. Faith leads to good works, which are an aspect of grace, but the works do not justify. Neither does the grace of faith justify us; we are not justified on account of our faith, but rather faith is a grace which opens our eyes to the justification wrought for us by Jesus Christ.

The *effect* of justification is to free our conscience from the crippling burden of sin and guilt and to make us free in Jesus Christ (John 8:31-36). The unjustified are, *first*, oppressed by the sentence of death and their sense of guilt. Their lives are governed by the fact of sin and guilt, and their efforts to suppress the witness of their being against themselves (Rom. 1:18). They are children of wrath, under judgment, yet seeking to suppress and deny that fact.

Second, the unjustified seek self-justification, and they do so by sado-masochism. Thus, instead of seeking and gaining godly dominion, their lives are dedicated to an ambivalent quest for ungodly dominion through sadistic actions, or to a self-punishment or masochism to atone for their sin and guilt.

With Christ's justification, the goal of society becomes the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33), the righteousness or justice of God. Dominion activity then marks man and society. Because man is at peace with God through Jesus Christ, he is at peace with himself and his neighbor. A society of justified men is a society of peace and justice.

On the other hand, the society of the unjustified is a lawless and revolutionary society. Man's war against God leads also to a war against his neighbor, and against his own being. The Lord declares, "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36). The world of the unjustified is death oriented, as modern society plainly is. Sado-masochism leads to suicidal practices on the part of man and his state.

Moreover, the unjustified seek answers to man's problems within man, or from man, because the essence of the unjustified is their trust in man's ability to save himself. Thus Burke, in dealing with the social problems caused by aggression, believes, "Actually, if the number of aggressive impulses is ever

going to be reduced in our culture, our children will have to be reared with more indulgence." Moreover, "We should rear our children with a love that engenders love, not with the severity that begets aggression."[43] Burke wrote oblivious of the fact that the violent generation of the 1960s was a product of indulgent and permissive training and education. This should not surprise us. Suicidal blindness marks the unjustified. Their world moves steadily towards death and hell.

14. Sanctification

The Shorter Catechism (no. 35) defines sanctification thus:

> Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness (I Pet. 1:2; Eph. 4:24; Rom. 6:6).

First, the divine priority in sanctification or growth in holiness is God's free grace. I Peter 1:2 links and grounds sanctification in God's election and foreknowledge; Ephesians 4:24 makes clear that it follows from regeneration.

Second, in sanctification our nature is renewed and remade in all our being after the image of God, i.e., in conformity to the last Adam, Jesus Christ. Having been transferred by Christ's justification into the new humanity, we are now by God's Spirit led into the holiness of that new race of Jesus Christ.

Third, in this life, while never wholly sanctified, we die more and more to sin by the renewing of the Spirit. At the same time, this means growth in righteousness or justice, and God's justice is set forth in His law-word. Just as "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4), so holiness is the obedience of faith to the law. Holiness is thus to believe and obey the Lord and His word, and a holy society is a society of believing and obeying men, people who live by the every word of God (Matt. 4:4). Quite rightly, John Murray titled his summary of this doctrine "Sanctification (The Law)."[44]

Simon, in discussing the life of the early church, wrote, "it was holiness - not birth, nor wealth, nor strength and power, but holiness alone - which determined the structure of Christian society. The apex of society was not the ruler but the saint."[45]

The implications of this fact are far-reaching. Without necessarily agreeing with the varying definitions of the saint in medieval and Reformation history, we can point out that for a society to regard holiness as the determinative factor in the structure of a society means to give society a God-centered focus.

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43. Charles Burke: *Aggression in Man.* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, 1975). p. 170.
44. In Carl F. H. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
45. Edith Simon: *The Saints.* (New York, New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1968). p. 108.

Roman (and pagan) society had a power focus. The apex of society and the justification for ruling was in one form or another simply power. St. Augustine had such societies in mind when, in *The City of God*, he declared that ungodly states become simply larger bands of robbers; they are criminal syndicates who have gained legality in their immorality and crime. Virtually all of history has seen a struggle for power, amoral power, whatever its commonplace pretensions. Forms of civil government are normally defined in terms of their power structure, (i.e., a monarchy, republic, democracy, autocracy, autarky, dictatorship, etc.), not in terms of holiness and righteousness (or justice).

At the same time, societies, commonly in rebellion against power, do so in the name of self-realization or self-fulfillment. The common term for this is "the rights of man," *not* the righteousness or justice of man. What man seeks is then not the opportunity to do justly under God (Micah 6:8), but to get what he wants out of life. Self-realization is commonly a facade for envy, and a word for selfishness. This quest for "rights" or self-realization only strengthens the hand of the power structure, because it enhances the heedlessness and irresponsibility of the people who hold it.

It must be further stated that *pietism is not holiness*. The doctrine of sanctification or holiness is grounded on justification and regeneration. *Holiness stands in God's objective work, whereas pietism rests on man's subjective experience*. From the beginning pietism down-played justification, and it stressed man's act of taking hold of the gift of new life.[46] Very early, a leading pietist, Johann Konrad Dippel (1673-1734), "substituted the 'Christ in us' for the 'Christ for us.'"[47] This led him to downgrade imputation, and the doctrines of Christ's merit and satisfaction, in favor of a more active role for the person. Instead of the obstacle of God's wrath against the sinner, and Christ's required work of atonement, the emphasis was shifted to another obstacle: man's love of himself in place of God. If the key obstacle is in man, the key to overcoming is also in man. Man's self-love is real, but God's judgment on all sinners is the great obstacle which Christ alone can overcome. Pietism shifts the initiative in redemption towards man.

Moreover, pietism shifts the center of concern from the glory of God (as in William Perkins) to the salvation of man.[48] The result is that a man-centered, not a God-centered faith, marks pietism, whereas true holiness is God-centered. Moreover, pietism's history has been marked by doctrinal waywardness, because the emphasis on personal experience tends to take priority over God's word and faithfulness thereto.

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46. F. Ernest Stoeffler: *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century*. (Leiden, The Netherlands, E. J. Brill, 1963). p. 16.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
48. F. Ernest Stoeffler: *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*. (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1971). p. 55.

The word *piety* appears twice in Scripture, and it means there to show reverence. In I Timothy 5:4 it has reference to the duty of children and grandchildren to respect their elders; in Acts 17:23, *piety* (*eusebeo*) is translated as worship. The English word *pietism* thus has a very different meaning than the twice-used Biblical word (Greek) for reverence, *piety*.

What God requires of us is "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). We are told that we must not "fail (*hustereo*) of the grace of God," i.e., fall short of what grace requires, which is peace, not bitterness, and an obedience to God's law, not fornication and profanity (being outside of God's Temple and law), as was Esau (Heb. 12:15-17). Holiness is separation to God and an active obedience by faith to His every word. Both *holiness* and *sanctification* in the New Testament are translations of the same word (*hagiasmos*).

Too often, holiness has been defined as mere negation, i.e., as separation from evil. Such a definition leads to a monastic and ascetic mentality, and also to a serious misunderstanding of holiness. Holiness is more than a separation from things, although it can involve a separation from many things. It is above all else a separation from our old man and humanity, from the old Adam in us, to the new man, Jesus Christ. It is useless to be separated from a list of things if we have an unseparated mind and heart. Sin is an attribute of man, and the separation begins within man.

Furthermore, separation is not simply from the old man in us, and all his ways, but to the new man, Jesus Christ, and to His every word. As our Lord declares, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; cf. Deut. 8:3).

To be holy means to be separated and dedicated to the service of and obedience unto the Lord. It means, moreover, seeing this world as God's world, in which all things work together for good for us in Him (Rom. 8:28). It means seeing all things in terms of the Lord. While the church strayed for a time in allegorizing, wrongly, all creation, it did rightfully see the unity of all things in the Lord. Thus, as Simon noted, the saints never saw an apple merely as an apple: it set forth the beautiful order of God's creation, a reminder of His bounty, and much more.[49] To be holy means to see our lives, not simply in our personal framework and context, but in terms of God's eternal decree, His purpose from all eternity. We believe His every word, obey His every word, and we separate ourselves from ourselves unto the Lord.

The world does not run in terms of our plans and calculations. It is sin, not holiness, to view it as such.

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[49] Simon, *op.cit.*, p. 113.

15. Preservation

Most theologians regard *preservation* as an aspect of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; clearly, it is very closely related and is inseparable from it. Herman Hoeksema, in passing, makes a distinction by calling his discussion thereof "Preservation and Perseverance."[50] The Canons of the Synod of Dort, 1619, in the "Fifth Head of Doctrine," speaks of the perseverance of the saints but distinguishes preservation as a related but separate point of doctrine. Articles VI - IX deal with preservation specifically. Our Lord speaks specifically of preservation in John 10:27-30:

> 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. (Cf. John 6:37; 17:11-12; 18:9)

These verses cannot be understood fully without reference to the preceding three verses, 24-26. The men of unbelieving Israel demanded an answer: "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Our Lord's reply is to the point: His words and works were more than enough witness to that. They refused to believe because they were not His sheep. Israel had a profession of faith, but no true faith. Hence, lacking faith, they were outside the fold and hence outside of the Messiah's preservation. Our Lord continues here the imagery of John 10:11-18. He is the Good Shepherd who cares for and preserves His sheep. His flock includes "other sheep," Gentiles, but it does not include false Israel, the hireling and deserter. The implication is clear: because they are not His sheep, they will not have His preservation. Here, as in Matthew 24, the judgment of Israel is stated. No Jew could miss the point. For a shepherd to declare that certain sheep were not of His fold was to withdraw His preserving care and to leave them to the mercy of wolves and bears. Hence, the hostility of these listeners, and their desire to stone our Lord (v. 31); in part, no doubt, this was, as they declared, because He identified Himself as one with the Father (vv. 30-33). However, even more than doctrine, our Lord's rejection of old Israel, and its separation to judgment, was of very great moment and a sharply offensive statement.

Thus, before our Lord speaks of preservation, He speaks of *no preservation and judgment.* The doctrine of preservation is set in the context of a world at war, of Christ versus Satan, of false followers and true followers. We do not see a mass of indifferent humanity, but those who hear the Shepherd's voice, and those who refuse to hear it. The false ones place the problem on the Shepherd's shoulders: it is His failure to communicate. Hence, they say, "Tell

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[50] Herman Hoeksema: *Reformed Dogmatics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966). pp. 547-560.

us plainly," but the implication is that He cannot do so, because He is not the Christ. Our Lord responds by declaring that his words and works had plainly declared Him to be the Christ, "but ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep" (John 10:26).

Thus, the doctrine of preservation is set in a context of conflict, and of attempts by wolves to destroy the flock and fold. Our Lord then defines that preservation. *First*, it is His sheep who are preserved, and He defines His sheep as those who "hear my voice." They hear His voice because He knows them, and therefore "they follow me." The hearing faith, rests on His calling or voice, and leads to action, following Him. Faith, obedience, and works are thus marks of the sheep, the preserved ones.

Second, the privilege of being the Shepherd's sheep involves preservation: eternal life, and perseverance, "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Preservation is from temporal defection and straying to eternal life and care.

Third, our Lord can speak with unqualified assurance when He promises preservation, because "I and the Father are one." Hence, what Jesus Christ does and promises, the absolute God is totally and fully a part of, inseparably so. Preservation thus is not a hopeful promise of an attempted care by Jesus Christ but the absolute purpose and work of the triune God. The complete unity of the Father and the Son is the guarantee and assurance of our preservation.

Man is not the author of his salvation, nor is he the assurance of its certainty. No more than his life is his own creation is his salvation and preservation man's own doing.

This preservation is no more defined by man than is his salvation. My idea of preservation may involve preservation from troubles, griefs, and unhappiness. No such preservation is promised in Scripture. Certainly, Abraham, Joseph, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Stephen, and Paul give evidence to the contrary. All these saints underwent grievous trials, and their lives were marked by fearful events, martyrdom in Stephen's case, prison, slander, abuse, and more in the others. This false notion of self-preservation is evoked by Satan in his temptation of our Lord, using Scripture itself in Matthew 4:5,6:

> 5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,
> 6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Satan cites Psalm 91:11,12, clearly a psalm on preservation. The psalmist seems to cite all form of preservation as a part of the life of faith, and Satan

thus cites an obvious fact to buttress his temptation. However, Psalm 91, read in context, requires recognizing the force of vv. 1-2:

> 1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
> 2. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Leupold saw the meaning plainly: "The 'protection of the Almighty' seems to suggest the figure of a host who, following Oriental custom, offers protection to his guest at the cost, if need be, of even his own life."[51] How great the protection afforded a guest in Near Eastern life was, and how seriously it was regarded, is apparent in Lot's case in Sodom (Gen. 19:1-11). Whether or not we may agree with Lot's proposed action, in his day it would have been regarded as an honorable act by a host. However, a "guest" was not a guest in any modern sense. To allow a man into the house, and to break bread with him, was a religious act, an act of communion. It established a bond for life and death. But it was not a one-sided act: it did not serve merely to preserve the "guest" but also served to add to the entourage of the host. It provided the bond which held society together.

The American who succeeded in bringing Arabian horses to the United States was only able to survive and succeed in Arabia after a man of power established a bond with him by inviting him to his table: there was now a mutual obligation between a lord-host and the guest-vassal.

Thus, the preservation spoken of in John 10:27-30 is of sheep by a Shepherd: the sheep are protected by the Shepherd, but they are His possession, and at His disposal. Paul refers to this in Romans 8:36, "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Paul is citing Psalm 44:22, a psalm written, perhaps by David in a time of distress. The evil enemies are successful against the godly, and David cries out,

> 11. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and has scattered us among the heathen.
> 22. Yea, for thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. (Psalm 44:11, 22)

No more than the private can determine the mode of his preservation can we determine ours. It is God-centered. The able and godly general will have in mind the preservation of people and country in and by means of a war; he cannot govern his strategy in terms of the individual's preservation, although he is mindful of the individual. God, however, has a more total concern than any general.

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[51] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms.* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959). p. 651.

Satan demanded that man put God's preservation to a trial or test: our Lord's reply was, "Thou shalt not tempt (or try to test) the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7). The purpose of the preservation is not man but the Kingdom of God and our place therein. In the course of His appointed calling and task for us, for the discharge thereof, He gives His angels charge over us, lest we dash our foot against a stone (Ps. 91:11,12), but He remains the Lord. We are not called to be preserved for our own goals but to be preserved for His purposes. This can mean the trials and sufferings of a Jeremiah and Paul, and it may not: He is the Lord, and He determines all things. Preservation is not a humanistic doctrine but a theocentric one. To try to force doctrine into a man-centered framework, (what's in it for me?), is to deny the faith. Preservation means that we are within the Lord's household, His purpose, His protection, and His disposal. We are preserved in terms of His sovereign calling. Apart from that preservation, there is only dereliction and reprobation.

16. Perseverance

The Canons of Dort give us a very full treatment of this doctrine, and its place in the writings of the Reformation is a central one. As against the insecurity of the late medieval believer, and the insecurity of Arminianism, the Reformation taught the security of the believer, because his salvation depends, not on his work, but on God's unchangeable work in and through Jesus Christ.

This doctrine is popularly summarized in the phrase, "Once saved, always saved." The doctrine of perseverance is very closely connected with the doctrine of the church. To deny this doctrine of perseverance is to affirm a very emphatic doctrine of a powerful church. The means of grace and the authority and centrality of the clergy and/or elders becomes strongly stressed. The less secure man is with respect to his salvation, the more he must rely on a strong church whose means of grace provide him with the supply lines of the means of grace.

Although the major reformation churches (i.e., Lutheran and Reformed) should be today the main advocates of this doctrine, their adherence (where it exists) is purely formal. The authority of the church in Calvinistic circles has been greatly over-stressed, so that Milton's comment is all too true: "New presbyter is but old priest writ large." Adherence in such circles to the doctrine of perseverance is more or less formal; adherence to the authority of the church is passionate and vehement.

No return to a Biblical limitation on the power of the church is possible without a revival of the meaning of this doctrine of perseverance. But this is not all. Insecurity in faith calls for and precipitates a hunger for security which the state then provides socially. This means statist security, cradle-to-grave regulations and protection, social security, socialism, psychiatry, and

more. Salvation and security therein is the actual goal of most politics, psychiatry, and psychology today.

The Westminster Standards emphasize this doctrine in The Larger Catechism, 79-81, and in Chapter XVII, "Of the Perseverance of the Saints," in the Confession of Faith. Paul speaks often of it, as in Phil. 1:6, "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."

The summary phrase, "Once saved always saved," is both an accurate summary of this doctrine, and also a mistake in its emphasis. It is true in that it calls attention firmly and clearly to the fact that we have an eternal security in Jesus Christ. It does justice to the sovereign nature of God's grace. It makes clear that all who are truly in Christ are saved, and no man can pluck them out of Christ's hand (John 10:28-29). It tells us that we have a security in our salvation and can cease from troubling ourselves on that matter and proceed to godly reconstruction.

It is at this point that the phrase falls short. "Once saved, always saved," places the emphasis on our *condition*, and accurately so, but it fails to call attention to our *calling*. We are not saved merely to be rescued, but we are saved to serve the Lord, to exercise dominion in His name over every area of life and thought, over all the world (Gen. 1:26-28), and to seek first His Kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33). It is the fallen man, who, in terms of the tempter's program, every man as his own god (Gen. 3:5), places the primary emphasis upon man. The redeemed must place priority on God's word and calling. Therefore, this doctrine can be better summarized thus: "Once called, always called."

The purpose of our salvation is the restoration of fallen man into God's calling to be His vicegerent and to subdue the earth and himself to the Lord. Covenant man thus has an inescapable calling. Our salvation is a restoration to that calling, and our security therein, our *perseverance* therein. Isaiah has much to report about our security in our calling, as witness these declarations of the Lord;

> When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (Isa. 43:2)
> No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. (Isa. 54:17)

Again, Paul tells us,

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

Paul here apparently echoes Isaiah 55:11, wherein God declares,

> So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

The Lord God being omnipotent and infallible, His purpose never fails, and his word always prospers. When God saves a man, He places man within His Kingdom and its purpose, so that man's labor is never in vain. Man remains frail, fallible, and erring, but God makes all things work together for good for and through those who are called according to His purpose, and in terms of His purpose and glory (Rom. 8:28). Our security is in God's omnipotence and grace.

If we deny the doctrine of perseverance, we make salvation dependent on man's will rather than the grace of God, as Berkhof noted.[52] Then, too, not only salvation but perseverance and security are dependent upon man and man's will. Those who hold to such an insecurity usually take one of two courses open to them. *First*, they can rely more and more heavily on the means of grace, the church, and the church becomes the means of assurance, and grace becomes channelled more and more exclusively through the church. Instead of the clear word of God, the words of men who constitute themselves into the voice of Christ's Church become their reliance and security.

Second, they can seek security in experience. Arminianism is heavily experience oriented. It is a common fact that many people go from revival meeting to revival meeting, retreat after retreat, seeking more stimulation and experience. Their security rests on continual excitation and a renewed "glorious experience," so that their concern remains this: the assurance of salvation. The very assurance they deny from God they seek from experience.

The man who knows that he has an eternal security in Jesus Christ is released from that futile quest for security in himself or from an institution. He is released into godly action, Christian reconstruction. Instead of a life-long quest for security and assurance, he is released into action for dominion in the name of Jesus Christ. He has been called into an eternal calling, and he is called into power and dominion in and under Christ the King. He may suffer in that calling, be slaughtered like sheep, as Paul states it, but, as Paul goes on to say,

> 37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
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> 38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

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52. Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946). p. 549.

39. 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. 8:37-39)

17. Glorification (1)

Six days ago, while driving home, I listened to a radio preacher who seemed to promise a good sermon. His text was I John 5:4, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world; even our faith." Naturally, I hoped for a sermon on dominion. The man, an able speaker but a beggarly expositor, held as follows: "world" means the world system. In Adam, we long to be a part of it, to be in society, fraternity or sorority members, part of the "in" group that runs things. In Christ, we overcome this desire to "belong" to the world system, and this means victory.

Such an interpretation is the perversion and trivialization of Biblical faith. It makes the individual and his petty lusts the focus of salvation, not the Kingdom of God and His righteousness or justice (Matt. 6:33).

Popular imagery about heaven likewise trivializes the faith. Consider, for example, the idea of the blessed playing harps in heaven. Granted, it is not taken too seriously, but the fact that this image is so common is still important. Now harps are mentioned in Rev. 5:8; 14:2; and 15:2. They are a symbol of the heavenly praise of God. Clearly, the joyful praise of God is an aspect of the life of the redeemed, in time and in eternity. Medieval faith stressed the vision of God as the goal of faith; Protestant piety since the 18th century has stressed the same thing, and hymns sing the fact that the vision of the Lord will be glory. Again, there is ground for this in Rev. 22:4: "And they shall see his face."

Unhappily, however, these popular images of glory neglect or underestimate the importance of other aspects of the life of the redeemed in glory. *First*, it is life in the new creation, or the renewed creation, "a new heaven and a new earth." Platonism held to two kinds of being, ideas, form, or mind on the one hand, and matter on the other. Salvation for neoplatonism meant the triumph of the spiritual over the material. This emphasis, transferred into the church, gives a view of glory which is neoplatonic rather than Biblical. The material world is replaced for them by a purely platonic spiritual realm. The Bible, however, gives us a very plainly material view of glory: it is creation with the curse removed from it (Rev. 22:3). Our final state in glory includes the resurrection body. The difference in Scripture is not between the material and the spiritual, but between God and all creation. One aspect of that creation is heaven. Its superiority *now* to this earth and the cosmos is not in its "spirituality" but in its sinlessness. In the new creation, earth, like heaven, will be free of sin. This is its glory, to be free of sin, under God's dominion

through His covenant people, and perfectly manifesting His law-word and will.

Second, another neglected aspect of glory is that it is the new Jerusalem, life in community. It is "the general assembly of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." Paul and the apostolic fellowship speak of that general assembly as one ruled by "God, the judge of all" (Heb. 12:23). In that community, those whom the Lord deems to be faithful become "ruler over many things" (Matt. 25:23). Our equalitarian hypocrisy leads us to resent any hint of authority and hierarchy, but Scripture plainly points to both. Salvation in glory is not a release from responsibility, but rather our entrance into the fullness of it, and this means life in community. The great vision of glory and triumph in Revelation 19 is a vision of marriage and a banquet, of community and communion. The Lamb of God, the Great Bridegroom, takes his church or kingdom into a full community and communion with Himself, and, through Him, with the Triune God. This is blessedness or happiness for the redeemed. Life with the Lord means also life with the people of God.

Third, most images of heaven present us with an eternal vacation. The superficial grounds for this are the equations of Sabbath and salvation (Heb. 4:1-11); clearly, salvation and glorification are represented by the Sabbath, but the essence of the Sabbath is to rest *in the Lord* and His accomplished work. We rest from our labors to show that we do not depend upon what our hands have done or can do. The state of glory is the fullness of the Sabbath in that it is the fullness of our resting in the Lord. It does not mean an eternity of idleness. Very plainly, we are told, "and his servants shall serve him" (Rev. 22:3). *Servants* is *douloe*, bond servants; we are perpetually *in debt* to Christ, and we are perpetually in His service as our glory, and His grace to us. *Serve* is *latreuosousin*, to serve publicly or reverentially, to work for hire, which hints of reward. We have thus the fact of work as basic to glory, with implications of both debt and reward involved in our service, which points to both grace and blessing. The eternal Kingdom of God is thus a place of work, but without the curse (Rev. 22:3).

Fourth, paradoxically perhaps, the state of glory is not only one of work as bondservants but also one of the fullness of dominion: "and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5). Adam was commissioned to serve God and to exercise dominion over the earth. He rejected that service and sought an independent dominion and self-service. In consequence, he lost dominion and became a slave to himself. Now, in glory, the redeemed man, fully and happily God's servant, attains thereby the fullness of his dominion as God's vicegerent over creation.

This state of glory as one of continuing service and dominion is difficult for fallen man, and even redeemed man, to grasp. The problem is theological. It is the essence of God that *He is*. His name Jehovah or Yahweh means I AM THAT I AM, or He Who Is. God is uncreated, eternal, and self-sufficient

Being, whereas we are created being. It is the goal of man in sin to be as God (Gen. 3:5), and for him this means, among other things, simply *to be*. The imagined goal of Marxist communism is thus an ideal state wherein man simply is, where man is what he chooses to be, if he chooses to be anything. For Marx, in the communist paradise, the division of labor will disappear, and man will be whatever he chooses to be, "a hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic" in his activity, or a brain-surgeon, without ever *becoming* one of these in his person, The essence of the Marxist new man is simply *to be*, which means *to be* whatever he chooses at will.[53]

A similar view of heaven and the new creation marks most Christian views. It is held that man's function in the state of glory is simply *to be*, and hence the plain statements on reigning and serving are neglected. But this attribute of God, aseity, can never become the attribute of man. When we speak of man's being, we must speak of it in reference to God, which means that, for man *to be* means *to be God's servant*. The state of glory is the eternal fulfillment of that fact.

18. Glorification (2)

We have seen the nature of false doctrines of glorification. They seek to give man the aseity or self-being which belongs only to God. Man has no aseity either in heaven or on earth; his glory is the reflected glory of God.

Scripture speaks often of glory with respect to men, i.e., I Cor. 15:43, II Cor. 3:18, etc. The meaning of these references can best be summed up perhaps in these three:

> I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. (Isa. 42:8)
>
> Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. (Dan. 2:37)
>
> And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Dan. 7:14)

Two of these three verses are from Daniel, which is in part a commentary on glory, man's attempts to seize it, and God's total right to and control of all glory. In Isaiah 42:8, *first*, we see God's absolute and total claim to and possession of glory. It is God's attribute and being. None possess it of themselves other than the triune God, and none are given the glory of God as an attribute or possession. *Second*, God, by His providence, grace, and eternal purpose, allows men, redeemed and unredeemed, to have a reflection of that

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53. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel: *The German Ideology*, Parts I and II. (New York, New York: International Publishers, 1947). p. 22. See also Gary North: *Marx's Religion of Revolution*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1968). p. 53.

glory in their brief span of time, so that God's glory is constantly in history. Men, good and evil, hold the stage briefly, and claim that glory for a time, and then pass on. *Third*, the glory that God gives to all creation is summed up in and conferred upon God's second and last Adam, the Messiah. He, the anointed one, holds in His person the glory of God and the glory of His creation. He therefore possesses the everlasting Kingdom and an everlasting dominion. He is the glory of God.

The word *glory*, the Hebrew *kabod* (in the Daniel verses *yeqar*, preciousness, rarity, glory, honor) means weight, heaviness, honor, worthiness. This fact calls attention to a distinction of very great importance. Neoplatonism sees pure spirit as the ultimate and highest being, whereas matter is lesser and inferior. Our ideas of God, heaven, and glory are colored by neoplatonic concepts. On the other hand, the Bible declares, in the ascription of absolute glory to God alone, that the ultimate in weight, heaviness, or worthiness is the person of God. To grasp this idea even dimly is difficult for minds saturated with neoplatonism. However, no more than to believe in a spiritual doctrine of God means to believe in a ghost does a belief in God as the ultimate and absolute glory require us to believe in a limited physical being.

But this is not all. From beginning to end, the Bible speaks of the glory of God, i.e., of His weight, of the fact that He is alone the ultimate and absolute glory or weight. Clearly, such an emphasis can lead to a limited and physical view of God and His self-revelation, just as the spiritual view leads to the ghostly view. Our Lord corrects this physical view in His teachings to the Samaritan woman: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Thus, ultimacy in Glory and Spirit are both ascribed to God. Moreover, God's glory is not only weight but Spirit. Hence, the revelation of God's being, nature, and presence comes with physical or material manifestations as well as spiritual ones. The two are one in Him. Hence, too, the great manifestation of the glory of God is in the person of the incarnate Christ, who is conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. In the Old Testament, God's manifestation of Himself and of His glory is accompanied by thunder, earthquakes, a pillar of fire and of cloud, and more (Ex. 16:7,10; 24:15-18; etc.). In the New Testament, it is incarnate in Jesus Christ and is manifested in miracles which establish the fact that the ultimate Being is present to rule over all things and to alter them at will. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appear in glory to set forth the fulfillment of the glory of the law and the prophets in Christ's atonement (Luke 9:31), and in the resurrection and ascension, whereby God's glory reveals itself in the destruction of sin and death, and in full dominion over all creation (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:26; Acts 3:13; 7:25; Rom. 6:4; I Tim. 3:16; I Peter 1:21). Our Lord's Second Coming will openly reveal His glory to all men (Mark 8:38).

We have seen that God is He who is Spirit as well as Glory. It is important now to understand how Scripture uses the word *Spirit*. Our neoplatonic presuppositions lead us to contrast spirit with matter, a contrast which is Hellenic, not Biblical. In Scripture, the contrast is between *spirit* and *death*. God is not Spirit nor matter *in any neoplatonic sense*; He is uncreated Being, uncreated Life, the Creator out of nothing of all things in heaven and earth. As against Him, the nations are as nothing, as weightless dust in the balances (Isa. 40:15) before Him who is the glory or weight in His own Being. Thus, Paul, in II Cor. 3:6-11, speaks of the fact that sin is death, and the letter or ministration, i.e., the judgment of the law against us, is death. As against this ministration of death which, *because of sin*, the law works in all of us, "the spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6), because the Holy Spirit is *life*, absolute life. God's glory, weight, power, or honor was present in the ministration of the law, in the proclamation of judgment against all sinners. This being the case, "How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious" in a far greater sense (II Cor. 3:8)? There is thus a glory in judgment, and a greater glory in the giving of life.

Thus, the work of the redeemed is clearly set forth. Glorification begins with our redemption. If our glorification is deferred to heaven, then our life here is one which leads to reprobation, for we have separated ourselves from both the law and the grace of God. We have here therefore a calling which is glorification in process. Its aspects include, *first*, the ministration of the law. Here it is important to recognize that, while Scripture speaks of death as an enemy (I Cor. 15:26), the great problem is not death but sin. Death is an aspect of God's judgment on sin. Because God's justice requires it, "the ministration of death" (II Cor. 3:7) is a legitimate and godly ministry. All law enforcement, all chastisement, discipline, pruning, training, and directing is an aspect of this kind of administration. For men to slight or under-rate this ministry is to sin against God.

Second, there is a ministration of life, the proclamation of the gospel to all the world. Here the glory of God is more fully revealed, but this ministry rests on God's law or justice, and the fact that God's justice is satisfied in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Third, the law is not excluded from the ministration of the gospel. Rather, the law is divided into a "ministration of condemnation" and a "ministration of righteousness" or justice (II Cor. 3:9). The life of faith is the life of justice or righteousness, so that the law is death to the ungodly but the way of life or sanctification to the redeemed.

Fourth, our glorification in process included knowledge, knowledge of the Lord, and of all things in the Lord. Paul declares, "God, who hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

Man cannot be negligent in his task. God has created man "with glory and honour" (Ps. 8:5), and ordained man to have dominion over God's creation (Ps. 8:6; Gen. 1:26-28). This calling of man Christ fulfilled (Heb. 2:6-9). Man now has the duty, as a member of Jesus Christ, and as His faithful covenant man, to discharge this calling to dominion, which is his God-ordained glory and honor.

The glorification of man thus begins in time. It requires the fulfillment of the creation mandate, and the development of God's image in man, knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion, to its God-ordained purpose. To postpone glorification to heaven is to invite reprobation. Our Lord tells the servant who refused to use his talent to bring an increase to the Lord,

> 26. ...Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:
> 27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.
> 28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.
> 29. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.
> 30. And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 25:26-30)

The neglected point in our Lord's statement is v.27. To put our money out to loan, by means of a bank or a lending institution, requires no work of us, and yet it produces an increase. The plain implication is that, as effortless as drawing interest from a bank deposit is, so effortless is a minimal amount of results for a redeemed man. He will be productive with the "talents" God has given Him. To be unproductive is to be dead. Hence, the servant is called *wicked*, *slothful*, and *unprofitable*. Being dead, he belongs with the dead, in "outer darkness." Hell is life stripped of all of God's glory: this is its horror and loneliness. It is isolation from God who is Spirit, and therefore life, and hell is thus death itself. Hell is that corner of creation in which the reprobate have an ironic imitation of aseity or self-being: the glory of God departs from man, and the Spirit, who is life, is gone also. Sin finds its fruition in eternal death, and the rebels who seek to be their own gods and law are left to their empty selves, to "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

19. Glorification (3)

The glory of God is manifest in all three persons of the Godhead. Too often, we fail to recognize the glory as it is manifested in the Holy Spirit. The glory of God, as it is revealed in the life of the redeemed, is the glory of the Holy Spirit. Buckler has set this forth very tellingly:

> At Pentecost the Glory appears not as a blazing body of light, but in 'tongues of flame' severally to each of the *members* of the divine body regal. A tongue of *flame*–not a *tongue* of flame, as the narrative develops the incident–was to each member of the kingdom what the light carried before the Great King was to Cyrus, Darius and Alexander the Great. It was the mark of the Royal Glory descended upon its future possessor, to remain with him as long as he remembered whence it came and neglected not to ascribe it to its divine source.[54]

As Buckler points out, kings of great power in antiquity had carried before them *a light*. The light marked them as possessors of royal power, as possessors of *the glory*. It was the possessor of the glory who had weight, power, and authority in history. For a man to possess the glory meant that his was the dominion and the determination of things. When the ark of God's tabernacling presence was taken from Israel (I Sam. 4:11,17), old Eli fell and died, and his daughter-in-law named her new-born son *Ichabod* for "The glory is departed from Israel" (I Sam. 4:21-22). The fire or flame representing divine glory, which Cyrus, Darius, and Alexander the Great had carried before them was a man-lit, man-created flame. At Pentecost, however, the heavens opened to send the flame of God's glory to every believer:

> 1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
> 2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
> 3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, *and it sat upon each of them*.
> 4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
> (Acts 2:1-4)

Pentecost was thus a *coronation*, not of believers collectively as a church, but as individuals who are members of Christ. We are told of the glory, "and it sat upon each of them." In the world of Christ's day, where the meaning of the royal flame was well known, the meaning of Pentecost was clear: the glory of God was given, not to the kings and emperors of this world, but to covenant man, redeemed man.

John the Baptist had said of our Lord, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier then I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). The glory of God would be present in the Messiah, and He would be that glory, the one Great King. This Greater King, God incarnate, would baptize His people with the fire or flame of glory, with dominion and power. John continued, however, of Christ: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he

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54. F. W. Buckler: *The Epiphany of the Cross, or the Kingdom of God on Earth and Faith of the Church*. (Cambridge, England: W. Heffer and Sons Ltd. 1938). p. 73f.

will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12). The glory of God will crown His people, but it will consume and destroy the reprobate. Because God is the only true Glory, the only weight, power, and dominion in all creation, He "is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). He is the life of the living, and the death of the reprobate.

Thus, because they were the bearers by grace of the flame of glory, the early Christians refused to give the glory to Caesar. When asked to put incense upon the altar before Caesar's emblem, i.e., when asked to gain legal status by conceding Caesar's lordship, they refused. When asked thereby to give glory to Caesar by feeding his fire, they refused, saying, "Jesus is Lord." They by grace were men of Christ's flame.

In the early church, and in a few churches to the present, baptism has been accompanied by the chrism, or anointing. The baptism signified regeneration; it is an outward witness to an inward grace. The oil of anointing set forth membership in the body of Christ and the blessing of the gift of the Spirit, entrance into glorification. In the Church of England, anointing continued to the time of Edward VI's first Book of Common Prayer.[55] In the Church of Armenia, the anointing is from head to foot, with these words:

> *First, the forehead saying*: A fragrant oil poured out in the name of Christ, the seal of heavenly gifts.
> *Next the eyes, saying*: This seal which is in the name of Christ, may it enlighten thine eyes, that thou mayest not ever sleep in death.
> *The ears*: May the anointing of holiness be for thee unto hearing of the divine commandments.
> *The nostrils*: May this seal of Christ be to thee for a sweet smell from life to life.
> *The mouth, saying*: May this seal be to thee a watch set before thy mouth and a door to keep thy lips.
> *The palm of the hands, saying*: May this seal of Christ be for thee a means of doing good, of virtuous actions and living.
> *The heart*: May this seal of divine holiness establish in thee a holy heart, and renew an upright spirit within thine interior.
> *The backbone*: May this seal which is in the name of Christ be for thee a shield and a buckler, whereby thou mayst be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.
> *And the feet*: May this divine seal guide thy steps aright unto life immortal.
> *And thereafter he shall say*: Peace be with thee, thou saved of God.[56]

Unhappily, where anointing survives, too often it is a tradition, not a living force setting forth the implications of glorification.

Buckler called attention to the three ancient aspects of the life of glory as witnessed in ancient royal and imperial circles, and as set forth in the Scriptures. Clearly, baptism is the beginning of glorification insofar as

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55. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
56. F. C. Conybeare: *Rituale Armenorum*. (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1905). p. 98.

baptism sets forth the actual regeneration of the person who comes forward to receive the rite or ordinance. After that, there is, *first*, the wearing of the robe of honor or glory. To be given anything belonging to the king meant in antiquity to be made a member of the king. To be in union with the royal bride was to become the king; hence, men who sought to seize royal power sought to seize and possess the king's bride or wife. Abner, to make himself Saul's successor in Ishbosheth's place, seized and went in to Rizpah, Saul's concubine (II Sam. 3:6-8). Absalom did the same with his father's ten concubines, whom David had left "to keep the house" (II Sam. 15:16; 16:20-23). Adonijah sought to do the same with Abishag (I Kings 2:17-22). The legitimate family sharing of the king's glory is to wear his cast-off clothing. The royal family wears the royal garments, the robe of glory.

The parable of the wedding feast sets forth the Christian's possession of the robe of glory. Only those who put on the royal gift, the wedding garment, signifying the righteousness of the king, have any place at the king's table. They stand then in the king's righteousness, grace, and power (Matt. 22:1-13).

Again, the cross of our Lord is also His cast-off garment. Paul tells us to "cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light...put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:12,14). When our Lord commands us to take up our cross and follow Him, He is not so much summoning us to a life of suffering as to put on Christ, to become members of Him, to *follow* Him wherever He leads us, and to be His witnesses, witnesses to His glory (Matt. 16:24-27; Mark 8:34; 10:21; Luke 9:23). He asks that we take up our cross *daily* (Luke 9:23) i.e., that every day we 'wear' the cross as our robe of glory. When John Bowring in 1825 wrote the hymn, "In the cross of Christ I glory," he caught the meaning of this text. While Buckler's theology left much to be desired, his knowledge of history was superb. As he so ably stated it,

> The Cross of Shame is the Christian's 'robe of honour.' To take up the Cross has the same significance as to accept the robe of honour. Likewise the reverse, to reject the Cross is to declare one's independence. As the robe of honour constitutes the recipient the vicegerent of the king in his own proper sphere of action, so the acceptance of the Cross, constitutes him who receives it to be the member or limb of our Lord in his sphere of action.[57]

Thus, at the heart of the meaning of Pentecost is the fact that the Lord brings His redeemed people into His glory. We cannot now give glory to any man, including ourselves, nor to the state or Caesar. The glory is God's, and we are His family, called to exercise *dominion* under Him.

Second, having been given the robe of glory, we are invited to the wedding feast, and to the daily table of our Lord. The royal feast is set forth in the

[57] Buckler, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

communion table. To partake thereof is to declare and avow one's self to be a member of the king's family and body. The real presence of Jesus Christ is not in the elements but in those who manifest His glory and dominion, who manifest the power of God on earth. To partake of the elements is to vow that we will be the King's man and wherever we are, to apply the law-word of our Lord in every area of life and thought, and to defend the King's realm as our own by grace.

In John 15:14, our Lord declares, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." *Friends* in Greek, *philos*, means not only *friends* but *princes* (*Esther 1:18, in LXX*), princes of grace. We are the Lord's friends, His princes of grace and bearers of His glory, if we keep His commandments or law.

Third, the bearers of God's glory manifest the royal righteousness. Royal righteousness is to be distinguished from servile righteousness, i.e., the obedience of household slaves (John 15:15). It differs from the self-righteousness of the Pharisees (Matt. 5:20). Royal righteousness acts from a position of God's absolute power, glory, dominion, and wealth. If we are the heirs of Pentecost, and if we wear the robe of glory and eat at the royal table, then we are able to manifest the power of royal righteousness, for the bounty and power of the Lord is with us. Our Lord declares:

> 42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.
> 43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.
> 44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you:
> 45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.
> 46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?
> 47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?
> 48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matt. 5:42-48)

The Good Samaritan gives us our Lord's example of royal righteousness.

The meaning thus of the flames of Pentecost is that we put on Jesus Christ as our glorification. The emphasis is not on our experience, but on our relationship and obedience to Jesus Christ, God's manifest glory, for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He is the true Light, and the Glory (John 1:4-9). Our Lord says of Himself, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

It is of interest that the Feast of Lights, or the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, was observed to celebrate the rededication of the temple and its purification under Judas Maccabaeuns in 164 B.C. The feast began on the 25th of Chislev (December), the day now celebrated as the birthday of our Lord, who is the true Temple, and the very glory of God.

20. Glorification (4)

In antiquity and into modern times, the acceptance of a garment from a superior was an acknowledgment of his superiority and glory. It was a religious act. Thus, when the brothers of Joseph accepted changes of raiment from him (Gen. 45:22), they acknowledged that Joseph's earlier dream was indeed from God (Gen. 37:5-11), and that Joseph was the bearer of God's glory in his time. Naaman, the Syrian, tried to persuade Elisha to receive gold, silver, and ten changes of raiment, but Elisha refused (II Kings 5:5, 15-16). Instead of taking a blessing from Naaman, he conferred one. To accept a robe was an act of homage to a lord; an acknowledgment of his suzerainty, and an avowal that he manifested the glory and the power. Abraham's refusal to accept gifts from the King of Sodom rested on a vow to God, whose sovereignty and glory alone Abraham acknowledged (Gen. 14:22-24).

Buckler has called attention to an aspect of the meaning of the robes of honor or glory. *First*, the robes set forth a doctrine of continuity or succession.[58] Elijah and Elisha give us an example of this. Without agreeing with the common doctrines of apostolic succession, we must recognize that succession or continuity is a basic aspect of Scripture. There is a succession between Israel and the church, for example. From beginning to end, there is one covenant in Scripture, from Adam to Christ, to the Second Coming. The New Covenant and Testament derives its newness not from a newness from the party of the first part, who is always the Lord, nor from its law and grace, which remain the same, but from *the people* of the covenant. The newness in the covenant is the church, the party of the second part.

This tells us something about succession. The succession is not in old Israel, nor in New Israel (the church), but in the Lord's continuing grace and action in history in terms of His covenant. Like Elijah, we may feel at times that the succession or continuity is collapsing, but the Lord declares that He always has His faithful "seven thousand" (I Kings 19:18), and, like Abraham, we are required to see it as a great throng and innumerable (Heb. 11:12). The succession is real, but it is not in us, nor of us, but of the Lord.

On the human level, succession is a matter of birth, election, inheritance, a laying on of hands, or a gift. God's succession is by His election and His regenerating power, His electing grace, and our inheritance in Christ. It is a

[58] F. W. Buckler: *The Epiphany of the Cross*. p. 100.

matter of supernatural grace and power, and it makes the recipients wearers of the robes of glory.

Second, the gift of the robe in antiquity always established a legal bond, with a vow from the recipient. Because the king gave to the subject a gift, a relationship to himself, the necessary response was a vow of gratitude and obedience.

Very early thus, baptism meant vows. John the Baptist laid vows upon those who came to be baptized in terms of their calling (Luke 3:10-14). The question to be asked by the baptized was, "Master, what shall we do?" (Luke 3:12). The response of the baptized to the covenant questions was a vow of faith and obedience. In this vow, all priority of allegiance and service went to the Lord.

Third, the recipients of the robes of glory, as members of the royal family, attend the King's court and His meals. The King's court is His faithful church, and His table, the service of communion. This was not only a family duty but also a family privilege and honor.

Fourth, the king delegates the duties of His realm to His family. The emphasis of the world is on the delegation of *positions* and *offices*. This is not Biblical. In Scripture, the office is secondary to and subordinate in its entirety to a *function*. An elder is one who rules according to God's law. Paul tells Timothy, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, *he desireth a good work*. A bishop then must be..." and then follows a list of virtues, and the statement that he is "one that ruleth well his own household..." (I Tim. 3:1-7). The office is defined by a faithfulness to God's calling. The true officers of the King of kings are those who do His will, who are themselves truly kings, priests, and prophets in the Lord. Glorification thus involves sharing in a corporate kingship in Christ. It is a kingship by grace, and its culmination is set forth in Revelation 4:10,11,

> 10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,
>
> 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

In this kingship, we who have been given the flame and robe of glory, are called to faith and obedience towards righteousness, holiness, knowledge, and dominion.

Let us remember: in Biblical kingship as manifested in God's Kingdom, the true officers are members by grace of the royal household and family. Blood and inheritance are set aside. Our Lord Himself defined the royal family, saying they are those who do the will of the Father:

> 46. While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.
> 47. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.
> 48. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?
> 49. And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!
> 50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. (Matt. 12:46-50)

This definition of the family of Christ the King is of great importance. Blood is denied as the determining force in favor of faith and obedience. Let us remember that several Biblical words translated as *obey* mean to hear or hearken, to receive by faith and to act on God's word. In the Hebrew, this is the meaning of *shamea*, and in the Greek, of *hupakouo*.[59] Our Lord does not define the royal family in terms of Himself, i.e., in terms of His incarnation, but in terms of the Father and the Father's will. Those who do the will of the Father, as expressed in covenant faith, law, and obedience, are His family. This is a denial of so-called "New Testament Christianity." It is a declaration of the unity of the Triune God and of His whole revelation and of the whole word of God.

Fifth, the glory of God, the robe of glory, and the flames of Pentecost, point beyond the moment to eternity, and they declare the *Presence* of God. When the flame was carried before Alexander, Cyrus, or Darius, it meant that the supposed glory of the world was present, in person and power. The flames of Pentecost meant that Jesus Christ, very God of very God, was alive, ruling from His throne in glory, and present in His royal family in spirit and in power. Those who put on the robe of glory, the righteousness of Christ, witness thereby that the saving, ruling power of all creation is with and in them. They declare that He is the very present King, now and forever. The true child of Pentecost, the true charismatic, is thus one who affirms that Jesus is Lord and the very present King of kings, and that in His Name we are called to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth under Him, our King and Savior.

Too often churchmen play the role of Ichabods; for them, the glory has departed. The glory, as it seems to appear in the world, is humanistic. The flames of Pentecost have given way to the Olympic torch, the Statue of Liberty, the eternal flames before tombs of the Unknown Soldiers of various nations. The power and the glory are now ascribed to humanistic states, and to military prowess. The church dies when its lord is remote, and the glory only a matter of Biblical record rather than present power. A dead church has *worshippers*; a living church has *members*. Phythian-Adams wrote:

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[59] See W. A. Whitehouse's essay on "Obey, Obedience," Alan Richardson, editor: *The Theological Word Book of the Bible*. (New York, New York: Macmillan, 1960). p. 160f.

> Through the one Lord, Jesus Christ, we have our access in the one Spirit to the one Father 'of whom are all things, and we unto Him' (Eph. ii. 18; I Cor. viii. 6). And this 'access' is not merely that of worshippers for whom the old barriers of the Hieron-courts have been broken down and who have even passed through the Veil into the Most Holy Place of the Naos: it is a communion so intimate that we ourselves enfold the Presence, and as the living stones of His habitation are radiant with His Glory (Eph. ii.15, 21-22; 2 Cor. iii.18, cf. I Pet. ii.4-5).[60]

If we are not members who show forth the Kingdom, the dominion, the power, and the glory of our King, unto salvation and godly rule, then we are false guests in the King's House. Then indeed we wear alien garments, and the King orders us cast out (Matt. 22:1-14). The man cast out had come into the presence of the king, but not as a member, not as one of the family. *Membership* is not in an institution, not in the church per se, but in Jesus Christ. Our Lord defines this membership very plainly:

> 34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
>
> 35. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
>
> 36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (Matt. 25:34-36)

We see how our Lord identifies Himself with His every member, every true believer, and, moreover, that He will not tolerate any failure on our part to identify Him with these same members.

Isaiah, as the great prophet of the glory of God, tells us that the glory of the Lord, as it envelopes men and nations, creates a new heavens and a new earth, increases longevity, and alters the wolf and the lamb, for the Lord creates His people, His Kingdom or Jerusalem, "a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Isa. 65:17-25). The Lord, however, is a consuming fire to His enemies:

> 16. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.
>
> 17. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his (the enemy's) thorns and his briers in one day (Isa. 10:16-17)

Our Lord declares, "I am come to send fire on the earth" (Luke 12:49). If we are not members of the fire of His glory, His word, power, and dominion, *we are for burning*.

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[60] W. J. Phythian-Adams: *The People and the Presence.* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1942). p. 197.

21. "Feed My Sheep"

Salvation is too often seen by man in humanistic terms as his redemption from the evils which beset him into freedom to realize himself. Christians will phrase this in more Scriptural language, but the emphasis too often remains man-centered. The Bible requires us to see salvation in terms of God's eternal purpose concerning His Kingdom, and our place therein. We are not saved for our sake, but for the Lord. Our salvation frees us from service to sin and death for service to the Lord.

Hand in hand with this man-centered emphasis on salvation goes a like emphasis on our inner feelings. With some, this means endless pious gush over how great a sinner they were, and how marvelously they were saved, as though the purpose of the Christian life is to rhapsodize on our feelings, review past sins, and chant about present blessings. Our Lord Himself gives a decisive answer to all such pietism in dealing with Peter in His third resurrection appearance, as reported by John 21:15-17:

> 15. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.
> 16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.
> 17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

To understand this incident, we must remember, *first*, that Peter had three times denied His Lord (Matt. 26:73-75; Mark 14:29-31; Luke 22:31-33; John 13:36-38; Mark 14:70-72; Luke 22:59-62; John 18:26-27). He had done this, even as Christ had predicted. Peter knew that Christ knew of his betrayal. All that was needed was an opportunity now for a confession on Peter's part, and an absolution from our Lord. However, it is precisely this opportunity and confession which our Lord forestalls by His initiative.

Second, Christ's question is an open reminder of Peter's betrayal. It was also a very plain reminder of the like betrayal by all the disciples, *all of whom had echoed Peter's protestations* (Matt. 26:35). The question was, "Lovest thou me *more than these?*" i.e., more than these other betrayers. All were dealt with in the questions to Peter. The question, however, is designed to prevent a pietistic answer, as our Lord's instruction and command indicate: "Feed my lambs."

Third, the word for *love* used in the first question is *agape*, that love which is of God and is in essence grace and favor. Peter's answer in each case makes use of another word for love, *phileo*, ordinary, fallible human love. Peter no longer is able to claim a great, God-like love but only a faltering but real love

as a man. Our Lord, in turn, alters His questions: (a) lovest (*agape*) thou me *more than these*? (b) lovest (*agape*) thou me? (c) lovest (*phileo*) thou me? Thus, our Lord distresses Peter, in His final question, by asking if Peter has indeed a frail human love for Him.

Fourth, whatever the love Peter and the others profess, there is the same requirement. That love is *not* expressed by emotional protestations of faithfulness, nor by emotional protestations of sin and guilt. Do not show love by words before or after the event, nor by claims of faithfulness, or confessions of guilt. Rather, *feed my lambs and my sheep. "Feed" means here to instruct. Lambs* or lambkins means children, sheep, the flock of Christ. This is a plain commandment requiring Christian education. The test of love, of repentance, and of faith is the discharge of our Christian calling.

An emotional confession, and comforting words from Christ, would have left Peter and all the betraying band of apostles *feeling* better. Our Lord prevented this. He gave them a task, because the redeemed and forgiven people of God are not called to concentrate on their feelings and condition but to serve the Lord with gladness. Peter's calling was the mark of grace and forgiveness. The forgiven do not dwell on the past, nor on their sins: Christ has dealt with their sins, and they stand forgiven and redeemed. Their sins are the dead past, but their calling is the present and the future.

In that calling, we are not perfectly sanctified. Far from it. It is futile, however, to dwell upon our sins and inadequacies. We are called rather to submit to God's calling and allow Him to use our inadequacies to his glory and in His power. The whole point of Christ's salvation and calling is that His will be done.

The word to Peter, to John, and to all was that henceforth they were not their own: henceforth, they would be used as the Lord desired:

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. (John 21:18)

If the Lord in His sovereign purpose saw fit to give one privileges over another, "What is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:22). It is sufficient that they were called and used: this is the mark of grace and forgiveness. Hence, Paul sought greater faithfulness, lest he become "a castaway," i.e., laid on the shelf (I Cor. 9:27). To be forgiven is to be called, and to serve in joy and in thanksgiving. It is not a futile caterwauling about the past.

> 1. O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
> 2. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. (Ps. 107:1-2)

X

ATONEMENT

1. Expiation and Atonement

The terms *expiation* and *atonement* are very similar. Atonement means the reconciliation of two parties who have become estranged. Expiation is the act of payment, restitution, and restoration whereby atonement is made. When we speak of making atonement, we thus speak of both expiation (the restitution) and atonement (reconciliation).

The most serious mistake we can make with reference to expiation and atonement is to assume that these are ecclesiastical concerns whose sole reference is to a particular institution, the church or Christian synagogue, and its doctrine of Christ. Because the triune God is maker of heaven and earth and all things therein, all men inescapably have to deal with God at every point, act, word, and thought in their lives. As such, they are either in obedience to God, or in disobedience. Whether or not men believe in God, they are inescapably tied to Him in all their being. Man's sin and unbelief is a moral or ethical fact; man's being is metaphysically the creation of God. By his sin and unbelief, man makes himself morally estranged from God, and at war with God. Metaphysically, however, man still remains totally God's creation and creature, so that, in spite of himself, man cannot depart an iota from the conditions of his life and being as they are ordained by God.

As a result, when man sins, he seeks ethical or moral separation from God and indeed claims a metaphysical separation as his own god (Gen. 3:5). The fact remains, however, that man is still God's creation, and everything he does will manifest that fact in spite of himself. Thus, because man was created in God's image to serve him as His subduer over the earth, the condition of man's life is the law-word of God. Whenever and wherever man transgresses God's law, his whole being will demand and seek expiation. Having been created responsible to God, man will seek to discharge that responsibility, even though the form of it is now perverted and evil. Thus, *first*, man continues to seek dominion and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:26-28), although now his quest is turned towards the Kingdom of man rather than the Kingdom of God. However, all that the ungodly accumulate will only serve God's Kingdom (Isa. 61:6), and the lot of the ungodly will be frustration and failure. *Second*, in his sin, man will inescapably seek to make atonement, even though he may deny in the process that he is either guilty of sin or is seeking to justify himself. Thus, man becomes his own judgment, because his whole being, as the creation of God, will serve God. To be God's creation means to serve God, whether willing or unwillingly. Because we are totally God's handiwork, in all our being we manifest His purpose and judgement, so that,

in our sin, we judge ourselves by our waking and sleeping, our thoughts and our dreams, in our eating and drinking, in our work, rest, and play, in every way we manifest His judgment on our sin.

Asaph tells us, in Psalm 76:10, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Alexander commented:

> The very passions which excite men to rebel against God shall be used as instruments and means of coercion. See Ps. xxxii. 9. And so complete shall be this process, that even the remnant of such passionate excitement, which might be expected to escape attention, will be nevertheless an instrument or weapon in the hand of God. This last idea is expressed by the figure of a girdle, here considered as a sword-belt. So too in other cases the verb *to gird* is absolutely used in the sense of girding on a sword. See Ps. xiv. 3, and compare Judges xviii.11, I Kings xx. 11, 2 Kings iii.2.[1]

The Prayer Book Version renders the first half of this verse, "The fierceness of man shall turn to thy praise." Kirkpatrick commented, "All rebellion against God's will must in the end redound to God's glory: it serves to set His sovereignty in a clearer light (Ex. ix.16)."[2]

Expiation and atonement are thus inescapable facts. A distinction must be made, however, between legitimate and illegitimate expiation and atonement, between that which meets God's requirements, and that which man, in spite of himself, renders as a means of escaping guilt, although without success. *First*, legitimate expiation and atonement meet and fulfil God's requirements. To make atonement legally means thus to do so in the manner prescribed by God in His word, and in no other way. Because it is God's law which all sin violates, it must be God's law alone which sets the terms of reconciliation. No thief, adulterer, or murderer has any legal or moral grounds to set the terms of his forgiveness and reconciliation. He does not make the law, and he has no legitimate bargaining power with respect to it. *Second*, illegitimate expiation and atonement are man's attempts to remove the penalties for sins on his own terms, in his own way, and in his own time and place. In all false expiation and atonement, there is no lack of suffering and punishment, far greater indeed than in legitimate atonement, but there is no release.

Hell is the end result of all illegitimate expiation and atonement. The reprobate, insistent on their own way and their own will, give themselves over to eternal self-justification. They are thus totally past-oriented and past-bound, endlessly rehearsing their sins and endlessly justifying themselves (Luke 16:19-31). There is neither community nor work in hell, only endless memory and unending and determined self-justification.

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[1] Joseph Addison Alexander: *The Psalms, Translated and Explained.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan (1864)). p. 323.

[2] A. F. Kirkpatrick: *The Book of Psalms.* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1906). p. 455.

Heaven is the habitation of those whose sins are legitimately expiated and for whom atonement is accomplished by Christ. The memory of their sins is blotted out even by God (Isa. 43:25), so that they are freed from the guilt of the past and are future-oriented in this world, and eternity-oriented in the world to come. They now work, with no curse to hinder or frustrate their activities (Rev. 22:3), because their reconciliation is real and total (Rev. 22:4).

Legitimate and illegitimate expiation and atonement are in two directions, God-ward, and man-word. *First*, all sin is an offense against God, and all sin requires restitution to God. This is the theological aspect of making atonement. The terms are strictly specified by Scripture. *Second*, sin also is man-ward, in that people are robbed, killed, raped, injured, kidnapped, slandered, despoiled by fornication and adultery, defrauded, and so on. Restitution must be made also to man, and this is the anthropological side of making atonement. Civil forgiveness follows such restitution, even as theological forgiveness follows restitution to God. Here again the terms of restitution and restoration are specified by God's law-word.

False religion offers illegitimate expiation and atonement, and false civil orders offer illegitimate expiation and atonement. Examples of the latter are the prison system, rehabilitation programs, psychiatric treatments, and so on, all very much with us.

When false religion and false civil governments offer men false expiation and atonement, the social order begins to disintegrate. It may talk about love, brotherhood, and community, but it will be marked by hatred, enmity, and social warfare. Men will be at war with themselves and with other men, torn apart by self-hatred and a hatred of the world and life. Illegitimate expiation and false atonement in church and state mean that the social order begins to exhibit the marks of hell, and there is neither peace nor community.

Ancient Rome recognized the necessity of atonement for social stability and order, and hence it required that all citizens be present for the annual lustrations. The only exemptions allowed were military, and the soldiers gained atonement by proxy. Rome recognized the *necessity* for expiation and atonement, but it sought these things on false grounds and hence failed to gain them.

Today, the same things are sought by means of laws, political action, and psychiatry. If anything, the results are becoming more disastrous now than they were then. Thus, expiation and atonement are matters of great concern, of heaven and hell, of life or death, and any person or society neglecting them will pay the price of self-destruction.

2. Our Atonement by Jesus Christ

At the heart of the Christian faith is the fact that sinful man, incapable of making atonement to God, is redeemed by the atoning work of Jesus Christ. This great act is set forth typically in the Old Testament sacrificial system, and it is to the Old Testament we must look first for its meaning.We are told of man's fall, and the subsequent course of mankind (Gen. 3-5). Man as a sinner cannot render unto God that holiness and righteousness which is God's due. Lawless man is in all his being anti-God and is no more capable of faith in God and obedience to God's law than is a dead man capable of dancing a jig. Paul in Romans 3:9-20 stresses the total inability of man to justify himself by self-righteousness. The sinner's self-righteousness compounds his sin.

Salvation is entirely the work of the triune God through Jesus Christ. Because it is entirely God's work, it is academic to discuss whether or not man can exercise his supposed free will. If God is man's creator, man's will, and all his being, is the handiwork of God and a part of His plan. For Arminians to assume some area of independence for man is to assume that God is not wholly God, and that man constitutes an area of independence from God in the universe.

Moreover, the atonement, as we meet it in Leviticus, is a *covenant fact.* The sacrificial system did not render expiation and atonement for all men but for covenant man, Israelite and non-Israelite. Those whom God chose as His covenant people were at one and the same time those who were redeemed and for whom intercession was made. There is no hint of universalism in the Old Testament with respect to the efficacy of sacrifice. In Psalm 87, we have the procession of foreigners coming into Zion, and, of all of them, it is said, "This and that man was born in her" (Ps. 87:5), and this fact of being born into citizenship in the Jerusalem of God is of God's choosing: "The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there" (Ps. 87:6). "The people" can be translated "the nations." God is portrayed as choosing the peoples, individuals from all nations, and by His sovereign choice decreeing their rebirth and their reconciliation. To be *born there* means to be born into the covenant by God's sovereign grace. Particular persons are saved, but no man is saved in abstraction from either Christ or Adam. We are redeemed *out of* and *from* the humanity of Adam *into* the new humanity of Jesus Christ. Our salvation is thus both individual and particular and at the same time an aspect of the universal fact of Christ's new humanity and new creation, the old man or old humanity of Adam is sentenced to death and is abolished, and the old world is sentenced to death also. Those who are chosen and elected to redemption are transferred from one world and humanity to another. Those who are ordained for reprobation are elected to self-expiation and self-justification, to a cycle of sado-masochistic activities. There are two humanities, and two kinds of expiation and atonement.

We cannot separate the facts of atonement and regeneration except for theological analysis: in life, they are inseparable. No man is regenerate without Christ's atonement, and only the regenerate are atoned for through Christ. To speak of Christ having died for all men as individuals (rather than all men, i.e., all peoples, races, tongues, and tribes) is in essence the same as saying that Christ has regenerated all men, an impossible statement.

Can we limit this by saying Christ opened up the *possibility* of atonement and regeneration for all men? Emphatically not, because the cross did not constitute a possibility but *the fact* of expiation and atonement. Moreover, there can be no *possibilities* outside of God without a denial of God. *All the possibilities* of atonement in the cross were and are of God's sovereign choice and predestination. The idea of a universal atonement dethrones God and enthrones man.

The world-wide nature of God's Kingdom is set forth in Psalm 87. It develops the thought of Psalm 86:9,10:

> 9. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O LORD: and shall glorify thy name.
> 10. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

Thus, the very psalm which restricts the Kingdom of God to those born by God's choice into the covenant speaks of God's sovereign grace to the Gentiles. Leupold titles the psalm, "The Glorification of Zion by the Adoption of the Gentiles."[3] The universalism of the faith is eschatological: it is not a universal atonement but a world-wide dominion by God's sovereign and efficacious grace.

Psalm 87 declares that the foundation of the true Zion is of God. A catalogue of some of Israel's enemies follows, but these enemies are now by rebirth the people of God's covenant. *All God's people*, including singers and the players on instruments, cry out to God with joy, "All my springs are in thee" (Ps. 87:7). They do not rejoice because they chose the Lord, but because He chose them (Ps. 87:6). It is not their free will they celebrate but God's sovereign grace: "All my springs are in Thee."

The atonement is universal in the sense that men of every race and nation are among the redeemed. In this sense, "all men" are included in God's election. It is not universal if *all men* as individuals are meant. Christ's expiation and atonement have reference to his covenant people. Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ suffered and died for "His sheep" (John 10:11,15), "His Church" (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25,27), "His people" (Matt. 1:21), and "the elect" (Rom. 8:32,35), and this was in terms of an eternal and efficacious purpose by the omnipotent God. "The world" is to be recreated, whereas the reprobate are cast out as false heirs (Matt. 21:33-41). The re-made and new

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[3] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms.* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1959). p. 621.

world and the regenerated humanity in Christ shall live forever in the joy of their Lord, and in the glory of the resurrection. An atomistic view of man can lead to the Arminian view of the atonement, but any view which takes seriously the sovereignty of God, and the covenantal nature of man's relationship to God, will reject that view. Significantly, Arminians do reject both God's sovereignty and covenantalism.

Lawless man makes himself his own god and law and denies God and His law. To be redeemed means to believe in and obey God, to be subject to His absolute government. Expiation and atonement reconcile us to God's sovereign rule and government, so that, as Berkhof points out, atonement is closely tied to intercession:

> The great and central part of the priestly work of Christ lies in the atonement, but this, of course, is not complete without the intercession. His sacrificial work on earth calls for His service in the heavenly sanctuary. The two are complementary parts of the priestly task of the Savior.[4]

Both atonement and intercession, priestly tasks, are inseparably tied to Christ's royal task, government: The government is upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6). Only those who are subject to His government by his sovereign grace are at the same time those for whom He makes intercession with the Father. And those for whom He makes intercession are those whom He has made atonement for in His mercy: they are the covenant people. The reprobate are in covenant with death and hell (Isa. 28:15).

There are thus two covenants, two humanities, and two kinds of atonement. Those who are the reprobate find their atonement and self-justification in sado-masochistic activities. Those who are the elect of God in Christ are called out of this fruitless and self-defeating atonement into Christ's efficacious work. They move from self-government to God's government, from self-made laws to God's law, from talking to themselves to praying to God through Christ, and from the covenant with death and hell to the covenant of God in Christ.

3. Atonement and Responsibility

It is necessary to recognize that Christ's atoning sacrifice was not simply a priestly work but royal and prophetic as well. If we see the atonement as only a priestly accomplishment, we are then well on our way not only to antinomianism but also to paganism. The work of pagan doctrines of atonement was and is simply priestly and no more. The modern purveyors of atonement are psychologists, psycho-analysts, and psychiatrists. It is their function to relieve men of their burden of guilt and to send them on their way

[4] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946). p. 367.

as free and supposedly autonomous individuals. Whether gained from a modern practitioner, or from the priest or shaman of an ancient cult, the goal of atonement is release from the burden of guilt into the freedom to live one's life in independence from guilt and from the claims of God and man. The goal of humanistic atonement is humanistic freedom. The guilty man seeks freedom from guilt, not from sin. The result is no freedom at all.

The nature of Biblical atonement is radically different. Christ's priestly, atoning work at the same time replaces us again under His royal rule and law, and it is a prophetic declaration to us that it is His law which condemned us, which is alone the means of our sanctification, and that we must now live as subjects of His Kingdom in obedience to Him.

St. Paul, in the midst of discussing the Christian's life, duties, and calling in Ephesians 4, stops his discussion to point to the foundation of the Christian vocation in Christ's atonement, His royal power, and His prophetic office:

> 4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
> 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
> 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
> 7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
> 8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
> 9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?
> 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Eph. 4:4-10)

Paul tell us, *first*, that there is a unity and an interdependence with responsibility in the Kingdom of Christ. The unity and the diversity in the being of God is manifested also in the Kingdom and people of God. The people of God are bound to one another and to the Lord by their duty to minister to one another in obedience to the law-word of God. Their gifts are from God and to be used to his glory.

Second, Paul quotes Psalm 68:18, a verse with a long rabbinical tradition behind it, with which many of Paul's readers were familiar. To Paul, that interpretation was almost second nature. The rabbis applied this verse to Moses, who ascended up to Mount Sinai and brought gifts to men in the form of the Torah or Law. But the verse as written by David means the triumph of God over the enemies of His people. How are the two senses to be reconciled? Clearly, the rabbis saw God triumphant in the giving of His law. In Psalm 47 we have the same declaration as in Psalm 68:18 of God triumphing over His enemies, and His royal ascension. He is declared to be "King of all the earth," and "He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet" (Ps. 47:7,3). God's people reign in Him by their faith and obedience (Deut. 28),

and the law is the means whereby the earth and its peoples are subdued and made holy unto the Lord. Thus, we have the royal or kingly office of Christ set forth as basic to our calling, justification, and sanctification, and the prophetic power as the grounds of His rule. Psalm 68:11 is emphatic at this point: "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."

Prophetism is a Biblical office: there is nothing comparable to it in any other religion, only seers, diviners, necromancers, and the like. The prophetic word is the royal word. Only the royal word can command and ordain, only the divine royal word.

The atonement, a priestly task, is thus inseparable in Scripture from Christ's royal and prophetic offices. Only God the Son can make efficacious atonement.

The Christian thus is not redeemed to go his own way but to serve the Lord. The atonement means a restoration to a nature which is godly, and responsible to the Lord.

All pagan forms of atonement seek freedom from guilt in order to continue living irresponsibly towards God. Their goal is to placate unfriendly powers and to render propitiation from evils or offenses committed, and to avoid angering unpredictable and capricious powers. Thus, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, we have an account of the Flood, but, as Thomas notes, "The destruction of man was not, however, caused essentially by any sin of man (contrast Gen. vi.5)."[5] In the Sumerian "Prayer to any God," Thomas tells us, "The suppliant admits unwitting sins, but denies conscious guilt, and protests universal human ignorance of divine laws. He does not deny that unwitting offenses deserve punishment."[6] Where sin is clearly cited, as in an Egyptian tale, "There is no reference to sin against God as in Gen. xxxix.9."[7]

Pagan atonement thus seeks *release*. Its goal is to bring things to a conclusion, to end nagging guilt and a bondage to the past and to some human or supernatural powers, and to find freedom. Buddhist atonement thus does not foster any sense of responsibility towards God and man. Rather, its goal is release. The same is true of Hinduism, and other religions. The penalty is paid, and release into a guilt-free life in this world or the next is the goal, a freedom from the guilt and the binding agency.

In all such thinking, atonement is a *terminal point*. It marks the end of a bondage, involvement, and responsibility. Indeed, atonement is sought to gain a release from responsibility into autonomy. Atonement in such a faith is essentially negative. When a man who has broken a neighbor's window, or

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5. D. Winton Thomas, editor: *Documents from Old Testament Times*. (New York, New York: Harper and Row, (1958) 1961). p. 24.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 115f.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

damaged his neighbor's automobile, replaces the window pane and repairs the damaged car, his action normally gains him a release from responsibility and constitutes *negative* action. Nothing has been added to society; restitution has been made, up to a point, but not in the Biblical sense of twofold to fivefold. There is no capitalization nor advance in society's life, nor in his theological experience. The atonement marks an end.

Biblical atonement, however, marks a starting-point. The redeemed are made a new creation; they are called out of unbelief, lawlessness, and disobedience into faith and obedience. They are not freed from responsibility to God and man but are restored into it and are given grace and power to obey God's law. Having been redeemed by Christ, the great high priest, they hear and obey Him as the Great Prophet of God, and they serve Him as God the King.

The atonement effected by Jesus Christ is thus into responsibility, and it marks the starting point of a new life, a life of faith and obedience.

4. Vicarious Sacrifice

An ancient Greek religious rite gives us an insight into the widespread existence of vicarious sacrifices and penalties:

> ...the *Thargelia*, a festival of Apollo at Athens, included a peculiar rite in which one or two men (*pharmakoi*) were first fed at the public expense, then beaten with branches...and finally put to death. The connection with Apollo was not very marked; it seems rather to be an ancient rite which had to do with the safety of the ripening crop. Nor does it presuppose the Divine anger, though doubtless more stress was laid on such a ceremony in time of famine or pestilence, when men felt that their gods were angry with them. It was primarily a means of removing any taint of evil which might bring danger to men or destruction to their ripening crops. Because rites of this character were out of line with the development of Greek religion from Homer onward, it is perhaps safe to regard them as survivals from a very early period. In themselves they shed little light on the present question, except as they indicate that men feared the possible anger of their gods, and possessed means to allay the anger itself. Still these rites of riddance must be taken into account as the source of later purificatory rites, and perhaps as the starting-point of propitiatory sacrifice.[8]

Fairbanks gives us an evolutionary perspective, and hence what he describes is a very primitive rite in his eyes which historical development made obsolete.

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[8] Arthur Fairbanks, "Expiation and Atonement (Greek)," in James Hastings, editor: *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. V. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, (1912) 1937). p. 651.

Such vicarious sacrifices are readily found all over the world, among Aztec and other Indians (human sacrifices), and evidence is not lacking of the prevalence and persistence thereof.

These earlier *forms* of vicarious sacrifice have indeed often given way as cultures have developed and grown sophisticated, but this by no means gives us any ground for assuming that the fundamental motive in these rites has disappeared or abated.

In dealing with the fact of *motive*, it is necessary to begin by calling attention to the *tainted* motives of fallen man. Man, as sinner and covenant-breaker, approaches all things from the standpoint of his rebellion. This means that, even when he accepts his guilt, he in effect denies it. He can ascribe guilt to the environment, other people, or to God, and he can do so directly, or, by admitting guilt, he can still do so indirectly by insisting that the conditions of his life made sin likely or inevitable. Thus Epicurus insisted that the world poses a moral dilemma: if God wishes to prevent evil and can not then God is impotent. If God could prevent evil and does not, then God is evil. Thus, as Epicurus framed the problem, God was in either case indicted and man absolved, and man had every "good" reason to reject God as evil or to rule Him out of the universe as impotent or dead.

When man is guilty, or feels guilty, he suffers. When he suffers, he resents the fact that he does, and he is determined that others should suffer also. For him, the world is out of joint because he himself is, and someone must pay for this. Vicarious suffering and sacrifice is demanded by covenant-breaking man, ancient and modern, as a means of satisfying his own outrage at being made to suffer. When Cain was angry at God, he killed his brother Abel, and Lamech (Gen. 4:23-24) made clear that "whoever wrongs me in the least forfeits his life"[9] The "wrong" could be a fancied one: Lamech made himself the judge, and others a vicarious sacrifice to his own assertion of autonomy. The motive in all non-Biblical vicarious suffering and sacrifice is thus a tainted and evil one. Basic to man's life, politics, and religion is this effort to lay his own guilt upon others. Even in masochistic self-punishment, there is a strong sense of the evil and oppressive world of God and man which "requires" such suffering. The masochist is an injustice collector, to use the apt phrase of Dr. Edmund Bergler. The world and God are to him dispensers of injustice, and he is the perpetual and long-suffering victim.

It is clear thus that vicarious suffering and sacrifice is a part of the life of fallen man. The masochist suffers, he believes, because God and man are evil, and he is their appointed and innocent victim. The sadist, on the other hand, lays his guilt on others and requires them to accept the role of a vicarious sacrifice.

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[9] U. Cassuto: *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part I.* (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, (1961), 1972). p. 243.

But a still deeper motive is also present. All men who are covenant-breakers are not only tainted in their motives but guilty men as well. Although they may consciously deny or excuse their guilt, in their heart they know that they are guilty. It is thus guilt, injustice or unrighteousness which leads them to suppress the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:18-21). They are guilty in relationship to God and His law; they seek to make themselves gods and their own source of the determination of good and evil, of morality and law (Gen. 3:5). Denying God is basic to their denial of guilt. If there be no God, then man cannot be an offender against a myth, a non-existent thing. Basic to atheism is the flight from guilt and responsibility.

However, man is God's creation, and every atom of his being witnesses to God, as does all creation. There is thus for him no escape from the witness of God (Ps. 139). At every hand, he is confronted by God, God's claims on him, and his guilt before God. Man thus stands guilty in all his being, and inescapably so, as long as he is a covenant-breaker.

Sigmund Freud saw man as inescapably guilty, and he held that, until the problems of guilt were solved, religion and priestcraft could never be abolished. Guilty men would seek somehow to find relief through religion, and some sort of religious atonement. The abolition of religion could only be properly effected by reducing guilt to a scientific problem and explaining it away as a survival of man's primitive past and of ancient drives within his unconscious being.[10] The practical effect of Freud's solution was to create a new priestcraft to deal with the problem of guilt, psychoanalysts, with psychologists and psychiatrists also engaged in a like task.

Man seeks, in his sin, a sin-bearer to bear the burden of his guilt. Hence, vicarious sacrifice is basic to his outlook. "Someone must pay," he believes, and pay heavily for the sufferings of others. The masochist seeks himself as the vicarious victim. He makes atonement for his own guilt by means of masochistic activities, but, even in so doing, he is eloquently protesting against God and life for requiring so great a price.

Bergler has spoken of the habit of masochists of pleading guilty to the lesser offense. His meaning is Freudian, but his insights are often telling. Even the guilty pleas of sinful man are an indictment of God and life. The sado-masochists deny the sin, resent the guilt, and charge the real offense to God, life, and man.

Thus, the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice is not evaded by denying Biblical faith. It remains, in a warped and evil form, because it is inescapable. Whenever and wherever man denies God and His word, he replaces it with an

[10] See R. J. Rushdoony: *Freud.* (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, (1965) 1975).

imitation thereof. All the categories of life are God-created and God-ordained. Man cannot escape them; in his sin, he perverts them.

God's law has penalties for sin. These penalties are fixed and unchanging. The sin of man requires eternal death. Man is incapable in his sin of pleasing God, or of offering an acceptable sacrifice or atonement. Man cannot make a personal atonement to God, or place God in his debt by any works or acts. His creation was of grace, and his life is incapable apart from God's grace of ever pleasing God. Even in his faithfulness, he is still an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10). Only by the vicarious sacrifice of God the Son, who takes upon Himself the death penalty for the sins of His elect, can there be a remission of sin and guilt. All atonement in Scripture is by vicarious sacrifice, first set forth typically in the appointed clean animals (Lev. 1:4; 16:20-22, etc.), and then by Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:6,12; John 1:29; II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:28; I Peter 2:24).

Vicarious sacrifice is inescapable. In covenant-breaking man, it means sado-masochistic activities; it means punishing various classes, races, or peoples as the guilt-bearers for the rest of society. It means a politics of guilt and hatred, and a constant social revolution, as one group after another seeks to absolve man and society of guilt by punishing a chosen "evil" class or group which is made responsible and guilty for man's sins and problems.[11] The failure of churches to understand the meaning of vicarious sacrifice and the *freedom* it creates has been disastrous to man and society. The presence of covenant-breaking forms of atonement is always a menace to man and society.

5. Imputation

Perversity has long been native to man's disposition, in ways great and small. Men seem to prefer unhappiness, because they go to such great lengths to ensure its persistence and presence.

Literature in particular manifests extremes of perversity. Catullus, in pre-Christian Rome, is a very obvious example. Modern man is also marked by a penchant for unhappiness and perversity, by a desire to create conditions where by he can accuse God and man of treating him unfairly. His greatest pleasure is often in this triumphant charge of injustice. He collects injustices as though injustice were gold, and then he finds even greater pleasure in charging God and man with unfairly and unjustly visiting them upon him. In humorous fashion, the cartoonist Charles M. Schulz has Lucy declare,

> When you feel down and out
> Lift up your head and shout,
> Someone's going to pay for this!

[11] See R. J. Rushdoony: *Politics of Guilt and Pity.* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1970).

There are times when the hatred of happiness, prosperity, success, light, and peace are openly expressed. Usually, however, man claims to want all things good while wilfully working to ensure the triumph of evil. In effect, man says, because I am evil and dark, let there be only darkness.

Is this an overstatement? Let us then glance at a student poem for confirmation, H.E. Sheleny's "Hate:"

> The dismal rain comes down
> And taps against my window pane
> Like so many little demons
> Striving to steal in and possess
> My soul. I love the Rain.
> The darkness cascades over me
> As if to engulf me in a torrent
> Of fear. I love the Dark.
> The sun warms me. It brightens
> The world. It SEEMS to offer hope.
> I hate the Sun.[12]

The point is ably and powerfully made. The Rain and the Dark are dismal, like little demons, and they seek to steal and possess the soul. They are compared to a torrent of fear. Yet "I love the Dark," i.e., evil, fear, the demonic, and so on. The Sun gives light and warmth and offers hope; ergo, "I hate the Sun."

Man not only chooses evil, but he also chooses suffering. He seeks to justify his continued rebellion against God and his preference for evil by indicting God for injustice in making man suffer so greatly. The greater man's suffering for sin, the greater his self-justification and his sense of self-righteousness before God and man.

Theologians have rightly distinguished between *original* sin and *actual* sins. Original sin is the evilness or sinfulness of fallen man in all his being. It is the common attribute of all who are in the humanity of Adam. This sin or depravity is total in that it is the governing fact in his nature which colors his mind, will, emotions, actions, and all his being. Just as a tiger is always a tiger, so a member of the humanity of Adam is inescapably a man whose being is not merely marked but is in essence governed by original sin, the desire for autonomy from God as a self-ordained god. Actual sins are particular acts in violation of God's law. A new-born babe is without actual sins; it is marked by original sin.

In the atonement by Jesus Christ, this fallen man dies in Christ and is made a new creation in Him. His actual sins are atoned for, and his old life and nature are sentenced to death and then made a new creation.[13] Regeneration

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[12] *Crest*, vol. II. (Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, California, no date, but from the mid 1960s). p. 20.

[13] See Robert L. Dabney: *Christ our Penal Substitute*. (Harrisburg, Virginia: Sprinkler Publications reprint, 1978).

and justification accompany the atonement. Without them, actual sins would be dealt with only, but the sinning man would remain unchanged.

Jesus Christ, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), is He in terms of whom God makes all things new (Rev. 21:5). Not only does He remove sins from creation, but he removes the fact of sinfulness or rebellion and regenerates all things in terms of Himself into the renewed image of God. This means a life of the knowledge of and obedience to God, of righteousness or justice in all our ways, of holiness or separation and dedication to Him in all our being, and it means also a life of dominion, man under God bringing every area of life and thought into captivity to Jesus Christ.

This freedom of the believer is accomplished by Christ's atonement. The sins of the redeemed man, or of the man who is by grace singled out for redemption, are *imputed* to Jesus Christ; they are laid to His charge, entered into His account, so that He assumes the penalty of death for us. But this is not all: through Him and in Him we have the *remission* (*aphesis*) of sins. Our sins are forgiven; restitution is made for them by Jesus Christ, and there is a dismissal of sins and a release. The remission of sins means that we stand before God as pardoned men. The atonement effects a *legal* change in our status before God.

But a pardoned murderer or revolutionist is still a law-breaker at heart. Not so the redeemed man. At the same time, he is *regenerated*, made a new creation, by the Holy Spirit through Christ, so that the pardon is received by the renewed man; it gives new life to one who is newly raised from the death of sin.

To remit the sins of the ungodly is to compound evil. Humanists, denying God's law, insist that love and forgiveness can win over a criminal and change his life. The result has been the proliferation of crime and a growing decay of society. The criminal remains a criminal still, and all that the humanistic remission of sins accomplishes for him is a greater freedom to commit crime, to sin.

All offenses against God's law require death. If we do not have the death of Christ as our vicarious substitute, we have the certainty of death at the hands of Christ as King and Judge. Those who commit capital offenses against God's law with respect to human society should face death at the hands of a godly government as well.

It is Christ's atonement which saves the sinner. The atonement does not simply make salvation possible: it makes it actual, because it secures and seals an unchanging and irrevocable salvation. What Christ does cannot be undone, and what ever work he begins in a man, He carries through to its eternal fulfillment and glory.

The perversity of man in warring against God is replaced by a delight in doing God's will, and rebellion and unbelief are replaced by faith and obedience. Without imputation, there is no redemption. The denial of imputation implies a humanistic faith in the self-sufficiency of man and his ability to save himself.

In Romans 5:12, Paul tells us:

> 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.

Here as elsewhere man's inability to grasp the full meaning of God's truth no more nullifies that truth than a mans blindness obliterates the sun from the heavens. Paul makes clear that our solidarity with Adam is a very real fact. Adam's sin and fall means "that all have sinned." Adam is our federal head or representative man. As all tigers and hyenas are no less tigers and hyenas from Adam's day to ours, so we are no less begotten in Adam's image, and in his own likeness (Gen. 5:3).

Adam's sin is thus imputed to all men. This is the *legal* fact. All of Adam's race are a part of a war against God, and so death is "passed upon all men," *i.e.*, the sentence of death, for all sinned in Adam. Just as a man's liability for damages becomes the liability of his family residing with him, and of his property and income, so the liability of Adam becomes the liability of his race and of the earth they inhabit. This is the *legal* fact.

The physical and moral fact is that all of Adam's race are begotten in his image. We are not told how this moral rebellion is transmitted, but we are told that it is basic to our very conception (Ps. 51:5).

Imputation is basic to our condemnation, and to our pardon. Even as Adam is the head of the human race of fallen covenant-breaking men, so Christ is the head of the new humanity. Murray cited the parallels and the contrast ably:

> We cannot grasp the truths of world-wide significance set forth in this passage unless we recognize that two antithetical complexes are contrasted. The first is the complex of sin-condemnation-death and the second is that of righteousness-justification-life. These are invariable combinations. Sin sets in operation the inevitable consequents of condemnation and death, righteousness the consequents of justification and life, and, as is obvious, these are antithetical at each point of the parallel.[14]

The godly man thus moves in terms of Christ and His law-word, Christ's righteousness or justice. His sentence of death was just, and His redemption an act of sovereign grace. Accordingly, the redeemed man becomes an instrument of Christ's redeeming power and of His righteousness or justice.

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14. John Murray: *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 179.

Christ as the true and new man puts into force man's calling (Heb. 10:5-9), which David of old set forth in Psalm 40:7-10:

> 7. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,
> 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.
> 9. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.
> 10. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

Even as we once did the works of Adam, so now we do the works of Christ; we are governed by His word and His Spirit. This means that we who are now alive in Christ are also alive to His law-word and to His Spirit. Christ's work being perfect, and His power extending to every realm, He does what no human judge can do: His legal pronouncement of pardon and remission of sins is accompanied by His regenerating power and a new life that delights in obeying the Lord. Alexander's comment on Psalm 40:7 is very good:

> The reference is here to the law of Moses. *Written of me* is by some referred to prophecy, by others to the requisitions of the law. The literal meaning of the Hebrew words is *written upon me, i.e.*, prescribed to me, the *upon* suggesting the idea of an incumbent obligation. "Enjoined upon me by a written precept." This is clearly the meaning of the same phrase in 2 Kings xxii.13. Thus understood, the clause before us may be paraphrased as follows:–"Since the ceremonies of the Law are worthless, when divorced from habitual obedience, instead of offering mere sacrifice I offer myself, to do whatever is prescribed to me in the written revelation of thy will." This is the spirit of every true believer, and is therefore perfectly appropriate to the whole class to whom this psalm relates, and for whom it was intended. It is peculiarly significant, however, when applied to Christ: first, because he alone possessed this spirit in perfection; secondly, because he sustained a peculiar relation to the rites, and more especially the sacrifices of the law.[15]

The redeemed man thus has the Lord as his federal head, a program for dominion through God's law, and a freedom from perversity into joyful and willing obedience through faith. He has undergone a legal change by imputation and remission. He has a new life by Christ's regenerating grace and power.

Because Jesus Christ is very God of very God as well as very man of very man, our salvation is the work of eternity, not of time, and of the Creator, not of the creation. It stands thus impervious to the workings of men and history, and it abides eternally. Without imputation, man is trapped in history and its sin and death. In Jesus Christ we have our glorious and eternal salvation, victory in time and eternity.

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15. J. A. Alexander: *The Psalms, Translated and Explained.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, (1864)). p. 180.

The unregenerate impute sins to man and to God. Sado-masochism means that a man's sins are imputed to other men, or to one's self in a charade of self-pity which accuses God, but, in either case, there is an implicit and explicit imputation to God and to other men. Injustice-collecting has basic to it imputation. The injustice collector collects injustices as a means of increasing his misery and his tally of indictments against God and man. If the masochist suffers, it is suffering as a means of indicting others and of affirming a basic innocence behind the confessions to lesser offenses.

Those who charge the doctrine of imputation as representing a lower morality must face this "paradox:" humanistic, sado-masochistic imputation is a flight from moral responsibility and accountability, whereas the Biblical doctrine goes hand in hand with a true confession of sin and guilt, and a new life of moral responsibility. Humanistic morality imputes sin to God, the environment, society, capitalism, communism, and so on, rather than facing man's responsibility honestly. It brings in imputation, not to redeem man from his sins, but to absolve him falsely. Biblical imputation goes hand in hand with the sinner's full awareness of his offenses against God. In Scripture, those whose sins are imputed to Christ do *not* impute the guilt of sins to Him. They freely confess their sin and guilt. It is the offense and the death penalty which is imputed to Christ, and by means thereof the elect are redeemed and pardoned. Those whose sins are imputed to Christ confess their sin and guilt: they do not impute them to their parents, the environment, capitalism, their teachers, or anything else. Rather, they are *delivered* from such false imputation.

False imputation began with the fall. Adam imputed his sin to Eve and to God: "The woman *whom thou gavest* to be with me, *she gave me* of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). Eve imputed her sin to the tempter: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:13). Ever since then, imputation of this false and evil variety has been basic to the life of man. The Bible thus does not give us a strange or novel doctrine: it gives us the only valid and moral form of imputation, one basic to moral responsibility and to legal accountability in a just moral order.

6. Blood

Bavinck, in discussing the Old Testament sacrificial system, wrote, "The real means of atonement was the blood of the animal sacrificed."[16] How seriously the Bible regards blood is apparent in Leviticus 17:10-14:

> 10. And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will

[16] Herman Bavinck: *Our Reasonable Faith.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956). p. 351.

> even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.
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> 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.
>
> 12. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.
>
> 13. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.
>
> 14. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

This commandment is often repeated: Leviticus 3:17; 7:26-27; Deuteronomy 12:15-16, 20-24. It is a law required of all men (Gen. 9:4), and the word *blood* is used as a synonym for *life* (Gen. 9:4; Ps. 30:9). Blood must be returned to the earth, and covered. This was true even of wild animals which were killed for food (Lev. 17:13). All life is created by God, and it can only be taken on His terms and according to His law. A benediction used in the second Temple, recited when the blood was covered up, declared: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hath sanctified us by His precepts, and hath commanded us to cover up the blood."[17]

Moreover, two laws are specifically singled out by God as binding on all men, murder and the eating of blood (Gen. 9:4). This does not mean that the other laws were not so universal; where laws are not binding on the ungodly, we are told so, as in Deuteronomy 14:21. These two laws thus have a particular importance for all men.

This prohibition against blood-eating is not a relic of primitive taboos, as Jacob Milgrom noted:

> That none of Israel's neighbors possesses this absolute and universally binding prohibition means that it cannot be a vestige of a primitive taboo, but the result of a deliberate, reasoned enactment. This is clear from the rationale appended to the law: blood is life (Lev. 17:11,14; Deut. 12:23). Men (the sons of Noah) are conceded the right to eat meat, if they drain off the lifeblood, which belongs to the Creator.[18]

However, while shed blood obviously has reference to life, it more clearly refers to death, to life taken. In Numbers 35:33-34, we are told:

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[17] C. D. Ginsburg, "Leviticus," in C. J. Ellicott, editor: *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1954 reprint). p. 415.

[18] Jacob Milgrom, "Blood," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. IV. (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing House, 1971). p. 1115.

> 33. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.
> 34. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

The penalty for all sin is death (Gen. 2:17). Man is thus guilty before God of his own blood as well as that of others, when his sins involve the lives of others. Shed blood cries out to God for vengeance (Gen. 4:10). Of an evil generation, it is said, "the land was polluted with blood" (Ps. 106:38). The Lord tells Ezekiel, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not" (Ezek. 9:9). Numerous like verses can be cited, but one more key verse will suffice, the declaration of our Lord:

> 34. Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:
> 35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.
> 36. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (Matt. 23:34-36)

Our Lord states plainly that "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth" finds expiation. It finds this expiation in a culminating judgment on Jerusalem. The clear inference is that *all sin* requires and gains some form of expiation. Either it finds it in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, or else in the judgment and reprobation of all who remain as enemies of Christ. Lenski commented:

> When all God's grace is spurned, his judgment must follow. Moreover, guilt and penalty are also cumulative. While each individual and also each generation receives the due reward of its deeds, when one generation after another duplicates the wickedness, the pent-up wrath of outraged justice breaks forth like a volcano. Divine justice is not as superficial as ours; it demands more than a reckoning for individual and separate crimes. Each crime, when it is re-enacted, involves a guilt that reaches back to the beginning. The last acts "allow" or sanction all the former that were of the same type, and so the last acts involve guiltiness for all. In this way there came upon the last generation of the Jews "all the righteous blood poured out on the earth from the blood of Abel, the righteous, to the blood of Zachariah."[19]

The atonement of Jesus Christ thus has nothing to do with the reprobate; their judgment is condemnation and reprobation. The elect find their expiation in

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[19] R.C.H. Lenski: *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel.* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943). p. 918f.

the shed blood of Christ. We are "justified by his blood" (Rom. 5:9). The blood of Jesus Christ effects our atonement.

Paganism has very commonly seen significance in blood. Hence, the eating and drinking of blood is seen in many cultures as a means of appropriating the life and power of another, or of gaining inspiration. The Attis cult had a baptism of blood. A number of cultures saw the drinking of blood as a means of absorbing the divine essence.[20]

Pagan uses of blood thus range from allaying the wrath of slain animals to self-deification. They have been held by some to resemble Biblical practices, but the intent and meaning is radically different. In Scripture, what is involved is the confession of sins, the acceptance of the validity of God's judgment of death, and the fullness of trust in Christ's vicarious atonement. Pagan religious uses of blood either deny guilt or seek an escape from guilt, or else are open quests for god-like powers. In Scripture, blood confronts us with our guilt and requires that we accept God's verdict on us: "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11).

Modern man is intensely concerned with blood and blood-guiltiness, but on radically humanistic grounds. His concern is to eliminate the guilt of blood by means of a radical pacifism. He therefore works to abolish capital punishment, war, hunting, sometimes even meat-eating, and to create a world without death. This means arresting history and controlling life, including birth, which means legalized abortion, which by redefinition is not called murder. A static world, with zero economic growth and zero population growth, with death abolished and history arrested, is the goal. The goal of Marxism has been called the ant-hill society; the same goal holds for all forms of humanism.

A central fallacy in this humanistic goal is that it seeks to remove blood-guiltiness but not sin. Sin is seen only as violence done to man and nature, not as a violation of God's law. As a result, humanism deals with symptoms, not causes. Not surprisingly, humanism has created the bloodiest age in all of history, when *a higher percentage of mankind* has died from war, revolution, mass murders, slave labor camps, politically created famines, and the like, than ever before in all of history.[21] Every humanistic form of dealing with sin and guilt only compounds the problem. Not surprisingly, psychology is a central concern of modern 20th century man: *how to live with one's own self is now a fearful problem.* Atonement is sought in escapes from the facts of sin and guilt, and the death of the cancer of sin is covered over with cosmetics and masks. Our Lord describes this living death in the religious leaders of His day (Matt. 23:26-33).

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[20] Sir James Frazer, edited by Theodore H. Gaster: *The New Golden Bough.* (New York, New York: Criterion Books, 1959). pp. 455-486.

[21] See Gil Elliot: *Twentieth Century Book of the Dead.* (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972). Elliot's survey does not include death by abortion.

The penalty for sin is death. Blood is forfeited, life rejected. Every attempt by man to solve his problem on his own terms is an affirmation of his sin, his revolution against God, and a denial of his problem. For the redeemed man, the blood of Jesus Christ means a surrender to the death penalty and a full confession of sin and guilt. It means atonement through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, our federal head, our new Adam, and our substitute.

7. Sacrifice

False imputation has almost the status of a science today. The source of evil is regularly traced to a group, class, or race. Capitalism, communism, the military-industrial complex, Puritanism, the blacks, whites, and so on are seen as the root cause of evil in the world. More sophisticated forms in psychoanalysis and psychiatry impute sin to our parents, our environment, our "primitive" ancestors, and so on. The psychiatrist, modern man's new priest, does not ask for a confession of sins which acknowledges sin in the way that the confession of the Office of Compline does:

> I confess to God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and before all the company of heaven, that I have sinned, in thought, word and deed, through my fault, my own fault, my own most grievous fault: wherefore I pray Almighty God to have mercy on me, to forgive me all my sins, and to make clean my heart within me.

The psychiatric confessor receives confession in order to impute guilt to some other person, thing, event, or cause than the confessing person. There is absolution by false imputation: the confessing person's guilt is transferred and imputed to another person or cause. Basic to modern psychiatry and psychology, as well as to its politics and sociology, is an essential environmentalism. Environmentalism is simply a form of imputation, and the modern world is governed by this false doctrine of imputation. Since all of us are both the victims of this environment, and, at the same time, the environment for all other people, we thus impute our small quota of sin and guilt to others, and also have imputed to us the sins of our entire age and world. In every way, man is the loser! Moreover, he exchanges a true for a false sense of responsibility: he imputes personal sins to others while assuming sins that are not his own.

Eugenics and the emphasis on heredity does not solve the problem of imputation: it transfers the problem to the past, which cannot be changed, and offers hope only in distant generations yet to come.

But this is not all. False imputation requires a false sacrifice. Someone must pay the penalty for the sin and guilt, and the net result is that, in humanistic societies, social energies are directed, not towards godly reconstruction, but towards making the guilty class or group pay the penalty. Since the accused group has a different idea of who should be sacrificed for

the social good, the result is civil conflict and sometimes blood-letting. False imputation requires a continual sacrifice of the offenders, and the more grievous the conflict, the more bloody the sacrifice.

In Biblical imputation, the sinner must fully recognize that the sin imputed to the sacrificed are *his own*. The evangelical formula is, "Christ died for *my* sins," not for sin in general, nor for *our* sins, but *mine*. Sin does not belong to the environment, to capitalism, communism, nor our parents. It is personal, and it is *mine*. In the words of the Office of Compline, it is "my fault, my own fault, my own most grievous fault." Biblical imputation is also the birth of responsibility. The truly redeemed, as against false professors, are *responsible* persons. Biblical imputation transfers us from the irresponsibility of the fallen Adam and from his false imputation "The *woman thou gavest* to be with me, *she gave me* of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12), to godly responsibility. Instead of imputing guilt to others, we assume the *responsibility*; we find in Christ our atonement by His vicarious sacrifice and our freedom from sin and guilt, from irresponsibility, and from false imputation.

The sacrificial system of the Bible sets forth this principle of responsibility and imputation. All sacrificial animals had to be clean animals or birds, bullocks, goats, sheep, dove, or pigeon (Gen. 8:20; Lev. chapts 1,11,etc.). Thus, the *first* aspect of sacrifice is that the offering had to be clean, *i.e.*, kosher as food and hence an animal of usefulness. *Second* the animal has to be without blemish (Lev. 1:3; 3:1; Deut. 15:21; 17:1; Lev. 22:17-25; Mal. 1:6ff.). If a herd animal, it was to be a male for certain offerings, as the burnt sacrifice. It could not be a sick or old animal but only one in every way unblemished and valuable. *Third*, it had to be a domestic animal. Some wild animals are clean, but the wild animals are not man's property (II Sam. 24:24), and the sacrifice begins with the surrender by the sacrificer of what is his, and from the best of his possessions. The wild animals are already God's (Ps. 50:10-11). Unlawfully acquired property could not be offered to God (Deut. 23:18). The unbloody offerings, cereals, flour, oil, wine, fruits, etc, were all products of man's labor and hence again were man's property and exacted a price, a sacrifice from men. The sacrifice involved the best from man's possessions and the best to God.

Fourth, the thing sacrificed represented the sacrificer, and, on the Day of Atonement, represented also his sin and guilt. Aaron confessed all the transgressions of Israel and placed his hands on the sacrificial animal, the scapegoat (Lev. 16:21-22). The laying on of hands represents a transfer, as of the Spirit (Num. 27:18; II Tim. 1:6, etc.), and it was probably normal practice in all sacrifices.

Thus, the Biblical sacrifices involved a transfer of sin and guilt to a vicarious sin bearer or substitute. The sacrifice had to be a part of the life and possessions of the sacrificer, of his best. There was thus an identification with

the death, a confession of sin and guilt, and thus a strong and full sense of responsibility together with gratitude to God that an unblemished substitute was ordained by God.

The sacrificial victim thus belonged to the condemned and was a substitute. Paul tells us that Jesus Christ is our passover lamb, sacrificed for us (I Cor. 5:7). Christ appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). He, as the Adam of the new creation, dies for His elect and effects their atonement, a change in their *legal* status from men sentenced to death to pardoned and free men; He changes their *moral* status by making them a new creation by regeneration; and He changes their *family* status by making them sons of God by the adoption of grace.

False imputation breeds not only irresponsibility, an inability to face up to sin and guilt, but false sacrifice. All who are members of the humanity of Adam are ever involved in looking for sacrificial victims. Whatever the problem or offense, a sin-bearer is sought out as the scapegoat. Whereas with the Biblical scapegoat there was a personal and total confession of sins, and all men as sinners were individually and nationally to see themselves as guilty *before* God for their transgressions, humanism sees things differently. The offense is in essence *against man*, because its definition of law and of sin is man-centered. Man then must make atonement to man, and be sacrificed to man. Sin is not seen as the human condition of the entire humanity of Adam but as an attribute of a class, group, or race. The sin-bearer and scapegoat is then a guilty segment of humanity which must be made the victim, *i.e.*, the capitalists, communists, blacks, whites, male chauvinists, and so on. Then all men see the problem as the sin and guilt of *the other* group, and all men try to effect atonement and salvation by sacrificing all other men. History then becomes, as it has been, a bloody battleground. Politics becomes in the hands of humanists the art of providing scapegoats and sacrificial victims.

The word *sacrifice* comes from the Latin *sacrificium, sacer*, holy, and *facere*, to make, so that it means that something is forfeited or destroyed in order to reestablish a communion and to make holy the sacrificer. This Christ does for us. As Chytraeus wrote,

> The *efficient principal cause* of Christ's sacrifice is the will of God's Son, who voluntarily turned upon Himself the wrath of God against sin and underwent abuse and dreadful torments of soul and body, so as to make satisfaction for the sins of the human race and, with the placation of God's wrath, restore righteousness and eternal life to men. John 10:15: "I lay down My life for the sheep." Is. 53:7: "He was sacrificed because He Himself willed it." Ps. 40:7 "I have delighted to do thy will, O my God."[22]

[22] John Warwick Montgomery, editor, translator: *Chytraeus on Sacrifice*. (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1962). p. 80f.

Because Biblical imputation and sacrifice go hand in hand with responsibility, and atonement is also accompanied by regeneration, Christ's sacrifice does make holy. Humanistic sacrifices intensify sin. To illustrate, racism is today a major sin in the eyes of humanists. Thus, where whites have been in the past guilty of racism, and of victimizing other races, they must now be victimized and sacrificed to make atonement for their ancestors' sins.

But the human condition outside of Christ involves *total depravity, i.e.*, every aspect of the individual is governed by the fall and sin, and every people, tongue, and tribe, and race is affected totally by sin. Thus, to stay with racism, no oppressed race has ever lacked its own form of racism as well as the full complement of sins. One group may be culturally richer in its inheritance, but both oppressor and oppressed have a common problem. Exchanging places does not solve that problem, nor does the idea of equality, which is, together with inequality, an abstraction and a meaningless myth when applied to the concrete and actual situations of men and races. As there are differences between members of one family, so there are also between members of one nation, or one race. Abstractions only complicate the concreteness of human problems.

If man's problem is sin, the political abstractions and political attempts to solve problems by finding victim groups are dangerously false, nor do they solve the root problem. Political scapegoats are found, and the problem is intensified, because it is falsely dealt with, in that irresponsibility is fostered. Laws can no more abolish racism than they can abolish sickness, death, or bad weather.

How then can we deal with racism? We recognize *first*, that there is a basic division in humanity, between those who are of Adam, and those who are of Christ. *Second*, those who are of Christ are only those who manifest the works of Christ. "By their fruits shall ye know them" (Matt. 7:20). The regenerate do not live by man's law and mores but by God's word and law (Matt. 4:4). In terms of God's word and law, they seek the reconstruction of all things. If we pinpoint the evil as racism, communism, or capitalism, we may or may not deal with actual evils, but we do so then from a perspective which is false and in itself evil. We fail to see sin in its true nature. We become self-righteous, and, if we deal with actual victimization, our answer is to transfer victimization to another group. Humanistic peace treaties lay the foundations for the next war, and humanistic solutions become the fabric of the new problems, because in essence they involve false imputation and require false sacrifices. These sacrifices do not make holy: they pollute humanity. Christ's sacrifice redeems the humanity of the new Adam and makes it righteous or just. As Paul says,

> 21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:

22. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:
23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:
24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. 3:21-26)

Man's obedience to the law, if that were possible, could not effect man's salvation. The justice or righteousness of God to which the law and the prophets witness, requires the penalty of death upon sin. All men are sinners, and none are righteous in and of themselves. The atonement and justification of the people of Christ is thus not of themselves but of Christ. By means of His atoning sacrifice, He effects the remission of our sins and makes us legally righteous before God. Christ's is the one true sacrifice for sin.

Where a false sacrifice or victimization for sins is effected, a false order and a false peace are created. If one problem is alleviated, it is only to create another. In the humanistic world view, we are all of us victims, and we are all of us victimizers, because we belong to a group, race, class, or profession someone can find responsible and hence guilty for their plight. Men endlessly document their humanistic doctrines of imputation in order to "solve" problems of poverty, racism, war, class conflict, crime, and all things else. Because of our extensive social interlocks, all these solutions have a semblance of truth. The roll-call of "facts" is an endless one. We are thus guilty of racism, and we are also the victims of capitalism, socialism, fascism, or communism. We are alternately victims and victimizer and always more and more the slaves of the civil government which seeks atonement by imputing sins falsely to these various factors. Politics becomes the art of imputation so that some group or class may be sacrificed in order to save society. False imputation destroys society, however, because it leads to false victimization, to making another group the scapegoat. In the Bible, the people had to identify themselves with the scapegoat. It was the sin of *all* the people which the scapegoat bore. In humanism, others are the scapegoats, and all sins and problems are imputed to them. The consequence is self-righteousness and hypocrisy, and also social anarchy and civil conflict. In trying to victimize one group, all are sacrificed: by failure to confess total depravity, sin is magnified and given status as good politics and sound sociology. False imputation leads to false sacrifice, and the result is death, not life.

8. Legal Satisfaction

Many churchmen in our time are concerned that atonement be so formulated that "the crudity of propitiation" be avoided. As a result, all kinds

of theories are advanced in order to offer an acceptable solution to the supposed problem of the meaning of the death of Christ. Moule, for example, suggests the analogy of the living body: every limb or organ has an influence on the entire body, and therefore Christ's noble and sacrificial death has an influence on every member of the body, on all humanity.[23] Now the analogy of the body, of an organism, does have its place in Scripture, but not with respect to the actual fact of the cross and Christ's atonement: the language of the cross is *legal*, and it has to do with God's law.

We have a strange situation with respect to the facts of sin and the law: churchmen tend often to treat sin and the law more casually than do atheists and pagans. Thus, Hinduism and Buddhism take sin and guilt seriously enough to hold to the doctrine of Karma, to the necessity of a full and total satisfaction for all offenses committed. This means continuing re-incarnations, until guilty man satisfies the full burden of cosmic law. This is, of course, the most vivid and thorough example of satisfaction in pagan religion, but it has its analogies in the modern world. Various psychologies, most notably Freudianism, hold to a necessary propitiation of all guilt through man's mental and physical activities, so that human life is an endless atonement for the past. Sin and guilt demand satisfaction, and, while for Freud guilt was not a *moral* fact, it was still an omnipotent *psychological* fact demanding satisfaction.

It is an ironic fact that, precisely when churchmen were busily cleansing the churches of the doctrine of satisfaction, humanism was establishing a psychological demand for total satisfaction. The 20th century, moreover, has seen this demand for satisfaction play an increasing part in international diplomacy and war. The Treaty of Versailles was an effort to establish humanistic satisfaction. After World War II, Stalin demanded and gained his idea of legal satisfaction for the U.S.S.R. Of course, in every age we can illustrate in abundance this demand for satisfaction in human affairs.

All this leads us to a very simple fact: *law requires satisfaction.* If a man steals, he must restore what he has stolen. Law declares what the good and true order is: whenever a violation of that order occurs, restitution and restoration must follow. In any conflict of laws, it is the governing and basic law which exacts satisfaction. For most men today, God's law is not the governing and ultimate law: man's law is. Satisfaction thus must be made to man. As a result, we have become the most litigious society in all of history. Courts of law are clogged with a tremendous back-log of cases, and, if the court calendars were speeded up by various reforms, the cases would only increase, because many men are restrained from pursuing legal satisfaction only because of the great costs and the long delays. Men want satisfaction.

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[23] C.F.D. Moule: *The Origin of Christology*. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977). pp. 107-126.

The idea of turning the other cheek (Matt. 5:39) is very much talked about and too seldom practiced. After all, if man is his own god and law, then his law *must* be satisfied, or the world is out of joint. However, if man is a creature and God is the Lord, then I can rest in the assurance that God's law will exact its satisfaction in every case. Then I cease to function as God, judge, and avenger, and I take my place as one called to believe in and obey God, and to further His Kingdom. The satisfaction I then seek is not private and personal but theological and cosmic. Men and the creation must be restored to their rightful place under God. Since the law is not my law, it is then not my satisfaction I seek, nor on my terms or law.

Moreover, if God is the Lord, then His law governs all men and all creation. As the omnipotent sovereign, He requires full and unfailing obedience to His law, which is "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25; cf. 2:11). If man transgresses that law, God requires satisfaction, the death penalty, and the true and perfect righteousness required by the law. Man as sinner, being fallen and depraved in all his being, cannot give satisfaction: his works are tainted and fallen, and sin has corrupted all his being. Fallen man is neither able, nor has any desire, to render satisfaction to God. On the contrary, he indicts God in terms of his own law and demands satisfaction from God for his alleged wrongs. Warfield ably summed up the orthodox doctrine of satisfaction and the atonement in these words:

> In this, its developed form, it represents our Lord as making satisfaction for us "by His blood and righteousness"; on the one hand, to the justice of God, outraged by human sin, in bearing the penalty due to our guilt in His own sacrificial death; and, on the other hand, to the demands of the law of God requiring perfect obedience, in fulfilling in His immaculate life on earth as the second Adam the probation which Adam failed to keep; bringing to bear on men at the same time and by means of the same double work every conceivable influence adapted to deter them from sin and to win them back to good and to God–by the highest imaginable demonstration of God's righteousness and hatred of sin and the supreme manifestation of God's love and eagerness to save; by a gracious proclamation of full forgiveness of sin in the blood of Christ; by a winning revelation of the spiritual order and the spiritual world; and by the moving example of His own perfect life in the conditions of this world; but, above all, by the purchase of the gift of the Holy Spirit for His people as a power not themselves making for righteousness dwelling within them, and supernaturally regenerating their hearts and conforming their lives to His image, and so preparing them for their permanent place in the new order of things which, flowing from this redeeming work, shall ultimately be established as the eternal form of the Kingdom of God.[24]

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[24] Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield: *Studies in Theology*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1932). p. 264f. See also *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. I. "Atonement," by B. B. Warfield. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1969 reprint). p. 355.

Basic to all sado-masochistic activities is man's desire to render satisfaction for his sin and guilt. Men may not consciously recognize or admit this sin and guilt, but every atom of their being witnesses to God and God's law and cries out for satisfaction. Man's efforts to provide his own brand of satisfaction results in sado-masochism. In varying degrees, sado-masochism is common to all men outside of Christ. Man's being cries out for the freedom of balanced accounts, for full satisfaction.

But fallen man's idea of balanced accounts and of satisfaction, while reflecting God's law in their being, is still a fallen and perverted idea. Man wants satisfaction in order to gain freedom from God. But man, having a new god, himself, and a new law, his will, wants also satisfaction for his own law.

Our Lord deals with this fact in the parable of the unjust servant or "slave," in Matthew 18:23-35. The king is a symbol for God; His "slaves" or servants are His appointed and commissioned governors or satraps. One of the chief of these rulers has a shortage in his account of 10,000 talents, perhaps 10 million dollars in terms of the dollar value of the 1940s; the purchasing power of such a sum in antiquity would be even greater than now. The governor had gained this sum from the king as a loan: it was thus a "debt" (Matt. 18:27). The parable thus far is simply establishing one fact: every servant of God, and every creature therefore, is inestimably in God's debt. He is at any moment liable to total judgment. God in His mercy restrains that judgment, normally for our life time.

The debtor, however, sees nothing of God's rightful claims, God's patience and mercy, nor of his own condition. On the contrary, the unjust and unforgiving servant or satrap is insistent on full satisfaction for all his claims. A fellow servant owned him a hundred pence, or denari, about $20 in the 1940 monetary scene, and with a purchasing power again of five to ten times that in antiquity.[25] The unjust satrap has the fellow servant thrown into debtor's prison.

This is a parable on forgiveness, and therefore on satisfaction (Matt. 18:21-22). Forgiveness in the Bible always involves some form of satisfaction: it is a juridical term meaning that charges are dropped because satisfaction has been rendered. It is amazing how readily people by-pass Hebrews 9:22, "without shedding of blood is no remission" (or, forgiveness, in the Berkeley Version and other translations). Thus the parable shows us man demanding full satisfaction for himself and treating God's requirement of satisfaction with contempt. But, God having provided us with His gracious satisfaction in Christ, we are to forgive as we have been forgiven. We are to manifest mercy, forbearance, and patience. The parable gives us the extremes of God's requirement of satisfaction, $10 million, as against our $20, in order to

[25] Sherman E. Johnson, "Matthew," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. II. (New York, New York: Abingdon Press, 1951). p. 477.

demonstrate the relative significance of God's law and His demand for satisfaction, and our demand for satisfaction. More, the parable demonstrates in particular the extent of God's grace: his forgiveness is extended to us through Christ's satisfaction where no satisfaction on our part is possible. God's demand for satisfaction rests on God's law, on ultimate law and justice. It is the foundation of all law and all satisfaction.

If we deny God's law, and if we hold to an antinomian grace, then the doctrine of legal satisfaction disappears from our theology, and justice fades from our society. Grace without law leads to freedom for lawlessness: it is then lawlessness which most receives grace because forgiveness then flows to the greatest offenses and offenders. Lawless grace is thus not grace at all: it undermines the doctrine of the atonement and therefore the very ground of grace. Our social decay today is due to this antinomianism.

But law without grace is also a deformity. It leads to all the penitential systems of history (not to be confused, as is sometimes done, with restitution). Christ makes restitution to God for our offenses; we make restitution to man, as Zaccheus did (Luke 19:8,9), and thereby to the Lord. Our restitution never saves us; it does manifest our state of grace. Restitution works towards restoration. Penitential exercises work towards self-punishment and self-atonement; Hinduism is full of penitential asceticism, as is Buddhism. The Biblical doctrine of satisfaction delivers man from every false way.

The demand for satisfaction is basic to the nature of things, and, while the fall perverts the demand, it cannot erase it nor satisfy it except as God ordains it. The God-ordained means of satisfaction is Christ's atonement. It restores God's order, meets the requirements of God's law, and also restores man to God's appointed place.

9. Imputation and Sacrifice

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest made atonement for the holy place, and for the court of the sanctuary. Because he did this alone, on the eve of the Day of Atonement, he took an oath before the elders of the Sanhedrin that he would make no changes in the ceremonies. The elders charged: "We adjure thee, by Him who hath caused His name to dwell in this house, that thou shalt not alter anything of all that we do say unto thee."[26] By this oath they meant that no particular emphasis, as of the Sadducees or Pharisee, could enter the sanctuary. Only God's prescribed ritual could prevail.

Then the high priest laid both his hands on the scapegoat, signifying that the scapegoat was the sin-bearer for both the priesthood and the laity, and all their sins were laid upon him. The confession became gradually a set and prescribed one. During the Second Temple, it declared:

[26] C. D. Ginsburg, "Leviticus," in C. J. Ellicott, editor: *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1954 reprint). p. 409.

> O, Lord, thy people, the house of Israel, have sinned, and done iniquity, and transgressed before thee. O Lord, I beseech thee, cover over the sins, the iniquities and the transgressions that thy people, the house of Israel, have sinned, have done iniquitously, and have transgressed before thee, as it is written in the Law of thy servant Moses.[27]

All priests and people who were then present prostrated themselves and responded, "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever."

Some scholars choose to believe that only on the Day of Atonement was there a laying on of hands. The pattern of the day, however, set the pattern for all and Edersheim cited the actual practice thus:

> Women might bring their sacrifices into the Great Court; but they might not perform the second rite–that of laying on of hands. This meant transmission and delegation, and implies representation; so that it really pointed to the substitution of the sacrifice for the sacrificer. Hence it was always accompanied by confession of sin and prayer. It was thus done. The sacrifice was so turned that the person confessing looked toward the west, while he laid his hands between the horns of the sacrifice, and if the sacrifice was brought by more than one, each had to lay on his hands. It is not quite a settled point whether one or both hands were laid on; but all are agreed that it was to be done 'with one's whole force'–as it were, to lay one's whole weight upon the substitute. If a person under vow had died, his heir-at-law took his place. The only public sacrifices in which hands were laid on were those for sins of public ignorance (Lev. iv. 15; xvi. 21), when the 'elders' acted as representing the people–to which some Rabbinical authorities add public sin-offerings in general (on the ground of 2 Chron. xxix. 23),-and the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, on which the high-priest laid his hands. In all private sacrifices, except firstlings, tithes, and the paschal lamb, hands were laid on, and, while doing so, the following prayer was repeated: 'I entreat, O Jehovah: I have sinned, I have done perversely, I have rebelled, I have committed (naming the sin, trespass, or in case of a burnt-offering, the breach of positive or negative command); but I return in my repentance, and let this be for my atonement (covering).' According to Maimonides, in peace-offerings a record of God's praise, rather than a confession of sins, was spoken. But, as the principle prevailed that frequent confession even without sacrifice was meritorious, another formula is also recorded, in which the allusion to sacrifices is omitted.[28]

As we have already indicated, this laying on of hands, this transfer of sin and guilt to the vicarious sacrifice, meant not only the transfer of the offense *and* the death penalty, but at the same time the restoration of godly responsibility. Fallen man imputes sin and guilt to others, and he requires the sacrifice of the victim social class as the remedy for his sin. Fallen man thus denies responsibility; he imputes *responsibility*, together with sin and guilt, to his appointed scapegoat. He himself is meanwhile someone else's scapegoat.

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[27] *Ibid.*, I, p. 410.

[28] A. Edersheim: *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ.* (New York, New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.). p. 113f.

False imputation is thus at heart an imputation and transfer of responsibility. The society of the fallen Adam is thus not a society but a state of war.

In godly imputation, the legal transfer of sin and guilt goes hand in hand with regeneration and the rebirth of responsibility. Adam was created to be God's vicegerent over creation, to serve as king, priest, and prophet under God. The king is the responsible ruler of his realm; as king under God, man must rule and exercise dominion in terms of God's law. The fallen man wants kingship because of its power, He fails to attain it because he rejects responsibility. An irresponsible king cannot rule over even himself.

As prophet, man under God declares God's word to all creation, and in all faithfulness. The prophet declares it: the king applies it. Man as prophet studies the word, and as king rules in terms of it. Fallen man is his own prophet, setting forth his own word as the ruling law. But his word is a lie, and his kingdom rests on theft and faces retribution and reprobation.

As priest, redeemed man dedicates himself, his realm, and his declared word and works to God. Fallen man, as his own priest and god, dedicates all things to his own glory, or, more accurately, to what becomes his own shame.

The atonement thus restores man to the creation mandate (Gen. 1:26-28). As we have seen, the high priest's confession over the scapegoat was emphatically declared to be, "not for all men, but for the house of Israel," *i.e.*, the covenant people. It was *their* sins which were confessed and imputed to the sin-bearer by the laying on of hands; and it was in *their* lives that freedom, responsibility, and restoration took place.

Boettner has called attention to the three different kinds of imputation which are basic to Biblical doctrine:

> In Christian theology there are three separate and distinct acts of imputation. In the first place Adam's sin is imputed to all of us, his children, that is, judicially set to our account so that we are held responsible for it and suffer the consequences of it. This is commonly known as the doctrine of Original Sin. In the second place, and in precisely the same manner, our sin is imputed to Christ so that He suffers the consequences of it. And in the third place Christ's righteousness is imputed to us and secures for us entrance into heaven. We are, of course, no more personally guilty of Adam's sin than Christ is personally guilty of ours, or than we are personally meritorious because of His righteousness. In each case it is a judicial transaction. We receive salvation from Christ in precisely the same way that we receive condemnation and ruin from Adam. In each case the result follows because of the close and official union which exists between the persons involved. To reject any one of these three steps is to reject an essential part of the Christian system.[29]

[29] Lorraine Boettner: *The Atonement.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1941). p. 76.

Fallen man finds all three imputations offensive, and with good reason. If man is his own god, then it follows that his destiny cannot be the handiwork of any other power. The Biblical doctrine of imputation sharply underlines the fact that man is a creature. We are not our own universe: we are a part of Adam's humanity. We find in our day a resentment among many that they were born black, brown, or white, and into a certain family and social context. To have a *context* is offensive to them. Existentialism formulates this idea in its insistence that man, as Sartre emphasizes it, is born without essence and with only being; man then creates and defines his own essence. The Bible declares that we have a given essence: we are creatures made in God's image who have fallen and are morally depraved.

Again, the imputation of our sins to Christ means that we are not lords of our destiny nor fate. Our salvation cannot be our work. To be saved means, among other things, the full recognition of our creaturehood and its implications. It means recognizing that we can only live in covenant with God, and in obedience to His covenant law. The covenant-breaker chooses death as his affirmation: better to *die* in hell then to serve in heaven! Life must be on his terms, or not at all. Imputation must be man's sovereign act, not a predetermined and God-ordained category of life.

Similarly, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to man means that here also man is a creature. It is not only God's law which declares what righteousness or justice is, but God's gracious act in Jesus Christ, which restores us judicially to a righteous status, and regenerates us morally. The affirmation by the redeemed man of this imputation of Christ's righteousness means that he declares that the totality of life and law are of God's ordination, and every atom and thought of creation must move in terms of His decree.

Fallen man's creed is to be his own god (Gen. 3:5). A god is beyond responsibility, because he is responsible to none, and all things are responsible to him. Strictly speaking, a true god is beyond both responsibility and irresponsibility, but neither paganism nor humanism can realize this goal, because they are in essence false and are pretenders. The result is that all attempts at being god result in irresponsibility. The Greek gods are classical examples of this, incapable of living by their own rules, or manifesting anything but conflict and irresponsibility. The same is true of fallen man in every age. He rejects Biblical imputation to play god, and he becomes radically irresponsible. False imputation becomes an aspect of his irresponsibility. All the world is made guilty so that he can claim his freedom and innocence. The Marquis de Sade is a classic example of false imputation and the radical irresponsibility behind it. He willed the death of God, and also of the universe. "Oh, how many times, by God, have I not longed to be able to assail the sun, snatch it out of the universe, make a general darkness, or use that star to burn the world! oh, that would be a crime," and crime was his joy.[30] But the death of God means the death of man, which Sade also willed:

"Blot out your soul...try to find pleasure in everything that alarms your heart; arrive quickly...at the perfection of this brand of stoicism."[31] By imputing all sin to God, Sade also renounced life in effect. False imputation is an aspect of sin, and therefore of death.

The Biblical doctrine of imputation denies the irresponsibility of those who, pretending to be gods, deny responsibility for their sins. It also undercuts the pessimism of Karma, the endless chain of consequences which binds a man to his sin. The Biblical doctrine of imputation does tie us to the consequences of our sins while at the same time delivering us from sin. We see the consequence, the death of Christ, our vicarious sacrifice, who took upon Himself our death penalty for revolution against God. We can see that consequence because His sovereign grace opens our eyes to the full meaning of sin. At the same time, we are delivered from sin and death into righteousness and life. We acknowledge that in Adam we are a people and a person at war with God, and we rejoice that in Christ we are at peace with Him. We see that we are not our own, that we have been created and re-created for God's purpose and glory, and our response to Christ's sacrifice is a thank-offering of ourselves. Paul summons us to this in Romans 12:1, declaring, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." The Greek word translated as *service* can also be rendered as *worship* or religious service. Paul says in I Corinthians 6:20, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." We are restored by Christ's sacrifice to that reasonable religious service to which the first Adam was called, to exercise dominion in the Lord's name and to develop all of His creation which is available to us as God's Kingdom.

Man falsely imputed to himself in Adam the position, nature, and authority of God (Gen. 3:5). At the same time, man imputed his sin to God, to his environment, and to his fellow man (Gen. 3:12-13). False imputation became an exercise in the evasion of guilt and responsibility. Biblical imputation makes clear our part in Adam: his sin is imputed to all his seed. However, in Christ we find our release, because our sins, as members of Adam and as individuals, is imputed to Jesus Christ, the Adam of the new creation, and His righteousness is imputed to us. Biblical imputation centers on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and it calls for our living sacrifice of ourselves to His purpose (Rom. 12:1). Biblical imputation means that we are not gods but are members of one another, of the humanity of either Adam or of Christ. Thus, Paul, in

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30. Simone de Beauvoir, "Must We Burn Sade?" in Austryn Wainhouse and Richard Seaver, translator: *The Marquis de Sade: The 120 days of Sodom and Other Writings*. (New York, New York: Grove Press, 1966). p. 32.
31. Pierre Klossowski, in "Nature as Destructive Principle," in *Ibid.*, p. 83.

summoning us to be living sacrifices, stresses our corporate life in the new humanity:

> 4. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
> 5. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (Rom. 12:4-5)

True imputation means a godly acceptance of creatureliness.

10. The Doctrine of Ransom

The key doctrines of Scripture are strongly offensive to humanistic man. Such things as God's sovereignty, predestination, grace, and much more ring ominously in rebellious ears of an offense against man's claim to autonomy. The term *ransom* is one of these offensive notes of Scripture. *Ransom*, in Hebrew *kofer*, comes from a word meaning to wipe off, or to expiate. It has reference to a redemption fee paid to rescue a man from the law, or from his captor. The Greek word is *lytron*. Our Lord says plainly in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Man the sinner is in captivity to sin (Rom. 6:17,23; 7:14). The sinner is a slave, doomed to die. Jesus Christ effects the ransom of His people by the payment of a price, his life for the life of His people. Paul speaks of the redeemed as,

> 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
> 25. 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;
> 26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. 3:24-26)

We are told, *first* of all, that our justification, our legal acquittal and release, is an act of grace by Jesus Christ. It is not our work but His. *Second*, He is the ransom or the redemption God has set forth, literally, the deliverance effected by the payment of a ransom. As Hodge observed, "Christ is presented as a Redeemer, not in the character of a teacher or witness, but of a priest, a sacrifice, a propitiation."[32] *Third*, God set forth Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, to satisfy the requirements of God's justice. Our redemption then is not our work, nor due to any change in us, but it is the work of Christ, our new Adam, who then begets us into the new creation in His own likeness as a new humanity. *Fourth*, this sacrifice *declares* God's righteousness: it sets forth the nature and demand of God's law, so that we see in Christ's

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[32] Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. (New York, New York: A. C. Armstrong (1882) 1893). p. 142.

atonement not only the greatness of God's grace and mercy but also the unswerving and eternal validity of His law. *Fifth*, the remission of sins is affected, their forgiveness, because Jesus Christ renders satisfaction. All men in Christ stand only in His righteousness. Hodge commented:

> A plan of salvation which strips every man of merit, and places all sinners on the same level before God, of course cuts off all assumption of superiority of one class over another. Paul means to say that the result of the gospel plan of salvation is to prevent all self-approbation, self-gratulation and exaltation on the part of the sinner. He is presented as despoiled of all merit, and as deserving the displeasure of God. He can attribute, in no degree, his deliverance from this displeasure to himself, and he cannot exalt himself either in the presence of God, or in comparison with his fellow-sinners. As sin is odious in the sight of God, it is essential, in any scheme of mercy, that the sinner should be made to feel this, and that nothing done by him or for him should in any measure diminish his sense of personal ill-desert on account of his transgressions. This result obviously could not follow from any plan of justification that placed the ground of the sinner's acceptance in himself, or his peculiar advantages of birth or ecclesiastical connection; but it is effectually secured by that plan of justification which not only places the ground of his acceptance entirely out of himself, but, which also requires, as the very condition of that acceptance, an act involving a penitent acknowledgment of personal ill-desert, and exclusive dependence on the merit of another.[33]

In our time, the word *ransom* has come to have a lawless meaning; it is often used by terrorists who seek to exact a tribute from others which they believe is due to their cause. The original meaning of *ransom* has to do with law, not lawlessness. In Scripture, it has reference to the price paid for a forfeited life, or for delivery from capital punishment, as in Exodus 21:30. It is the price paid for pardon of sins and for the redemption of the sinner from death (Job 33:24; Mark 10:45). Only certain offenses were subject to ransom. In the usage of the term by our Lord, it means redemption from the bondage of sin and from the penalties of sin to which sinners are subject by God's law. This redemption is accomplished by Christ as our federal head and Adam, and our substitute.

The emphasis which this doctrine makes is on the immutability of God's law. The antinomian misinterprets Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil." If *fulfil* means to end, or to put away, this sentence becomes an absurdity. Then our Lord is saying that He has not come to destroy, but really to destroy, abolish, or to make unnecessary. This is an absurdity. Rather, He is emphatic that He has come to put the law into force (Matt. 5:18-20). Paul, in Romans 3:24-26 is also emphatic that Christ's atonement sets forth this same fact of God's righteousness and justice: the propitiation is required by God's justice,

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

and God is just. The law is not canceled or made void by the atonement, nor by faith: it is upheld (Rom. 3:31). The necessity for the atonement is a vindication of the abiding force of the law.

Thus, *first*, instead of being undermined, the validity of the law is very strongly set forth by the atonement. Man's revolt against God's law is so serious a fact that only the work of God the Son can undo it. Man apart from Christ is a doomed creature.

Second, grace thus does not cancel nor make void the law (Rom. 3:31). Grace witnesses to the necessary and valid claims of the law and provides the ransom price, the only begotten Son of God, our substitute.

Third, that ransom price is the blood of Jesus Christ, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). It is the great and unchanging seriousness of God's law that makes clear the greatness of His grace and mercy. Our deliverance or redemption is more than a mere rescue; it is a ransom, the payment of the due price, the death penalty for sin. This price Jesus Christ paid in His atoning death.

Fourth, because we have been redeemed at so great a cost, we must therefore face all our todays and tomorrows in a spirit of faith, obedience, and gratitude. For the Christian to sin now is to despise God's law and grace alike. Therefore, Paul urges,

> 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
> 10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God...
>
> 18. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
> 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 you spirit, which are God's. (I Cor. 6:10-11, 18-20.)

Fifth, to be ransomed means to be freed. We are freed, not from the law as the righteousness or justice of God, but from the death-penalty of the law, from sin and death, into righteousness and life. The "handwriting of ordinances that was against us," *i.e.* the indictment of death, was taken away and nailed to the cross by Jesus Christ (Col. 2:14). Our freedom now is not *from* the law, but *in* grace, whereby we stand before God as legally righteous, or justified (Rom. 3:24), and now commissioned to put God's law into force (Rom. 8:4) as the means of establishing God's kingdom and dominion.

Antinomianism has received a very great impetus in the past two centuries through the influence of Romanticism. Romanticism sought to free man from an imposed order into freedom to create his own order. Man had as his first

goal the creation of his "authentic self" and then the full and free expression of that self. This meant freedom from any order or pattern imposed by God and man. The artist was seen as the pioneer in and the prophet of this true liberation. As Talmon noted, "The human miracle of genius was absolved from all moral and other obligations, since the genius was a force of nature which 'bloweth where it listeth'."[34]

This meant that both the slavery of man to sin in the fall, and man's ransom and freedom in grace and law in Christ, were anathema to the Romantics. The Marquis de Sade was merely more emphatic than others in believing that man's freedom is *from* Christ and *in* sin. Camus observed:

> Romanticism, Lucifer-like in its rebellion, is really only useful for adventures of the imagination. Like Sade, romanticism is separated from earlier forms of rebellion by its preference for evil and the individual. By putting emphasis on its powers of defiance and refusal, rebellion, at this stage, forgets its positive content. Since God claims all that is good in man, it is necessary to deride what is good and choose what is evil. Hatred of death and of injustice will lead, therefore, if not to the exercise, at least to the vindication of evil and murder.[35]

For such a faith, the idea of ransom becomes the epitome of repression and offense. Man then seeks release not to God but from God into autonomy. The doctrine of ransom thus recalls us to the fact that God's law governs all things and is essential to man's life and being. Instead of a freedom in sin, there is slavery, for "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (or, slave) of sin" (John 8:34). The ransomed man is the free man, because his relationship to the law is changed from seeing it as a repressive force to finding it basic to life.

To be ransomed by the new Adam, Jesus Christ, means to be taken from death to life, and from grief to hope and joy. As the scope of the ransom increases and unfolds, it means that, at the same time, the power of the ransomed, and their joy, will become all the more notable, and the impact of the new life will be felt in every area of life and thought. Isaiah tells us:

> 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.
> 7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
> 8. And the highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

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[34] J. L. Talmon: *Romanticism and Revolt: Europe 1815-1848.* (New York, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967). p. 145.
[35] Albert Camus: *The Rebel.* (New York, New York: Vintage Books, 1956). p. 47.

> 9. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there;
> 10. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa. 35:5-10)

The atonement of Jesus Christ undoes the work and reign of the fall, so that the *legal* restoration of man, which is accompanied by his regeneration and *moral* restoration, has as its conclusion the restoration of creation. The doctrine of ransom thus is closely connected with restoration.

11. Forgiveness

Modern man's idea of forgiveness is radically antinomian. Forgiveness to the humanist means setting the law aside and denying the claims of the law. Law is seen as harsh and unloving, whereas forgiveness is seen as a freedom from law because of the superiority of love. Love is thus seen as radically anti-law. The tired old line of young men who try to seduce girls is based on this premise: "If you loved me enough, you would do it," *i.e.*, if you really loved me, the law would mean nothing to you.

In the Bible, however, forgiveness is a legal term. It means that charges are dropped, because satisfaction has been rendered, or that, for the time being, charges are deferred. Both in the Hebrew and the Greek, the words used mean to cancel, cover, remit, discharge, or to acquit. In relationship to God, against whom all sin is committed, this means that the sacrificial system affected forgiveness. The sinner acknowledged his guilt and transgression and found his sins canceled through the atoning blood of the God-ordained sacrifice. The plain inference was that sin requires death for forgiveness. This atoning and vicarious sacrifice is effected for the redeemed in the cross of Jesus Christ. In relationship to men, the sinner makes restitution, and forgiveness must be unlimited as long as restitution is made, but it is conditional upon restitution.

The word *forgiveness* in the Bible cannot be separated from God's law. For the humanist, law and forgiveness are irreconcilable, because his is a world and life view which presupposes a conflict of interests as basic to the universe, whereas for Biblical faith a harmony of interests prevails because God is the Lord. The humanist sees the law as a force hostile to love; forgiveness means setting aside the law. The requirement of restitution is thus seen as unloving. When this humanism is transferred to the church, forgiveness becomes an end to the law, and love triumphs over law.

In Scripture, however, God's law, like His creation, is *very good* (Gen. 1:31; Ps. 119). God restates His law to His covenant people as an act of sovereign grace. The covenant was and is always an act of grace and a covenant of law. The covenant provides the means of atonement or

forgiveness through the law of the covenant: each member of the covenant is bound to the other in faithfulness unto death, and to a full obedience to the law of the covenant. Jesus Christ as the last Adam keeps the law faithfully and makes atonement for His elect people, for the chosen members of the covenant, to effect their forgiveness and restoration. Hebrews 9:22 is clear-cut: "without shedding of blood is no remission," *i.e.*, no forgiveness of sins (cf. Lev. 17:11; Matt. 26:28; Acts 10:43; Rom. 3:25).

For the Bible, sin is not something which can be forgotten, or, by a simple sentence, "I forgive you," done away with and removed. Sin is against God and His law. God's covenant law alone provides the way of remission, the blood of Jesus Christ. God's covenant requirement for atonement witnesses to the eternal and abiding force of the law: it manifests the righteousness and holiness of God. To separate forgiveness and atonement from the law is not only antinomianism but a denial of grace, forgiveness, and atonement.

To recognize this fact means to know the sovereignty of God. God is the Lord. His word stands forever. To be in the covenant and to be the people of the law is an act of grace; forgiveness means that the law is so serious that it requires the blood of Jesus Christ for atonement and forgiveness, and our life of faithfulness to God and His law as evidence of grace received. It means that the life of restoration is a life of restitution, and of faith and obedience. The Bible, when it speaks of God forgiving iniquities, says literally God is He who lifts off sin (Ex. 34:7; Num. 14:18; Ps. 32:5; Hos. 11:3; Micah 7:18). The basis of forgiveness is the sacrifice required by God; the required ritual was carried out by the priest and the sacrificer, but the forgiveness is only granted by God: "the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him" by God (Lev. 4:26). The words which speak of forgiveness all refer to an *act*, *i.e.*, of purifying, purging, wiping clean, washing, or sprinkling, whereby God declares the legal account to be altered, and the man now set free.

The forgiveness of sins is thus an aspect of the *legal* fact of justification. Man's relationship to God and His law is altered, not because of anything man has done, but what God has done. This legal change in man's status is accompanied at the same time by a *moral* change, regeneration, a renewed or cleansed conscience, so that the sinner is a new creation. The ground of his legal change of status is Christ's atoning work; the basis of his moral change is again Christ's work, this time His regenerating work. The forgiveness which the believer enjoys is the work of Jesus Christ, His atonement, so that our forgiveness rests on a legal act, Christ's vicarious death for our sins.

Where forgiveness is turned into an emotional and antinomian fact, some very deadly consequences follow. *First*, law and grace are separated; love, forgiveness, and grace are set against the law. This destroys Biblical theology. *Second*, in civil and criminal law, forgiveness becomes a higher way then the law, and lawless, graceless forgiveness begins to dominate the

courts. It means then that legally "victims don't have rights," as the A.C.L.U. has stated.[36] Then too the position of Dr. Karl Menninger, that the demand for restitution and capital punishment is a crime against criminals[37] becomes a logical one. The demand for law becomes a demand for a return to a lower level in human development.

Third, forgiveness then becomes a subsidy to the criminal. He is socially vindicated; he must not be discriminated against because of his criminal offenses. To speak of his criminal record is to become a sinner.

This means, *fourth*, that the real sinner is anyone who insists that sin is serious before God and must require atonement and restitution. The "spiritual" man is then the one who treats all sin as an opportunity to assure the sinner, "I forgive you," without any of the requirements of God's law being met.

As I write this, I am thinking of two long distance telephone calls today about an adulterous man. A young woman, a new Christian, has a husband who has been for years flagrantly adulterous. The "spiritual" counsel she has received has presupposed only one binding sentence in Scripture to govern all her problems: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). But no commandment of obedience to man is unconditional. The counsel given to this young woman consistently assumed that forgiveness of unrepented and continuing sin is required by God, which is radically false. Our forgiveness is to be like God's (Matt. 6:12), and His is always in harmony with His law. Repentance, which involves a change of direction and action, is required (Matt. 18:15-17). No one requirement of Scripture can nullify another (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22); the penalty for adultery cannot be eliminated by our insistence on love and forgiveness. A repentant murderer can know the forgiveness of God and man, but he cannot escape God's required penalty for murder. His forgiveness of sins alters his theological status; his civil status calls for the death penalty according to God's word.

Forgiveness thus has two aspects, theological and social or civil. Christ's atonement effects theological forgiveness for the redeemed; it does not alter the civil consequences of sin as required by God.

When Paul faced the problem of incest in the Corinthian Church, he knew that no death penalty existed for the act he cited (I Cor. 5:1). Hence his counsel is to consign the guilty over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, hoping that they could be saved by God's grace for heaven (I Cor. 5:5). In brief, he invoked the necessary death penalty supernaturally, while hoping for the redemption of the sinner thereby. We find that the early church used this

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[36] Frank G. Carrington: *Neither Cruel Nor Unusual.* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1978). p. 77f.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 79f., 135f.

precedent to hold those guilty of capital offenses to be legally dead and hence outside of the communion table while having fellowship after repentance.

The humanistic view of forgiveness as a human, emotional act goes hand in hand with the view of the law as a humanistic fact. The law being a human product can be set aside by man. Where the law is from God, there forgiveness is only on God's terms, and in harmony with His law.

12. Sado-Masochism

We cannot begin to understand our world without a knowledge of the fact of sado-masochism. All men outside of Christ are guilty men, and guilty men are dominated by sado-masochistic activities. Because of their guilt, men either punish themselves as an act of self-atonement, or they punish others. Whatever the problem at hand, people bring to it, not the clear light of reason imagined by rationalists, but a guilt-ridden life and a need to discharge themselves, although vainly, of that guilt. Thus, the greater the number of people in any given social order who seek self-atonement, the more commonly are the problems and questions of that society met by sado-masochistic appeals and answers.

A good illustration of this is the women's liberation movement. The leaders of the movement are bent on making men and women alike feel guilty. The cartoonist, Claire Bretecher, broke with the movement over this issue, observing, "Those feminists are doing everything they can to make other women feel guilty."[38] One feminist has written at length to imply that the desire to rape is basic to the male nature, and the history of men-women relationships has behind it the implied threat of rape if women fail to take their male-appointed place.[39] Many male reviewers applauded this preposterous book. Was it not their masochistic impulses which led them to agree with this savage and abusive work? Men have often brought sadistic impulses to bear on the subject of women, and towards the women in their lives. Others come with a masochistic impulse. In neither case do the issues matter: they merely provide a means of giving vent to sado-masochistic impulses.

A brilliant scholar of things Soviet has reported on the extensive masochistic death-wish of many Soviet students. One told him, "Sooner or later, they'll have to p-put me in a l-labor camp. It's convenient, you know, to have a State t-that lays down hard laws about sin. That caters to one's own shilly-shallying death wish."[40] Feifer himself displays a radical masochism and is a true student-radical of the 1960s. He comments of the Russian

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38. "Slicing the Baloney with Style," in *Time*, May 8, 1978, vol. III, no. 19, p. 91.
39. Susan Brownmiller: *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. (New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).
40. George Feifer: *Moscow Farewell*. (New York, New York: The Viking Press, 1976). p. 58.

students, "Few suspect that I'm as envious of them: that I often wish that I'd been born to their deprivation and pressure."[41] Feifer feels guilty because he has a better life and greater opportunities!

There is scarcely a political or racial issue which is without its sado-masochistic overtones. The sexual revolution is a prime example of this kind of motivation. The pages of the various "men's" magazines provide a vast literature of sado-masochism. Before proceeding with an analysis of contemporary sado-masochism, it is important to recognize that popular views of the subject tend to see it as an aspect of all persons, *i.e.*, as an ingredient of human psychology, and *therefore* normal unless pursued to the exclusion of all other concerns. Such is the view of a dictionary which reflects the views of the "sexual revolution."[42] The authors feel that a man who on pay-day gets drunk and beats up his wife, and a woman who enjoys humiliating her husband at every turn, "are probably sadists according to the definition, but within the bounds of normalcy."[43] The "sexual revolution" is a poor source of knowledge, of course, because it is sado-masochistic to the core. Brown has said, of promiscuous women, in his report on the subject,

> Self-hatred, basic insecurity, hostility toward others, the inability to accept the world as it exists, low ego strength, and sensations of inadequacy and guilt are most frequently listed as components of the damaged personality structure of the promiscuous woman.[44]

Is this true only of clinical cases? Quite the contrary. The "Letters" column, as well as the advertisements, of any "sexually-oriented" periodical gives abundant evidence of sado-masochism. Thus, one letter writer who gave his address, said, "I like to get real NASTY." He then described in detail his sadistic sexuality and his love of degrading the women involved, including urinating on them. He particularly enjoyed a doubly sado-masochistic situation, degrading a masochistic woman while her equally masochistic husband watched. The writer added, "My one ambition is to join a family in incest."[45] In another periodical, an "entertainer" a singer, speaks of her fantasy, a desire for gang-rapes by boys or men who "have absolutely no respect for me." This woman's "songs" are sexually oriented.[46]

Masochistic desires for self-degradation have been important in the occultist movements, as witness Aleister Crowley, Baudelaire and others.[47]

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41. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
42. Inge and Sten Hegeler: *An ABZ of Love*, "Masochism." Translated from the Danish by David Hohnen. (Medical Press of New York, 1963). p. 165.
43. *Ibid.*, "Sadism," p. 238.
44. Wenzell Brown: *The Promiscuous Woman*, p. 16f. (New York, New York: Lancer Books, 1967). p. 16f.
45. *The L.A. Star*, no. 94, 1975, p. 23.
46. Susan Toepfer, "Sarah Kernochan," in *Gallery*, March, 1976, p. 434f.
47. R.E. McMaster: *Eros and Evil, The Sexual Psychotherapy of Witchcraft.* (New York, New York: The Julian Press, 1962). p. 148.

Occultism has cultivated hatred of itself, liked an association with darkness, the deformed, the perverted, and the ugly. We should note also the homosexual habit of working to make the vulgar and the outrageous into art. Among some groups, such as the Turks, sexuality is closely associated with brutality, satyriasis, and psychosis.[48]

"Sexual revolutionaries" affirm a sado-masochistic view of sexuality as the hope of man. Thus, Lo Duca wrote:

> Eroticism represents one of the most profound deliverances of man (of *vir*, the male). A severe analysis of its nature and a pitiless examination of its manifestations reveal one fundamental reality: in all our civilizations virile dignity is sacrificed and humiliated. Man demands, but woman has the power to accord OR to refuse. From the outset, from his first attempt to conquer woman, the male is devirilized: we believe this to be the key to the sexual labyrinth. The taste for rape (in all its forms) is thus explicable; the taste for venal love, and erotophilia becomes perfectly clear. By rape, the male sates his desire without abdicating his virility. With money, man also retains the total liberty of initiative. *Solveo, ergo sum.* And in practicing eroticism for its own sake, man reserves for himself the intellectual choice and control of his sensual pleasures.[49]

A more degraded definition of man is difficult to imagine: I pay (for sex), therefore, I am; or, I rape, therefore I am. Susan Brownmiller's view of rape as basic to men may well have some grounds in the sado-masochistic mentality of advocates of the "sexual revolution."

However, in terms of the view of life held by these people, the only valid goal is happiness, and happiness means whatever anyone chooses to make it mean, including sado-masochism. One editor wrote, "There is only one goal, and only one just recompense - happiness - and we are all in the running equally and together. The rest is hypocrisy and horseshit." In answer to one woman's protest at the account of a savage and perverted rape, the editor answered, "I assume 99.9% of all STAR sex accounts are fantasy."[50] This is perhaps true of the letters to all such publications, including *Penthouse*, but the problem is that sado-masochistic fantasies soon make reality look pale, and the results are described by one, Ms. R.C., aged 35, married twelve years, and with three children. She and her husband have enacted or imagined fantasies in order to 'vitalize' their sexual life.

> My problem here is that I've been running out of fantasies. I cannot get sexually aroused from the same fantasy time after time. I wear them out after a few months and I find myself at a loss currently. All my deep seated fantasies have been rehashed, embellished and just plain worn

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[48] Allen Edwardes: *The Jewel in the Lotus*. (New York, New York: The Julian Press, 1959). p. 26, 110ff., 207f., 211ff.

[49] Lo Duca: *A History of Eroticism*. Adapted from the French by Kenneth Anger. (Covina, California: Collectors Publications, 1966). p. 17f.

[50] *L. A. Star*, no. 96, 1975, p. 2f.

> out. As far as I'm concerned, you can see the same movie so many times before it begins to bore you. Fantasy has been a vital part of my sexual life and I am at a loss without it. It played a vital part in the only type of masturbation I find pleasurable–Mental.[51]

The need then is to enter into perversities in order to "enjoy" sex, and the result is a steady development of sado-masochism in many. Sado-masochism quickly enters into a world of vicious and perverted practices, which even the *L.A. Star* documents.[52]

Sado-masochism is very basic to man's being. One prominent caterer to the urge for punishment described the impulse of her patrons as a need for humiliation. "It's the emotional humiliation that's the real punishment. And *punishment* is the right and operative word. All my cases, they all want punishment."[53] The sado-masochist exercises sadism towards some in his life, either through emotional blackmail or punishment, or actual physical punishment. Thus, a person who continually whines and feels sorry for his or herself will be inviting masochistic punishment, *i.e.*, disfavor, unpopularity, and conflicts, while at the same time inflicting upon those closely related a sadistic punishment, working to make them feel guilty for what the sado-masochist claims is wrong. In some people, one element or another, sadism or masochism, may prevail, but both are common to all sinful men.

Politicians, who regularly exercise their powers for ungodly ends and reasons, are especially prone to masochism, according to two psychiatrists who studied Washington madams and call girls and found that men in power have a strong predilection for sado-masochism. Such practices involve beatings, degradation, punishment generally, and even being the object of urination and defection. Homosexuals are especially prone to the latter, to "brown showers," even to eating a prostitute's defecation. As one girl commented, "They paid between $175 and $200 for that, can you imagine?" Homosexuals in particular are marked by strong feelings of "self-contempt," which they will not admit.[54]

In the background lies the modern view of man, the liberal humanist view, with its classical inheritance. Man is the norm, whatever he is, and man is the setter of norms. This is the view of man propagated by films.[55] From this perspective, Biblical morality means self-sacrifice and is therefore foolishness, not the way of life. Hence, self-indulgence in sado-masochistic

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51. *Penthouse Forum*, January, 1976, p. 82.
52. *L. A. Star*, vol. I, no. 23, December 21, 1972, "The Mind of a Sado-Masochist," pp. 25, 22.
53. Monique von Cleef with William Waterman: *The House of Pain, The Strange World of Monique von Cleef, the Queen of Humiliation*. (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, n.d. c. 1974). p. 15.
54. Sam Janus, Ph.D. and Barbara Bess, M.D., and Carol Saltus: *A Sexual Profile of Men in Power*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977). p. 81.
55. Parker Tyler: *The Hollywood Hallucination*. (New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, (1944) 1970). p. 246.

desires is regarded by some as "true psychic health," since man is the norm. "In such inspired play we do not 'regress' to childhood, in the sense that it drowns us; rather we dip into its refreshing waters consciously, and for a moment perhaps recapture something of our lost innocence."[56] This position is logical if we hold that man is the source of all value. The Marquis de Sade took this faith to its logical conclusion.[57] In literature, this view of man has led to dreams of "luxurious cruelties" and has been called by Praz the romantic disposition.[58]

Sado-masochism is a total perspective, and the sense of guilt in man leads to a sado-masochistic coloring and viewpoint in all things, including politics. The various sexually-oriented periodicals are not lacking in political content of a particular sort, muck-raking articles which show us to be all victims of the political establishment. In such periodicals as *Playboy, Penthouse, Gallery,* and many, many more, articles of this sort abound, and sometimes provide the best information on a particular sensational issue. The writers can be socialist, conservative, liberal, libertarian, or anarchist, but a common trait of all these articles is their appeal to masochism. We are rarely given a practical course of remedy. Rather, we are to feel that we have been made *victims*; we suffer unjustly, and we deserve better, but life gives us a raw deal. For injustice collectors, these periodicals are gold mines.

Of course, liberal writers generally tend to give us classical expressions of sado-masochism. Susan Sontag once wrote, during the Vietnam War, "the white race is the cancer of human history," a view very widely held by students and academicians, with both masochistic overtones and sadistic intent towards other whites. Susan Sontag has since regretted her sentence, only because she feels the use of illness as such, i.e. as metaphor of evil, is invalid. In *Illness as a Metaphor* she writes:

> The people who have the real disease...are hardly helped by hearing their disease's name constantly being dropped as the epitome of evil. Only in the most limited sense is any historical event or problem like an illness. It is invariably an encouragement to simplify what is complex and an invitation to self-righteousness. If not to fanaticism.[59]

It was once supposed that sadism was a product of a repressive society, and like views of masochism prevailed. This view is now regarded as "a dangerous mistake," but to suggest, as has been done, that "Boredom is also a stimulus to such excesses,"[60] is a meaningless answer.

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56. Gerald and Cardine Green: *S-M: The Last Taboo.* (New York, New York: Grove Press, 1973). p. 188.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
58. Mario Praz: *The Romantic Agony.* (New York, New York: Meridian Books, (1973) 1956).
59. John Leonard, "Book Review," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Friday, June 2, 1978, p. B-14.

In a column about battered wives and "live-in" partners, Tony Castro wrote about a beautiful young woman who said, "If a man ever hit me, that'd be it. I'd be gone in a New York minute." Somewhat later, Lauren was left well battered by Larry. Her reaction? "I think I'm to blame as much as he...It might have even been more my fault than his." Castro commented:

> It's an everyday occurrence, I'm told. The man bangs the heck out of the woman and leaves. The women feels betrayed and seeks out counsel and help. She might even go to a center for battered wives. When the bruise is gone, the man returns and all is forgiven.
>
> For some reason, however, it seems the woman is often doing the apologizing.[61]

How common is this? When I left missionary work for an urban pastorate, I was immediately amazed at the stream of people who came with very serious problems which were still open to correction by God's law. These people, however, came, not for correction, but, as with previous pastors, for sympathy and "prayers." But prayers which are not accompanied by corrective measures are blasphemous. When I suggested God's corrective measures, the responses were at first excuses and then anger and finally sadistic hostility. It was these responses which drove me to a study of the subject and a reading of Theodor Reik's *Masochism in Modern Man*, and to the work of Dr. Edmund Bergler. I saw that sado-masochism was using the church as a means of hiding its nature. Two decades later, I saw similar reactions from many to my *Institutes of Biblical Law*. By calling attention to God's answers to our problems, I was calling for their resolution and solution as normal to the Christian life, whereas sado-masochism, hiding behind a mask of super-piety wants *no solution*, only continued injustice collecting, self-righteous hostilities and assaults (usually verbal), and masochistic self-pity as it wallows in sin. In one major city, a layman who engineered the capture of a church and Christian School, and the expulsion of the pastor, now is full of masochistic fears and regularly checks his car for bombs! Where there is no atonement, men and women are adept at engineering situations in which they see themselves as the abused, not the abusers, as sinned against, not as sinning. I have seen men and women of strongly masochistic tendencies work imaginatively to create situations wherein they can act with sadistic violence in the name of defending themselves. One man spent several weeks in masochistic brooding about imaginary wrongs against him by his young bride in order to justify his "punishment" of her, which included lighted cigarettes thrust into her vagina. He came from a "good" family, and few found it

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60. Anthony Pietropinto, M.D., and Jacqueline Simenauer: *Beyond the Male Myth*. (New York, New York: Times Books, 1977). p. 318.

61. Tony Castro, "California Couple: A Rematch,"in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Sunday, June 4, 1978, p. A-3.

believable, other than the doctor. The girl, as a young convert, escaped, and secured a divorce.

Ploss and Bartels rightly observed, "the human mind...always sins with a good excuse."[62] What sado-masochism provides for sinners is an ostensible means of sinning with self-justification, of atonement by means of sin. Woodward was right in this, if little else, when he observed of masochists, "Guilt must be expiated. 'Sin' must be punished."[63] What the sinner does, in this process of self-atonement, is to plead guilty to a lesser offense, one in which he or she is more sinned against than sinning; he works out then a means of self-atonement, and accordingly reacts with rage against God and man because no cleansed conscience results.[64]

Neurosis, which is at root sado-masochism, has as its identifying marks the inability to work, to love, to have normal social contacts, interests and hobbies, and, above all, to be an injustice collector.[65] Thus sado-masochism leads, not to social unity and productivity, but to unrest, conflict, and destruction. The sado-masochist destroys himself and his world. Obedience to God's law is productive of social progress; disobedience is destructive. As Solomon sees so clearly, Wisdom declares:

> 35. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.
> 36. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. (Prov. 8:35-36)

William Gothard has most tellingly described the mental problems and conflicts of most people. Among the gifts of God to us, there are four things which are in essence beyond our ability to change: our essential appearance; our aptitudes; our family into which we were born; and our social-economic situation in childhood. As Gothard points out, most people resent some or all of these things. Their resentment is thus basically against the God who made them (Ps. 139:13-17).

Such resentment is destructive, not productive, and it leads to self-pity, that rich seed-bed of sado-masochism. It leads to rebellion against reality, and to pleasure in displeasure. It results in the will to lose, in order to prove that God is immoral, and the sinner justified.[66] Marriage becomes for all such a fertile

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62. Herman Heinrich Ploss, and Max and Paul Bartels: *Woman in The Sexual Relation, An Anthropolotical and Historical Survey.* (New York, New York: Medical Press of New York, 1964). p. 29.

63. L. T. Woodward, M.D.: *Masochism. (Derby, Connecticut: Monarch Books, 1964). p. 64.*

64. Despite their Freudian bias, the works of Theodor Reik: *Masochism in Modern Man,* 1941; and Edmund Bergler, M.D.: *Counterfeit-Sex,* 1951; *The Psychology of Gambling,* 1957; with William S. Kroger, M.D., *Kinsey's Myth of Female Sexuality,* 1954; and his many other works are very important.

65. Edmund Bergler, M.D. and William S. Kroger, M.D.: *Kinsey's Myth of Female Sexuality.* (New York, New York: Greene and Stratton, 1954). p. 28f.

66. Edmund Bergler, M.D.: *The Psychology of Gambling.* (New York, New York: Hill and Wang, 1957). pp. vii, 19, 22, 25f., 32, 89, 108, etc.

arena for sado-masochistic activities. Long before Reik and Bergler, *Proverbs* described all such as suicidal, as lovers of death.

Many criminals, themselves sado-masochistic, justify their activities by appealing to the "fact" of universal sado-masochism. One pimp declared, "They beg me to hustle them. The whole world is masochistic."[67] A whole succession of observers have noted the sado-masochism of both prostitutes and their clients. Furthermore, much inter-racial sexuality has like motivation. One negro writer reported:

> Some of the black men in London have told me about episodes where they've hustled, or more accurately, been hustled by, white women, some of whom are relatives of people in the British government and of royalty. The black men would take these ladies home and make love to them everywhichway, after which they would kick the women out of bed, beat them maybe, and then stand up and urinate on them. The men were amazed that they could get away with such goings-on, as well as at how much gratification the women seemed to derive.[68]

There is more than a little confirmation of this fact. Much of what passes for inter-racial brotherhood is not a godly concern but masochism. It is the unatoned sinner working out a humanistic atonement. Sin is defined humanistically, and then absolution sought cheaply. It proves, however to be no absolution at all. The sinner wants atonement on his own terms, by means of sado-masochistic works. At the same time, because his sin is the desire to be god (Gen. 3:5), nothing in either sin or self-atonement can ever satisfy him. He dreams, however, of the infinite god-like self-realization. The white pimp (from a very rich family) whom Gail Sheehy interviewed said of himself,

> "Every twenty-four hours this hustler goes for googul, the score of scores. Pronounce it gooo-gul. Mathematical infinity. A number that is equal to one followed by 100 zeroes."[69]

This is a common opinion, usually stated more pretentiously, *i.e.*, it is the quest, not the goal, which is important; seeking truth, whether it exists or not, not finding it; and so on and on. It is a sophisticated way of saying that one prefers to live in fantasy permanently, not in reality. It means choosing hell over heaven. An old anonymous poem witnesses to the fact that this preference for one's imagination over reality is not new:

> There is not half so warm a fire
> In the fruition as desire.
> When I have got the fruit of pain
> Possession makes me poor again:

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67. Gail Sheehy: *Hustling, Prostitution in Our Wide-Open Society*. (New York, New York: Delacorte Press, 1973). p. 163.
68. Calvin C. Hernton: *Coming Together, Black Power, White Hatred and Sexual Hang-ups*. (New York, New York: Random House, 1971). p. 97f.
69. Gail Sheehy, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

Expected forms and shapes unknown
Whet and make sharp temptation.
Sense is too niggardly for bliss,
And pays me dully with what is;
But fancy's liberal and gives all
That can within her vastness fall.
Veil therefore still, while I divine
The treasure of this hidden mine,
And make imagination tell
What wonders doth in beauty dwell.

Where such a mentality prevails, marriages fail: reality is detested in favor of fantasy. In politics, it means that an ideal country (always either foreign or imagined) is used to damn one's own country, whose sins alone are visible, while the sado-masochist, in his fantasies, is its innocent victim, crying out in protest against a universal and outer evil.

There is no solution to the problem of sado-masochism and to the root problem it points to, sin and guilt, except through Christ's atonement. But when we approach Christ's atonement, we must do so on Biblical terms, or we are humanists and sinners still. We must define our words and doctrines in terms of Scripture. The Rev. Don Fahrenbrink writes, "Mercy is mercy, in the name of Christ or not."[70] Kwan-Yin, the Chinese goddess of mercy, is one who "refused to enter paradise so long as any human being is excluded." Thus, she "still remains outside the gates of heaven." The Unitarian Conway, and the Buddhists, find this view of mercy most noble, but it is *not* Christian.[71] In a classic story of Buddhist mercy, a man, seeing a starving tigress and her cubs below him jumps off a cliff to feed them with his own body. Is this Christian mercy? Mercy, like all moral acts, varies in nature in terms of the theology which undergirds the morality. In the Bible, mercy is defined in terms of God. It is His covenant act: it manifests His grace, favor, holiness, righteousness, and law, and our mercy must reflect His mercy. It is not to be lawless or graceless, nor can it be humanistic.

The same is true of forgiveness. Rev. C.S. Lovett calls attention to all *the good* mercy and forgiveness do to us and to our psychology. To be forgiving removes emotional stress, we are told.[72] All this may be true, but it is irrelevant to the central question: Dare we forgive, or refuse to forgive, except in terms of God's law-word?

All attempts to reduce mercy, forgiveness, love, good works, or anything else to humanistic terms result in by-passing Scripture, or to using it partially and wrongly; it also feeds man's attempts at self atonement. But such

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[70] Don Fahrenbrink "What's So Special About Christian Mercy? in *Bethesda Bulletin.* (Denver, Colorado: Bethesda Hospital Association, Spring, 1978). p. 9.

[71] Moncure Daniel Conway: *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Man of the East.* (London, England: Constable; Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906). p. 71.

[72] C. S. Lovett, "How *Fast* Can You Forgive?" in *Personal Christianity*, vol. 18, no. 6, June, 1978, p. 2. Baldwin Park, California.

attempts fail, and the failures feed man's self-pity, and his sado-masochistic expressions of self-pity.

There are no end runs around the cross and Christ's atonement to mental health and freedom from sin and guilt. All sin is essentially against God, and, before there can be effective restitution towards men (in terms of God's law), there must be atonement to God, in terms of God's law, through the vicarious substitute, Jesus Christ.

There are two ways of atonement in essence, sado-masochism on the one hand, and the cross of Christ on the other. The one compounds sin, whereas the other delivers us from its bondage. The sado-masochist becomes one who loves death, is suicidal and destructive, whereas the redeemed in Christ have everlasting life, and, in terms of God's covenant law, exercise dominion and are fruitful unto God.

Reik attempted to find cultural values in masochism, and he tried to re-interpret Christianity as a masochistic religion.[73] His "solution" was to ask masochists to be tolerant towards themselves, and to avoid the sense of guilt! This was a pathetically shallow answer to a very deep problem. Sinful man's being cries out for atonement as surely as it demands food. Man, created in God's image, cannot live at peace with himself except in terms of peace with God and living in faithfulness to His covenant law. For a psychoanalyst like Reik, who knew the deep roots of man's unconscious being, to come up with so superficial a solution to the problem is evidence of humanism's inability to deal with the problem of sado-masochism. Those who know the truth of Scripture know that it can only be solved by God through Christ. There is no other way.

13. The Unatoned

The unatoned, those who have no redemption in Jesus Christ, cannot live without atonement. They seek that atonement in sado-masochistic activities. "A large percentage" of prostitution is concerned with meeting the demands of sado-masochism.[74] Politics provides a fertile area of activity for many sado-masochists. We are told of Lloyd George "that he reduced those who worked with him to nervous wrecks, almost as a way of charging himself with energy."[75] The treatment of employees and associates in the world of business and the labor unions is rich in sado-masochism. Our literature has become pathological, and its prominent figures are perverse in their natures and writings.[76]

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73. Theodor Reik: *Masochism in Modern Man.* (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus (1941) 1949). pp. 337ff., 389ff., 429ff.

74. Perry Whittaker: *The American Way of Sex.* (New York, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974). p. 190.

75. Aurens Uris: *The Frustrated Titan, Emasculation of the Executive.* (New York, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1972). p. 97.

Those outside of Christ seek, consciously or unconsciously, an atonement by means of their own sado-masochistic plan. But, without Christ's atonement, men are trapped in their own cycles of self-punishment, pleading guilty to the lesser offense, and to sadism, ascribing the greater and real offense to others. This sado-masochism will manifest itself in every area of our lives, and it will lead to a politics of self-abasement and self-destruction, combined with an ascription of ultimate sin and offense to a class, religion, race, or group. Sado-masochism separates men from reality to fantasy; it creates what Warner rightly calls the urge to mass destruction, often presented as the salvation of man and the world.[77]

It leads not only to a non-productive and suicidal life, but also to fear. Out of a background of police and detective work, O'Grady saw clearly, "Fear is the tax that conscience pays to guilt."[78]

The unatoned seek atonement, *usually unconsciously*, in sado-masochistic activities, through fantasy, politics, marriage, religion, social work, and so on, polluting all that they touch.

Consciously also, they recognize that sin must be atoned for, somehow *removed*. Massive and costly political and social efforts are demanded and instituted in order to remove sin, and we have the politics, sociology, and psychotherapy of sado-masochism on all sides. Sin somehow must be erased.

Another common effort was early favored by Reik: everybody sins, so let us all forgive one another and thereby undermine the seriousness of sin. Of course, such a reading of sin is humanistic. If man could forgive and wash away the *guilt* of sin, then long ago all guilt would have been abolished, and men would be sinning without guilt or fear. But sin is a violation of God's law, and the sinner cannot abolish either God or His law, and his guilt therefore remains.

The problem of guilt will not go away. John Ciardi, in commenting in 1962 on the Adolf Eichmann case, wrote, "For the question 'Who is guilty?' might better become 'Who is not guilty?'" He had been in an air crew responsible for massive destruction in Tokyo during World War II. He commented:

> But what if Japan had won and it had turned out to be Japanese judges who tried the case? What could I have offered in my own defense but, one by one, all of Eichmann's arguments. I was only a cog–the smallest kind of cog, in fact, one of four gunners who rode at least fifty feet away from the controls and bomb switches. I only obeyed orders–when I had to. It was my duty–alas. But in the end what could I plead to that–happily–never-convened court but "guilty as we all are"?[79]

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[76] See the examples given in Otto Friedrich: *Going Crazy, An Inquiry into Madness in Our Time*. (New York, New York: Avon Books (1975) 1977).

[77] Samuel J. Warner: *The Urge to Mass Destruction*. (New York, New York: Greene and Stratton, 1957).

[78] John O'Grady and Nolan Davis: *O'Grady, the Life and Times of Hollywood's No. 1 Private Eye*. (Los Angeles, California: J. P. Tarcher, 1974). p. 206.

All are guilty, and there is no remission of sins. Humanism begins by trying to abolish sin and guilt and ends by making it inescapable and ineradicable. By denying the fixed and eternal law of God, it substitutes for it man's law, which becomes quickly totalitarian and provides no hope of escape.

Thus, Dr. Lorand sees "the demonic, dark side" of man as the primitive, primordial, and *personal*. It is Freud's id and ego. Our hope for Dr. Lorand is in the superego, our socialized part. "We're constantly witnessing a struggle in our psyche, recognizing hostile and antagonistic powers in perpetual battle with the socialized part of our personality, our censor."[80] This means, when developed to its logical conclusion, salvation by total socialization by means of the totalitarian state.

The unatoned may be in the church, and they may be in the world at large. In either case, their lives have no valid direction. As Jude observes, all such men are rebels against God's authority; they are the living dead, "twice dead;" they are like "wandering stars" having no orbit. They are "trees whose fruit withereth," and they are "clouds without water" (Jude 10-13).

The unatoned, being aimless, are also the bored. They seek "something new" as a substitute for becoming a new creation. Thus, a letter by a Miss B.L. aged 20, wrote of an affair of over 18 months with a married man of 30. Every sexual experiment was tried by this "happy" couple, and then boredom apparently set in. "Nothing else to try. Can you help us? We seem to be looking for something new all the time."[81] Luke commented on the decadent Greek thinkers of Paul's day, noting, "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing." (Acts 17:21).

The unatoned may deny both sin and guilt, but they remain guilt-ridden sinners whose lives manifest their lack of peace and their troubled conscience. Having no peace, they are at war with God's peace, and they are troublers of the peace of this world. "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22).

14. The Atoned

One of the great proclamations of Scripture sounds forth in Romans 5:1,2 which, while specifically referring to justification sets forth the power and the privilege of the atoned:

> 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

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79. John Ciardi, "Manner of Speaking," in *Saturday Review*. July 7, 1962.
80. Dr. Sandor Lorand, M.D., in "Preface," to Arthur Zaidenberg: *The Emotional Self*. (New York, New York: Bell Publishing Company, (1934) 1967). p. 14f.
81. Dr. Harold Greenwald and Ruth Greenwald: *The Sex-Life Letters*. "Nothing Left." (New York, New York: Bantam Books, (1972) 1973). p. 446.

> 2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Because our atonement, our reconciliation to God, and our justification are totally the work of God through Jesus Christ, our security is firmly grounded in the Lord, and we have peace. We are released from guilt into faith, grace, joy, and hope.

Peace with God is an impossibility on man's terms, or by man's works. The sinner cannot find peace nor a clear conscience. Because he is a guilty man, he is deeply and thoroughly involved in sado-masochism and is in flight from reality. He seeks escape in the fantasy world of fiction, entertainment, and self-pitying indulgence, because there is no escape in reality. He is a self-doomed and wilfully blind man.

The atoned, however, have *peace with God.* They are delivered from the enervating power of guilt into the freedom of godly action. True faith thus is alien to charnel-house theology; instead of bewailing mortality and concentrating mournfully on the dead bones of its fallen estate, it works joyfully in Christ to do His will. The Great Commission does not ask us to spend our days mourning over past sins and what we once were but to go forth in Christ's power, commanding all nations of the world by "teaching them to observe all things" which our Lord commands, and to baptize them into the new creation (Matt. 28:18-20).

Calvin, in speaking of the life of the atoned, declared, in commenting on Romans 4:20,

> All things around us are in opposition to the promises of God: He promises immortality; we are surrounded with mortality and corruption: He declares that He counts us just; we are covered with sins: He testifies that He is propitious and kind to us; outward judgments threaten His wrath. What then is to be done? We must with closed eyes pass by ourselves and all things connected with us, that nothing may hinder or prevent us from believing that God is true.[82]

The atoned do not evaluate themselves in terms of either their pride or their guilt: God is true, and God declares them to be reconciled in Jesus Christ, to be atoned and justified by His sovereign grace.

Atonement thus means freedom. It is freedom from sin and guilt, and from the fallen humanity of the first Adam. We are freed from an endless dwelling on the past, the mark of hell, and are given a life of hope, power, and glory. The atonement is God's great Emancipation Proclamation. It releases us from the slavery of sin and death into the freedom of righteousness and life.

This means the ability to *rest.* There is neither rest nor peace for the wicked (Isa. 48:22). It is the mark of hell to be endlessly concerned with the past, trying to re-arrange, edit, and alter past events (Luke 16:20-31). The

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[82] John Calvin: *Romans*, p. 180.

redeemed work to alter the present and the future by means of God's law-word. Moreover, being heirs of *life*, they can *rest*, one day in seven, one year in seven, two years at the end of forty-eight years. Those who are the living dead cannot rest: life is always running out on them, and, with unceasing and sleepless activity and fretful self-indulgence, they try to seize life, but without joy, peace, or rest.

True rest and true work go together. Godly rest is productive of faith, energy, and action, and godly work is marked by joy, peace, and rest. Thus, the atonement also means the ability to *work* productively and effectively, because we know that our labor is never vain or futile in Christ (I Cor. 15:58).

The life of the atoned is also deliverance from the delusions and fantasies of a man-centered mind. A woman in Moravia's *The Empty Canvas* epitomizes this reduction of reality to the limits of a person's thinking, so that the real is what man conceives it to be, and nothing more. Asked, "What do you believe in?", Cecilia answers:

> In nothing. But I don't mean I didn't believe in it because I thought about it, and realized that I didn't believe in it. I didn't believe in it because I never thought about it. And even now I never think about it. I think about any sort of thing, but not about religion. If a person never thinks about a thing, it means that for him that thing doesn't exist. With me, it isn't that I like or dislike religion, it just doesn't exist.[83]

This is the logic of modern philosophy come to fruition. The protagonist in the novel echoes a common opinion, a good illustration of sado-masochism, as he recalls an opinion that:

> Humanity is divided into two main categories; those, who, when faced with an insurmountable difficulty, feel an impulse to kill, and those who, on the contrary, feel an impulse to kill themselves.[84]

The unatoned are caught in some form of this internal dialogue. Because they are guilty, they know the power of guilt over themselves, and they use guilt to control others. Husbands and wives try to make each other feel guilty as the means of governing one another. A guilty person is unfree and is essentially incapable of consistent independent action. Preachers commonly preach to heighten a sense of guilt in their congregations. Supposedly this is done to further holiness, but holiness comes with faith and growth in obedience, not growth in the paralysis of guilt. Politicians use guilt heavily to control people: citizens are made to feel guilty for all the ills of the world and their country so that they might surrender more power to the state. The politics of guilt and pity is the politics of totalitarian humanistic statism.

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[83] Alberto Moravia: *The Empty Canvas*. (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1961). p. 272.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 302.

Where control by guilt prevails, legalism does also. Man-made rules are imposed rigorously, and law proliferates in church and state. Even "free sex" groups impose rigid rules and find violations unforgivable. Because man is ultimate for all such people, man's rules are basic. Fear of offending other persons, *fear of man*, is then basic, so that *a double guilt* governs such men. *First*, there is the guilt before God, who made them, and whose laws are implanted in every atom of their being. *Second*, because man is made his own god, there is guilt and fear before man, lest others be offended or despise the law-breaker, or rule-breaker, as an outcast, as socially unfit.

The atoned are free from the burden of sin and guilt because they are legally and personally redeemed by the atonement effected by Jesus Christ. Their salvation is grounded in an effectual, objective, and legal act by God the Son. Pietistic religion undermines that objective legal fact. As Aulen noted, "the watchword of Pietism was New Birth...rather than justification - that is to say, the word chosen was one that described a subjective process."[85] The new birth is very important, but its importance rests on the background of an objective and unchanging legal act by Jesus Christ. To stress the *results* of that act rather than the act itself is to place the emphasis on man. The result too has been a weakening of the objective legal fact. Because priority is given to man in pietism, man then assumes a place of sovereignty: God's legal act, the atonement, is then available to all who of their own free will *choose* Christ. The result is an ineffectual legal act made effective only by man's personal choice. As G.D. Long observes tellingly:

> This author sees no purpose, benefit, or comfort in a redemption that does not redeem, a propitiation that does not propitiate, a reconciliation that does not reconcile; neither does he have any faith in a hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers. Rather, he has faith in a redemption which infallibly secures the salvation of each and everyone for whom it was designed, namely, "the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52), which is such a multitude of sinners declared righteous that no man can number them. God forbid, therefore, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).[86]

It is a real and objective law, which is broken by sin. That law is not a mere code which represents a human demand: it is the word which sets forth the righteousness of the living God. Our redemption from the *penalty* of the law for sin is Christ's work. We are not, as Murray pointed out, redeemed from the law itself, because the law is summed up as our obligation to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and being, and our neighbor as ourselves. "It would contradict the very nature of God to think that any person can ever

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85. Gustaf Aulen: *Christus Victor*. (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (1931) 1937). p. 150.
86. Gary D. Long: *Definite Atonement*. (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1966). p. 65.

be relieved of the necessity to love God with the whole heart and to obey his commandments."[87]

The atoned are redeemed from the *penalty* of the law into *the power* of the law. The law expresses the righteousness of God, and it is the means to dominion (Deut. 28).

Our religious experiences are thus at best hardly secondary to the supreme importance of God's great act, the atonement. The atonement is the charter of man's freedom.

87. John Murray: *Redemption - Accomplished and Applied.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1955). p. 49f.

XI

JUSTIFICATION

1. Justification

Charles Buck (1771-1815) defined atonement thus:

> Atonement is the satisfying Divine Justice by Jesus Christ giving himself a ransom for us, undergoing the penalty due to our sins, and thereby releasing us from that punishment which God might, justly inflict upon us, Rom. v. 11. The Hebrew word signifies *covering*, and intimates that our offenses are, by a proper atonement, covered from the avenging justice of God.[1]

Atonement and justification are both legal facts, and, in Biblical theology, both are totally the sovereign acts of God's free grace. In atonement, satisfaction is rendered by Jesus Christ, for the sins of the elect people. In justification, the acquittal which atonement secures is followed by a legal declaration that the atoned are just, holy, and righteous before God's court of law. Atonement releases us from the penalty and condemnation of the law, which God pronounces upon all who transgress and violate His commandments. Justification declares that our legal status is one of righteousness. Buck wrote, with respect to justification,

> JUSTIFICATION, a forensic term, and signifies the declaring or the pronouncing a person righteous according to law. It stands opposed to condemnation; and this is the idea of the word whenever it is used in an evangelical sense, Rom. v. 18. Deut. xxv. 1. Prov. xvii. 15. Matt. xii. 37. It does not signify to make men holy, but the holding and declaring them so. It is defined by the assembly thus: "An act of God's free grace, in which he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."[2]

Because justification is a legal act, it does not make men holy but rather declares them legally to be so.

The influence of humanism in the church has undermined extensively this doctrine. Because humanism is man-centered in every area, it stresses human experience above and beyond objective reality. The modern world began with Descartes' "I think, therefore I am." The human consciousness is the measure of reality. As a result, in the area of Christian faith and life, the consequences of the modern standard very early meant a variety of stresses on experience. It would be absurd to hold that, prior to the rise of Pietism, religious experience was non-existent in Christendom. On the contrary, it was

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[1] Rev. Charles Buck: *A Theological Dictionary*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Joseph J. Woodward, 1826). p. 37.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 285. Buck's assembly citation is from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, A. 33.

commonplace and even more extensive than under Pietism. However, man's subjective religious experience was seen by orthodoxy as at best secondary to God's objective work of redemption. The central Reformation doctrine was justification. Today, in all evangelical circles, the focus is not on atonement and justification but on being born again. Man's rebirth and conversion is clearly important and necessary; without it we would have no Christianity. But being born again is a product, not the cause. It is man's subjective experience of God's work; atonement and justification are God's objective acts, and totally His work.

Where man's subjective experience is given priority over God's objective acts, certain serious consequences follow. *First*, the sovereignty of God in salvation is undermined, and salvation becomes man's choice, not an act of God's sovereign grace. This leads to a warping of all theology and a radical misreading of all Scripture. Christianity is undercut in its God-centered character and is made supposedly man-centered.

Second, because both atonement and justification refer to God's law, the satisfaction thereof, and the legal fact of a changed status before God, where the primary stress is on man's experience of being born again, then antinomianism prevails. The law's centrality is discarded in favor of the primacy of experience. Experience is held to over-rule law and to render law obsolete. On the other hand, where atonement and justification have primacy, there logically the authority of God's law will be re-established; the emphasis is then not on our feelings but on what God has done for us in Christ, and the faith and obedience He now requires of us. Antinomianism is the tell-tale evidence of an experiential bias.

Third, psychology prevails over theology, and, in the modern church, psychology is the subject of a very great percentage of preaching. A man-centered faith is greatly concerned with man on man's terms. Theology then becomes the stage scenery and back-drop against which man plays the central role.

Fourth, the social gospel is the man-centered approach of many humanists. Those who stress the individual man will become psychology-oriented; those humanists who are interested in group man, in humanity rather than individuals, will stress the social gospel and political action.

Fifth, because God and His law become adjuncts to human experience, in every area of life, the family, church, school, the state, the arts and sciences and all things else, man's spiritual or rational judgments prevail over the judgments of God's word.

Justification, on the other hand, means a stress on God's objective order rather than man's subjective experience and rationale. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says in Q. 33:

> Q. What is justification?

> A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins (Eph. 1:7), and accepteth us as righteous in his sight (II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:5; Rom. 3:22, 24, 25), only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us (Rom. 5:17, 18, 19; Rom. 4:6-8), and received by faith alone (Rom. 5:1; Acts 10: 43; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

The world being totally God's creation, law and justification are His prerogatives also. As evolutionary ideas have either been accepted or have unconsciously influenced churchmen, their thinking has become antinomian, and justification has receded in their framework of thought to the background. The Reformation was possible because justification was made central and basic. The emphasis on being born again resembles the pre-Reformation preaching of various monastic and lay orders, with the same heavy stress on the individual and his experience. While the modern evangelical subjectivism has the advantage of the background of the Reformation clarification, it still represents a return to the earlier subjectivism.

Green, in his analysis of the Shorter Catechism statement on justification, called attention to its premises and affirmations:

1. The origin of justification: it is of God.
2. The nature of justification: it is an act, a gracious act.
3. The elements of justification: pardon and acceptance.
4. The completeness and comprehensiveness of the act: "all our sins."
5. The ground of justification: the imputed righteousness of Christ.
6. The condition of justification: "faith alone."[3]

The doctrine of justification tells us that order is of God's creation and in terms of His law. He alone can declare what justice is, and who is just, so that it is His justice, His court and law, and His word alone that governs all things. Every attempt at justice, justification, and a righteous or just standing apart from God's law is an exercise in nonsense. Nothing that we do, reason, or experience can of itself alter our status or the nature of justice. All man's efforts simply constitute a delusion: man is not God, and man's law cannot produce justice or justification.

A social order or a religious movement which lacks the Biblical doctrine of justification will therefore lack a sense of reality. It will begin with delusion and end in disaster.

2. The Sociology of Justification

We have, in Romans 3:21-31, Paul's great declaration of the meaning of justification in the life of the redeemed and in redemption. Paul proclaims, not the abolition of law and works as such, but the abolition of man's law and man's works as in any way contributing to man's righteousness before God.

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[3] Joseph Benjamin Green: *A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards, with Explanatory Notes*. (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1965. Sixth Printing Revised). p. 85.

He summons the witness of the law and the prophets (v. 21) to declare that man's justification before God is totally the work of God. Man's law, or man's attempt to use God's law as a means of justification, is denied. As Murray noted, "Law in one sense pronounces the opposite of justification, the law in another sense preaches justification."[4] All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God (v. 23); no man can save himself, or justify himself before God. Man cannot place God in his debt (Rom. 4:4).

We have *redemption* through Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:24), i.e., He has ransomed us by the payment of a price. Our redemption is not an abstraction, nor is it a redemption into a life of our own, into independence and autarchy. It is "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." He is the embodiment of our redemption, and we are now members of His new humanity and of His new creation: He is our federal Head, our Adam (I Cor. 15:45-50). Our redemption frees us from sin and death into a life of righteousness, holiness, knowledge, and dominion in Jesus Christ (Gen. 1:27-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24).

It is an error, as Murray pointed out, to see Jesus Christ as satisfying and placating God's wrath by His propitiatory sacrifice. Paul, in Rom. 4:25-26, makes clear that this sacrifice is the work of the Godhead. "It is quite alien to biblical thought to overlook the agency of God the Father in the provisions of redemption and it is a perversion to represent the Father as won over to the exercise of grace and mercy by the intervention of Christ's propitiatory accomplishment." Paul declares that the initiative comes from God.[5]

Thus, Scripture gives us this over-view of history:

1. God created man, and commissioned man to serve Him, and to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth, making it God's Kingdom (Gen. 1:27-28).

2. The means to this goal is the every word of God, which is law because God declares it (Gen. 2:15; Matt. 4:4).

3. Man saw and still sees, in his sin, a "better way", man's own law-word as the means to the Kingdom and to the perfection of the earth.

4. Man's way brings in sin and death, but man persists in believing that his way will finally conquer sin and death and make him as God (Gen. 3:5). Man therefore denies God's sovereignty or lordship, God's law and God's summons to repent or perish. The law and the prophets are alike rejected.

5. Man is thus under condemnation, under God's death penalty, and Jesus Christ makes atonement for His new humanity, and justifies them.

6. Man is now freed from sin and death (Rom. 8:2), and from his will to be his own god and law, determining for himself what is good and evil (Gen. 3:5). Instead, he is delivered from all efforts at self-justification and self-salvation, being "justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).

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[4] John Murray: *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 110.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 117f.

He looks not to himself for justification, neither to his works, reason, nor person, but by faith he looks to Jesus Christ.

7. Paul concludes, "Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31). Paul thus denies antinomianism any ground. Man is delivered from his own law-word and kingdom to God's law-word and Kingdom. Precisely because man is delivered from self-justification, he now lives by the *every word* (Matt. 4:4) of God, who justifies him. He is born again, and his new life is God's gift and creation (John 3:5-6). He is delivered from the law as a death sentence into the law as the righteousness of God to be fulfilled or put into force in and through him (Rom. 8:4-5).

As a result, his life now has a new sociology: his life and institutions, and their development, are now subject to the every word of God. They are no longer an independent and humanistic government and development but a theocratic one.

Briefly, theocracy requires theonomy, i.e., God's rule requires God's law. The Kingdom of Man requires man-made laws; the Kingdom of God requires God-given laws.

God's law is given to us to obey, not to consider. Moreover, we receive the law as creatures, not as gods. In Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God doctrine, men are to become gods in the same way as Jesus is a Son of God.[6] This means that man's absolute dependence upon God for atonement and justification is undermined, and this is in fact the case with Armstrong.[7] Thus, when Armstrong approaches the law, he does not do so as a creature in covenant with God through Christ, but as a potential God. The result is, not redemption through Christ, and sanctification by the obedience of faith to God's every word, but the imitation of Christ by other sons of God of like rank. This aspect of imitation appears in Armstrong's claims to a prophetic role.[8] The parallels to Mormonism are thus not surprising.[9] Armstrong is, however, of the British Israel school of thought. A telling example of the imitation of Christ motif came in July, 1978, when Herbert W. Armstrong issued a general letter to his followers denouncing his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, for his "improper behavior and excessive drinking." According to the news report, "Armstrong said he had 'followed the way of Christ' by 'trying desperately through the years to cover up my son's sins and mistakes.'"[10] The covering of sins by Jesus Christ means atonement; the covering of sins by man is lawlessness.

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6. Joseph Hopkins: *The Armstrong Empire*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974). p. 101ff.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-127.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 21f., 54f., 63f., 66, 89f., 230, 234f.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 103, 104f.
10. Bert Mann, "Covered Up For Son, Elder Armstrong Says," in the *Los Angeles Times*, Friday, July 7, 1978, H. II, p. 6.

At this point, many will cite Proverbs 10:12, "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins." It is remarkable how many people are familiar with such verses as *seem* to contradict other parts of Scripture, and how they love them! Proverbs 10:12 has *nothing* to do with atonement or the imitation of Christ. It is talking about the fruits or *results* of hatred and love. Hatred produces and works to create strife; love works to undo hatred and sins. As Delitzsch stated it, love "smooths the disturbances occasioned by" sins.[11] Peter and James cite Proverbs 10:12 as illustrative of the way of life of the redeemed (I Peter 4:8; James 5:20).

This means that the sociology of justification can be neither antinomianism nor the presumptuous imitation of Christ as would-be gods. Because man is God's creature in all his being, in the totality of his life and institutions he must be subject to the every word of God. The life of the justified is the life of faith, of saying Amen to, and placing the whole of our life and reliance on the *every word of God* as our only way of life and law. The justified have a Lord, Jesus Christ. The justified have a law, *the every word of God.* The justified have a kingdom, the Kingdom of God. The justified become members of God's new creation in Christ, and they live in terms of that life, law, community, and family. "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Ps. 107:2).

3. Justification By Faith

Justification is a legal act; justification by faith is a matter of life. It would appear that the line between theology and life is a blurred one. To say so, however, would be a serious error: in Scripture no such line exists. Theology, the word of God, is always a matter of life and death because it is the living God, who is the absolute lord and total creator of all things who speaks the word.

Abstractionism has behind it a Hellenic faith. It seeks to separate from life *the idea*, the form or pattern, which has been imposed on or mingled with an alien matter. But the Bible does not give us form and matter in conjunction but only God's creation, a unity.

When the abstractionist seeks truth, he "rises above" one aspect of the world to seek another and "truer" one. The Manichaean deserts matter for spirit. The mystic rises above particularity and individuality to seek the oneness of being. The neoplatonist churchman forsakes law and material things for grace and spirituality, and so on. With agnostics and atheists, abstractionism means that a barren intellectualism (or pseudo-intellectualism) leads towards a denigration of life and practicality.

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[11] Franz Delitzsch: *Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon*, I. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, (1872) 1950). p. 217.

The word and the works of God know no such division. In God's creation law, love, life, grace, and all things else are inseparable. The psalmist says, "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil" (Ps. 97:10). Love without a hatred of that which opposes our faith and is its enemy is impossible; we cannot abstract love from law, life, judgment, and grace. Abstractionism presupposes a Hellenic world view in which mind (or form) and matter are two alien substances in temporal and temporary confusion; it then requires that the true thinker and the moral man separate the two. For Scripture, the division is not between mind and matter; no such line exists. It is between faith in the Lord and faith in man. It is a moral, not a metaphysical, division. As a result, when we speak of justification, we must recognize that this legal act by the sovereign God has moral and personal consequences for man. Where there is no justification, there is condemnation. When the living God who made every atom of man's being declares a man to be *legally* justified, then every atom of that man's being is alive with this freedom from sin and death and the penalties thereof. Then man's conscience and being reflect, not condemnation but justification. Then too the calling of and the responsibilities under God previously denied are now assumed and discharged in terms of a growing sanctification.

In any court of law, to be transferred from legal guilt to legal righteousness is a tremendous fact of life. It is totally so in God's supreme court of law and life. Justification by faith is thus a fact of life because it is an act of God's absolute court of law.

Certainly there is no abstractionism when we first encounter the great declaration, "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). Judea in Habakkuk's day was marked by waywardness and covenant-breaking. The overwhelming evil of the Chaldeans (neo-Babylonians) threatened Judea also. God declares the coming judgment but makes clear that the just man shall live by his faith in the midst of judgment. Who are the just, the *tsaddiq*? The verb is *tsadak*, to make righteous, to acquit. Both the noun and the verb are primarily legal or forensic rather than moral or psychological in their connotation. *The just* stand before God in God's grace and by His righteousness; they are an elect covenant people. (The ancient world knew of no standing before a sovereign or lord apart from his electing choice. There is a reference to this fact in Esther 4:11; 5:2. Thus, when the Bible speaks of anyone standing before God, or favored by His presence, it is always a case of sovereign election.)

Habakkuk, as a man of the elect people, is told of the coming judgment on Judea. His reaction is one of grief and consternation, but not surprise. God answers him by declaring that the elect man does not stand before God in his own righteousness, nor his own wisdom. The covenant man will therefore live by his faith that the God of all grace, justice, and mercy is ordering all things in terms of His all-wise and all-holy counsel. The just thus stand before

God in God's electing grace, legally made just by His mercy, and they stand in history in the faith that He who made them legally just when they were lawless, and sought to be their own gods, is also just and holy in all His ways. He will also justify time and history (Rom. 8:28).

There is an oblique reference to Hab. 2:4 perhaps in John 3:36; certainly Romans 1:17 repeats it, and Romans 2:1-4:25 expound it. In Romans 1:16-17, Paul declares:

> 16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
>
> 17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Paul's gospel or good news is "the power of God unto salvation." The omnipotence of God, His absolute power, is operative in His revelation of His righteousness. His law stands; His court requires atonement, and Christ renders it for the elect people. God's legal declaration of justification, however, is never abstracted from the life of man and the workings of God the Spirit. The legal act is distinct but never separable from the moral fact of regeneration and faith. Historically, this salvation was to the Jew first, and then to the Greek Gentiles, but it is "to every one that believeth", without regard to race, class, or status. It is the revelation "from faith to faith", i.e., by faith to every person everywhere who receives the gift of faith. The world of Paul's day was one dominated by an anti-God mentality, and by a homosexual mentality (Rom. 1:18-31). It took faith to live in that world in the confidence that God's absolute government was not only in control but increasing its sway (Isa. 9:6-7; Rom. 8:28). This, however, was exactly what they were to do, to believe that the Lord had redeemed them and justified them, and that the Lord would likewise redeem both time and history and triumph over all things. Paul concludes Romans by reminding believers that in due time God shall bruise or crush Satan under their feet (Rom. 16:20; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5; Rev. 11:15; 19:16). The final consummation results in a glorious triumph and a renewed creation:

> 3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.
>
> 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
>
> 5. 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.
>
> 6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

> 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.
> 8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Rev. 21:3-8)

In the fullness of the new creation, the legal fact still stands as the cornerstone: the elect stand justified by God's sovereign grace, and all of history and creation stand redeemed by His eternal counsel and decree. But now by the working of God's providence, Christ's royal power, and the Spirit's sanctifying operations, the moral fact is by God's grace in harmony with the legal fact. Sanctification in man is perfected, and all of creation is "Holiness unto the LORD" (Zech. 14:20-21).

The first two paragraphs of the Westminster Confession, "Of Justification", state:

> 1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth (Rom. 8:30; Rom. 3:24): not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything 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 (Rom. 4:5-8; II Cor. 5:19,21; Tit. 3:5, 7; Eph. 1:17; Jer. 23:6; Rom. 3:22,24,25,27; I Cor. 1:30,31; Rom. 5:17-19), they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God (Phil. 3:9; Eph. 2:8; Acts 13:38-39).
> 2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification (John 1:12; Rom. 3:38; Rom. 5:1); yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love (James 2:17,22,26; Gal. 5:6).

Faith without works is dead, and there is no justification where all other saving graces are absent. This means that the justified, who are those legally declared righteous before God, now become God's instruments of righteousness on earth. The justified are the elect people of law and grace, of love and mercy, of faith and works, and they are the people of God's Kingdom who extend God's dominion into every area of life and thought. They dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen. 9:26-27), in the tabernacle of the Lord Christ, and they are enlarged by the Lord, because they serve Him in all their being (Rev. 22:3).

4. False Justification

To justify means to declare judicially that a man's life and actions are in harmony with the law. God, as Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25), is emphatic that He "will not justify the wicked" (Ex. 23:7). It is the duty of all human

judges to abide by God's law, and this means "they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deut. 25:1). Men can be righteous in their relation to other men, but, before the Lord, none are righteous (Rom. 3:10). No man can justify himself before God. *First, to justify* is a legal act, and, before God, man is not the judge but the sinner. Self-justification is false and presumptuous justification, because it presupposes that judgment is man's prerogative. It rests on original sin, man's desire to be his own god and judge (Gen. 3:5). Self-justification is thus an aspect of original sin, of man's depravity. Justification is a sovereign legal act by the Lord and can never be a prerogative of man. Judgment and justification by human courts, civil and ecclesiastical, is by delegation only, not by prerogative, and must be made in terms of God's law to be valid. In brief, justification is a divine act, the work of the Lord.

Second, because man is a sinner, self-justification is doubly wrong, because it presupposes not only the sinner's ability and right to judge himself, but also assumes that man is capable of doing good when he is evil. *The good* which is required of him by the Lord is something far more than and different from the humanistic and humanitarian idea of the good. It means to manifest the holiness, righteousness, and dominion of God with knowledge and wisdom. God alone is good (Matt. 19:17); we manifest His goodness to the degree that we believe in the Lord and obey Him; our goodness is an aspect of His grace in us. Our justification as well as our righteousness is from the Lord. Paul makes clear that he realizes that in man himself, in his flesh, i.e., his humanity apart from the working of the triune God, there is no good thing (Rom. 7:18). Man is a creature and all that he is, he is by virtue of God's choosing and handiwork. Man has no independent standing before God to commend him or to give him grounds for self-justification. God is the creator and the law-giver, and hence the only redeemer and justifier. And man in revolt is especially in need of God's grace in justification, because he is mortally sick; more, he is dead in sins and trespasses (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13).

However, because man is God's creation, and because God's every work manifests His law and order, man's being cries out for justification. Despite his sin, and despite his already wealthy estate, Esau cried out, begging his father for a blessing (Gen. 27:34). Even so, man's being cries out for justification. The need for it is written in man's bones, in every fiber of his being.

Justification is thus a fact of every-day life, of our total life. We commonly say of others, "He's trying to justify himself," when men, caught in sin, seek to make themselves righteous or justified in their action. In prison, men justify themselves by looking down on other forms of crime as "really low" and their own offenses as justifiable. Prostitutes always look down on some other prostitute as "really low" in their practices, and hate married women and refer to them as "the real whores." Dishonest men in Church, state, labor, and

commerce balance out their works in order to give themselves a favorable and justifying balance. Men and women will justify their adultery or their irresponsibilities in marriage on the ground that the other party did something which justified their reaction.

In false justification, which is the same as self-justification, an important aspect is that of *necessity*. The sinner pleads *necessity* as a justifying fact. The comedian, "Flip" Wilson, has rightly satirized this fact of pleading, "The devil made me do it." Substitute for the devil, circumstances, superior officers and authorities, and other like excuses, and the meaning is still the same. *Necessity* is seen as both causing and justifying the offense. The pleas of both Adam and Eve before God cite necessity as their justification, and the necessity is finally placed on God's shoulders: "The woman *thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). The sinner feels a necessity in his sin and pleads justification by necessity.

The redeemed man feels another kind of necessity, the necessity to serve and obey the Lord. Paul writes, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16).

For the unregenerate, *sin* has a necessity to it, and this is his self-justification: "everybody's doing it;" "I'm only human;" etc. Sin is seen as a part of the condition of humanity, a metaphysical rather than a moral condition. For the regenerate, it is *the obedient service to God* which is a necessity. Because man is God's creation, man has an inescapable duty to serve and glorify God.

Aaron, in the episode of the golden bull-calf, insisted on the necessity for his sin. *First*, he declared that the people made him do it: "thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief." *Second*, Aaron claimed that he did not form the calf: the golden calf miraculously formed itself in the fire: "And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." *Third*, Aaron insisted on calling his sin an aspect of his priestly work, and on confusing the calf and the Lord: "And when Aaron saw it, (the golden calf) he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD (Jehovah)" (Ex. 32:1-14).

Because of man's need for justification, he seeks to relate his sin somehow to God and His righteousness. Aaron called the calf the Lord, Jehovah, and the Marxists vindicate terror as a step towards perfect justice. In every area of life, sin is somehow justified by the sinner.

Because the sinner needs justification, he can only justify himself by also justifying his action, i.e., his sins. False justification thus ends up as the justification of evil. But to justify evil, we must at the same time indict and condemn the good. Accordingly, the tempter indicts God as a liar and evil:

"Yea, hath God said?" You shall not die, he declares; God knows that, instead of death, godhood, divinity, awaits you, and he seeks to frustrate you.

Thus, false justification begins by trying to raise itself to the level of righteousness, and it concludes with an assault on justice and a vindication of evil and injustice. It is the essence of modern politics to justify envy, theft, murder, the dishonoring of parents, false witness, fraud, idolatry and more in the name of a supposedly higher good. This higher good is still the old sin. The justification varies: it is in the name of the crown, the republic, the people, the revolution, or anything else man idolizes. Necessity is cited as the reason for whatever sins are committed: they are for the good of the state, the church, or the people, which means that the realm of law and necessity is transferred from God to man. Humanism is at the heart of all false justification.

5. Repression

In a radio debate, Larry Flynt, editor and publisher of the sexually oriented magazine, *Hustler*, declared:

> You see, I happen to feel most of the social ills are caused by repression, not permissiveness, and his views (Rev. Larry Jones') are the opposite....I believe most of our social problems are caused from this repression and not a permissive attitude. I think if we became a more sexually liberated society, a lot of our problems would not exist–mainly crime.[12]

What Flynt refuses to admit is that man is at war with God, and man's desire is to sin, to violate God's law. It is not repression which leads to crime but man's desire to be his own god and law. The sinner finds the legal, godly way difficult, boring, and repressive, but sin is for him a way of life. A prostitute, describing her passionate love affair with a married man, remarked without comprehension on the fact that, when the man gained a divorce, "something went out of our relationship", and it ended.[13] The logical step was to marry, but that made the relationship lawful and hence untenable.

The 20th century has seen much literature, professional, literary, and amateur, on the idea of repression. Flynt has summed up the popular meaning of it all in his comments. The evil is repression; repression causes all kinds of evil; eliminate repression, give man full freedom, and crimes and social problems will gradually wither away.

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[12] Larry Jones, with C. A. Roberts: *Hustler for the Lord.* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1978). p. 108f.

[13] Joannie Winters: *House of Desire.* (New York, New York: Warner Paperback Library, (1967), 1973). p. 89.

All this is another way of saying that the problem is not the criminal but the law against crime. The law is repressive, and therefore it leads to crime. Eliminate the law, and you eliminate the crime.

Behind this stands another implicit charge: God is the source of these troublesome laws. Man is in trouble, because God (and Christianity) are repressive. Eliminate God, the Bible, and the church, and man will be free and *justified.* In Genesis 3:1-5 the tempter accuses God of repressing man. Man, he holds, needs to be free from God's repression in order to realize himself and become his own god.

Biblical justification is by imputation. Although man is not righteous before God, God the Judge imputes the righteousness of Jesus Christ to the sinner and declares him justified. As Berkhof wrote, "Justification is a judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner."[14] From beginning to end, justification is the act of God: He is the lawgiver whose law has been broken. He is the court and the Judge before whom all flesh shall appear. He is the Redeemer whose atonement affects man's justification. And, before all this He is the Creator, who made all things, including man.

False justification declares that all this is wrong. God, having made man, should release him to go his own way and be his god. In false justification, it is held that God's act is invalid and that only as man is free from God's repression can man's true justification emerge.

This view is not only applied to the theological realm, but to the family and society. Thus, when a Baptist pastor in New York State administered a well-deserved spanking to his 14 year old daughter, he was taken to court and his child taken from him. The paddle was about the size of a ruler or paint-stick, and between 10 and 12 swats were administered. This was called child abuse. "The Welfare Department of Onondaga County, however, as represented by two of the welfare workers associated with the Roy case, views the parental religious training of Shirley as violative of her rights as an individual to choose for herself what is right."[15]

The Sexual Revolution is a classic example of the war against repression. Not surprisingly, the demands of the revolutionaries are steadily stepped up in their lawlessness.

In politics, the repression of man is seen as a great evil, i.e., any repression by God and His word. In its place comes the repression by the state as the new freedom.

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[14] Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1941) 1946). p. 513.

[15] Alan N. Grover, "A Spanking Today May Take Your Children Away: Shirley Roy Case, "The *CLA Defender*, vol. 4., p. 3.

This should not surprise us. In a world of moral conflicts, something will be suppressed, either good or evil. The various modern opponents of repression are really seeking the repression of God and His law, and their replacement by a radical permissiveness for evil. This means justification by means of eliminating the laws which have been broken.

Every effort to end the repression of man is thus an attempt at the repression of God and His people. Paul tells us of the unregenerate, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). The unregenerate repress or suppress the knowledge of God within them (Rom. 1:18), and they want its suppression in the world at large.

However, because the whole world is God's creation, and every man therein, including God's enemies, is God's creation, all things witness to God (Ps. 19:1-4). This means that the champions of freedom from repression become the greatest of repressors. They are of necessity forced to suppress and remake all things in order to justify themselves. The result is a totalitarian state and world order. Just as for Christianity the sinner must be remade into a new man, so for humanism the old man, man created in the image of God, must be destroyed and remade into a new man, a self-created humanistic man, in order to regain paradise.

The end result of false justification is totalitarianism and the humanistic state. It is tyranny and repression. It is the great effort to destroy all things in order to obliterate God and His handiwork. Man must be destroyed, Nietzsche held, to make way for superman. Man as he is, was savagely hated by Nietzsche, because man as he is, sinner or saint, is inescapably a witness to God's handiwork. Nietzsche thus sought justification for man by the mass destruction of man! Self-justification is madness and suicide.

6. Justification by Law

Around 1660 A.D., Western civilization began to shift from a Christian to a humanistic foundation. Earlier, the so-called Renaissance had represented a similar change, but it had been defeated for a time by the Reformation. For the Enlightenment, religion was a matter of emotions, superstition, and blind faith, and hence the province of women and children, not rational men. For Bayle, *true morality was grounded in right reason, not in religion.* In a book written soon after the comet of 1680, Pierre Bayle argued that there was no necessary connection between religion and morals. Hence atheists could be as moral as anyone else, and toleration was thus the rational course with respect to various religious groups. (In one work, he did argue against toleration for atheists, perhaps on pragmatic grounds.)

But the matter did not stop here. All law was progressively located, together with morality, not in God but in Nature and Reason. The

Enlightenment thus separated law, morality, providence, and reason from God and religion and located them in Nature and Reason, and thus in effect in man, elite man.

This separation had its impact on religious life. One effect was the birth of pietism. We cannot grasp the full meaning of pietism until we see it as a reaction in Protestantism *against* the Reformation, and in Roman Catholic circles, against the Counter-Reformation. The pietists turned from an emphasis on justification and regeneration to a stress on the new life and emotional experiences. This was in part a return to the pre-Reformation emphasis on religious experience rather than doctrine. It was also in step with the Enlightenment stress on experimentalism (hence, experimental or experimental religion), and also the new emphasis on a separation of religion from morality. The early pietists did not lack the most flagrant manifestations of antinomianism, or just plain immorality.[16] Because law and morality had been separated from religion in current thought, many churchmen felt it to be a mark of wisdom to be antinomian, some quite flagrantly. Thus, John Wesley in 1751 found a Methodist preacher arguing that "a believer had a right to all women."[17] In the Great Awakening, some antinomians advocated a forsaking of marriage as legalism.[18] There is no lack of like opinions in our own time.

Meanwhile, theologically this belief was read into Scripture on the supposed ground that the law is dead for the believer. In American Negro theology in the South, during the era after 1865, it led to a logical conclusion from this antinomianism, the "clean sheets" doctrine. Placing a dirty sheet next to a clean sheet would dirty the clean sheet, but two clean sheets would remain clean. Therefore, it is no sin for two "Christians" to indulge in sexual relations, whatever their marital status. (I have encountered this doctrine among 20th century white clergymen, without the same colorful name of "clean sheets.")

This Enlightenment separation of religion and morality has led to a progressive general toleration of immorality. The press has long considered it a virtue not to delve into a politician's sexual life, unless some incident forces it into public view. Voters feel virtuous when they overlook morality, whether with candidates, or issues such as abortion. In 1978, a poll by the *Baltimore News American* indicated that 74% were not sure they would oppose or refuse to vote for suspended Governor Marvin Mandel, in spite of his conviction for bribery and conspiracy. A candidate for the state legislature in Illinois won in the primary although charged with eight counts of "flashing", or indecent exposure, at schoolgirls.[19]

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[16] For a summary account, see R. J. Rushdoony: *Revolt Against Maturity*. (Fairfax, Virginia: Thoburn Press, 1977). pp. 46ff.

[17] Lawrence Stone: *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*. (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1977). p. 627.

[18] C. C. Goen: *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1962). pp. 220ff.

The separation of law and morality from religion has also led to the "carnal Christian" doctrine, which holds that a man can be as ungodly as any unregenerate man, and become an atheist, but is still saved if he has once "accepted Christ."[20]

The Enlightenment separation of religion from law and morality has also seen an atomization of reality, so that meaning is separated from the universe, and logic from material aspects of creation. Ferlinghetti wrote:

> And yet how many
> wild beasts
> and how many mad
> in the civil thickets.....
> or then Rimbaud
> his 'nightmare and logic'
> a sophism of madness
> But we have our own more recent
> who also fatally assumed
> that some direct connection
> does exist between
> language and reality
> word and world
> which is a laugh
> if you ask me.[21]

The key areas whereby a religion manifests itself are the family, law, and education. If a religion does not govern all three of these, it is a dying faith. In fact, the way to understand the religion of any culture is to examine these three areas. In all three, for most churchmen in the 20th century, humanism is the governing factor. Children are seen as a physical and economic responsibility, not a religious one. Our laws are increasingly informed by humanistic morality, and our statist education is humanistic to the core.

When a religion abandons law and education, another religion takes over, and humanism has, largely by the default of "Christians." Both law and education are very important to the humanists, because humanism's plan of salvation calls for the redemption of man and society by means of statist law and statist education. This, of course, means totalitarianism. Law ceases to have as its purpose the suppression of crime and violence and the requirement of restitution (Ex. 22:1-17; Rom. 13:1-8). Its purpose becomes salvation. Educators from Horace Mann to the present have seen man's salvation as politico-educational, and politicians have longer roots in their messianic pretensions. Mankind will be made righteous, it is believed, by acts of law

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19. "The Week, "in *National Review*, vol. XXV, no. 33, August 18, 1978, p. 998.
20. See Arend ten Pas: *The Lordship of Christ*. (Vallecito, California: Ross House Books, 1978).
21. Lawrence Ferlinghetti: Poems: *A Coney Island of the Mind*. (New York, New York: New Directions, (1955) 1958).

and by educational processes. A new man will be created, and paradise on earth.

Even more, environmentalism is basic to humanism. Man's sin and guilt are denied. Man is the victim of religion, or of capitalism, of his family's discipline, of false education, of repression, and so on. The goal of legislation and education, the great *works* of humanism, is to free man from all his problems, his poverty, diseases, guilts, bigotries, and even death by means of rational and scientific state action. In the process, some reactionary people must suffer, but all that the state does will be *justified* by the results. Even as God's saints, surveying history, sing the Song of Moses, declaring, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: *just and true* are thy ways, thou King of Saints" (Rev. 15:3), so too the saints of humanism are expected to sing, "Great and marvelous are thy works, O state, and *justified* are all thy works by the Great Community." But the Great Community will never arrive for the humanists, only hell. There is no justification in their works, or any works.

But we cannot eliminate the threat of this rival religion until we as Christians restore the family, law (and morality), and education to their rightful place under Christ the King and His law-word.

7. Justification by Victimization

In Genesis 3:7-13 we find Adam and Eve, having sinned, see themselves not as sinners but as victims. In their attitude we find summed up the essence of humanistic sociology, politics, religion, psychology, and more. The "wisdom" of these areas of study and discipline can be summed up in four words: "We are all victims." Is a man a criminal, or a failure? If he is poor, the answer is his poverty is to blame, and he is a victim. Is he born into wealth, or into a middle class suburban family? Both of these things make him a "victim", or so countless university students in recent years have told me. All their rebellion, lawlessness, and unbelief, where it produces unhappy results, is traced to their background. They are in their own eyes *victims*, and hence their behavior is *justifiable.*

But if we are victims, someone else is guilty. The result is the punishment of the *outsider*, a person, class, race or nation. The guilty are the rich or the poor, the middle classes, or the establishment, the blacks, whites, or something else. Of course, supremely, the outsider is God's covenant people; man's hatred of God is manifested by lashing out at God's people.

This false justification is increasingly being honored as a science. Thus, a Danish-born psychiatrist, Dr. David Abrahamsen, M.D., speaks of victimology. Very persuasively, once his humanistic premises are granted, Abrahamsen goes so far as to maintain that, in a majority of cases, the victim provokes the murder. ("Teddy, by provoking and goading Tiger, instigated

her own murder that Saturday night.")[22] What Abrahamsen does is to call attention to the sadistic element in the murderer, and the masochistic personality of the victim. Granting this for the present, his argument is even then on shaky ground, because his view of man has strong elements of Pavlovianism. Man is a conditioned reflex; hence he is a victim, because he is a passive being, not an active, responsible creature made in the image of God.

In victimology, the genetic approach prevails. The family is guilty for the child's sins. The "problem" is a weak father and a domineering mother. Even in my university days, this doctrine was commonly believed. Virtually all students saw themselves as the victims of such homes. In the limited number of cases where I came to know the parents, I found this idea to be a myth, but one still believed religiously. At any rate, for all such people, genetic causality replaces and excuses guilt. It provides false justification by "demonstrating" victimization.

But the Lord, as He confronts Adam and Eve, passes judgment upon them for their double sin. *First*, they broke His law and ate of the forbidden fruit. *Second*, by claiming to be victims, they denied their sin and thereby sinned again.

Men who seek false justification by claiming victimization make themselves into *chronic victims*. Even Abrahamsen notes this and writes, "some people have to remain miserable in order to feel good."[23] The victim makes a virtue out of being a victim. They say in effect, "See how sensitive I am; I suffer for things which happened twenty or fifty years ago!"

In brief, for all such, to be justified means to be victimized. A classic example of victimization becoming a virtual religion is apparent in the best-loved classic of the Vietnamese, Nguyen Du's *The Tale of Kieu*, although the same spirit is apparent in most Oriental religions. Kieu cries out, "Creator, why are you so mean and cruel?"[24] Again, Kieu declares, "We're victims in a world all twisted round," and, "For justice can we cry, we flies and ants?" We are as nothing to God. In the Introduction to *The Tale of Kieu*, Gloria Emerson singles out a key concept in the *Tale*, the word *oan*, meaning *wronged*. The *Tale* is, she notes, "the picture of a society of victims, of people punished for crimes and sins they did not commit."

Unhappily, such thinking is commonplace in all circles today. It is the essence of Marxism, but it is also common to conservatives who see men as *victims* of conspiracies. It is common to modern ideas, about missions, both liberal, reformed, and evangelical: the peoples on the mission field are

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[22] David Abrahamsen, M.D.: *The Murdering Mind*. (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1973). p. 219.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[24] Nguyen Du: *The Take of Kieu*. Translated by Huynh Sanh Thong. (New York, New York: Random House, 1973). p. 36.

presented as victims, not sinners. Liberation Theology is a theology of victimization, not of the redemption of sinners.

But Scripture is clear that we are self-victimized. We try to appeal to God as victims of God: "this is the way you made me, God." The result of this false doctrine of justification is *a life of defeat*, of self-willed, carefully nursed defeat.

But I John 5:4 tells us:

> For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

8. Toleration and Intolerance

The bitter hostilities and sometimes savage persecutions for religious reasons of all dissenting elements once marked Christendom and marred its professions of faith. Supposedly, we have now entered into more enlightened times, and toleration is the rule. But, before we congratulate ourselves on being wiser and more advanced, let us remember hostility and savagery have not disappeared. Rather, they have merely been transferred from religion to politics.

The humanism of the Enlightenment, in line with the thinking of Bayle and many others, viewed religious differences as of trifling important. Religion was seen as mere opinion, superstition, and blind belief. To argue or fight over something like religion was hardly becoming to any intelligent man. *Toleration, instead of representing moral advance, represented moral indifference.* Moreover, strong convictions, as they left Christianity, entered into politics, so that politics became the new religion, and the wars of religion became total political and military wars. The 20th century sees the full-fledged holy political wars, although their first great eruption came with the French Revolution. There has been no moral advance.

Toleration in the modern age was born out of a false premise, namely, that Christian faith is a mere opinion and a matter of indifference. Now men kill and die over matters of politics. The more clearly humanistic and anti-Christian these new men are, the more savagely they kill, torture, and destroy. The fascists and the communists are the clearest example of this, but the democracies are moving in the same direction. Moreover, as the new religion of politics triumphs, it drops all pretense of toleration to persecute Christianity openly. On gaining power, political religions can tolerate no free or independent opinion in any realm. Thus, the so-called progress in religious toleration was no progress at all but simply a shift in the locale of intolerance.

The growth of toleration with respect to Christian doctrine and differences was thus a manifestation of indifferentism both within and without the church. Men began to speak of the many roads to God, and to explore other religions with appreciation. Christianity waned as revelation and was stressed

as a means of creative self-expression. "Why not try God?" one printed appeal of recent years read. Indeed, why not? Having found mouth washes good for the breath, and soaps and deodorants good for the body, why not try God for the good of one's peace of mind? God, from the sovereign lord and creator of all things, was reduced to a human resource.

The dictionary defines *toleration* as tolerating what is not wholly approved, as the spirit and desire to be tolerant in matters of opinion. *Intolerance* is defined as bigotry, as an unwillingness to tolerate, bear, or endure contrary beliefs and opinions. Now, if politics is the order of reality and truth for us, we cannot then tolerate a contrary belief, because it is then very clearly a danger and a menace. Hence, the communists cannot tolerate republican capitalists, and true republicans cannot tolerate communists. Politics has then ceased to be a matter of opinion: it has become a matter of reality and of sanity.

The Christian cannot favor either tolerance or intolerance. *First* of all, both positions reduce Biblical religion to a matter of opinion, a position he must emphatically deny. *Second* those who profess toleration hold that the truth will be discovered by free inquiry, whereas the Bible is clear that the truth of God is known by revelation from God and is received by the Spirit of God working in man to hear God's written word. The key on man's part is thus not free inquiry, however worth while or earnestly pursued, but regeneration. Similarly, those who believe in intolerance assume that repression can change the human scene. But man is not remade by law, nor by repression, but by the regenerating power of God. Neither toleration nor intolerance have anything to do with it.

Paul tells us that, for all the unredeemed, God's law is a *curse*: it is a death sentence upon all men (Deut. 27):

> 10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.
> 11. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.
> 12. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.
> 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. 3:10-14)

For an unregenerate man to attempt to pass before God by law-keeping is impossible: he is under God's curse, and God's law accuses him for his lawlessness. For a man to claim that he sees no reason for God to condemn him as he goes his own way, because he neither kills, steals, nor commits adultery, is arrogance and evil. Most men keep within the law on these things

out of fear of the state's police, and in fear of their wives! They serve themselves best, and most easily gratify their will to be god in their own lives, by keeping within the law. Their's is not morality but cautious sin. No man can justify himself before God, nor make atonement for his sin. Consider this fact: God's law is life, peace, and strength to the redeemed (Ps. 119). "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165). This same law is a curse, not peace nor strength, to the unregenerate.

Now, if God's law is a curse to the unregenerate, how much more so is humanistic man's law a curse to him! Man makes his laws in order to save himself by law. He says of politics and law: This is the order of reality and of salvation; we men will remake the world and ourselves by our works of law. What God's law curses is *man's way*. If man seeks to use God's law, or a Pharisaic version thereof, as a means of salvation, he is accursed. What Paul condemns is precisely the Pharisaic perversions of the law erected into a plan of salvation. If these are condemned, how much more so the openly humanistic versions of law stand condemned. They are, moreover, all the more a *curse* to man. The new religion of politics and its doctrine of salvation by humanistic law is thus a fearful curse upon mankind.

No man, says Paul, *is justified by the law in the sight of God.* Rather, *the just shall live by faith.* The justified thus do not see politics as salvation. Moreover, they recognize the errors in both tolerance and intolerance. These involve a trust in man's work and way rather than in the promise of the Spirit.

Thus, we cannot stand in terms of the Biblical doctrine of justification and pursue the dream of fallen man, from Cain, through Rome, to the present, of salvation by politics. It is the tempter's program.

9. "The Just Shall Live By Faith"

Both in Romans 1:17, and in Galatians 3:11, Paul is emphatic that "the just shall live by faith" and that our justification is the work of God through Christ.

Let us now consider some further implications of this. A simple illustration will suffice to stress the fact that justification is a legal or juridical act by Christ entirely apart from any act, will, desire, or effort on our part. If a man, without my knowledge, and without any merit or work on my part, deposits $100,000 in the bank to my name, that money is validly and actually in my account whether I know it or not. *When* I learn of this deposit, my reaction will quite naturally be one of great joy; it will be for me a glorious experience. It is not my experience which puts the money in the bank, but my reaction to the deposit which produces the experience.

Similarly, Christ's work of justification takes place entirely apart from me, my will, efforts, or experience. It is His sovereign and gracious act, a merciful

act which is totally and entirely of His grace. My knowledge of Christ's act leads to an experience on my part. I am suddenly converted legally from one condition to another, and, by His grace, regenerated or made new in order to be able to conform to that new estate. My experience of this is my conversion. My experience does not save me; I have my experience *because* I am already saved and know it now. No more than my joyful experience, on learning of a large deposit of money to my account, creates the money does my religious experience of conversion save me: it is my response to salvation.

Thus, all those who preach that a man can be saved by going forward at a meeting and having an experience are making salvation into man's work and are denying justification. The Biblical stress is *not* on conversion, i.e., on man's experience of salvation, but on justification, the Lord's legal act for our redemption.

Now, Paul says, knowing what God has done in Christ, "The just shall live by faith." What does this mean? If I know that a large sum of money (in non-inflationary dollars or in gold) has been deposited to my account, I know then that my power, my ability to function, and my responsibilities have been radically altered. My way of life is thus altered. Similarly, knowing now my relationship to God, His inexhaustible power and total government, my life is altered. I am not alone, nor impotent. I have a place in God's grand plan and strategy, and I am an heir of all things, and one of the blessed meek who shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5).

Paul speaks of the privileges of our new estate thus:

> 26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
>
> 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
>
> 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
>
> 29. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:26-29)

He declares that the redeemed man is the heir of all things. He is the man who walks by faith. Stamm is right in declaring, in discussing justification, that "the axiom of Paul's gospel is: *through faith* that is faithful" i.e., justifying faith is manifested in faithfulness.[25] When Habakkuk was first of all told that "the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4), this word came from the faithful covenant God. Habakkuk, horrified by the coming judgment on the covenant nation, was reminded that the covenant law calls for *judgment* on transgressions as well as *redemption*. God's judgments represent faithfulness to His covenant law, and their goal is the redemption of His people, and of all the earth. The word of the Lord declares:

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[25] Raymond T. Stamm, "Galatians," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10, p. 505.

> 9. Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!
>
> 10. Thou has consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.
>
> 11. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.
>
> 12. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!
>
> 13. Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?
>
> 14. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:9-14)

The Lord is judging His people through Babylon, but the destruction of Babylon is already set forth in these words. Israel is judged, and Assyria, Judea and Babylon as well, so that the Lord's covenant may stand, the earth be restored, and all be made into the Kingdom of God. We interpret faithfulness as standing by someone, no matter what they do, i.e., as faithfulness even in their sins. God's faithfulness to covenant man in his sins is not to smile at them but to judge them. Only so can the earth "be filled with the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

God is faithful to His covenant with man, in His mercy as well as in His judgment. In response, man must be faithful. The law of God is the way of faithfulness and the covenant bond. Just as a married man manifests his faithfulness to his wife by observing closely and lovingly his marriage vows, so the redeemed man is faithful to God's covenant in Christ by observing God's covenant law. Every attempt to use the law apart from Christ's justifying work is false, for such a use of law, or law in this sense, "is not of faith" (Gal. 3:12). On the other hand, to abandon the law as no longer binding is to deny faith, because faith is faithful. The law is a curse to those who are antinomian, and to those who seek to save themselves by law.

In Hebrews also we are told that "the just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:38), and we are then given examples of living by faith in the lives of men who manifested covenantal faithfulness. Faith is faithfulness to the covenant God. Faith is evidence of justification and regeneration. It is our response to the great gift of salvation through God's Son. Having been made sons of God by the adoption of grace through Jesus Christ, we manifest in our lives and our experience that we are sons and heirs. We thereby give evidence of and witness to the fact that we have been justified by His grace and mercy. It is neither our experience nor our works which save us; they only manifest the fact of our salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

10. Justification and the Will to Fiction

The words just, justify, and justification, with three exceptions in Proverbs, are also translated from the Greek and Hebrew by righteous and righteousness. To be justified means to be brought into right relationship with a person. In the case of justification between man and man, justification is made possible by man's act of restitution. Restitution is the purpose of Biblical law, and it effects the restoration of right relationship between the offended and the offender. Justification between man and God cannot be effected by man, because nothing man can do effects restitution. This requires the perfect law-keeping and the atonement of the new Adam, Jesus Christ, who, as the head of the new humanity, redeems His elect from sin and death and by His regenerating power makes them a new creation.

Without Christ's justifying work, man lacks right relationship to God *and therefore to reality.* Because all reality, including man himself, is God-created and made according to God's will and eternal purpose, man cannot have any right relationship to himself, to other men, and to the world around him except through God and His word. This means that in a very real sense Jesus Christ is the cosmic mediator who mediates a knowledge of and a relationship to all things through His person. We can know nothing truly apart from Him.

St. Paul, in warning the Colossians against all alien and non-Biblical philosophies, makes clear that all knowledge is through Christ, that, apart from Him, knowledge is "vain deceit, after the traditions of men, and the rudiments of the world" (Col. 2:8).

> 1. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;
> 2. That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;
> 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col. 2:1-3)

"The mystery of God" here is not Christ, as Lightfoot noted, but "Christ as containing in Himself all the treasures of wisdom." In brief, Paul states that "the Gospel....is as complete in itself as it is universal in its application."[26] Jesus Christ is the key to *all* knowledge. St. John thus says, "but ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (I John 2:20), i.e., we know the principle of all things through knowing their creator (John 1:1-3).

If we are separated from Christ, we are then separated from knowledge and from reality. We then live without justification and without knowledge of

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[26] J. B. Lightfoot: *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, reprint of 1897 edition). p. 173f.

reality. We live in terms of our imagination, an evil imagination which substitutes for God's reality the illusions of man's heart (Gen. 6:5).

One consequence of this is the will to fiction. Every era outside of Christ is a dark age of self-willed illusions. The 20th century has seen the development of fiction technologically, so that it is transmitted, not only by the printed and spoken word, but by radio and television and the facades of the modern world. Actors and audience become involved in this will to fiction and they lose reality to a degree where the two things, imagination and reality, exchange places. In an interview, actor James Coburn declared,

> "I don't think much about being a public figure,....Just about the part I'm playing in a film. You bring this character to life, make him vital, dynamic. Then when the film is completed, this character that you've slipped into is gone."
> "A great depression sets in. You know it's going to happen, and there's nothing you can do about it. Another role takes away the depression, but sometimes you don't get another role for six months. So you move into a fantasy life."
> "Making movies is my reality. Anything else is fantasy. I do anything to avoid the reality of taxes, paying bills, answering the phone..."
> "I feel a responsibility to do the best I can, whatever the role. You aren't long for this earth. Films are forever."[27]

This is not an unusual case, only a more honest statement than most.

We must add further that any false doctrine, or any heresy, is a departure from Christ and from reality. To illustrate, one of the better known and largest churches in the U.S. is radically antinomian in its faith, holds to the doctrine of the carnal Christian and decisional regeneration, and is open to any popular new movement that comes around. It is emphatically not open to any strict emphasis on Scripture. Its doctrine of "decisional regeneration", and the term is strongly stressed by them, means that anyone who at any time says "yes" to Jesus at an altar call, or on a decision card, or on listening to a broadcast, is at once regenerated and Jesus is bound to "save" him, meaning take him into heaven, no matter what his subsequent mode of life. A deacon of the church, through his studies, became "a five-point Calvinist." He condemned homosexuality, and was called a "legalist" and a "believer in works, rather than Jesus Christ." The church was one of the largest youth followings in the world. Because the young deacon insisted on breaking up the commonplace acts of non-martial coition in cars within the church's large parking lot by member youth, he was accused of harassing the faithful and substituting works for faith. In such a situation, there is a radical loss of all sense of reality and no knowledge of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 22:15). We are told very plainly that all "dogs (or, homosexuals), and sorcerers, and

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[27] Charles Brock, "James Coburn, 'Making Movies is My Reality, Anything Else is Fantasy'," in the Florida *Times-Union*, Jacksonville, Florida, Thursday, November 16, 1978, p. C-1.

whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" are *outside* the Kingdom of God (Rev. 22:15).

To be justified by the work of Jesus Christ means thus not only right relationship with God the Father but with all of reality.

The goal of Marxism is to transfer men from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. By the kingdom of freedom they mean a man-made and man-controlled world in which man rules as god in terms of his fiat word. The kingdom of freedom is the nightmare realm of man's imagination. It means, as Solzhenitsyn has pointed out, the destruction of history, so that events of ten and fifteen years ago become myths.[28] History, past, present, and future, become precisely what the new god ordains them to be by his fiat word.

In the United States we see the state invading the realms of the Christian school and church for the first time in history, and when church and school resist these invasions, new to the U.S., the state accuses them of holding a "novel" doctrine. State officials have brushed aside all the long-existing immunities and openly term them a "novelty." For them history has no meaning: only man's (or the state's) fiat word has meaning, and it is pure fiction.

The doctrine of justification is thus emphatically not an abstract doctrine, nor a purely ecclesiastical doctrine. It is basic to all of life. Abstract and museum-piece theology has no rightful place within the church: it is a fiction, and its god is as dead as its preachers.

11. Justification by Indictment

When Adam and Eve were confronted by God after the Fall, they promptly resorted to the first acts of self-justification in history. Adam justified his transgression by indicting God and the woman: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). Eve's self-justification was similar: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:13). Both blamed the world-system: it exploited the innocent and led them ignorantly and inoffensively into sin. Thus, Adam and Eve pleaded, *first*, victimization, and, *second*, they indicted the "victimizer", God. Belief in victimization leads always to an emphasis on self-justification by indictment. The sinner piles one reason upon another to invert the moral order of the universe and make God the criminal and sinner, and man the holy and offended innocent.

In a collection of essays by Folsom Prison convicts, this fact of self-justification by indictment is very clear. One convict, Pancho Aquila speaks

[28] Alexander Solzhenitsyn: *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956*, vol. III. (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1978). p. 228.

of resistance to the system as "spiritual salvation." "Existing morality" militates against his freedom and character. He is a victim of "class war."[29] Aquila sees himself as a target of "oppression and mutilation."[30] All he pleads guilty to is "the reach for freedom, for growth", declaring:

> When power and wealth is controlled, monopolized and stratified, those at the bottom will seek to reach the top as surely as some will weep and cry at the bottom landings. If the world and history is ever to change, the structure of American economics must collapse. The giant circus tents must fall to the ground. Broadly speaking (poetically), a giant summit meeting of an entire human race must agree to share the treasures of earth, taking example from the sun who generously and abundantly showers heat to all revolving territories and faces of this our planet Earth. From a restricted cage to an infinitely expanding universe, the underlying energy and force of life is the reach for freedom, for growth. I am guilty of this crime! We are guilty! Guilty! Guilty![31]

Convict Charles Butler is full of "righteous indignation" and indicts the system thus: "I am mad at the *system*, the fucking system that has spawned so much evil and oppression, so many goddamn crooks and criminals masquerading as 'leaders' and 'upstanding' citizens!"[32] We seldom meet with as much "righteous indignation" in the pulpit as we do in prison! Is it any wonder we have problems? Another prison inmate, "Joe Convict", argues the civil government should not legislate morality: prostitutes should be licensed and taxed and contribute to the economy; the only sexual crime should be forcing someone to do something against their will.[33] Herb Zeigler, an admitted "robber/thug" declares, "I reject the notion that we are social and moral degenerates." Rather, "Crime and corruption are natural outgrowths of the American condition." He and others are full of self-pity.[34] All agree in indicting the systems and in seeing themselves as victims.

To jump to the other end of the social spectrum, the wealthy widows of Palm Beach, Florida, are ready to justify their empty, godless lives by citing such trifles as giving some of the excess oranges from their trees to other people![35]

Still another example is the "poet and medicine priest", Michael Grandees who claims to have lived 3,000 years and reeks with a lofty self-declared nobility. Twelve of his 3,000 years were spent in the "pain and death" of

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[29] Pancho Aquila, "Cult of Warriors," in Folsom Prison Convicts: *The Hardened Criminal.* (Millbrae, California: Celestial Arts, 1976). p. 11.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 118f.
[35] Nora Ephron: *Scribble, Scribble: Notes on the Media.* (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, (1975) 1978). p. 31.

childhood disease, and the rest in the study of American Indian wisdom. According to Grandees.

> "The people who came to settle this country from Europe were brutal," he says. "They brought brutality here to a beautiful people who were living in a utopian state. In the course of their invasion and conquest of America, they violated every standard of civilized behavior, particularly their own Christian standard."....
> "I'm only part Indian," Grandees admitted, "but in my heart, and my mind I'm all Indian...I'm a medicine healer. I've never felt like just a simple part of the human race. I've always felt I came from a higher power,...that I've lived in other worlds for 3,000 years,...that I have a deep knowledge and understanding of the human race."[36]

Grandees goes on and on in this vein, ignorant of history, of Indian culture and life, and of his own pretentious self-righteousness, and a major American conservative newspaper gives solemn and serious heed and space to this. And why not? Justification by indictment is popular with the world outside of Christ.

It cannot be said too often that all men need justification. The doctrines of Scripture do not represent a narrow corner of the universe: they are the key to the whole of it. Men can only live as creatures made by God in His image. His word sets forth the inescapable necessities of life and thought. Just as Satan is the ape of God, all of whose kingdom and plans are a sickly imitation of the Kingdom of God, so all of man's life and thought moves as a parody of God's Kingdom, of salvation, justification, atonement, heaven and hell, and all things else in God's order. Men do not abandon the doctrines of Biblical faith, wherever they are: they merely invert, pervert, and parody them. And, whatever they do, knowing that they sin, they indict God and His Kingdom for their own waywardness.

Thus, Bertrand Russell admitted to loving nature more than man. He admitted to a standard of anarchistic sexuality and justified it as a quest for a substitute for the love of God. As he wrote his daughter, he never gave his whole heart to anyone, declaring:

> "My most profound feelings have remained always solitary and have found in human things no companionship," he wrote. "The sea, the stars, the night wind in waste places, mean more to me than even the human beings I love best, and I am conscious that human affection is to me at bottom an attempt to escape from the vain search for God."[37]

When we look past the disarming tone of this statement, we find a humanist who does not like humanity, a common fact. For the humanist, man is god, and this soon boils down, in practice, to *singular* man, myself, not mass man.

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[36] Cathy Lawson, "Poetic Message of Thanksgiving," in the Santa Ana *Register*, Thursday, November 23, p. F1, Santa Ana, California.

[37] Katharine Tait: *My Father Bertrand Russell*. (New York, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanich, 1975). p. 46f.

Moreover, the universe is indicted: it is such that the quest for God is a "vain search." How easy then to be a man of love and nobility in relation to the sea, the stars, and the night wind, none of which make a demand on us the way God and other people do. Most of the modern love of nature is in reality a hatred of God and man and a means to a cheap nobility. It is an indictment of God and man which permits us to withdraw into the solitary world of nature and an ostensible purity. We set ourselves apart from a sordid world into a realm of holy and pure nature and its beauty. Only there are we in our proper and fitting environment! All too may of our environmentalists and nature lovers have a simple message for us: they are too pure for the rest of us. This fact came home to me with especial sharpness not too long ago in a conversation with a woman, a stranger, who asked for my counsel but really wanted my admiring pity. When my questions began to probe at some undisclosed but secret evil in her life, she reacted sharply. She not only denounced my line of inquiry, designed to help her, but came out with a classic statement of self-justification: "I am a member of the Sierra Club." Her membership and active support of a society of nature devotees made her a pure and noble soul: let no one seek out sin in her!

Men justify themselves by indicting the sins of others, the sins of society, of other Christians, of blacks, whites, or other races, of husband, wife, or parents, and so on. The sins of others are enormously interesting to us: we measure ourselves against others and glow with self-righteousness. Supremely, of course, man loves to indict God: this is at the heart of sin. Sin is man's justification of his will and an indictment of God's word. Man needs justification, whatever he does, and whoever he is. He will indict God and man to claim it.

12. The Person of God

A common problem in thinking about God is that people approach Him with Greco-Roman presuppositions as a result of their non-Christian education. This problem occurs in every aspect of theology, and no less with respect to justification. To justify means to be in right relationship with God; justification, however, is a legal fact, the work of Jesus Christ in satisfaction of the requirements of God's law. Salvation is thus a legal act by Christ before it is a personal fact for man. The church has repeatedly shifted the emphasis from justification to conversion because it is more at ease with the personal (and often emotional) experience than with the legal fact. Indeed, it tends to view legal facts as abstract and impersonal.

Legal facts are abstract and impersonal to the extent that our thinking and our laws are non-Biblical. Law in the Roman tradition, for example, is lacking in two central things which are basic to Biblical law. *First*, Roman law is not an eternal order of heaven and earth. At its most religious level, Roman law

was a contract between the City of Rome and the gods, a contract made at Rome's founding. Law was thus a negotiable fact and not an eternal verity. Law could also be the fiat word of the rulers or ruler, and natural law meant in essence the negotiated law of nations. Biblical law is radically different. It sets forth the unchanging righteousness of the eternal God and His order for all of creation. It is not negotiable: it is given. In the Roman contract with the gods, the City of Rome bargained for support for its own creation, its own idea of order. In the covenant of the living God, the City of God is called into being by God's sovereign grace, and a part of that grace is the gift of His covenant law. Roman law was *made*, Biblical law is *given* by revelation.

Second, Roman law was thus an abstraction. It was not a living part of reality, nor of an eternal order, but an abstract idea created by the state and imposed on its realm. When Roman law was most religious, it was not religious because the gods were involved in the contract but because Rome was involved. The key religious factor was Rome, not the gods. The gods gained status by their association with Rome, and the senate made the gods. Biblical law, however, is totally personal, because it is totally the word and expression of the living and totally personal God. God's law is constitutive of all being; to forsake God's law is to forsake life and reality (Prov. 8:36). It is impossible for God's law to be at all abstract or impersonal.

Law came to be seen as dead and mechanical rather than an expression of God's nature and life. Hence grace was opposed to law rather than being essentially linked to it. In Scripture, God does not discard His law: He effects the satisfaction thereof as His act of grace, so that man might be restored to right relationship to Him. That right relationship continues now by man's holiness, and the way of holiness is the law, not anti-law.

A feeble and not new illustration helps us to understand the personal nature of law, and its relationship to love and grace. Marriage means faithfulness. Adultery destroys that faithfulness, and its penalty is death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). The law says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). To keep that law in our marriage is not a cold matter of legalism but the evidence of love for God, for our mate, and for marriage. We are most clearly in grace when, in faithfulness to God and to our spouse, we keep that law with all our heart and with all our soul (Deut. 13:3). Grace does not come *after* adultery, in setting aside God's judgment of death by an act of human and antinomian "grace", but in living gladly and faithfully in terms of God's law word. Neither grace nor law can be our acts nor our will, but only the Lord's.

God's law cannot be abstracted from the being of God, nor can His grace. Thus, where abstractionism prevails, there men will pit God's grace against His law, and His love against His justice. The result is theological anarchy.

To be justified means to be in right relationship with God because God in Christ has made restitution for our sins. We are also regenerated and made

thereby members of the new humanity of the second and last Adam, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:20-26, 47-50). As members in the last Adam of the new creation, we live in faithfulness to God's law, because we are in grace. The Law, instead of being a death sentence against us, is now written on the tables of our hearts, in our being (Jer. 31:33). The law expresses the holiness and righteousness of God's being; now, as members of the new creation by His justification and regeneration, the law, as we grow in grace becomes by His grace the expression of our being. It is not an abstraction: it is our life.

To be justified by the grace of God through Jesus Christ means, that all priorities in our right relationship to God are of His ordination. They are not established by our experience but by the Lord. To illustrate, in a very interesting account of her father, Bertrand Russell, and of her own religious pilgrimage from humanism to the church, Katharine Tait writes feelingly and tellingly of the humanistic perfectionism demanded by her parents. She was free to sleep with all the men she wanted, but she had to meet a rigid humanistic demand for honesty in personal relationships. As a result of this, not to mention her denial of God, she was burdened with heavy and inexplicable guilt. In a moving chapter, "Conversion", she describes her religious experience:

> ....The doctrine of original sin gave to me, when I came to understand it, the same sense of intoxicating liberation my father had received from sexual emancipation. It was *normal* for me to be bad, and I need not feel ashamed.
>
> For me, the belief in forgiveness and grace was like sunshine after long days of rain. No matter what I did, no matter how low I fell, God would be there to forgive, to pick me up and set me on my feet again. Though I could not earn his love, neither could I lose it. It was absolute, not conditional.[38]

This is not a theological statement and cannot be treated as such, but a theological premise is still apparent. Mrs. Tait is right in seeing the significance of the doctrine of original sin; we are guilt-ridden and paralyzed as long as we wallow in self-righteousness, or as long as we seek to attain to self-created, self-generated righteousness. All our being witnesses against us. But liberation is not in the doctrine of original sin, nor is salvation our feeling of freedom. It is in God's act, a legal act. In that legal act, God's righteousness or justice is manifested, and, at the same time, the fullness of His grace, love, and holiness.

God is not a piecemeal God, nor a variable God. He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). In us, a variableness exists, and a continual turning from one mood or thing to another. We are variously happy, sad, angry, loving, hateful, and so on. It is,

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[38] Katharine Tait: *My Father Bertrand Russell.* (New York, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanich, 1975). p. 187f.

however, an aspect of the simplicity and unity of being in the Godhead that there is "no *variableness, neither* shadow of turning." Thus, while Scripture may stress to us one aspect of God's being at a particular point, i.e., His wrath or His mercy, God is never given to any one of these as moods. He is always totally what he is, the God of grace, law, justice, holiness, love, wrath, and all things else, and in every manifestation He is totally all these things. In relation to us, we may experience one aspect of God's nature, such as His wrath, but in Himself He is at that moment also love and grace. Thus, while we can pray, concerning ourselves, "in wrath remember mercy" (Hab. 3:2), we must remember that God in His wrath is not like us, for a moment taken over by wrath, but always totally Himself. In Him there is no variableness. Such a God is unlike the Greek abstractionist idea of a passionless God: He is love and wrath, law and grace, and more in His being, But He is never variable. God is the supreme and perfect Person. Thus, abstract ideas of law and justice cannot be imposed on God without undercutting justification. The result of such a perversion is a steady decline into humanism and the loss of salvation.

13. Justification and History

The doctrine of justification is denied by many; others affirm it formally, but it has little practical meaning for them, and they rely on their experiences for their religious profession, on their affirmation rather than God's act.

A key contributing factor to this unbelief and neglect is a naturalistic view of history. By most men, history is seen as a natural process, and a chronological one. The determining forces of history are entirely from within history, so that man's life is a product of historical processes on a biological continuum. One must not seek cause, meaning, or purpose from without history.

This naturalism has profoundly affected Biblical studies, so that what seminaries and "Christian" colleges teach is not a Biblical doctrine of history but a naturalistic one. The problem can best be illustrated by comparing Hosea 11:1-4 and Matthew 2:13-15:

> 1. When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.
> 2. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.
> 3. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.
> 4. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. (Hosea 11:1-4)

> 13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child

> and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.
> 14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:
> 15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. (Matt. 2:13-15)

Hosea tells us that God called Israel, the covenant people, his son, and delivered them from Egypt. The prophets called Israel out from their apostasy, but they were not heeded. God treated them tenderly, but they responded with idolatry. What is the relationship of this passage to Matthew's? Matthew plainly states that the Egyptian sojourn of our Lord was *to fulfil* the words of the prophet, i.e., to complete, round out, and bring into fullness of meaning openly that which Hosea had predicted. Sherman E. Johnson says of this, "Early Christians often thought of the Exodus with its miracles as a type of Christian redemption (e.g., I Cor. 10:1-5; John 6:49-51); the rabbis likewise believed that it foreshadowed the messianic age, when all its miracles would be re-enacted."[39] All Johnson tells us is what men by faith 'read into' the text!

H. R. Reynolds and the Rev. Prof. Whitehouse, ostensibly orthodox commentators, denied any prophetic meaning to Hosea 11:1-4, stating:

> In this context there cannot be a prophecy of the Christ, for obstinate conduct and rebellion would thus be involved in the prediction. It is true that Matt. ii.15 quotes the passage in illustration of the fact that the true Son of God was also submitted in His youth to the hard schooling of a cruel exile. The calling out of Egypt of the Messiah gave a new indication of the cyclical character of Hebrew history. The passage helps us to understand what is meant by the formula, "that it might be fulfilled."[40]

Besides erring in describing "Hebrew history" as "cyclical", these men deny God's determination of history and reduce prophetic fulfillment to man's perception of interesting parallels. Meaning is thus a product of man, and history's patterns and types are man's discernment of accidental similarities into which he reads provender meanings than the bare events contain. With gravediggers like this as the reverend professors of the church, the church has no need of enemies in order to suffer decline. Ellicott himself was no better, commenting on Matt. 2:15 thus:

> As the words stand in Hos. xi.l, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," they refer, beyond the shadow of a doubt, to the history of Israel, as being in a special sense, among all

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[39] Sherman E. Johnson, "Matthew", in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VII. (New York, New York: Abingdon Press, 1951). p. 160.

[40] H. R. Reynolds and the Rev. Prof. Whitehouse in "Hosea," in C. J. Ellicott: *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. V. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan). p. 429.

> the nations of the world, the chosen son of Jehovah (Exod. iv. 22,23). It is hard to imagine any reader of the prophecy not seeing that this was what we should call *the* meaning. But the train of thought which leads the Evangelist to apply it to the Christ has a distinct method of its own. A coincidence in what seems an accessory, a mere circumstance of the story, carries his mind on to some deeper analogies. In the days of the Exodus, Israel was the one representative instance of the Fatherhood of God, manifested in protecting and delivering His people. Now there was a higher representative in the person of the only begotten Son. As the words "Out of Egypt did I call my Son" (he translated out of Hebrew instead of reproducing the Greek version of the LXX.) rose to his memory, what more natural than the mere context and historical meaning should be left unnoticed, and that he should note with wonder what a fulfillment they had found in the circumstances he had just narrated. Here, as before, the very seeming strain put upon the literal meaning of the words is presumptive evidence that the writer had before him the fact to which it had been adapted, rather than that the narrative was constructed, as some have thought, to support the strained interpretation of the prophecy.[41]

We have thus, as Ellicott noted, two views on the event described by Matthew. *First*, the modernist sees the event as a fiction constructed to fulfil an ancient prophecy, and that prophecy was in itself an artificial and "strained interpretation." *Second*, the pseudo-orthodox see the flight into Egypt of Joseph, Mary and the child as historical but see the prophecy as an artificial thing. "The *meaning*" is something very different and confined to Israel, and Hosea's comments concerning Israel. The coincidence between the Exodus and the flight into Egypt leads Matthew to see an analogy. In other words, there is no real prophecy or prediction here.

Both views are really *practical atheism*. In both views, history and Scripture are purely man's work, and patterns, types, and analogies are man's interpretation of purely historical, meaning man-produced, events. The events are made by man, and the interpretations are made by man. To call such views Biblical or Christian is blasphemy.

Then how, in terms of a Biblical faith, shall we view these two texts? *First*, we must take God at His word. He is the Lord, maker and predestinator of all things. There is thus nothing accidental in all of creation. Both the events of Hosea and Matthew, and the words of both men, were ordained by God from all eternity.

Second, this means that history is God-ordained and directed. In naturalistic history, only the past is present in or impinges on the moment, and existentialism seeks deliverance from the past into the existential moment. The goal of humanistic man from the fall to the present is to be independent of God and history and to establish law, meaning, and good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). The goal is thus to say finally that the historical moment

[41] C. J. Ellicott in *ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 7f.

or present is freed from all things, causes, and influences other than man himself. In Biblical history, which means in all history, past and future are always present in the moment, in the here and now, because past, present, and future are created by the sovereign Lord and are determined from all eternity. There is thus far more in the moment than the moment itself.

Third, this means that the meaning of the historical present always transcends the moment. God from all eternity created and ordained Israel, Hosea, Matthew, Joseph, Mary, and the child. *All* events are linked in a common purpose and goal, because they come from the hand of one Lord. Adam was created and by grace was the son of God (Luke 1:38). Adam fell, but a new covenant son of grace was called out, the covenant people, Israel, called a son by God Himself (Ex. 4:22-23). This son was called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1) and given God's covenant law, and the sacrificial system which set forth the atoning and justifying work of God's Son, who was to come. The priests of Israel, as types of that Son, had a totally prescribed task, dress, and life, because they were stand-ins, representing the greater one who was to come (Deut. 18:18). *The purpose* of God's covenant is to call His son out of Egypt, out of bondage and captivity, out of death and sin, in brief, out of the Fall. By prophetic events, words, sacrifices, and rites, God shows His elect people the meaning of past, present, and future events, so that, when these things come to pass, they recognize what God is doing for His elect's sake. Thus, whenever Hosea or any other prophet or writer wrote the pages of Scripture, they wrote in the Lord and in the context of His purpose, mind, and meaning. The real meaning thus is not the naturalistic; the naturalistic view finally means no meaning at all to history, because the universe is a meaningless void and chaos, and man is the same, a futile passion, as Jean-Paul Sartre finally concluded in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre's position is thus more logical than that of these "Christian scholars" and academicians.

Now, with this in mind, we can assess the implications of this false historiography, which governs most commentators on Scripture, on the doctrine of justification. Justification makes our salvation entirely a legal act on the supernatural level. Aspects of this supernatural fact are enacted *in* history, but they are emphatically not a product *of* history. However, anyone infected by a naturalistic view of history will find justification somehow "unreal." Only that is real for naturalistic man which he himself produces. Hence, while uncomfortably giving formal assent to justification, he makes salvation a product of man's history and experience. Then only does he feel "saved."

One man told a theologian that his writings were the most God-honoring and Biblical that he had ever read, but, before accepting them to promote them, he wanted the theologian to prove his salvation by testifying to a conversion experience. For this man, nothing is real unless man testifies to it. (He was told that the test is not experience, but the word of God.)

Thus, before we can have a sound doctrine of justification, we must have a sound doctrine of Scripture and of history, which means that we must know God as indeed God.

14. Justification and Eternity

St. Paul, in Ephesians 1:3-6, declares:

> 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
> 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundations of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;
> 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
> 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

These verses are a brief compendium of theology. It sets forth, *first*, our election to salvation from all eternity, from "before the foundation of the world." Our salvation occurs in history, but it is ordained from eternity. We are "chosen....in him", that is, in Jesus Christ. Thus, our predestination is not because of any foreseen element, but because of Jesus Christ. We are acceptable in Him, and because of His grace.

Second, we are to *bless* or praise God, because He has blessed or made happy His people. Where there is a *blessing*, there is a bringing together. When God blesses us, He comes to us in His grace; when we bless God, we go to Him and place ourselves under His word. A blessing is irrevocable, as Genesis 27:33 and II Samuel 7:29 make clear. *It is like a vow*, a word spoken in the name of the Lord which cannot be retracted. Thus, when we declare, in the words of Psalm 103:1, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name," we make an irrevocable commitment which cannot be reversed. If we reverse ourselves, we are judged and condemned.

Third, we are blessed and chosen so that we might be holy. To be holy is to be filled, *determined*, and consecrated by God's power (*hieros*), or to be devout and devoted, given to God (*hagios*). Our predestination to the election of grace thus manifests itself by holiness, or sanctification. Where there is no holiness there is no salvation and no election. The idea of a "carnal Christian", i.e., a man who is saved but is not holy, is a contradiction and thus untenable.

Fourth, we are to be "without blame", (amomos), or without blemish. The reference is in part to the animals acceptable in Leviticus for sacrifice, clean animals and without blemish. We are thus to grow in grace and become more and more remade in the image of the unblemished one, Jesus Christ.

Fifth, we stand so before the Lord "in love" (agape), not our love, but His love, grace, and mercy. Thus, our redemption is an act of love, but that love

is unmerited: it is all of grace. We stand only "according to the good pleasure of his will."

Sixth, our predestination includes the adoption of grace into the family and household of God, so that we become His children by adoption. Our status is of His creation and ordination, as is the totality of our being. This adoption is through Christ's redemptive work.

Seventh, we are *made*, by God's grace, "accepted in the beloved." Here we come to justification. Our status is the act of God's sovereign grace, made, not in time, but in eternity. Our justification is enacted in time through Christ's atoning work, and we receive it in time, as justifying faith brings us to Christ. We are not justified *because* of faith, but we receive justification *through* faith (Rom. 10:17), "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).

Westcott pointed out that our redemption is "unto the praise of the glory of God" (Eph. 1:6,12,14), and in our redemption we see:

> The blessing wrought out before time in the eternal order according to the divine idea (vv. 4-6).
> In this work we notice:
> an election to holiness (v. 4),
> resting on predestination to sonship (v. 5),
> followed by the gift of God's grace whereby we are made meet for His presence (v. 6)[42]

The implications of justification from eternity can be understood by examining a Jewish New Year postcard from the latter half of the 19th century. It portrays God's angel examining the heavenly book in which men's deeds are recorded and reads:

God's angel sits over the Book of Memories,

> Reviews the good deeds, contemplates the transgressions,
> Soon he exclaims with joy, "Not bad!
> There is not a single wicked person among the Jews,
> Not even a guilty one. In short, a people worthy of salvation,
> A people that should and ought to have good fortune
> And be sent thousands of blessings from heaven."[43]

Granted that there is a tongue in cheek sense of humor here, but a popular theology is also reflected. *First*, salvation by works and worthiness is reflected, "a people *worthy* of salvation." The determination of man's redemption is clearly in man's hands.

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42. Brooke Foss Westcott: *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1906) 1952). p. 8.

43. Lucjan Dobroszycki and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett: *Images Before My Eyes, A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864-1939*. (New York, New York: Schocken Books, 1977). p. 14.

Second, this obviously makes God the spectator to history. He contemplates the records of men. In the person of His angel, He may feel that the Jews are "a people that should and ought to have good fortune, and be sent thousands of blessings from heaven", but He cannot guarantee them.

Is this a God, or a mockery of the idea of God? And what are the consequences of believing in such a God? *First* of all, very obviously our salvation depends upon us. That great work, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972), has no entry for "Justification." Anyone, Jew or Gentile, Christian or otherwise, who has a doctrine of God as a spectator, or anything other than sovereign, will give priority in the determination of history to man and time.

Second, to give man the control of history results in a nightmare. Men indeed seek to control history and to predestinate men and nations by their own decrees and plans, but nothing is more clear than their failures. Instead of a new order, they institute disorder, and their controls lead to uncontrollable results. In the spheres of economics, politics, and education, we see today the plans and works of humanistic statists rapidly spinning out of control. The dream of humanistic reason becomes a nightmare.

Third, if man is in control of history, i.e., if man determines history, then he also determines morality, good and evil. This being the case, then there are no moral boundaries or limits for man. The denial of God's sovereignty, and His justification as an act from eternity totally apart from man, means that man can now do as he pleases. Everything is permitted, if man permits it. The word of man becomes ostensibly the determinative word. Man then becomes his own justification. Everything is justified, if man chooses to justify it. Thus, two scholars, in dealing with sexual relations, which, by any *objective* standards would be called "sick", sinful, or unstable, concluded, "What, then, constitutes a basis for an harmonious male-female relationship? We are forced to the conclusion that this is not determinable from the outside."[44] This "outside" which is excluded from determination is not only God but all other men. Any sinner who justifies his sin is thereby justified!

If we deny God's total initiative and action in our justification, then we end up ascribing justification to man. Then, instead of God declaring the law, and alone being the author of all good and of all justification, man declares the law, defines the good, and issues his own decree of justification. To justify is to declare righteous. Salvation, sovereignty, righteousness, and government cannot be separated. Either God is the Lord, the law-giver, the Government, and the Court, or man is. If man can declare himself righteous, or make himself righteous on his own, it is because there is another principle of ultimacy and righteousness in the universe, an impossible assumption. To declare righteous, *to justify*, is an act of ultimacy and sovereignty. If to any

[44] Doris Jonas and David Jonas: *Sex and Status*. (New York, New York: Stein and Day, 1975). p. 102f.

degree this power is placed in man's hand, he will justify the wicked, and his own wickedness. He will re-define his sin to make it holy and will replace God's law with his own.

The Lord says, "I will not justify the wicked" (Ex. 23:7). Those who are morally wrong God will not justify. Those whom He justifies He makes righteous by His sovereign grace, but those who pursue "a false matter" (Ex. 23:7) seek to justify themselves. God creates all things, and His law governs all things. Only He can justify and make righteous, because no determination exists apart from Him. He is the Lord.

Some fear that, in speaking of justification from eternity, justification by decree is identified with the act of justification: the one is the decree, and the other is the result. Clearly, the result is in history. It is in time that the believer knows justification, and it is in history that the Holy Spirit applies to believers Christ's redemptive work. However, to stress justification from eternity does not remove or undermine the historical manifestation of justification in history but rather establishes it. Hair-splitting Reformed theologians have often created imaginary problems where none exist. The humanist view of time and history rests on nothing, and the result is meaninglessness and confusion. Christians have the answer in the sovereign God and His eternal decree: why do they underrate and neglect it? In Federico Fellini's film, *La Dolce Vita*, an 'honest man', surrounded by corruption, finds life meaningless. He declares, "They say that the world of the future will be wonderful. But what does that mean? It needs only the gesture of a madman to destroy everything."[45] As a result he commits suicide, after murdering his family. In a world without God, a mad dictator, in the midst of a sinful humanity, can destroy the world. But the world is not without God, and the justification of all things is beyond history, in God.

15. Pragmatic Justification

Justification today is, as always, basic to everyday life. Men cannot live without it. The most common form of justification, however, is pragmatic and existential. For modern man, there is no ultimate beyond man, and justification is therefore sought in social or personal grounds, i.e., in terms of humanism. As a student, I heard many professors justify the "severity" of Stalin as "necessary" for the future of mankind; a few criticized him, very few, on the grounds of his sins against man as an individual. In either case, man was the source and ground of justification.

Such a faith has clear expression in Sartre. For Sartre, existentialism is the valid faith because it locates man's destiny and justification within man himself. The ultimate is man's existence: "I think; therefore, I exist." This

[45] Colin Wilson: *Origins of the Sexual Impulse*. (New York, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963). p. 115.

doctrine is for Sartre "the only one which gives man dignity, the only one which does not reduce him to an object."[46] The absolute for Sartre is man in his free involvement with men and things.

Man's "free involvement" means that, since God is denied, man invents all values for himself. He decides for himself what constitutes good and evil. "One may choose anything if it is on the grounds of free involvement."[47] This means that all acts are valid if we determine them to be so. They are invalid if we do them in terms of an objective standard, such as God's law. To illustrate, marriage and faithfulness to one's spouse are valid only if they represent our free involvement, our free choice; they are invalid if they represent obedience to a law of God or man.

For an existential humanist, "there is no law-maker other than himself." Moreover, "Existentialism is nothing else than an attempt to draw all the consequences of a coherent atheistic position."[48]

"Free involvement" means that man is always to be seen as life in the moment, not in terms of a past or a future. Since man is not a determined essence but a present existence, "A penal sentence is always directed at a crime that no longer exists."[49]

This makes comprehensible the modern antinomianism and its common hostility to the punishment of criminals. After all, why should man today pay for what he did yesterday? Moreover, if man has only existence, and not essence, a determined nature, why punish him now for what no longer exists, his existential moment of crime? Modern man is thus uncomfortable with the idea of law. Law places boundaries around man, whereas it is the essence of the modern, existentialist mood to deny all boundaries.

Existentialist man trades boundaries and law for existentialist freedom, which means *anxiety* by his own admission, because now the government of all things is upon man's shoulders. The result is anxiety and sleeplessness.

As against this, David in Psalm 2 calls upon his righteous God, and he declares his total dependency on the Lord. Without God, existentialist men say, "Who will shew us any good?" (Ps. 4:6), i.e., they restlessly say that there is no good nor happiness in life, nor peace. Because these men love vanity and a lie, i.e., their own will as would-be gods (Gen. 3:5), they are restless, anxious, and hopeless men. Therefore, David can declare, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased" (Ps. 4:7). God gives to His redeemed people, to the justified, a peace and joy which is far greater than the unjustified ever enjoy in their

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46. Jean-Paul Sartre: *Existentialism.* (New York, New York: Philosophical Library, 1947). p. 43.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 60f.
49. Jean-Paul Sartre: *To Freedom Condemned.* Justus Steller, editor. (New York, New York: Philosophical Library, 1960). p. 91.

greatest prosperity. Those who stand in their own righteousness and seek an existential justification are the sick at heart, the restless, sleepless, and anxious ones. On the other hand, David, in the face of all his problems, can declare, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety" (Ps. 4:8).

Justification is an act of law, government, and sovereignty. Where man claims to be sovereign and the source of law and government, he denies the very ground of his existence. The *existence* he affirms becomes then a curse to him, and he is a restless, sleepless, and accursed being. Man's self-justification leads to self-government and self-righteousness, and to a man-made law. The further his departure, the greater is his curse.

To justify, to declare righteous, is an act of ultimacy and sovereignty. It comes from God, the creator of all things and their only source of definition, existence, and righteousness. To justify is thus a divine act. A segment of this power is delegated by God to man, to be applied in His ordained courts on a limited and remote sense. Man's courts of law must apply God's law, but, even then, they cannot declare or make a man righteous: they can only say, with respect to a specific and particular offense, "Not guilty", in terms of the laws of evidence. God alone can declare and make a man righteous.

The Fall placed man outside of God's law and righteousness. Nothing man can do can alter the fact of his fall, and his sentence of death. Man thus stands before God's court clearly and unequivocally guilty. The sovereign Judge in His grace and mercy applies the righteousness of Christ, and Christ's death as our substitute, to us. We are *declared* righteous by God's court, and then, by His regenerating power, *made* righteous. The *declaration* is our justification; the regeneration is our new creation, our transition from death in sin to life in Christ and in terms of faith in Him, obedience to His law, and life in the Holy Spirit.

Self-justification thus is an attack on God's ultimacy, whether that self-justification be with reference to a major crime or some slight offense. Self-justification affirms another law and another righteousness than God's law and righteousness.

Man's Babylonian heart seeks self-justification in things great and small, and even the redeemed, because not perfectly sanctified, seek a beach-head for their own self-assertion in trifles. In effect, they say, here, in these trifles, I am entitled to my word, law, and standard.

God, however, allows us not an atom nor a moment in all of being as an arena for our way and our righteousness. We have been set apart by His sovereign and justifying grace "for Himself" (Ps. 4:3). Hence, David's counsel is, "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah" (Ps. 4:4).

16. Justification and Logic

Paul tells us plainly and clearly that we are justified without works by the sovereign grace of God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24; 5:15-17; II Cor. 9:15; Eph. 2:8-10). God is the Creator and the Judge of all things, and He alone can declare man to be righteous, to be legally justified, and make it indeed so. To declare what constitutes good and evil, to create, and to declare what is good (Gen. 1:31; Eph. 2:11-22) is the prerogative of deity. God declares emphatically:

> 5. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:
>
> 6. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.
>
> 7. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. (Isa. 45:5-7)

To create all things, and to declare what is good and evil, righteous and reprobate, is the attribute of God alone. The right of judgment is delegated by God to His ordained courts and judges in terms of His law-word. Any other judgment is a usurpation, as all humanistic law is. All delegated judgment is limited, carefully circumscribed, and strictly confined to specific cases. Thus, a human court, in church or state, *first* of all, can only pass a sentence, legitimately, of guilty or not guilty. The scope of delegated judgment is thus severely limited. The defendant is not *justified* or declared righteous; he is simply not guilty, in terms of the evidence, of the stated charge or charges. *Second*, this means that even the "not guilty" verdict is so limited, that a man acquitted of theft can still be an actual adulterer or a false witness and a reprobate man before God.

On the other hand, God's court confronts men who are plainly guilty. The long indictment of Romans 3:10-19 is true of all the sons of Adam. By God's grace, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to God's elect; Christ's atoning death is their own death for capital offenses against God. They are reconciled to God through Christ, made a new creation by the Holy Spirit, and adopted as sons and heirs in the Kingdom of God. They are then legally acquitted of the death penalty for sin and declared righteous or just, and they are regenerated to put into action that righteousness (Rom. 8:4).

This doctrine of justification is offensive to would-be autonomous man, because it denies his ultimacy and his ability to define, attain, and decree righteousness independently and on his own initiative. Wherever man has a doctrine of self-justification, there man claims the right and the power to define and attain to righteousness or justice on his own terms. Modern religion, politics, economics, and education are dedicated to this faith in man's justifying power.

The rationale for this claim is in man's humanistic logic. By means of his own categories of thought, man precludes the reality of the God of Scripture. Such a God is held to be logically impossible, because autonomous man's logic rules Him out of court. Thus, J. L. Mackie, a philosopher, very neatly uses such logic to box out God:

> In its simplest form the problem is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists. There seems to be some contradiction between these three propositions, so that if any two of them were true the third would be false. But at the same time all three are essential parts of most theological positions: the theologians, it seems, at once *must* adhere and *cannot consistently* adhere to all three.[50]

This argument is very compelling only to those for whom ultimate reality and logic belong to the autonomous mind of man. Such a faith, because it is in essence a faith, and a passionate one, makes man's mind and logic the judge and therefore in effect *the creator* of reality. If reality is that which meets the requirements of my autonomous human logic, then reality is what my rational fiats declare it to be. This is, of course, Kantian to the core. It is Hegel's "the rational is the real", calling them at best "epiphenomena", while judging all reality by the canons of their mind and consciousness! Reality, however, is not determined by man's mind or logic, but by God's.

Hence, every effort to "prove" God is a denial of Him. In all such rationalistic proofs, God is brought before the logic of man's mind and required to "justify" and "prove" His existence. The god who is then denied or "proven" is the god of man's imagination, not the living God of Scripture. *To prove* means to establish by evidence, to show to be true, to test, and to verify. We cannot prove God: He is the source of all proof. We are rather proven, tested, or verified by Him. He alone can justify.

Moreover, it is not the word of man that creates, declares evil, or makes righteous, but the word of God alone. Thus, where the doctrines of God's sovereignty, the faith in creation and providence, and the fact of the atonement are undermined or denied, justification is transferred from God to man. If God did not create man, how can He justify man? If the only valid law is not God's law, how can God judge a man and declare him reprobate? If God is not the source and definition of all righteousness, how can He justify or legally declare righteous any man?

In Colossians 2:8, St. Paul condemns all humanistic philosophy together with vain or empty deceitfulness as "after the tradition of men", i.e., as according to the lines of autonomous man's logic. These, he declares, limit or take captive the mind of man and spoil his being.

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[50] Cited from *Mind*, LXIV, 1955, J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence", by Robert Hoffman and Sidney Gendin: *Philosophy: A Contemporary Perspective*. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1975). p. 105.

Justification is clearly a doctrine having to do with salvation. It rests, however, on the sovereignty of God and His law-word. It is not simply a theological doctrine which is unrelated to philosophy, law, politics, or education. Rather, it sets forth a fundamental fact about reality. We have already seen the limitations it places upon human courts and their jurisdiction. The same is true of politics.

Thus, Fromkin sees the need for a civil government, in order to be true government, to extend its responsibilities "to all areas of human activities." This means "an inventory of everything we have." There is also a need to have "an enlargement of the structure of authority in the world."[51] We have here Hegel's "god walking on earth" in the state. If the state is the source of authority, power, and law in a society, and the sovereign thereof, then it is the god of the society. Then, too, the justification of man, i.e., making man righteous, is an act of state.

If we begin with a humanistic logic, we end with a man-made god. He may be anarchistic man, the state, the church, a scientific socialistic elite, or any other agency, but he is still an idol, a false god. As such, instead of providing justification, he provides damnation.

The world of today is choosing damnation and affirming thereby that it is *justified.* To choose man's way, righteousness, law, education, or politics, i.e., to be humanistic in any area, is to say "Let us do evil that good may come." Of all such, Paul declares, their "damnation is just" (Rom. 3:8).

17. Justification and the Doctrine of God

It should be clear by now that justification can only be an act of God, because every aspect of it involves the attributes of the deity and cannot be usurped or legitimately claimed by man.

In the narrow sense, justification is God's judicial act whereby the righteousness of Jesus Christ is applied to the sinner, and all the claims of the law against the sinner as a man condemned to death and reprobation, are declared to be met and satisfied totally apart from any merit or initiative in man. Justification has to do, not with the inner state of man, but his legal status, and it provides the forgiveness of sins and restoration to God's favor. Paul, in Romans 5:1-10, sets forth this fact.

In the larger sense, justification sets forth the fact, *first* that the only ground of judgment is the law of God and the only true Judge is God the Lord. All justice and all judgment must be in terms of God and His law word. Any other law, and any other criterion of judgment, is an evidence, not of justice, but of original sin. Man, in all independent laws and judgments, seeks to be his own

[51] David Fromkin: *The Question of Government.* (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975). pp. 192-194.

god, and his own source of law, determining for himself what constitutes good and evil. Thus, *only God can justify*, because all law and judgment are from the Lord, and anything which is not from His word is sin, rebellion, and usurpation.

Second, justification is not only an attribute of law-making, but, like law-making, an attribute of sovereignty. If there are lords many, there are laws many, and also justifications many. Polytheism thus offers alternatives in justification. However, Biblical theism denies totally all "possible" alternatives. The God of Scripture declares, "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me" (Isa. 45:5). Thus, all alternatives to God's justification are attacks on God's sovereignty and law and are aspects of sin and rebellion. Because God alone is the Creator and Lord, God alone can define and decree justice and declare who is justified and who is not. In God's universe, God's way is the only true way; everything else is sin.

Third, justification thus has far-reaching implications, not simply for individuals but for all institutions. There is no justification thus for any institution, social order, or state which is not established on God's sovereign law-word and which refuses to see itself as under God's government. If we are not in grace, we are under reprobation. If we are in grace, we are in faith obedient to the every word of God (Matt. 4:4). Our obedience is not perfect, but it is an obedience which manifests the fruits of grace (Matt. 7:11-20).

A church which does not set forth the whole counsel of God for every area and sphere of life is a church which has *no justification*. The same is true of any state or school which turns its back on God's total word. What does this mean? In the popular, non-theological meaning of the word, to *justify* means to show to be just, to vindicate, to make just or right. The theological meaning, briefly, is that to *justify* is to regard and treat as righteous on the ground of Christ's mediatorial work.

Using the first meaning, how can a church, state, or school be made just or right? If we are humanists, we will say that they are just or right to the degree that they serve man and man's purposes. If we are Christians, we must say that they are made just or *right* to the degree that they are subject to the law-word of God. Does this make justification a process? Hardly, because, as we analyze the nature of a church, state, or school, we can discern two things: (a) its commitment, whether or not it is to the law-word of God, and to God as Sovereign, or to man. This outward commitment manifests whether or not it is an institution within the Kingdom of God, or within the Kingdom of Man, within the world of grace, or the world of the fall and sin. Men of grace establish their institutions in God's grace and law; men in sin establish their institutions in terms of the principal of autonomy from God. They thereby reveal whether or not they are institutions of the world of Christ's justifying work or of man's self-justification. Have they been made right or just in terms of Christ's work, and are they under God's government and law, in His

Kingdom? We can only justify our institutions in terms of the Lord. Then, (b), these institutions can, like men, be sanctified to the degree that they work out the meaning of their justification, to the extent to which they are faithful to God as the only law-giver, judge, and justifier of all things. *Nothing outside of God has any justification*; the greatest works of man are anathema if they are not in terms of God's sovereignty, rule, and law. All things within God's Kingdom will grow in holiness or sanctification. The justified Christian must not live in peace with unjustified institutions. We are commanded to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and (bring) into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (II Cor. 10:5-6).

Thus, an institution which places itself under God and within the framework of justification is one which recognizes that only God can define and declare good and evil, and none other (Isa. 45:5-7). God is the Lord and thus is law-giver and Judge. Nothing can *in any sense* be justified if it is not in accord with His word. The godly institution will recognize that it is not in man to make righteous or to justify, but only in and of the Lord. The state thus cannot create the good society in terms of its own law and effort. The just state is one in which God's law is obeyed, and righteousness is recognized as coming, not by acts of legislative grace and fiat, but by the grace of God the Lord. The church will recognize that it can save no man, and the fact that the Lord established the church is no justification for the church, which stands, not by blood nor by inheritance or succession, but only in justifying grace. The church which places its hope in ecclesiastical polity and politics rather than in the grace of God in justification is a church which has become an agency of self-justification. Similarly, the school which sees salvation in knowledge has denied the Lord and professed another means of justification, of making men just or righteous. The knowledge of the self-justified is an ignorance of God the Lord, and of the meaning of truth, Jesus Christ (John 1:17; 14:6). Education apart from Jesus Christ is education into self-justification.

Justification thus has far-reaching implications. It is too important a matter to be left to theologians who reduce it to an ecclesiastical concept. It is a doctrine which, like everything about our God, has a cosmic meaning. No atom in all of creation has any meaning or place apart from God and His eternal decree. Nothing has any justification whatsoever apart from Him.

18. Justification and the Freedom of Man in Christ

The goal of man in his sin is freedom; his conclusion is slavery. Man sees God's law as bondage and creates his own law as his great charter of freedom and thereby forges his own chains. Everywhere, man in his own will and way,

seeks self-realization and gains self-punishment and reprobation. Man's way and man's law is self-justification, the will to be righteous in terms of one's own standard and law. However, as long as God is God, there is none other way to righteousness and justification than God's appointed way. Because God is God, He alone can justify: it is a divine act, not a human effort or accomplishment.

Where man seeks justification by any other way than God's declared way, he must at the same time re-order all reality and insist on the righteousness of his law, works, justice, and activities. He must in effect deny God and affirm himself. This means an insistence that the government of all things is on man's shoulders as the new god of being, and this new god must also become a total god and governor. Total government and predestination by man means totalitarianism and tyranny. All humanistic politics, education, and economics are exercises in self-justification and therefore in the fundamentals of slavery.

An interesting side-light into this fact appears in the regime of Cromwell. The historian, Blauvelt, saw Cromwell as a "dictator." The Puritan and Calvinist Cromwell faced a monarch who was Arminian in profession and implicitly a humanist. Blauvelt gave a telling statement of the practical difference between the Puritan and Arminian rule over England:

> For it came to pass that the Calvinist, denying free will to man, worked for the freedom of the subject, while the Arminian, granting him free will, worked against it. This tended to increase the number of the former. Men who did not understand the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism knew that for them, Calvinism meant freedom from arbitrary taxation while Arminianism meant submission to it. So that in 1625 Pym said that "under the name Puritan (by that time a derisive synonym for Calvinist), had been collected the greater part of the King's true subjects."[52]

The Arminians, by limiting God, increased the power of the king and the state; the Calvinists, by limiting man's power and denying his autonomy, increased the freedom of man from the state by affirming God's sovereignty and government. The "free will" of man which Arminianism and humanism affirm is in actuality a freedom from God and a freedom for man to be autonomous and to play God. The result is tyranny. "Free will" seeks the autonomy of man to be his own god and determiner; Scripture speaks rather of man's *responsibility and accountability.* Man has no freedom from God; he can have a freedom under God in Christ. The denial of free will in favor of accountability is basic to Biblical faith.

Charles I, in justifying his tyranny, asserted consistently *the royal prerogative*. His apologists held that, just as, in terms of Aristotle, the soul

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[52] Dary Taylor Blauvelt: *Oliver Cromwell, A Dictator's Tragedy.* (New York, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937). p. 51.

and reason are inseparable, so the king and justice are inseparable. Sir Robert Filmer argued that kings are above laws, so that the justification for what a king does is that he did it.[53] The modern humanistic state has come to the same conclusion: right is what the state says it is, and the policies of state are their own self-justification. The net result is, that in the name of man's freedom from God and his "free will", man becomes a slave to the humanistic state, or in an anarchistic world.

Man's "freedom" and self-justification lead to slavery and death. Only in Jesus Christ and in His justification of His elect is there freedom: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Christ's justification is, according to Hebrews 4, also our Sabbath, our true rest. We enter into God's rest when we are justified by Jesus Christ. We cease from our labors, our attempts at self-justification, at playing God, and we rest in the righteousness and government of God Himself.

This means that Christ is our righteousness, and we stand justified, not in our works but in His imputed work, His imputed death, and His imputed righteousness. Our status before God is an act of grace in God's court, and it is in no way due to anything we are or do. It's God's law which condemns us, and it is God's court and law which are satisfied by Jesus Christ, so that our justification is an act both of law and of grace.

The justified are then freed from their own law, works, and self-justification. This means that they now live, not in terms of humanistic "free will", political and economic principles, or religious and educational autonomy, but in terms of God's law, government, and grace. The life of the justified is a life in terms of God's law-word. In every realm, education, politics, law, church, state, the arts and sciences, the professions, the family, and all things else, the meaning of justification is that we stand, not in our works and law, but in God's righteousness, law, and Kingdom. Politics cannot create a good society on any ground alien to Jesus Christ and His justification and word. The first premise of a godly social order is justified men. The second premise is that, having renounced their works as the means of salvation and justification, they renounce in politics and everything else man's work and government for God's accomplished word, law, and government.

God does not have one kind of court for man, in which souls are justified, and another for churches, schools, states, and professions, wherein men create their own law and develop their own justification for humanistic institutions and orders. Only if there are gods many, and laws many, are there justifications many. But God declares to all men, institutions and nations,

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53. Francis D. Wormuth: *The Royal Prerogative, 1603-1649.* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1939).

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth*; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22).

XII

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

1. Introduction

Two of the problems in much theological discussion are reductionism and abstractionism. These two are closely related. *Reductionism* reduces the richness of Biblical faith to a few articles of faith, and *abstractionism* separates the context of life from Biblical faith to give us some abstract ideas as the essence of the faith.

For Greek philosophy, both reductionism and abstractionism were intellectual necessities. The meaning of history was sought in abstract ideas, and both life and meaning were reduced to those ideas. This method was adopted by the church. Two examples of this can be cited. More than a few men have defined Calvinism in terms of the famous Five Points. Again, the true church is defined in terms of (1) the faithful preaching of the word, (2) the Biblical administration of the sacraments, and (3) godly discipline by the church. C. John Miller has wisely added another, (4) the fruits of the Spirit.

As brief definitions, both have their merits. As a form of short-hand theology, a case can be made for both. Definitely, I do not favor their abolition, simply an awareness of their limitations and dangers. Five Point Calvinism represents an important development of the implications of God's sovereignty and is in this respect in the mainstream of theological development. However, contemporary Five Point Calvinism has reduced the faith too often to these abstractions and lost all the power and vitality of Calvinism on the social scene; it does not speak to the problems of the day.

The same is true of the definition of the church. A correct church is not necessarily a living church. People buried in a cemetery commit no actual sins, but they are irrelevant to history. Consider the case of the church in Corinth. It was marked by some gross problems, i.e., a case of incest which was seen as a sign of Christian freedom. There were factions and divided loyalties, conflicts and lawsuits, associations with ungodliness, problems over the status of women, differences with respect to the gifts of the Spirit; doubts concerning the resurrection, disorders at communion services, and more. All the same, Paul does not deny them the status of a church, although *none* of the familiar marks of the true church characterized Corinth. Corinth, however, had a quality lacking in many correct churches today: the ability to grow in grace and in knowledge. Thus the traditional, and useful, definition of a true church does not fit Corinth, and the same could be said of other New Testament churches.

There is another problem, the word *church*. Our English word comes from the Greek adjective *kyriakos*, as used in *kyriakon doma*, the house of the Lord.

It refers to a building primarily, and also to an historical institution. The Greek word translated as *church* is *ekkelesia.*[1] In the Greek text of the Septuagint, *ekkelesia* is used essentially for the Hebrew word *qahal*, the assembly of the called of God.[2]

Thus the church is more than the local building and congregation. The term is closer in meaning to the Kingdom of God. It has reference to the called people of God in all their work together for the Lord. As a result, as Bannerman pointed out, the older Reformed divines began their treatises on the doctrine of the church with Revelation 17:14:

> These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.[3]

In terms of this, Bannerman (and others) have seen the beginning of the church in the calling of Abraham. However, there is no reason to defer the origins of the church to Abraham! In a very real sense, the church was created with Adam and Eve, and with their calling. There are some very great merits in seeing the origin of the church in Eden, because the church is not then an afterthought, nor something established to cope with sin. Just as some have seen the origin of the state in the fall of men, and hence as a work of negation rather than as an order whose purpose is God's law, His righteousness enforced and maintained. Neither church nor state can be reduced to God's answer to sin. Luther saw the state as God's hangman; all too many have seen the church as God's chaplain standing by the gallows. If we see the calling of the state as justice, and that of the church as the service of God's word and calling, we have a more positive and functioning doctrine.

It must be noted that in Eden, *first*, there was no call or summons to salvation, because there was no fall as yet. Since then, the church has had an urgent task of evangelization.

Second, Adam and Eve were *called* into God's service. Their work was in essence dominion (Gen. 1:26-28), knowledge (Gen. 2:19f.), holiness (Gen. 2:16f.), and righteousness by means of work and obedience (Gen. 2:15-17). Adam's calling was thus closely tied to the image of God in him so that we can say that the nature of the church is very closely related to the image of God in man.

Thus, since the fall, the church has a task of redemption through Christ. Man must be restored into fellowship with God; this fellowship requires the restoration of man first of all into God's grace: salvation. The work then is the

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[1] D. W. B. Robinson "Church," in J. D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1962) 1973). p. 228f.

[2] L. Coenen, "Church" in Colin Brown, editor: *Dictionary of New Testament Theology, I.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975). pp. 291-307.

[3] D. Douglas Bannerman: *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1887) 1955). p. 1.

application of the aspects of God's image, righteousness, holiness, knowledge, and dominion, to every area of life and thought. The church is God's armory for this purpose. The church issues God's draft or conscription call, trains the troops for action, and sends them out weekly to conquer in Christ's name.

In such a view, the prophetic, royal, and priestly offices of man are given their due functions under God. Instead of precipitating a withdrawal from the world, the church then becomes the instrument whereby all things are made new (Rev. 21:5).

2. Faith and the Church

Sometimes a problem can best be understood if approached indirectly. As a result, let us consider the nature of the family as a step towards understanding the church. C.C. Zimmerman, in his excellent study of *Family and Civilization* (1946), identified families as trustee families, domestic families, and atomistic families. The trustee family is clearly the Biblical pattern; it is society's basic institution; it is a law center as well as a life center; and it is the basic governing force.

At this point, a serious problem develops: the trustee family includes more than the Biblical family. The family life of Old China, with its ancestor worship, definitely qualifies, as does ancestor worship everywhere. Pagan Germanic families in some cases also qualify. In other words, while Zimmerman's classification is very useful and essentially sound, its nature is such that it is inclusive of forms of family life without reference to their religious and moral content.

The same is true of the church. Too often the church is defined in terms of its polity, i.e., congregational, presbyterian, or episcopal, or a particular practice, as with the baptists. Again, it can be defined in terms of a creed or confession so that conformity to a definition of the faith is the mark of the church.

It would be a serious error to under-rate the importance of these considerations, but it is also a serious error to over-emphasize them. The church is nothing apart from Jesus Christ, and correctness on these other points, however good, cannot replace faith in Him. The families of Old China and the families of faithful Israel were alike trustee families, but each was informed and motivated by a radically different faith. Strickler stated the case clearly:

> Still another reason why so much importance is given to faith in religion is found in the fact that it is the parental, the fontal grace; the source of all the other graces; the grace we must have before we can have any other.[4]

Obedience to God, the love of God, and more, are all important, but faith is "the fontal grace." Faith is "the instrumental condition of salvation."[5]

> Faith gives reality to the commandments of God and secures obedience to them; therefore "by faith the elders" (the saints of former days), "obtained a good report"–from God and men. Faith gives reality to the declarations of God concerning the plan of salvation, and secures compliance with its terms; therefore, "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." Faith gives reality to the warnings of God, and prompts to the use of the needful means, divinely provided, to escape the dangers to which they point; therefore "by faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Faith gives reality to the promises of God, and induces the soul to rely on them, and to fulfil the conditions on which they are to be fulfilled; therefore, "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Faith gives reality to the blessings and glories of God's eternal kingdom, and inspires the soul with courage and strength to do and to suffer anything that it may at last be found amongst those of whom the world is not worthy; therefore, by faith many suffered "trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned; they were sawn asunder; were tempted; were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Such is the power of faith! Such servants of the Lord can it make! Such victories can it win! Such deeds of righteousness can it perform![6]

But faith is not something in and of itself, nor is it of man. It is faith in Jesus Christ; it is also God's gift to us. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

For the church to stress the centrality of faith means that it is not the institution nor its forms which mark it as a church but something more than itself, something which is from God, the grace of faith. Without for a moment surrendering its Baptist, Presbyterian, or Episcopal nature, the more strong any one of these churches becomes in the faith, the less it stresses its own distinctives and the more it stresses the distinctives of Christ and the word.

The Bible stresses the centrality of faith in the calling of Abraham:

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[4] G. B. Strickler: *The Philosophy of Faith.* (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1902). p. 14.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 27f.

> Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord;. . . Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one, I called him, and I blessed him, and made him many. (Isa. 51:1-2)
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> But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend; thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. (Isa. 41:8-10)
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> So, then, they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. (Gal. 3:9)

What Paul says in Galatians 3:9 is that faith, our reliance on the gift of God, blesses us together with Abraham.

This faith is set forth in Genesis 15:6, "And he (Abraham) believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." To understand the meaning of this, we must, *first*, recognize that Abraham was called of God (Gen. 12:1-3). The initiative was entirely from the Lord, who created Abraham, gave him faith, called him, and established a covenant with him (Gen. 15:1-21).

Second, in Genesis 15:6, we see the nature of the faith which God gave to Abraham. The word translated *believed* is related to our English word *Amen*, which is close to its Hebrew original. It means trust. Paul tells us, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). God declares to Abram, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). Abraham rests in this fact, and he lives in terms of it: He says Amen to God. This meant concretely that he believed God when God declared that, although now childless, he would have in due time a posterity as numerous as the visible stars (Gen. 15:5).

Third, we are told that God "counted it to him as righteousness." Abraham had said *Amen* to God; the Septuagint translates this word sometimes as *pistos*, faithful, and sometimes as *alethinos*, true, real or truth. The word *counted* or reckoned means *imputed.* As Girdlestone noted:

> It would follow that the passage does not teach us that Abraham's faith was regarded or estimated by God *as if it were* righteousness–the one quality being taken for the other–but that owing to the fact that he had faith in the promises, God accepted him, acquitted him from the charge of sin, pronounced him righteous, and conferred on him an inheritance.[7]

However, as von Rad points out, this imputation is *covenantal*; it presupposes an existing communal relationship. "God is righteous so long as he abides by this covenant...Man is righteous so long as he affirms the regulations of this

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[7] Robert B. Girdlestone: *Synonyms of the Old Testament.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1897) 1976). p. 163.

communal relationship established by God, i.e., the covenant and the commandments."[8] Ezekiel 18:5ff. speaks of this covenant faithfulness. Thus, man is called into the covenant by grace, given faith by grace, and sent forth to act in obedience to that faith and the covenant law.

Fourth, this imputation is, as Leupold stated, "a purely forensic act."[9] The covenant with God is a legal relationship. Abraham's faith is within the context thus of law, but it is *more personal* because of that fact. The modern mind separates the legal and the personal, because humanism has made law statist and abstract and hence impersonal. This is not true in the reality of God's creation. My relation to my wife is personal because it is legal, because it meets God's law. An illegal sexual relationship is impersonal and exploitive. In Scripture, the more faithful we are to God's law, the more close and personal is our relationship to Him and to our fellow men. It is a serious error to import the impersonalism of humanistic thought and law into Biblical thought.

Fifth, it is important to remember the nature of Abraham's faith. As Atkinson pointed out, this faith has two aspects. Abraham believed God's promise that he, Abraham, would have a son, and "he acted on that belief by committing himself to God."[10] God expanded that promise to Abraham with a large grant of land to his posterity (Gen. 15:18-21). Thus, faith involves believing in God and believing in His promises; the two are inseparable. We believe in God's promises when we commit ourselves, our hopes, and our todays and tomorrows to the Lord. We cannot spiritualize faith and separate it from God's promises. Abraham's hope was for a son: "Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" (Gen.15:2). This is a concrete, temporal, and material hope, and it was obviously pleasing to God, and blessed by God. The promises of God to His covenant people are fully material and temporal, as well as eternal and spiritual.

It is this faith which must mark the church. Too often the church identifies faith with itself, and faithfulness with loyalty to the institutional forms and practices. It then seeks *conformity rather than faith*. The history of the faith is studded with such perversions. For example, in the France of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the Society of the Holy Sacrament sought to locate and punish dissent from the institution of the church. Formal compliance combined with cynicism was not persecuted. Bounty hunters were given one-third of the fines if they ferreted out offenders.[11] The alternative to such an

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8. Gerhard von Rad: *Genesis, A Commentary*. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1961). p. 180.
9. H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of Genesis*. (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1942). p. 477.
10. Basil F. C. Atkinson: *The Pocket Commentary of the Bible, the Book of Genesis*. (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1957). p. 141.
11. Edgar H. Cohen: *Mademoiselle Libertine, A Portrait of Ninon de Lanclos*. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1970). p. 153.

evil is not indifference to false doctrine but the cultivation of sound teaching and a sound faith.

Thus, the traditional marks of the true church are good but limited. A formally correct church is not necessarily a faithful church. Abraham believed in God, and he acted on his faith. So too does a true church.

3. Circumcision

As God expanded, step by step, the meaning of His covenant, He required circumcision as the mark and sign of the covenant (Gen. 17:1-14; 21:4). God's requirement is very specific:

> 9. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.
> 10. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.
> 11. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.
> 12. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.
> 13. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
> 14. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. (Gen. 17:9-14)

All human covenants were marked by some external sign to seal the covenant; circumcision is an external but not normally visible sign, so that it is a sign to God; only the public or open act of circumcising was public. Moreover, while circumcisions are not uncommon in various parts of the world, now as in antiquity, there is a marked difference between Biblical and pagan circumcisions. It was in other cultures an act for adults only, not for infants. As Stigers notes, "As far as we know, infant circumcision was practiced exclusively by the Israelites."[12] This is a very important point, because it denies the voluntary nature of man's salvation: God establishes His covenant with whom He chooses. That a babe of eight days can be included emphasizes the fact that the covenant (and its salvation) is all of grace; man has nothing to do with the making of the covenant except to obey it. Abraham did not choose to seek out God; God called him, and at every step took the initiative. In fact, so great was God's initiative, that we are not told Abraham's original name. When God called him, He named him *Abram*, a prophetic name. It was because there was no fulfillment of the meaning of his name, Abram, father of many, that Abram spoke to God of his childlessness (Gen.

[12] Harold G. Stigers: *A Commentary on Genesis*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976). p. 165.

15:2) when God began to speak of His promises. The family normally gives the name to a child, but God named Abram and made him His covenant and family member. God ordains the covenant, summons Abraham, orders circumcision, and declares that whoever is not circumcised shall be cut off, at the least from the covenant. We are not given Abram's original name, because the man before his call has no standing before God in God's covenant.

With Abraham, the covenant was made inclusive of Abraham's seed, with a vast people. However, to make clear that the covenant status and salvation is not by blood or race but by grace, and that it requires the response of obedience to God's law, circumcision became the sign of the covenant. With Noah, the covenant sign is the rainbow, because the covenant promise is *to the earth*:

> 11. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.
> 12. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:
> 13. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. (Gen. 9:11-13)

Until the Second Coming, the earth is spared total judgment. The covenant sign with Noah is a reminder of that fact to the earth.

The covenant with Abraham is with a people, and it could easily lead, as indeed it did, to a racial pride, a confidence in blood, i.e., in being the descendants of Abraham. Accordingly, God ordained that this sign strike at all confidence in generation. Not in generation but in regeneration alone is their hope for man. As Vos commented:

> Human nature is unclean and disqualified in its very source. Sin, consequently, is a matter of the race and not of the individual only. Circumcision teaches that physical descent from Abraham is not sufficient to make true Israelites. The uncleanness and disqualification of nature must be taken away. Dogmatically speaking, therefore, circumcision stands for justification and regeneration, plus sanctification (Rom. 4:9-12; Col. 2:11-13).[13]

This meaning of circumcision, that it has reference to a God-given grace, was clearly understood over the centuries by those who would understand it. In Exodus 6:12-30 Moses uses it to speak of his unfit speaking power as a disqualification for his task. In Leviticus 26:41, it is used to describe the unregenerate heart, and also in Deuteronomy 10:16. In Deuteronomy 30:6, Moses declares, "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all

[13] Geerhardus Vos: *Biblical Theology, Old and New Testaments.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 104f.

thy soul, that thou mayest live." Like awareness of the meaning of circumcision appears in Jeremiah 4:4; 6:10; and 9:25,26; it also is found in Ezekiel 44:7. Paul, of course, places great emphasis on the meaning of circumcision (Rom. 2:25-29; 4:11; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11-13.)

Just as Abram was named at his calling, he was renamed with the institution of circumcision (Gen. 17:5), because he was to be the father of many nations, and also the father of the faithful. Paul says of Abraham,

> And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. (Rom. 4:11)

In the New Testament, baptism, a further sign of the covenant was given, and for long practiced on the eighth day after birth. In Cyprian's day, this eighth day practice was condemned.[14]

Baptismal regeneration is a doctrine which revives the ancient Israelite heresy in another form: it ascribes the power to the rite rather than blood. Those who affirm infant baptism too commonly assume that the covenant act ensures a covenant status. The truth is rather that the presentation of the child involves, *first*, a confession of the priority of God in salvation. It is entirely His doing, and to present children for baptism is to affirm that God alone can save man. It is an affirmation of God's sovereignty and predestinating power.

Second, the baptism of a child is a confession that we, all that we have, and our children, are God's possession. Hannah expressed this faith clearly in taking the child Samuel to the sanctuary, saying, "For this lad I prayed, and the LORD has granted me what I prayed Him for; I have therefore handed him back to the LORD; as long as he lives he is returned to the LORD" (I Sam. 1:27-28).

Third, by promising to rear our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we declare that God's gracious covenant with us is binding upon all our household, including our children. We bind ourselves and our infants to obedience to God's law-word.

Fourth, baptism is a family act, even as circumcision was a family act. The family is a covenant institution, and God's calling was to Abraham, to become a covenant family and people. Baptism has become a church rite, rather than a family one; not surprisingly, the Christian training of the child has been shifted to the church from the family, a dramatic loss. No less than the Old, the New Testament stresses the covenantal teaching duty of all parents (Eph. 6:4).

We dare not share in the evolutionary doctrine that the family represents an early and primitive stage in the history of man, and the state a higher one.

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14. Joseph Bingham: *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, vol. I. (London, England: Reeves and Turner, 1878). p. 496.

Neither church (i.e., the Christian synagogue) nor state can be given a *priority* over the family. God did not call out random individuals to establish His covenant, nor did he call a head of state: He called Abraham, and God's naming of the man had reference to the family and to children. The family is central to the covenant and therefore to every Christian institution, church, state, school, and all things else. Some churches still number their membership by families instead of individuals, a sound covenantal practice (In terms of I Corinthians 7:14, if one member of a family is redeemed, the family is numbered in terms of that one person.)

The church as the family of God does not outgrow in this world the redeemed family of Abraham and Abraham's seed, those who by grace share Abraham's faith.

Let us now sum up some of the implications of circumcision. For centuries the church saw itself as a necessary *institution.* In so doing, they began with a sound proposition, the absolute priority and necessity for the Kingdom of God. Unhappily, they then identified the institution of the church and God's Kingdom. This was a dangerous equation. To illustrate, it is obvious that *life* is a necessary prerequisite. I cannot then say, however, that *I* am alive, and therefore I am a necessity for history and civilization! God's Kingdom is much more than the Christian Church, state, school, and family, and it is more than time and history. The *necessity* for salvation, God's Kingdom, and God's church refers to more than man's institutions, although it can be inclusive of them.

However, on the premise of the necessity of the institution of the church, men required membership of all men (It can be added that the state also sees itself as a necessary institution *and* as something more than man and transcending man.) Quite rightly, the Baptists, led by Isaac Backus, waged war against the current view of a necessary church. In reaction, they stressed a purely voluntary church. Now there is a difference between a necessary church, and a coercive church. The rebellion against a coercive church was valid. However, by stressing a voluntary church which is man's creation, men moved into a free-will position, antinomianism, and the sovereignty of man, a position now generally held by almost all the once coercive churches. In this sense almost all churches are Baptistic now.

What circumcision witnesses to is that the Lord establishes His covenant and church out of a sovereign grace. Salvation is His work, and He witnesses to this by declaring that infants must be circumcised. Whether they are saved or lost depends on His sovereign grace. We are not allowed to know Abraham before His call. The man who counts in God's history is the man He calls. When Abraham appears in history, he is the called man. When Abraham's seed appears, it is circumcised on the eighth day. Where salvation is concerned, man has no prior history; whether we are one day old, eight days, or fifty years of age, the work of salvation is God's work. Circumcision and

baptism do not save us, but they are witnesses to the fact that salvation is of the Lord.

4. Government

Three main types of polity dominate the church scene: episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational. Each claims Biblical and/or early church authority for its form of government. In each case, there appears to be impressive evidences favoring the particular view.

There is, however, a problem. If we begin with a present fact and try to find its antecedents in the past, we are likely to succeed, because the present fact is a development out of the past. The key question, however, is this: is it a faithful development of an original standard?

There is another question with respect to church polity: where is the standard? Is it the early church and tradition, or is it the Bible? If it is the Bible, is it all of Scripture, or, as with some, the New Testament only, or, with dispensationalists, some portions thereof?

The *origins* of the church theologians place in the Old Testament, and the calling of Abraham, if not with Seth and Enos, when "men began to call upon the LORD" (Gen. 4:26). Strangely, the *government* of the church is not likewise sought in the Old Testament, although the New Testament is clear that the familiar pattern, and even the name of the officers, *elders*, was derived from the Old Testament and the synagogue.

God is the sovereign and the governor of all creation. It would be curious indeed if the supreme ruler of all things made no provision for government prior to the New Testament. It would, in fact, be startling, since all things else are legislated, if government in all areas were not prescribed.

We are told in Exodus 18:13-26, that Jethro found Moses overwhelmed by his attempt to administer a one-man government. Since Moses had been trained in Pharaoh's household, he had been trained to rule, and he assumed that position easily. Jethro saw the weakness of one-man rule and spoke plainly:

> 18. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.
> 19. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:
> 20. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.
> 21. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens;

> 22. And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.
>
> 23. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.
>
> 24. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.
>
> 25. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.
>
> 26. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. (Ex. 18:18-26)

Before analyzing this text, let us note that Jethro spoke as a priest of God. Moreover, he urged Moses to verify his counsel by going to the Lord. We are told that Moses listened to Jethro, "and did all that he had said." This surely included going to the Lord. We know that he did so, because in Deuteronomy 1:9-18 Moses declares that this system of eldership was ordered by God Himself. (The word used for this office is at times rulers, at other times captains, elders, or bishops. The word used in the Hebrew is *sar*, prince.) Moreover, elders or rulers were already a known form of authority. There were "elders" in Egypt, according to Genesis 50:7, but this may have meant no more than rulers or princes. More relevant to our concern, there were "elders" or rulers over Israel from within Israel even during the Egyptian captivity (Ex. 3:16). The office of elder was more than tribal: it originated in the family; the head of the family was its elder. God thus ordained that the family be the nucleus of government; Moses was not called upon to create a novel and rootless government but to use and develop an existing one which, in the providence of God, is basic to all government.

This raises another question: how are we to know how this office relates to the church? Was not Moses here setting up civil government? One answer to that question is the fact that both the synagogue and the church were ruled by elders; obviously both saw this as God's requirement.

Another important fact is that various references to elders in the Bible make clear that eldership is a pattern for government in a variety of spheres. Thus, in II Kings 19:2 and Jeremiah 19:1, we find reference to *the elders of the priests*. The priests (and Levites) were thus ruled by an eldership within their own ranks. Again, we find that there are *elders of the city*, who governed in five main spheres: blood redemption (Deut. 19:2); the expiation of murder by an unknown culprit (Deut. 21:3,6); the judgment of incorrigible delinquents and criminals (Deut. 21:19); cases of defamation of virgins (Deut. 22:15); and the laws of the levirate (Deut. 25:9). These are local and family concerns.

Next, *judges* are spoken of as a form of eldership (Deut. 19:17-19; 25:1-3; 17:8-11; 16:18-20; 21:2). Moreover, there are *elders of the people* or of the country, who made up the civil government (Num. 11:16; I Kings 20:7,8; II Sam. 3:17; 5:3; 17:14-15, etc.)

There were other, specialized forms of elders, but our concern here is the question of church polity. The New Testament is clear that both the synagogue and the church were ruled by elders, and that this was true of the church from the beginning. It was the pattern of the faith and an aspect of the church's continuity with the Old Testament.

Let us look again at the requirement and pattern in Exodus 18:18-26 and Deuteronomy 1:9-18. The eldership represents a hierarchical and graded authority. Every man who is a free and responsible head of a family is an elder. Over ten families, one elder exercises government and oversight. Problems too difficult for him are passed on up; there are elders over fifties, hundreds, and thousands. Over and above all, we find seventy elders ruling with Moses (Ex. 24:1; Num. 11:25). The original seventy cardinals in the college of cardinals were once all elders, and for centuries were laymen only.

To a degree, this pattern was established in Scotland after the Reformation, but the hostility of the nobles and the crown restricted it. The Scottish Reformation was from the top down, a problem which later haunted it; the General Assembly was first created, and then the subordinate structures. In the American colonies, John Eliot established the villages of Christian Indians on the eldership pattern, but, when Charles II came to the throne, Eliot's work was destroyed.

This Biblical form of government requires that men and the families be trained to govern. The basic government is on the family level, and all other forms of government rest thereon. This means that a society is as secure as its family structure. This is a fact often confirmed by sociology and psychology, and with reason, because God has so ordered life. This structure ensures a strength in government. Whether in church or state, it is a stabilizing force.

When Paul cites the qualifications of a bishop or elder, his stress is on the man's abilities to rule his own household, to rule himself, and his faithfulness, responsibility, and success as a husband and father (I Tim. 3:1-7). The foundation of the office and its qualifications are familistic.

What this pattern of eldership does is to create a network of responsible and governing men on the local level. *Government is not primarily a function of remote state officials, or high-ranking church officers, but of every man in his place.*

Instead of a concentration of government at higher levels, government under God is diffused throughout society, and responsibility is made a mandate for every man.

The free man is thus a governing man. The slave, one who seeks security above freedom, cannot be an elder. The man who sought security at the price of freedom was to have his ears pierced, to indicate a subordinate and feminine status (Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:17). This was done at the doorposts, to signify that he now belonged to the house and was no longer the head or potential head of a house.

It must be said that modern men are largely slaves. They leave the government of their children to their wives, the schools, or the church. Not surprisingly, impotence is a problem to modern man.

The eldership is a means of recapturing government for God; it is the starting-point of dominion, and it is the essence of godly government. In this calling, the wife is a help-meet in the exercise of man's calling and dominion.

Because of the humanistic nature of most historians, very little has been done to study the history of the eldership in Christendom. Some very elementary facts in that regard can be pointed out. In early Christian England, and for some time, the basic governmental unit was the hundred, or the hundred-court. Above the hundred-court was the shire, or the thousand-court. Rule in these districts was by aldermen, or elders, and the word alderman still lingers on in some cities, although long separated from the Biblical elder. Later on, in England, the royal sheriff and the county replaced the hundreds, shires, and elders.

Clearly, the pattern in the early church, and in the early centuries and for some time thereafter, stressed government by elders, local rule, and the local church. Before Rome fell, centralization had begun within the church, after the Roman pattern, but, with the fall of Rome, the eldership and the hundreds began to re-assert their rule.

A final note: our word *dean* comes from the Roman *decanus*, the commander of a division of ten. The early church took over the word, and, in time, it came to mean the head over ten monks in a monastery, then over ten ecclesiastics in a cathedral. The Old Testament pattern of eldership among priests was thus applied to the church. The university dean was in origin an ecclesiastical office.

5. Training for Governing

There are more than a few references in the New Testament to the home as the locale of church meetings. Prior to the fall of Jerusalem, the church was not an illegal institution, since Rome regarded it as merely a Jewish sect and thus to be given the immunities possessed by the Jews. After the fall of Jerusalem, no such protection existed; it was not possible to meet openly, or to have specified and publicly known buildings. However, before the fall (and after), the church met in homes. We have repeated references to this fact: Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2; etc.

Not only was the physical locale of the church the home, but the qualifications for officers were essentially family virtues, as I Timothy 3:1-13 makes clear. The main office, that of *elder*, is the name of the head of a family. Another office, that of *deacon*, is the name for a family servant.

Furthermore, the training for government in church, state, and other areas is in Scripture essentially within the family. This is apparent in two key texts. *First*, in every Passover service, *beginning with the very first in Egypt*, the *instruction* and *participation* of the sons was a requirement. Every religious festival had an element of instruction in it, and it was essential in all things that the children be reared in the essentials and fundamentals of the faith. God so requires it:

> 26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?
>
> 27. That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses. (Ex. 12:26-27)

> 8. And thou shalt shew thy son on that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.
>
> 14. And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. (Ex. 13:8,14)

To make sure that all understood it, the Hebrews required the youngest male child to ask the question. In the early church, and for some centuries, children were a part of the communion services and offered the prayers for the communicants, a prayer memorized and designed to set forth the meaning of the service.[15] The Hebrew child participated in the Passover Service. The Christian child took part in communion, for the first eight centuries everywhere, and the practice had some prevalence still into the fourteenth century.[16] It was clearly seen as essential that the covenant child understand the meaning of salvation and that as early as possible share the *responsibility* of the redeemed. He was taught to ask the question, because it was his responsibility to give an answer for his faith. This kind of training appears also in Joshua 4:6, where the question, "What mean ye by these stones?" requires the answer of teaching God's saving power.

Second, the same kind of teaching is required with respect to the law. As we have seen previously, the child must ask concerning the meaning of God's law, and he must be taught its meaning (Deut. 6:4-7, 20-25). We have a like requirement in Psalm 78:1-8:

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[15] Joseph Bingham: *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Vol. II., Book XIV, ch. V., Section V. (London, England: Reeves and Turner, 1878). p. 739.

[16] *Ibid.*, II, Book XV, Chapter IV, Section VII, p. 797f.

> 1. Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
>
> 2. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old.
>
> 3. Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.
>
> 4. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.
>
> 5. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:
>
> 6. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children:
>
> 7. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:
>
> 8. And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

This whole psalm cites the lessons of history which parents must teach their children; the history lessons are illustrations of God's judgments and are to be a part of the teaching of God's law. Life must be built upon the law of God, the psalmist says, and the law must be taught to children: this is God's requirement. Without the law, and the examples of God's judgment on law-breakers in Scripture, history will be the continuing and weary round of judgment on unconfronted covenant-breakers. Even more, it is not merely *knowledge* of the law, but a life of faithfulness which is required. The goal is "that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Ps. 78:7).

There is another aspect of the training for government. Not only is it required that the law and the meaning of salvation be taught, but also *responsibility*. In Leviticus 4, this is set forth in the sacrifices for priests, rulers, and people. The greater the responsibility, the greater the sacrifice. Our Lord sums up this familiar fact of God's law in these words: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). For this reason, God in His law and in His judgments judges men more severely than women. Because of their greater responsibility as heads of households, they bear also the greater culpability. In fact, in Hosea, God speaks of the religious and sexual dereliction of men and women as alike adultery, and, because the men of Israel have been faithless to Him, He will not judge the sins of their wives and daughters. Indeed, these feminine adulteries are a part of God's judgment against the men. In time, God's judgment will overwhelm the whole nation.

> 12. My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.
> 13. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.
> 14. I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall. (Hosea 4:14)

Thus, men must early be prepared for responsibility and eldership by being taught that their sins are more serious in the sight of God because they are men.

The attitude of modern man is that status is a license for irresponsibility. Women have imitated men, and the feminist "liberation" movement is a demand for irresponsibility, and hence its close ties to the sexual revolution and to the homosexual and lesbian causes. The covenant child must be taught that he must be the most responsible person in his society if he is a boy, because he must function as an elder in his home and calling.

This means that a man must be responsible for those around and under him. A boy should be so trained. There was a time when a boy felt that protecting his sister and other girls was his duty; now, too often, he is a tormenter. The man is told by God:

> Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. (Lev. 19:29)

> And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4)

In the ancient world, and among pagans up to our day, the daughter and wife were the man's property and could be prostituted at will in many cultures. God makes clear that such a step brings on all the more fully a curse on the land as well as on man (Gen. 3:17-19). Even as man is God's property, so too is man's family, and all his possessions. Children, as God's possession, must be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We began with the family as the training ground for eldership, and we conclude with it. It is not enough for boys to be trained to be *good*; They must also be trained to be able rulers of themselves and of their domain under God. An elementary qualification of *any* covenant man is cited by Paul as he discusses the church: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:58.

As we have seen, for every ten families, there is to be one elder, a man capable of ruling wisely, of giving counsel, and of sound abilities to act as an

overseer or bishop over those ten families, counting his own. The requirement, however, is that all ten families be ruled by a man who is a faithful elder under God. While the teaching of the Scriptures week by week is the function of the pastor, the ministry of government belongs to every man, and every man must be trained for it.

The alternative to God's government is centralization, totalitarianism, and tyranny.

6. The Passover

It should be apparent by now that our approach to the doctrine of the church is not modern nor institutional. Instead of beginning with an episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational polity and then seeking fragmentary proof-texts for it, our emphasis is on God's redemption and the response it requires. The church is an institution only because God's prior redemptive work and calling establish it as such. To begin with the institution and its structure means to begin at the end, not the beginning of the history.

Very important in the history and nature of the church is the Passover. It is called "the feast of the passover" in Exodus 34:25. Most of the religious or holy days of the Bible are also called *feasts*. The word *feast* is *khagh* in the Hebrew, a feast, or sacrifice, and the word is related to *khahgag*, to move in a circle, march in a holy procession, to celebrate, or dance. In Hebrew thought, feasting, solemnity, and rejoicing go together; the association of solemnity is more with happiness than stiffness.

The Old Testament Passover began with the *seder* (order) meal at which children were instructed (Ex. 13:8); the Passover was celebrated for seven days, and on the first and last days work was prohibited. No leaven was to be in the house or in the possession of the family during Passover (Ex. 12:15,19). Leaven represented corruptibility; it does not, as some have held, represent sin. It stands for that which passes away. Man can only offer God a gift which is corruptible and temporal. He thus can bring for a thank offering and a peace offering leavened bread to the altar, and, in fact, he is commanded to do so (Lev. 7:13). Man's offering, however, cannot effect atonement; only God's unblemished offering can do so.

Before Passover, the father took the children through the house with a lamp to search out the leaven and to cast it out, because only God's unblemished substitute can make atonement. This was an excellent teaching device whereby the children were taught the necessity of approaching God with nothing from themselves. In "Rock of Ages," Augustus M. Toplady (1776) caught this spirit in his words,

> Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to thy cross I cling.

The Passover feast includes the Passover ceremony and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The ceremony of purging out the old leaven is referred to by St. Paul in I Corinthians 5:6-8:

> 6. Your glorying is not good, Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
> 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:
> 8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul's words tell us how the ceremony of purging the leaven was understood.

The New Testament declares that Jesus Christ is the Passover lamb (John 1:29; 19:36; I Corinthians 5:7; I Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6), and Jewish scholarship recognizes this to be basic to Christian thought, and speaks of the Passover as "presupposed in the New Testament."[17]

The Passover celebrates the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. On that night, all the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast, were slain by God in His judgment against Egypt and the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12:12). All the firstborn of Israel too would perish unless they were covered by the blood of the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:13). The Passover lamb is the type of God's firstborn, who dies in covenant man's place for the covenant peace and communion.

The Passover thus sets forth *freedom*. The freedom is total. It includes freedom from slavery and captivity, and it also includes freedom from the power of sin and death. Israel had not been faithful in Egypt; they had adopted the idolatry of Egypt, as Ezekiel 20:6,7 reminds them centuries later. They had thus sinned against the covenant, and only God's provision of a substitute, the Lamb, redeemed them from death. The blood of the Lamb thus represented God's faithfulness to the covenant in providing for the very victim from among men, to represent all covenant men, Jesus Christ, very God and very man. The Passover thus is essentially and closely tied to the Jubilee rest and freedom: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Lev. 25:10). Two words are used in the Hebrew and translated as *jubilee*, one in Leviticus 25:9, the other in all the other references in Leviticus 25 and 27; both have reference to the sound of trumpets. The word *liberty* is in Hebrew *dror* the same word as swallow, "a bird that recognizes no mastery; God is to be the only master of man."[18] Klein's sentence would read better, God is to be man's only *lord*.

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[17] Ernst Kutsch, "Passover" in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. XIII. (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing, 1971). p. 172.
[18] Mordell Klein: *Passover*. (New York, N.Y.: Leon Amiel, 1973). p. 105.

The church is thus the institution created by God in terms of the Passover fact and the Jubilee expectation. Jesus Christ, as St. Paul makes clear, is our Passover, We are saved by His blood; He died as our vicarious sacrifice and substitute, taking upon Himself the death sentence passed upon us. Salvation gives birth to the church.

The consequence of the Passover was the preparation and summons to take over the Promised Land and to dispossess the ungodly inhabitants thereof. The Christian Passover is similarly followed by the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), the mandate to go out and command all the world for Christ the King, making disciples of all nations. The church is created by the redemptive act of God in Christ in order to act upon the world in Christ's name and power. As a result, the New Testament has a minimum account of the structure of the church or Christian synagogue, in part because it was not structurally new, and in large part because the emphasis was on the calling to go forth into all the world in Christ's name and power.

However, just as the Passover looks to the Jubilee, so too does the Christian Passover; the conclusion of the matter is to be this: "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). Ezekiel gives us a vision of water flowing out from the altar; as the stream of this river of life from the altar of sacrifice flows, it widens to water all the land (Ezek. 47:1-12). This vision is given also to John: the water of life flows now from the throne; the work of salvation is done, and all is Jubilee. The world is renewed and the curse forever gone, as His servants serve him triumphantly (Rev. 22:1-5).

The church is an institution, but if it is only an institution, it is not a church. It is the Passover House, and it serves the Lord to ring in His Jubilee. It is Christ at work through man to extend the Passover festival into all the world, and to bring in the Great Jubilee.

7. The Sabbath

The Sabbath is very commonly regarded as a "church day" when in reality we should regard the church as a Sabbath creation and institution. The Sabbath creates the synagogue and the church.

The essential meaning of the Sabbath is rest, but it is emphatically not rest in the form of leisure, i.e., free time for man to use at his discretion. The Sabbath means rest in the form of redemption.

In the two statements of the Ten Commandments, we have an interesting variation at one point, the Sabbath law:

> 9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
> 10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy

manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
11. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Ex. 20:9-11)
12. Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.
13. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all they work:
14. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.
15. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. (Deut. 5:12-15)

In the first statement of the law, the pattern of creation is declared to be the pattern of man's life: six days for work, and one for rest. Every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year. This pattern is ordained by God, and it is therefore the *natural* pattern for man's life. God being the creator of all things, His law gives us life's natural and normal pattern.

An interesting sidelight is here apparent. In terms of Scripture, the man observing all the Sabbaths and festivals as well as the sabbatical year would rest approximately 850 days in seven years, or out of 2556 days. Modern man, with a five-day work-week and a two-week vacation, rests perhaps a little more, but without the true rest of the sabbath and its renewal. Rest means more than time off; it is inseparable from a religious peace, from justification and atonement.

Let us consider for a moment the Hebrew Sabbath. It was inseparable from sacrifice; the peace with God it promised was based on the sacrificial system, which is clearly central to God's law. The Sabbath rest and joy presupposed atonement for sin and peace with God. Although by our Lord's time the deformation of the faith had obscured the sacrificial system and works had replaced faith, the centrality of sacrifice still confronted the believer at every turn.

There is a dramatic dislocation when we turn to Judaism and its Sabbath. Sacrifice is gone as the foundation. The two basic facts are now circumcision and the Sabbath; both witness to the covenant, but the facts of atonement and justification are now gone. As a result, the vital nerve of Old Testament faith is lost.

The Christian Sabbath celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, His works of atonement and justification, and His victory as our federal head over sin and death. The Christian Sabbath thus means, *first*, peace with God through the work of Jesus Christ. We can therefore *rest* from our labors in the

finished work of atonement by Jesus Christ. We rejoice in God's grace and God's love. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). It is to the interest of an evil world to persuade men of their guilt, real or unreal. The politics of guilt controls men by seeking to make them feel guilty for being more successful than others. The world is full of well-to-do and rich people trying to buy atonement by financing all kinds of socialistic politics and projects; modern humanistic education is a failure except in inculcating guilt into students – guilty of being white (or black), guilty of being rich (or poor), guilty of eating too well, of enjoying life, and so on. Guilt cripples a man, and guilt thus is used as an instrument of control. Christ frees us from sin and guilt and alone gives us true freedom (John 8:31-36). No free society is possible without Christ's atonement and freedom therein. Churches whose preaching reinforces guilt are thus in effect undermining Christ's work.

Thus, only where there is atonement is there a true Sabbath. It is atonement that alone makes possible a true Sabbath, true rest, and which alone creates a true church. A true Sabbath or rest in the Lord means a trust and confidence in Him, "casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). We can rest joyfully in the fact that "he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. 2:14).

Second, we not only have peace with God through the atonement but we have *access* to God. The Sabbath is a celebration of that access, and the church is the fellowship of the celebrants. Paul can thus say joyfully,

> 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
> 2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:1-2)

This is access to the *throne* of all creation (Heb. 4:16); it is, moreover, a *family* access. Children, when hurt or afraid, run immediately into the arms of a loving father; whether that father is a great man or not makes no difference to the child; his are the arms of love, care, and providence. So too when we are hurt, afraid, or in need, we run to the Father in Christ to be comforted, strengthened, and healed. We are His children by the adoption of grace. The church celebrates that access. It is not the mediator nor the channel, but rather the celebrant of access.

Third, Isaiah 58:13-14 tells us something more about the Sabbath and therefore the church:

> 13. If you do not tramp upon the Sabbath by doing your business on My holy day, but call the Sabbath an enjoyment, in order that the LORD might be sacredly honored; and if you honor it by not doing your business, nor seeking your own pleasure, nor talking idle talk,
> 14. then you shall find your delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the highways of the earth; I will nourish you with the heritage of

> Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. (Berkeley Version)

We are here forbidden not only to make the Sabbath a day of work, but also of *planning* for work. We are also forbidden to seek our private pleasure, but, as E.J. Young pointed out, this was not to teach us to make the Sabbath a day of gloom.[19] As Moore made clear, this text was seen as requiring *honor* to the Sabbath by making it a day of godly rejoicing. It was the day of the best dinner, a custom which continued in the church until our time, the Sunday dinner as the luxury meal of the week. The poorest families in Israel put aside something to make the Sabbath dinner a special joy. In order to have a better appetite for the Sabbath rejoicing in the Lord, it became a custom, if a wedding came on the day before the Sabbath, to eat sparingly. It should be noted that the main Sabbath meal was on the night before the Sabbath. In Luke 14:1-24, we have an account of a lavish dinner attended by our Lord on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath was also the favored day for entertaining visitors at dinner.[20]

A practice from ancient times, still in use among Orthodox Jews, is to bless God before reciting, speaking of, or observing anything in His law. This is especially true of the Sabbath.[21] It is a day of rejoicing, and a time to praise God, and also to remember the poor and the stranger.

If this is the nature of the Sabbath, it must also be the nature of the church which is a creature of the Sabbath. The Lord and the Lord's Sabbath command the church, not the church the Sabbath. Our Lord says, concerning the Sabbath,

> 27. ...The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:
> 28. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath. (Mark 2:27.cf. Luke 6:5)

The man for whom the Sabbath was made is covenant man, the new Adam, Jesus Christ, and for us in Him. It is a day for the celebration of our redemption, calling, triumph, and Jubilee in Him. The Jubilee is the Great Sabbath of God. All our Sabbaths thus must echo with Christ's victory and look forward to the Jubilee. The church of the Sabbath proclaims rest in Christ's redemption, and victory through His sovereign reign.

8. The Assembly or Congregation

The most common word for the Christian community in the New Testament is *ecclesia*, which can be translated as assembly, congregation, or

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[19] Edward J. Young: *The Book of Isaiah, III.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972). p. 426.
[20] George Foote Moore: *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, II. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (1927) 1970). p. 35.
[21] A. Edersheim: *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ.* (New York, N.Y.: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.). p. 174.

church. The word comes from *ek*, out of, and *klesia*, a calling. It is a Greek word used in Hellenic politics to describe the coming together of the citizens to discuss the affairs of the city-state, and it is so used in Acts 19:39 by the town clerk to describe the Ephesian Assembly. The word thus describes a realm, a state, or a kingdom. The Septuagint uses *ecclesia* to describe the Israel of God in the Old Testament.

The New Testament continues that usage. The church is the assembly or congregation of the called people of God. It is the covenant community of the Messiah.

Ethelbert Stauffer saw *ecclesia* as the most basic term whereby the early church described itself.[22] The church does not create itself: it is called of God. Men create their own covenants in opposition to God, declaring, "Go to, let us build us a city" (Gen. 11:4), and Augustine's division of men into the City of God and the City of Man is Biblical. It goes back to the Fall, and its essence is covenant man versus anti-God leagues and covenants. Isaiah tells us that reprobate men in effect say, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement" (Isa. 28:15), and we can and must see this division as basic to history. Fallen man wants no covenant with God unless man can make it himself and dictate the terms. Hence, God's covenant people are *a called* people, not a contracting people. The initiative is the Lord's.

This covenant community goes back to the beginning of time, to Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Israel of God. This calling is one of which the church or congregation is repeatedly reminded:

> 11. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.
> 12. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.
> 13. I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you upright. (Lev. 26:11-13)

> 26. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.
> 27. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Ezek. 37:26-27)

> 7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;
> 8. And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. (Zech. 8:7-8)

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22. Ethelbert Stauffer: *New Testament Theology*. (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1955). p. 153.

The church thus is not only created by the act of God, by God's covenant grace, but it is also protected and blessed by the covenant God. It moves out into the world and history with a power from beyond history, from the Creator God. This power is dependent upon faithfulness to the covenant God and His covenant law.

As Stauffer pointed out[23]., the early church saw this promise fulfilled in itself, and Paul declares this to be indeed the case:

> 16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
> 17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
> 18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (II Cor. 6:16-18)

The church is called to a holy dignity:

> 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 marvelous light;
> 10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which hath not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (I Peter 2:9-10)

The same fact is stated also in Revelation 1:6.

In this age of democracy, our ideas of royalty and priestly office have been cheapened and debased. What we see of royalty now is largely a picture of impotence, and centuries of problems and hostilities color our picture of priesthood. This was not true of the New Testament era. Royalty represented then total power in the Greco-Roman world, vast wealth, and the power to control men and nations. On the other hand, the Jews and Christians knew another kind of royalty, the Messiah. God's absolute kingship over creation was to be realized in history in and through the Messiah. The Christian knew Jesus Christ to be God's Messiah. They were thus the people of the King of kings. Not only so, but they too were, by the adoption of grace, made members of the royal household and were thus princes of grace.

The doctrine of adoption and the doctrine of membership in Christ's body meant to the early church and should mean to us that we are called to rule (I Cor. 6:1-10), and that our calling is so authoritative and powerful a one, coming from the King of Creation, that "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). We cannot understand the audacity of the early church apart from this faith; it created a new kind of man.

The same was true of the priestly calling. For the Greco-Roman world, the priest was a *necessary* person. The peace of man and the state depended on

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

his lustrations. His personal holiness was a social necessity. For a Vestal Virgin therefore to defile her calling brought a quick penalty of death. Holy callings had a preserving power in the body politic.

The Biblical doctrine of priesthood was brought to its incarnation in Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest. In what sense therefore does our Lord through the apostles declare us to be a priesthood? Another facet of priestly work other than sacrifice is intercession. The priest intercedes for the people with God. The Christian is thus called as a priest to be an intercessor.

However, in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord speaks of our calling in terms which echo the preservative function of Greco-Roman priests as well as all priests:

> 13. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.
>
> 14. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set upon an hill cannot be hid.
>
> 15. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (Matt. 5:13-15)

They have a preserving and light-bringing function. In Stauffer's telling words, "In the midst of a dying world the Church is the coming generation that alone has a future before it when this world passes away: then God will dwell among them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them (Rev. 21:3)."[24]

The assembly has a call to rule; it is more than a building or an institution: it is a government, the government of Christ the King; it is life in Christ the Lord. St. John Chrysostom said, "The church does not exist in its walls, but in its rules; when attending church, do not go to the edifice, but to the light; the church is not in the walls and roofs, but in the faith and life."[25] The government which the church represents, Chrysostom said, is more important than the imperial government (meaning thereby Rome). "What then is the government, more dignified than that of the empire, which they who enter here receive?" It is self-government through the power of the faith. "For what profit is there, pray, in purple, and raiment wrought with gold, and a jewelled crown, when the soul is in captivity to the passions? What gain is there in outward freedom when the ruling element within us is reduced to a state of disgraceful and pitiable servitude?"[26]

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24. *Idem.*

25. Paul Milinkov: *Religion and the Church in Russia.* (New York, N. Y.: A. S. Barnes, (1942) 1960). p. 76.

26. Chrysostom, "Homily to Those Who Had Not Attended the Assembly," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene*, Second Series, vol. IX. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956). p. 226.

The *ecclesia* is the *assembly* of those whom Christ governs and who are therefore called to govern the earth under God. For many centuries, the church or assembly meant a government. As such, it had many governmental functions, some Biblical and some extra-Biblical, but all reflecting the fact that it meant government by elders. We have noted earlier some aspects of this in the English and Scottish churches. In France, until the French Revolution, the functions of the *assembly* were many. *The assembly as government* was a meeting of all the heads of households, i.e., elders, of the community after Sunday's last Mass. (This resembled the New England town meeting, held in the church.) The assembly's legal powers were, according to Albert Babeau.

> They determined the sales, purchases, exchanges, and rentals of the commons; the repair of the church, the presbytery, the public buildings, the roads, the bridges; in addition to their syndics, they named their schoolmaster, their herdsman, their sergeant, their hayward, the tithe collectors, the assesors and collectors of the taille. Sometimes they fixed the conditions of the wine-harvest; in certain circumstances they even set the rate of pay for day laborers and the prices of certain products.[27]

The French Revolution did not bring in "democracy"; it destroyed it to a great degree. Communal government through the assembly of all elders or heads of households was replaced with a centralized and concentrated power in the hands of the state.[28] At the same time, the care of the poor was shifted from the church and pastor to the state.[29]

This is not to say that the church or assembly as government is the answer to man's problems. A local assembly can be as corrupt as a national congress or parliament. The local assembly is, however, God's pattern. When this *form* has with it regenerate, self-governing men who have first of all been ruled by God, then its effectiveness and potentiality is clearly great.

The word designating the church, *ecclesia* or assembly, signifies government, government in terms of the whole word of God. To be a government under God, the church and its members must first of all be ruled by the governing law-word of God.

One final note: if today a church body in the United States called itself a *congress*, or one in Britain called itself the true *parliament*, the respective states would take notice, especially if those bodies began to spread rapidly, and to acquire governmental functions in education, welfare, and other fields. The concern of Rome with the *ecclesia* is thus understandable, as is its hostility. Today, as the *ecclesia* revives its powers, the United States has begun persecuting it, and no wonder.

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27. Charles Tilly: *The Vendee.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (1964) 1976). p. 151.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

9. The Holy Assembly

The word *holy* is basic to the life of the church and the believer. *Holy* (*hagios* in the Greek) means separated from sin and dedicated and consecrated to the triune God. The modern doctrine of separation is thus grounded in the doctrine of the holy. However, a false emphasis has sometimes resulted, and the stress has been placed on separation from other church members, usually unbelievers or defective in their doctrines. There is no question that at times such separation is a necessity, but the essence of separation is *to the Lord.* The essence is positive and an evidence of grace, not of conflict, which does not mean that conflict does not sometimes result.

We must not forget that, above all else, holiness is an attribute of God. Isaiah tells us that the cry of the seraphim one to another is, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3). Isaiah's vision, and his report of the song of the seraphim, is a vision of *the throne* of God's absolute government. John's vision of the throne is similar, and the chant is also: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. 4:8). John gives us, too, the response of the fullness of the elders of both Testaments, God's called rulers in history:

> 10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,
> 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (Rev. 4:10-11)

Again, when God gives His law, He repeatedly stresses the fact that *the law, the instrument of rule, is also a call to holiness*: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2).

It should be apparent by now that there is a sharp difference between the Biblical doctrine of the holy and the current one. In the Middle Ages, holiness meant a withdrawal from the world into the convent or the monastery. Many medieval saints were intense activists, but, in the popular and developing concept, withdrawal and separation from the practical affairs of the world was basic. Despite its often hostile view of the medieval world, most Protestants are not too different in their view of holiness. It means withdrawal and separation from the problems and battles of this world into a life of spiritual exercises.

But holiness is an attribute of God in His majesty, dominion, power, law, and government. It is a communicable attribute of God, and both men and institutions can be holy if they are separated and dedicated unto God *and* to the exercise of godly dominion, law, and rule in their lives, families, callings, and the world around them. There was a time when *Holy Church* meant a

conquering, ruling church because its faith commanded peoples and their lives.

This doctrine gave way, in Puritanism for example, under the influence of neoplatonism, to Pietism. As Christopher Hill describes the change,

> More typical was George Fox, who abandoned his bellicosity, and organized the Quaker sect on the assumption that Christ's kingdom was not of this world. For Bunyan too *The Holy War* was no longer–as it had been for Fuller a generation earlier–a Crusade, nor did it involve the community as a whole: it was waged in the heart of the individual. The gradual collapse of their noble dreams for the rest of the world as well as for England must have had incalculably depressing effects on the morale of the radicals; and must have contributed to that moral disintegration which made the Restoration of Charles II so unexpectedly easy.[30]

The corrupt regime of Charles II was possible because, in Hill's blunt words, "Religion had at last been divorced from politics."[31] But, if God the Lord is Maker of heaven and earth and all things therein, religion can be divorced from nothing and must govern everything.

Scripture plainly tells us that *God is holy*. Therefore, His law is holy: "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). Our calling is holy and for God's purpose, not ours (II Tim. 1:9). We are summoned to be holy (Eph. 1:4; etc.), and the church is called to be holy (Eph. 5:27). All of this is a continuation of the calling of Old Israel to be a "holy people." So too the church must be a holy assembly and a holy people:

> 6. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. (Deut. 7:6)

> 2. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.
> 21. Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien; for thou art an holy people, unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. (Deut. 14:2, 21)

> 18. And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;
> 19. And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken. (Deut. 26:18-19)

Clearly, holiness extends to all of life, and it means keeping God's law.

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30. Christopher Hill: *Puritanism and Revolution.* (New York, N. Y.: Schocken Books (1958) 1970). p. 147f.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 335.

Neoplatonism, however, has saturated the church with its influence. Neoplatonism believed, not in God as ultimate, but in two ultimate substances, soul and matter, soul being good, and matter low and almost evil in character. The good or holy man thus seeks to forsake the material world in favor of the spiritual. Men who are involved in the material world of business, manufacturing, farming, and the like are by nature therefore lower and must defer to spiritual men, like the pietistic clergy. Their material nature has been developed at the expense of their soul, or spiritual being.

Neoplatonism thus emphasizes a holiness which means a forsaking of material things. In church history, we find that, for some time, the clergy were forbidden, after performing a marriage ceremony, from remaining for the celebration. There would, after all, be banqueting, and no spiritual man should cater to his flesh by eating rich foods. Worse yet, there would probably be some drinking and dancing, laughing, jokes about marriage, and other horrors alien to a good neoplatonist. Such attitudes are now commonplace among pietists and give a false view of holiness. They were also present to a degree among the Pharisees, who accused Jesus because "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. 11:19). In brief, our Lord was accused of being a disreputable man of degraded tastes and associations because He ate heartily, drank wine, and reached out to lost sinners in His associations.

Christians in the New Testaments are called *saints*, holy ones, because they believe in Christ and obey Him; they are faithful. Thus, the basic Biblical word to describe the true members of Christ's assembly is *holy*, saints. The Lord's Prayer has as its first petition, "Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2); *hallowed*, *hagiastheto*, is a form of holy. D. Hill has said, "To 'hallow' the name (i.e. the nature of God as known through his self-revelation in history) means, not only to reverence and honour God, but also to glorify him by obedience to his commands, and thus prepare for the coming of the Kingdom."[32]

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *hasid* is often used to denote the godly man and to set forth his holiness. It "denotes the man who readily accepts the obligations which arise from the people's relationship to God."[33]

The meaning should now be clear. *The holy assembly* is the active body of people who obey God and are faithful members of His body and household. They accept their obligations, because it is their duty as members of God's family to be faithful to their Lord.

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[32] Cited from D. Hill: *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1972, p. 136, by Colin Brown in Colin Brown, editor: *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. II. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, (1967) 1976). p. 229.

[33] H. Seebass, in Colin Brown, *ibid.*, vol. III, p. 237.

Holiness indeed means separation from sinners (Jude 19; I John 2:19; Heb. 12:16ff; etc.). It does mean casting out the ungodly (Gal. 4:29f.). But, above all else, it means being the faithful people of God. A faithful husband and wife work together, defend one another, develop the strength and life of the family, and they love one another. Similarly, a holy assembly lives to develop the scope and power of Christ's Kingdom, to apply God's total word to all of life, to bring in all peoples, tribes, and tongues into His realm, and to rejoice together as heirs of the grace of life.

10. The House of God

The word *house* (*bayith* or *bahyith*) in the Hebrew means house as we understand it, and may come from a root meaning to build, or, to have children. Its usage is quite literal for the most part, i.e., Genesis 7:1, the house or family of Noah; Genesis 17:23, the house or family of Abraham, and so on. It means the family (or, better, the extended family) and can also be translated as *household.*

It is also used with reference to God and His dwelling-place. In Genesis 28:17, Jacob, after his vision, says of the place where he experienced it, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." He therefore named it *Bethel*, "house of God" (Gen. 28:19). Bethel was not a building nor an institution: it was a place. At that place, which Jacob commemorated with a stone to signify a great event, to be a monument, Jacob had been taken into God's family. He was leaving his own family behind for fear of Esau. At that place, Bethel, God took Jacob into His own household:

> 12. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.
> 13. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;
> 14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
> 15. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. (Gen. 28:12-15)

Jacob had sought the covenantal *birthright* and had gained it from Esau; now, God gave him the *covenant* by His grace and status therein. He tells Jacob that He is "the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." Instead of being called Isaac's son, Jacob is called Abraham's son to signify that Jacob is the covenant heir of the covenant father. Jacob was now the covenant man. He was taken into the covenant family of God: hence, he called the place Bethel, the house of God.

In acknowledgment of this, Jacob promised to *tithe* to God "of all that thou shalt give me" (Gen. 28:22). This phrase is revealing. Stigers' comment is to the point: "The sign of thorough committal on his part is the giving of the tenth, in recognition of his total dependence on Yahweh-Elohim."[34] Jacob, as von Rad noted, vowed a triple vow. *First*, the LORD shall be my God. *Second*, Bethel would be a sanctuary and a memorial to remind Jacob and his family which was to come of God's grace, and to be kept as a reminder of the covenant. *Third*, God promised to Jacob the whole of that country, and Jacob promised in return to give "of all that thou shalt give me" (Gen. 28:20-22).[35]

Bannerman said, of the term *house of God*,

> From the period of the wilderness sojourn onwards, the tabernacle and the temple are constantly referred to both in the historical and prophetic books as the "house of God," or "of the Lord." "The tent which He pitched among men," the place where His immediate presence was to be recognized, where His glory was to be seen, and where especially He met with men and spoke to them in grace. Yet ever and anon such references were accompanied with an emphatic testimony to the fact that God's presence was also in every place, and that the heavens and the earth were full of His glory.[36]

Jacob's vow is not given to us merely as a bit of historical data. Rather, it gives us the necessary response to God's covenant and to membership in the House of God. Before there was an institution and an assembly in any formal sense, there was *tithing* as an aspect of life in the House of God. Jacob's vow is echoed in the familiar words of the offertory hymn of William W. How (1823-1897):

> We give Thee but Thine own,
> Whate'er the gift may be:
> All that we have is Thine alone,
> A trust, O Lord, from Thee.
>
> May we thy bounties thus
> As stewards true receive,
> And gladly, as Thou blessest us,
> To thee our first-fruits give.

Unhappily, this is all too often sung formally and mindlessly by people who in their hearts are closer to Nebuchadnezzar, who said, surveying his possessions, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30). This should not surprise us. The goal of history for fallen man is the fulfillment of Genesis 3:5, the apotheosis of man, man as his own god,

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34. Harold G. Stigers: *A Commentary on Genesis.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976). p. 228.
35. Gerhard von Rad: *Genesis.* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1961). p. 281.
36. D. Douglas Bannerman: *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1887) 1955). p. 78.

enthroned on earth and across the face of the universe. God's goal in history is the destruction of this apotheosis and the establishment of His Kingdom or *House* against the Kingdom or House of Man.

There is an important point here. As members of the House of God by grace, we are heirs, heirs by the adoption of grace. Paul in I Corinthians 4:7, an extremely important verse, stresses the fact that all that we have and are we have received by God's predestination and providence.

Modern man, with his humanism is hostile to heirship. There is an obvious anti-humanism and predestination in being an heir. What we are, we are then by inheritance. But Paul says this is true of all of us. The inheritance and estate taxes and the hostility to heirship go hand in hand with a hostility to God's predestination. How dare God choose and bless some and not others? Man insists on doing the choosing, and, in envy, insists on levelling all things. *The House of God* is not entered by man's choosing: the Father chooses us; we are heirs by His grace, not by our doing.

Modern man has difficulty in comprehending the meaning of the word *house* as used in the Bible and in antiquity. For us, it means a building, and perhaps a family. While it is used in both senses in the Bible, it means much more. It is synonymous with life. The destruction of a physical building in a war, or death, rape, or slavery for any members, meant the ruin of the house, of the life of the family. The *house* was an entity to which the various persons *and generations* belonged. It was an on-going fact, so that men did not think of the *house* as the nuclear family but as the past, present, and future generations.

In terms of Scripture, the house of man, of fallen Adam, is one doomed to die. The ever-living house is the House of God, which is from everlasting to everlasting. When the covenant God makes man a member of His House, He makes man a working partner and family member of the governing power in all of history.

This House of God is given the covenant law: it proclaims that law to men and nations. God's law-word is the standard, and God is the Judge as well as the accuser and the prosecutor. Let us look at the *legal* implication of this. From the fall of Rome to after 1200, the courts of Europe were in varying degrees governed by Biblical law. True, much barbarian legal practice remained, and, true, the law was far from fully faithful to Scripture. At one important point, however, the courts were very different. A criminal prosecution required a plaintiff. Without an accuser, there was no case and no judgment. The accusation had to be grounded in God's law, and the plaintiff had to be an aggrieved or damaged person. The accusation and charge was in the name of God and His law. A monarch who was an agnostic altered this. Frederick II revolutionized imperial law. The state now became the plaintiff on its own initiative, and high treason became a major offense, although

Biblical law does not recognize treason except to God. Crown Prosecution was instituted, and state law became its foundation. In other words, instead of the law of society being the law of the House of God, as set forth in God's infallible word, it became the law of the House of Hohenstaufen. Kantorowicz called this new law, citing a then current commentator, an instrument "to propitiate the State-God, to secure satisfaction for the transgression of state ordinances." One result of this was the Inquisition. The state prosecuted unbelievers *in the state and its law*. "The 'High Court' prosecution was carried through with a special, solemn ceremonial. This 'Crown-Prosecution' indicates a feeling that the worldly state upholds a sacred, spiritual order, not less divine than the *Civitas Dei* the Church."[37] It was this step by Frederick II which "introduced the principles of totalitarian government into the Christian Commonwealth, contrary to its basic conceptions."[38]

Since then, of course, this principle has captured the state. The U.S. Supreme Court is largely concerned with state-instituted prosecutions of state-created crimes. The state is now the family of man and the House of Man, and hence the source of rule, taxation, and law.

To go one step further, when we today say *father*, we mean someone who sires us and pays the bills. To pray in terms of Scripture to "Our Father who art in heaven" means much, much more. A father in Scripture is above all the ruler of a house, and his word is authoritative. We cannot understand all that it means to call God "Our Father" unless we accept and understand Exodus 21:17, "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." The father as the source of life, love, rule, learning, and more could not be defied without striking at the foundations of life and society. When we know God the Father in this awe-inspiring sense, we also know Him as our protector and the God of love in more than a metaphoric sense.

Thus, to be the chosen member of the house of God means to be within the royal family, a part of that House whose law, grace, justice, and love are life to us, and which we make known to the world.

Too many churches are children of Frederick II; for them, it is the state whose rule and law are divine, and whose law defines justice and treason. Such churches are faithful to the state and treasonable to God the Lord, and to His House. Our Lord says of the Jews of his day that they were no longer Jews, no longer His House and covenant people, but "the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2; 3:9). Those groups today, who insist on serving Caesar and His law, while denying God's law and government, are not of His House, but of the Synagogue of Satan.

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37. Ernst Kantorowicz: *Frederick the Second, 1194-1250.* (New York, N. Y.: Frederick Ungar (1931) 1957). p. 240f.
38. Oscar Halecki: *The Millennium of Europe.* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963). p. 187.

11. Ministers

As we have seen, much of our thinking about the church is traditional rather than Biblical; much debate and religious controversy is again based on the customs common to a particular ecclesiastical tradition rather than grounded on Scripture. One such area of thought has to do with the nature of *the ministry.* Protestants tend to pride themselves on their purity in such matters, but without Scriptural warrant. Much of what follows with respect to the word *ministers* was much more ably said a few centuries ago by Joseph Mede in his Discourse V, on I Corinthians 4:1, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Mede's Discourse appeared in print in 1772, so the church has simply chosen to disregard a great scholar's comments, by no means new with him, in favor of its own usage.

There are three words in the New Testament Greek which are translated as *minister* or *ministers.* One of these is *leitourgos* (related to liturgy), which in the New Testament is used of Christ. He is the minister of the sanctuary in the heavens (Heb. 8:2); angels too are ministers (Heb. 1:7). In Romans 15:16, Paul declares that he is a *minister* of Jesus Christ, offering up the Gentiles as a living sacrifice to the Lord. The reference is plainly priestly in the Old Testament sense, and Paul declares himself an under-priest to Jesus Christ, who fulfills his calling by bringing the Gentiles to Christ. The word is also used of Epaphroditus' ministry to Paul's need (Phil. 2:25); this reference is not sacrificial in nature as is Romans 15: 16, and it means rather that, even as a priest servant represents a people to God, so Epaphroditus represented the Philippians in his service to Paul. In Romans 13:6, Paul, who had previously (Rom. 13:4) called rulers ministers (*diakonos*, servant), now calls them *leitourgoi*, because they are filling an ordained calling, ordained by God.

A second word for minister is *huperetes*, *under rower.* It is used of assistants in the pastoral work, as of John Mark (Acts 13:5); in Acts 26:16, Paul applies it to himself.

The main word used, however, is a third one, *diakonos*, servant, deacon, minister, or attendant.

Returning now to Mede's analysis, Mede points out that there are but two ecclesiastical orders, *presbyteri* and *diaconi*; all other offices "are but diverse degrees of these two." The term *priest* is simply an 'abbreviation' or abridgement of presbyter, and the college of cardinals was once made up of seventy laymen who were elders in terms of the Old Testament pattern. Both Catholics and Protestants have forgotten the origins of their offices.

Never in the New Testament are ministers spoken of as *ministers of the church*, our most common usage. Rather, they are called *ministers of God* (II Cor. 6:4; I Thess. 3:2); *ministers of Christ* (I Cor. 4:1; II Cor. 11:23; Col. 1:7); *ministers of Jesus Christ* (I Tim. 4:6); *ministers of the new Testament* (II Cor.

3:6); *ministers of the gospel* (Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23); *and for you a faithful minister of Christ* (Col. 1:7). To make men ministers of the church is to make the church their master. When Paul in II Corinthians 4:5 speaks of himself as a *servant* of the Corinthians, he first calls Christ *the Lord* over all, and himself a servant (using the word *doulos*) "for Jesus' sake."

Mede said that the term *minister* had come into use to avoid the word *priest*. "But if it be well examined, *Priest* is the English of *Presbyter*, and not of *sacerdos*, their being in our Tongue no word in use for *sacerdos*: *Priest*, which we use for both, being improperly used for a *Sacrificer*, the name whereby the Apostles call both themselves and those which succeed them in their charge. For who can deny that our word *Priest* is corrupted of *Presbyter*? Our Ancestors the Saxons first used *preoster*, whence by a farther contraction came *Preste* and *Priest*. The high and Low Dutch have *Priester*, the French *Prestre*, the Italian *Prete*; but the Spaniard only speaks full *Presbytero*."[39]

To call the clergy or pastors *ministers* is to call them *deacons* and to confuse the two offices. As a result, said Mede, we have an unhappy situation. Lay Officers are called *elders* or *presbyters* (the words are the same in the Greek, as is *bishop*, all being translations of *presbyterion*) and are thus given the highest title of all. Mede concluded, "Howsoever, when they call us *Ministers*, let them account *of us as the Ministers of Christ*, and not of men: not originally in them, but *as stewards of the Mysteries of God*."[40]

With Mede's comments in mind, let us go further. A minister is a servant, a deacon, and waiting at table is basic to its meaning; the minister is a household servant of the head of the house. In the church, he is the Lord's servant.

We are told that Satan too has his ministers (II Cor. 11:15). Some men become ministers of sin (Gal. 2:17).

We now come to a very important usage of *minister* by our Lord Himself:

> 25. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.
> 26. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;
> 27. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant;
> 28. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:25-28; cf. Mark 10:42-45)

The word *servant* in v. 26 is *diaconos*, and the same word appears in verb form in v. 28, translated as "to be ministered" and "to minister." Every believer is called to this ministry to the House of God, to minister to the needs of Christ's family.

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[39] *The Works of Joseph Mede*. (London, England, 1772). p. 27.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

The law speaks extensively of this ministry. No interest is to be charged on loans to *needy* fellow believers; this restriction does not apply to commercial loans but to charitable ones (Ex. 22:25; Deut. 23:19,20; Lev. 25:36,37; Neh. 5:10). There is to be a release of debts on the seventh year (Deut. 15:1-6; 12-18). The covenant member is to be mindful of widows and orphans (Ex. 22:22-24; Deut. 24:17; 27:19); of neighbors (Deut. 22:4; Lev. 19:13, 16); the poor (Ex. 23:6; Lev. 19:10; Lev. 25:35,39,43); to sojourners (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33,34; Deut. 10:18,19; 24:15,17; 27:19); the needy and defenseless (Lev. 19:14; Deut. 24:14; 27:18); slaves and servants (Deut. 24:14,15; 15:12-15; Ex. 21:2; 23:12); the aged (Lev. 19:32); and so on. The poor are to be remembered in a special tithe (Deut. 14:28-29); by means of gleaning, they were to be enabled to provide for themselves (Ex. 23:10,11; Lev. 19:9,10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19-21). The poor are also to be remembered in our rejoicing (Deut. 16:10-14).

These and other laws are alluded to and summarized by our Lord and by the apostles, and they are stressed as evidences of the life of faith in the covenant household. Note, for example, the following:

> 13. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:
> 14. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. (Luke 14:13-14)

> 34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
> 35. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
> 36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (Matt. 25:34-36)

> 35. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

This is the ministry to which all believers are called. To restrict the *ministry* to the pastor, elders, or deacons is not warranted by Scripture, and is a form of Phariseeism. This ministry can be institutionalized, as with a Christian school and the support thereof, homes for delinquents and homeless aged persons, ministries to prisons, and so on. These specialized ministries are necessary and important. But the requirement laid upon us is both personal and institutional. We cannot do it all ourselves, but neither can we delegate it all. Members of a household have duties one to another. The attitude of many church members that the paid staff exist simply to call upon them and to serve them is humanism. As Mede, and others centuries before him, made clear, the ministry is a ministry to God, and in His name one to another. To be a member of the House of God means family duties to the other members thereof. This

is the *ministry* according to Scripture. In Acts 20:35, Paul speaks of this ministry as "labouring...to support the weak" and as ordained by our Lord. With this went a warning: "if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thess. 3:10).

12. Presbyters

The word *presbuteros* or *presbyteros* is the Greek word translated as *elders* or *presbyters*. It is the same office as described in Deuteronomy 1:15-17. It has reference to an office or rule as well as to maturity and age. It is essentially the same word as *episkope*, or *bishop*. This is apparent from Acts 20:17 and 28. In Acts 20:17, we read that Paul sent for the *elders*, *presbuterous*, of the Church at Ephesus; in speaking to these men, and of the fact that they would be without his leadership in the days ahead, he calls them in v. 28 *overseers* or *bishops* called by the Holy Ghost to feed the Church of Ephesus. The word he uses in Acts 20:28 for the men he had earlier called *presbyterous* is *episkopous*. The word *episkopous* has as its root meaning *visitation* and means *overseer* or *superintendent*. In I Peter 5:1,2, the *elders* of verse 1 are asked in verse 2 to exercise *oversight*, *episkopountes* over the feeding of the flock of Christ. Thus, it would appear that in the New Testament the meanings of elder, presbyter, or bishop are one and the same.

Having said this, it must be noted that there are degrees of authority within this office in the New Testament. St. Paul calls the elders of Ephesus bishops, but he summons them to his side, and he instructs them. Again, Paul's authority over John Mark is very clear, as well as with other associates. The very word *presbuteros* implies a seniority of age, experience, and leadership. It was for this reason that Calvin, in his correspondence with Cranmer, was willing to agree to the retention of the office of bishop, provided it was seen as an administrative office within the ranks of the presbyters.

Our concern here, however, is less with the *office* and more with the *function*. Our thinking is too much colored with the world of Greco-Roman thought and the priority of emphasis on *office*. This is a tension which has long troubled Christendom. In the medieval era, the church fought continuously over the state's effort to isolate the office from the function and held that the legitimate ruler was also the just ruler. Beyond a certain point, if the ruler had abandoned his legitimate function and therefore office, he could be the target of civil disobedience and an interdict. The problem came with the application of this standard to the church. On what ground could a pope be declared an anti-pope? In some cases, a faulty or illegal election gave grounds for such a judgment, but, in the Council of Constance, 1414-1418, three popes were deposed, Pedro of Luna (who took the title of Benedict XIII), Angelo Corrario (who assumed the title of Gregory XII) and Balthasar Cossa, (who called himself John XXIII). John's removal was on the ground

of his notoriously immoral conduct; *The Catholic Encyclopedia* comments on "John XXIII" or Balthasar Cossa, "Undeniably secular and ambitious, his moral life was not above reproach, and his unscrupulous methods in no wise accorded with the requirements of his high office." Balthasar Cossa had been elected pope on May 17, 1410; on May 24, he was ordained a priest, and on May 25, he was consecrated and crowned pope.[41]

We must thus say that the history of the church has shown an awareness by Catholics and Protestants of the necessary connection between *office* and *function*, a distinction God enforces throughout Scripture on civil and ecclesiastical authorities, on prophets, priests, and kings. However, there has still been a false emphasis on the office. In Scripture, both *office* and *function* are spoken of as *God's calling*. The prophet Nathan reminds David that God called him from the sheepcote and made David a ruler for His own sovereign purposes (II Sam. 7:4-15). Clearly, God sees both office and function as aspects of the one and same fact, *His calling*. If this is true in Scripture of civil rulers, how much more does it not apply to presbyters.

With this in mind, let us examine I Timothy 3:1-7, St. Paul's description of the presbyter, or, more literally, a bishop, because the word used is *episkopes*;

> 1. This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.
> 2. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
> 3. Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;
> 4. One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity:
> 5. (For if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)
> 6. Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
> 7. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Presbyterians, more than all others, have used this text and used it extensively, but sometimes more readily of lay elders than of pastors. It clearly applies to all presbyters, as Calvin saw. In analyzing this text, it is clear, *first*, that a novice in the faith is barred from the office. The word *novice* is *neophutos*, our word neophyte, and means newly-planted. The bishop or presbyter must have roots in the faith, and the life of the faith. The novice is an outsider to a way of life he has newly entered; he lacks deep roots in the life of the community of faith and hence cannot govern it wisely. Rather, he will apply his abstract ideas to the House of God in pride and will fall under the same kind of condemnation as the devil, who thought he was wiser than God.

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41. J. P. Kirsch, "John XXIII", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. VIII. (New York, N. Y.: The Encyclopedia Press, (1910) 1913). p. 434f.

Second, not only is the bishop or presbyter to be no novice, but he must also be a man of experience and tested wisdom in the family of faith. This means not only within the church but also within godly family life as such. The elders of Israel were elders within their families first. The virtues required of bishops or overseers in the House of God are family virtues. We have here a most eloquent witness to the centrality of family life. I Corinthians 9:5 makes clear that the apostles were married men, and if Paul voted against Stephen in the Sanhedrin as well as being a witness against him, he would have had to have been either married at that time or a widower. Marriage was a duty to devout Pharisees, and this makes it likely that the apostle Paul was a widower, as Klausner pointed out. Clement of Alexandria also spoke of Paul as having once been married. Clearly, I Timothy 4:3 speaks of prohibitions against marriage in the name of holiness as the doctrine of devils. On the other hand, our Lord makes clear that some are "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12), i.e., because they are called of God to serve Him in that capacity, as witness Elijah and Jeremiah. However, the normal state is the married one, and the essential virtues of the bishop are family virtues. Paul describes an elder of Israel as the pattern for the elder of Christ.

Third, the bishop must be "apt to teach;" the word so translated is *didaktikos*, skilled in teaching. This choice of wording is not accidental. The Bible does use the word *preach*, or *preaching, evangelizo*, and other words as well which are translated as *preach, publish, proclaim*, and the like. Such a function is assumed to be a task of the bishop or presbyter. What Paul here stresses is the aptitude and the ability to teach. We have all too many men ready to proclaim or preach the gospel who do it badly or indifferently, or with poor preparation. They are thus a hindrance or a handicap to the House of God. In stressing the domestic or family virtues of the bishop or overseer, Paul stresses the ability to govern. The test of this ability is seen in the lives of his children, as well as in his sobriety, ability to rule himself, his family, and his handling of money. The overseer must be in command, and yet a gracious, helpful, and hospitable man, setting an example in these things for others. He must likewise excel in his ability to communicate the faith. All too many bumblers are permitted to leave seminaries simply because no one has the courage to tell them that they are lazy, incompetent, or unable to teach.

Fourth, Paul stresses the fact that the overseer must have "a good report of them which are without" to avoid reproach and slander and fall thereby into the devil's trap. The point here is an important one. A common sin among church members is gullibility and an unwillingness to be plain-spoken about the evils and incompetence of pastors. It is somehow held to be a virtue to be silent about or to cover up the weaknesses and sins of the clergy. Poor pastors are commonly treated with an indulgence not extended to superior ones; the reason for this is no doubt that a poor pastor does not distress nor upset the people in their sloth and sin as does a strong pastor.

An important fact must now be faced. Paul, in speaking of the bishop or overseer, says *apparently* nothing about his sacramental duties, about baptism or communion. Is Paul under-rating the place of these ordinances in the life of the church? Is he "reducing" the pastoral function to teaching?

The answer to this is again that we have a false distinction. One of the triumphs of the history of thought is the development of the analytic mind and its capacity for making sure and subtle distinctions. It would be wrong to under-rate the importance of this in the development of the West, but it would be equally wrong not to see that this critical analysis has all too often become dissection.

We are as a result too prone to separate the teaching of the word and the ministry of the sacraments. As we have seen, many Protestant definitions of the church divide these into two functions, whereas other traditions have sometimes swallowed up the teaching function in the sacramental. We have already seen the significance of the Passover. It is a rite, the central ritual of the Old Testament and the essence of the Lord's Table in the New. From start to finish, the Passover is a teaching event. The youngest male child capable of speaking and understanding raises the question, What is the meaning of this? and the ritual is a teaching as well as sacramental fact. The one is invalid without the other. Too often, of course, there is teaching in neither the sermon nor in the sacrament, but, properly, both are aspects of the teaching ministry.

Among Protestants in particular, the pastoral work includes a very extensive amount of visitation. This, however, is a *ministry*, and as we saw in examining the nature of the *ministers*, is a function of all members. Some aspects of it are specifically given to deacons (Acts 6:1-3), but the apostles, as bishops or overseers, gave themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). True, they were to set an example of hospitality and openness to all needs (I Tim. 3:2), but for the rest they were to be overseers of the flock, to guide them in their ministry.

The church today demands an extensive ministry to men by the pastors. As a result, it builds up strength numerically while being anemic with respect to God's requirements.

13. Ritual

As we have seen, the distinction between the word and the sacraments is, from the perspective of Scripture, an invalid one. It rests on a humanistic distinction with rationalistic roots. The rationalistic love of dissection often obscures the truth and some very obvious facts. To illustrate, the law is commonly divided by theologians into three categories: moral, civil, and ceremonial. This distinction is so widely accepted that many regard it as unscriptural to dispute it, but they find it impossible to substantiate from Scripture. Which laws are moral, and which civil? Can we say that theft and

murder are only moral and not civil offenses? Does not every civilly enacted law represent a concept of moral order? Can a state possibly say "thou shalt not" about anything without having a moral perspective of some sort? That moral perspective may represent an alien religious faith, but it is still a moral perspective.

Again, we speak of ceremonial laws. *Ceremony* is defined as a formal act, or series of formal acts, conducted in terms of an authority, tradition, or prescription. *Ritual* is similarly described, but usually with the statement that the formal acts are religiously prescribed. In our day, to speak of ceremony is to speak of something unimportant, and the ceremonial law is thus spoken of as now invalid and obsolete. The fact is that the focus of the entire so-called ceremonial laws is atonement, and also sanctification, by no means a trifling concern. Paul's letters are full of references to the centrality of these laws, and their present reality in Christ's work and the church's life. We cannot disregard their meaning for us.

Moreover, the definitions of ceremony and ritual reflect a Greek rather than Biblical perspective. The distinction in Greek thought between *form* and *matter* presupposes a universe in which God is only a limiting concept and the two absolutes or ultimates are form, ideas, or spirit on the one hand, and matter or content on the other. For the Greeks, form was basic; for materialistic modern man, matter or content is not only basic but often the only reality.

The reason for this is the changing view of the dialectic of form and matter. For modern man, the world of form or spirit has become empty, and the world of matter means the world of content and also freedom. (Philosophers have seen the world of form as the world of freedom, but the people have reversed this perspective.) As a result of this emptying of form, everything associated with form has also been seen as empty. One aspect of this depreciation of form is a contempt for ceremony or ritual.

In recent years, ritual has been under attack from within all churches, Catholic and Protestant. Recently, a Calvinist friend attended two funerals, one United Presbyterian, the other Catholic. To his amazement, he found both evangelical in content, and very similar, except that the Catholic funeral was more informal and included the use of guitars. The Catholic service used a better hymn, however, John Newton's "Amazing Grace." Catholics have passed on to me some horror stories about the conduct of services in some parishes.

Ritual, however, is not abandoned by being cheapened or made casual. The hippies of the 1960s rebelled against conformity, but no group of the era was more rigid in its conformity to a pattern of dress and speech. Instead of escaping conformity, they chose rather a *debased* conformity.

This is true of churches also. Thus, one large evangelical church prides itself on reaching youth and the modern mind. The director of music in that church, a very able and intelligent man, deliberately uses or writes for use a highly current music which in every way mirrors the current modern mood and music. He calls the church's choral music "throw-away music," because it is for "today" only. The entire ministry of this church has a like emphasis: it is a "now" church. The music director is too intelligent to think, unlike others in the church, that ritual is by-passed. It is, he says, a ritual so contemporary that none are aware that it is ritual. The ritual of the *Book of Common Prayer* he compares to opera: great in its day, but now obsolete, needing, like opera, subsidies to keep it alive. Unless a ritual expresses *today*, he said, it is for the historians and elite only.

His point was a valid one, in that there is a ritual, a pattern or form, in all churches, whether Pentecostal, Baptist, or Episcopal. At the same time, the *idea* of ritual is despised. Ostensible freedom from ritual means to such a freedom for the actualization of the moment's experience rather than a conformity to a past pattern of experience. In brief, hostility to ritual infects us all because of the existentialist culture of our time: we want to be children of the moment.

To return to the music director's perspective, he wanted a ritual expressive of the present world and its outlook, whereas the point of ritual in the Bible is that it expresses neither past, present, nor future, although mindful of all, but rather setting forth God's truth. The Bible is full of ritual; God obviously sees it as important.

As we have seen, ritual does exist in all churches today, but it is humanistic rather than theocratic. Let us go a step further. A fundamentalist pastor, strongly antinomian, has stated in his preaching that marriage services are a relic of the law and also of ritualism. He hoped that soon Christians would "outgrow" this legalism and live in terms of pure grace and love. His point reveals his awareness that law and ritual do go together. The world of pietism, Catholic and Protestant, has undercut both law and ritual. Both law and ritual rest on a prescription: something is required on penalty of retribution for failure to conform. The prescription or requirement comes from God in Biblical faith.

In humanism, the prescription comes from man. Again and again, in domestic or marital problems, I have found that failure to follow a ritual has led to trouble. To illustrate, in some cases, it is a ritual for a man to kiss his wife before leaving for work; if he fails to do so, her attitude then is, "He doesn't love me." I have deliberately chosen a minor example of humanistic ritual to illustrate its importance. Repeatedly in the law, God in effect requires a ritual and declares in effect that our sin of omission reveals our lack of love.

Obviously, God takes ritual very seriously. Considerable space is given to it in the Bible, and very grave penalties are pronounced against omission. Where God says that certain things are important to Him, for us to treat them as unimportant means to show at the least disrespect for God. Ritual and typology are closely related.

A type, said Terry, is something, someone, or a material object which conveys a vivid meaning; this meaning is one which, *first*, indicates a resemblance between the type and that which it symbolizes. *Second*, God appointed the type to represent the thing typified, and *third*, the type prefigures something in the future and ties it to something in the past. The type indicates what God's historical pattern is. Types are mainly of five kinds: persons, institutions, offices, events, and actions. (This last, actions, clearly includes rituals.)[42]

Baptism and communion are thus clearly rituals, and they are typical or typological in nature. They are no less replete with meaning than a reading of Scripture. A man can listen to Scripture without hearing it, and a man can witness baptism or partake of communion without heeding its meaning, but this makes neither Scripture nor the sacraments empty. Rather, it means that the man is empty, or, better, evil and heedless of God and God's claims.

Furthermore, ritual cannot be limited to the sacraments. All worship involves ritual. Grace said before and after meals is a ritual. "The essence of religious ritual in the Bible," according to Gordon J. Wenham, is this: "It is a means of communication between God and man."[43] Communication with God cannot be despised nor treated casually.

The key reason for the neglect of ritual is sin. Ritual is one aspect of God's communication with man, but man is more interested in being heard by God than in hearing God. We want God to hear us and to grant us our requests, but we are less interested in hearing God.

Let us look at one Old Testament ritual, a "minor" one in most people's eyes, to understand what God is saying. Bear in mind that this ritual is one of the least studied rites in one of the least read books of the Bible, *Numbers*. The rite speaks of God's claims on us, whereas what we too often want, whether we admit it or not, is some kind of claim on God's mercy, bounty, or gifts:

> 4. Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil.
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> 5. And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb.

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[42] Milton S. Terry: *Biblical Hermeneutics*. (New York, N.Y.: Hunt and Eaton, 1890 (revised edition)). pp. 244-250.

[43] Gordon J. Wenham: *Numbers, An Introduction and Commentary*. (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981). p. 29.

> 6. But for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third part of an hin of oil.
> 7. And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.
> 8. And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt-offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace offering unto the LORD:
> 9. Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering of three tenth deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil.
> 10. And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. (Num. 15:4-10)

First, let us consider the amount of the sacrifice. A young bull, ram, lamb, or kid is a considerable economic item. Add to this perhaps a bushel of flour, two and three quarter pints of wine and the same amount of oil, and the cost is considerable. A portion of all this goes to the priests; some of it, like the libation of wine, is simply poured out. *Second*, these meat or meal offerings of flour and grain, together with oil and wine, had to accompany burnt offerings (symbolizing dedication), the sin offerings (expiation), and the peace offerings (gratitude and communion). Their meaning, i.e., the meaning of the meal offerings, "is that he who accepts the Lord's sacrifice for sin must also show the 'good works' and generous deeds and holy conduct which are the evidences of a living faith."[44] Wenham says, "The wine libation like the outpouring of animal blood portrays the worshipper dying for his sin and giving himself totally to the service of God."[45] Again, he comments, "The worshipper must symbolically offer his whole life and work to God."[46]

We have thus a ritual here, to concentrate on the ritual of the libation of wine in order to conserve time, which strongly sets forth the God-centered nature of worship. To pour out two and three quarter pints of wine, in addition to tithing and sacrificing, meant that a man was recognizing God's priority. From a humanistic point of view, the wine libation was a wasteful ritual. Of course, we are even more "wasteful" in placing flowers on the graves of the dead, but our humanism is not bothered by that.

Let us glance now at two of the uses made of the wine libation elsewhere in the Bible:

> 15. Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim.
> 16. And David was then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison was then at Bethlehem.
> 17. And David longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me drink of the water at the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate!

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[44] Charles R. Eerdman: *The Book of Numbers*. (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1952). p. 63.
[45] Wenham, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

> 18. And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David; but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD,
>
> 19. And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest. (I Chron. 11:15-19)

Bethlehem was in Philistine hands, and David was holed up, a fugitive, in an arid place, with no good water. When he expressed a longing for water from the good well in his home town, three men crept through the Philistine lines, apparently at night, drew water from the well at Bethlehem, and happily brought it to David. David made clear that man is not entitled to such a sacrifice. The water was to him blood, in that it involved the risk of life. The wine libation means also giving our lives to the Lord in gratitude, a symbolic outpouring of blood. David treated the water thus as a wine libation and "poured it out to the LORD." The ritual was a familiar one to David, and it had incorporated into David's life its meaning. As a result, his immediate and spontaneous response to the men's gift revealed his own faith. It was no empty ritual.

In another instance, our Lord comments on this ritual;

> 2. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.
>
> 3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.
>
> 4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,
>
> 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?
>
> 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.
>
> 7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.
>
> 8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. (John 12:2-8)
>
> Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (Mark 14:9; cf. Matthew 26:13)

The ointment was poured out on Jesus as both altar and sacrifice; it was done in anticipation of His shed blood, His death. It was an example outside the sanctuary of the wine libation, and our Lord declares that it shall be remembered wherever the gospel is preached. To Judas especially, it was an empty and wasteful ritual; as a humanist, like all humanists, he put more value

on things done for man than things done for the Lord. Every humanist is a thief, in that he robs God of God's due.

What Mary performed was a ritual, and its meaning was very great. She understood why our Lord was going to Jerusalem; she recognized that He was and is the Lamb of God, the atonement for sin; Her response to that knowledge was to re-enact the wine libation.

Psalm 100 commands us thus:

> 1. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
> 2. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
> 3. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
> 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
> 5. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

To praise the lord, whether thrice annually as a nation in the early days of Israel, or weekly as in the synagogue and the church, is a ritual, and it requires the practice of rituals which are not empty but more replete with wisdom and knowledge than man can fathom in this lifetime.

We have neglected the rituals of Scripture such as the wine libation and we have seen the down-grading of ritual as a virtue. But a Biblically governed ritual is basic to our faith, and basic to God's communication with us. Remember, it was Judas who despised ritual.

The rituals of humanism and the state now fill our lives, and they govern our habits and dedications. It is time for a change. We give much to ourselves, and to the state. The Lord God demands His libation of wine and more. Will we see it as an empty ritual, and a waste?

14. The Laying of Hands

Our bodies have a significance in Scripture greater than anything the world recognizes; our bodies shall be resurrected. Greek thought separated body and spirit into two separate substances, whereas the Bible sees them as a God-created unity. The depreciation of the body led later Greek thought especially to depreciate the significance of physical sins, such as sexual sins, whereas the Bible allows no such casual view of the body.

The word *hand* has an important symbolic meaning in the Bible. It is a symbol of might and power, and to speak of the hand of the Lord is to speak of His power and protection. Lifting up the hands can be a symbol of violence (I Kings 11:26), of supplication (Ex. 9:33; 17:11; Ps. 28:2), and of blessing and benediction (Gen. 48:13,14), and much more.[47] The various symbolic

uses of *hand* constitute in themselves a substantial study even in summary form.[48]

Because the Bible sees the unity of mind and body, it therefore stresses the importance of material facts such as the body, ritual, and law. Greek thought viewed things material and external as less important than things spiritual and internal. This influence within Christendom has led to the depreciation of the body, ritual, law, and material symbols. The Biblical hostility to idolatry is essentially related to this unity. No material symbol can be used other than what God allows, because the unity of things can lead to a false ascription to something created which is forbidden by God. Both a neoplatonic and a Hindu faith lend themselves readily to idolatry, because the material is incidental or meaningless and can thus be casually used without undue commitment. Moreover, an essentially pantheistic faith can use all kinds of symbols and material objects without commitment to any, because there can be no truly unique local revelation of pantheism. The God of Scripture, because He is the Creator of all things, and yet separate from and beyond all things, can have a local appearance or theophany, or a specific and limited symbol. Thus, the Holy of Holies was also the unique habitation of the omnipresent God. Jesus Christ is the unique and sole incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead. The sacraments are unique and exclusive ordinances of the Lord. In a pantheistic universe, man can choose at will any material object to represent universal being; all things will do equally well. In the world of Scripture, the signs and symbols are unique, and they are God-given. With this in mind, let us examine the laying on of hands, usually called ordination. Our concern is not who, what, or how, but the meaning of the laying on of hands, rather than the offices *or callings* so set apart.

Our usual approach to the laying on of hands is humanistic and institutional and depends extensively upon our particular church background. We view it as perhaps the ratification of an election to office of a new deacon, elder, pastor, or bishop, and churches will argue over the form of ordination, and who can be ordained. This does not mean that there are not some important considerations in these varying church practices, but we go astray when we separate ourselves from the very plain statement of Scripture concerning the laying on of hands. The Bible gives no indication that this meaning was ever set aside, declared to be obsolete, or superseded by anything else. In terms of this, let us examine the relevant text:

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47. B. O. Banwell, "Hand," in J. D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1962) 1973). p. 503.

48. See J. Hastings "Hands," in J. Hastings, editor: *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. II. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. and T. Clark, 1899). pp. 293-296; A. S. Aglen, "Hand," in *ibid.*, II, p. 296; H. B. Swete, "Laying on of Hands," in *ibid.*, II, p. 84f.; L. L. Morris, in Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 912f., etc.

9. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together:
10. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:
11. And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.
12. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites.
13. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD.
14. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.
15. And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering.
16. For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.
17. For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.
18. And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.
19. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary. (Numbers 8:9-19)

Here we have the meaning of the laying on of hands plainly set forth. The Levites in the wilderness had the care of the sanctuary; once in Palestine, only a small minority of the Levites had this responsibility, and for a limited time. The main task of the Levites was instruction (Deut. 33:10). The Christian pastor is a Levite; his task is a continuation of that office, and hence the laying on of hands was retained in the New Testament, and in Christendom. It was retained, because the office or *calling* continues, and the meaning of the rite continues as of old.

Now to the implications of this: *First*, the firstborn belong to God (Ex. 13:2,11-13). The firstborn belong to the Lord, and, in giving Him of the firstfruits and the firstborn, we by token surrender all to Him. The firstborn thus had to be given to serve the Lord. The firstborn were to be redeemed from this actual service at the sanctuary with a payment, upon penalty of death. The firstborn were then to serve God in their respective callings, and the Levites became their substitutes in the sanctuary or in whatever service assigned to them.

Second, the leaders of the congregation then laid their hands upon the Levites, exactly as a worshipper laid hands upon an animal sacrifice (Lev. 3:2). The laying on of hands means thus an identification. This identification transferred sin, and the desire for forgiveness, to the sacrificial animal. As Wenham states it, "the Levites are being substituted for the first-born Israelite, who as a result of the passover were given to the LORD and therefore, in theory, to be sacrificed (Ex. 13:2). Numbers 3:45ff. has already mentioned that the Levites are to take the place of the first-born."[49] The identification of the Levites and the people by the laying on of hands means that all are united in him to the total service of the Lord. The ordained man, he on whom hands are laid, instructs and leads all in the service of the Lord. The meaning of this was seen in the early church, and pastors and bishops for centuries were elected by the acclamation of the people whom they represented. This fact of election was practiced by both Christians and Jews, and it impressed one emperor, Alexander Severus (205-235), so that he proposed its adoption by the Roman Empire.[50] While the laying on of hands can mean other things, such as blessing, no ordination is normally conducted without it. Bingham cites one known instance of it in the early church of Gregory Thaumaturgus, by Phoedimus, bishop of Amasece, who was ordained by prayer only, having fled to the wilderness to avoid ordination, which he later accepted.[51]

Third, the Levites then laid hands on the sacrificial bullocks, to make atonement for themselves as the representatives of the people. Their service was required by the Lord and yet acceptable only by His sovereign grace as atonement was made by the substitute. Just as the believer dies in Christ in order to live in Him (II Tim. 2:11; Rom. 6:5,8; II Cor. 4:10; etc.), so the laying on of hands sets forth our acceptance of the atonement by Christ as our salvation, and our total consecration, whatever our calling, to the Lord. The setting apart of the man ordained means symbolically the setting apart of all of us in this symbolic firstborn or Levite to God's total service. Just as the leaders of Israel represented Israel by laying on of hands, so Paul in I Timothy 4:14 speaks of the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (*presbuteriou*). They who lay on the hands represent the people and commit the people to God's service as led by the one so chosen and called.

Fourth, God says "the Levite shall be mine." They do not belong to the people but to the Lord. In declaring the Levites to be His, God declares that all in the congregation are His, and that His judgment falls upon them and the

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[49] Gordon J. Wenham: *Numbers, An Introduction and Commentary.* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981). p. 96.

[50] Joseph Bingham: *The Antiquities of the Christian Church.* Vol. I, Bk. IV, ch. I, Section IV. (London, England: Reeves and Turner, 1878). p. 131f.

[51] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Bk IV, Ch VI, Section XI, p. 157.

Levite for faithlessness. "For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast."

If we deny the Old Testament meaning of the laying on of hands, then we turn the clergy into a professional class which has no essential relationship to the people except to serve as need arises. If we accept the Old Testament meaning, then we have a body of believers who have a common life in Christ as their Head, and the presbyters or bishops as their representatives, instructors, examples, and leaders in the service of the King and the work of His Household.

One final note: the laying on of hands also made the animal of sacrifice the sin-bearer for the people's sins. This meaning is not present, of course, in the laying on of hands in Numbers 8:9-19. It is rather the aspects of substitution and identification which are present.

Unhappily, all too many congregations seem to act as if the pastor is their sin-bearer upon whom all their irritations, rebelliousness, and guilt is to be laid.

15. The Joyful and Healing Church

One of the early church fathers, St. Ephrem of Syria, who attended the Council of Nicea, 325 A.D., and died c. 378 A.D., wrote, among many other things, "The Rhythms on the Nativity." On reading these, it is easy to see why the church gave birth to the joyful music of Christmas, then and in the modern era. St. Ephrem saw the birth of Christ as the turning point, not only of history, but of the natural order also. Christ's birth determines the meaning and focus of time. Ephrem declared, "This is the day that rules over the seasons! the dominion of Thy day is like Thine, which stretcheth over generations that have come, and are to come!"[52] Grace and salvation entered time and history in the person of Christ.

> This day is that forerunning Cluster, in which the cup of salvation was concealed! This day is the first-born feast, which being born the first, overcometh all the feasts. In the winter which strippeth the fruit of the branches off from the barren vine, Fruit sprung up unto us; in the cold that bareth all the trees, a shoot was green for us of the house of Jesse. In December when the seed is hidden in the earth, there sprouteth forth from the Womb the Ear of Life.[53]

All godly men should be joyful, because Divinity came to dwell in Humanity. "Let every man chase away his weariness, since that Majesty was not wearied with being in the womb nine months for us, and in being thirty years in Sodom among the madmen."[54] Because of Him, the lost are saved, and the

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[52] "Rhythm the Third," in J. B. Morris, editor and translator: *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian.* (Oxford, England: Parker, 1847). p. 15.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

poor are made rich. Our Lord's birth opens up God's treasure-house: "let us grow rich from it."[55]

At the time of our Lord's birth, the rulers of Rome were enrolling the peoples for taxation, to make all men debtors to the state. "The King came forth to us Who blotted out our bills, and wrote another bill in His own Name that He might be our debtor,"i.e., as our representative before God.[56] Christ brings victory:

> O Babe, that art older than Noah and younger than Noah, that reconciled all within the ark amid the billows! David Thy father for a lamb's sake slaughtered a lion. Thou, O Son of David, hast killed the unseen wolf that murdered Adam, the same lamb who fed and bleated in Paradise...To-day is the throne of David established by Thee, O Son of David. The old men cried, 'Blessed be that Son Who restored Adam to youth, Who was vexed to see that he was old and worn out, and that the serpent who had killed him, and changed his skin and had gotten himself away. Blessed be the Babe in Whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth...[57]

Much more can be cited from St. Ephrem in this vein. Let it suffice to say that for him the church is joyful and triumphant because Christ is the Lord, and He has come. *The joy of salvation* is in Ephrem the mark of the church. This is a note too often missing in the church today. David, in Psalm 51:12, confessing his sin, asks God, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." We can call Biblical faith the eschatology of joy and victory. We must remember that Nehemiah, in a day of conflict and problems, forbad mourning and declared, "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). Isaiah gives us the summons of the Lord to joy:

> 1. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear: break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.
> 2. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;
> 3. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.
> 4. Fear not: for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.
> 5. For thy Maker is thine husband: the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: The God of the whole earth shall he be called. (Isa. 54:1-5)

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54. *Ibid.*, "Rhythm the Fourth," p. 26.
55. *Idem.*
56. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
57. *Ibid.*, "Rhythm the Fifth," p. 33.

The church is summoned by the Lord to make room for all the earth, because God shall enlarge her possessions and peoples to include all the nations. Ephrem's joy is in this context: the Lord has begun this conquest in Christ's birth.

There is another aspect of St. Ephrem's view of Christ's birth which is important for the life of faith and the doctrine of the church:

> In this day in which the Rich poor became for our sakes, let the rich man make the poor man at his table with him share. On this day to us came forth the Gift, although we asked it not! Let us therefore alms bestow on them that cry and beg of us. 'Tis to-day that opened for us a gate on high to our prayers. Let us open also gates to supplicants that have transgressed, and of us have asked (forgiveness).[58]

In other words, because we have received so great a gift from God, we must in return help the needy. Because we have received grace, we must manifest grace to others. Because God has heard our prayers, we must hear the prayers of others. Having been forgiven, we must forgive.

The church is made up of those who have been healed of the fatal sickness of sin; basic to the function of the church, Ephrem held, is *healing*. The concluding prophecy of the Old Testament stresses this fact:

> 1. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
> 2. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.
> 3. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.
> 4. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto to him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.
> 5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
> 6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:1-6)

To understand these verses, T.V. Moore said, we must apply "the principle of successive fulfillment." The verses speak of the unfolding of history in terms of the coming of Christ, "the Sun of Righteousness." His coming brings judgment to His enemies, and healing to His people. The people of Christ shall "go forth, and grow as calves of the stall." The image here is a double one: the calf of the stall is well fed; he is also, the prophet Malachi says, set free. "To leap as a young animal, which after confinement exults in the joyousness of freedom, is a striking image of the joy that the righteous shall

[58] *Ibid.*, "Rhythm the First," p. 9.

feel after being kept so long waiting for deliverance."[59] The faithful, they who believe and obey the Lord and His law-word, receive great blessings. Malachi 4:6 is cited by the angel to Zacharias, when he speaks of the coming of John the Baptist, and its meaning is further set forth:

> And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Mal. 4:6)

> And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (Luke 1:17)

"The hearts of the fathers" means the patriarchs of old, as well as the fathers today. To turn their hearts to the children means to live, act, and teach with the love of God and the future of His Kingdom at heart. It means a future orientation in terms of Christ. Hence, the angel declares that to turn the heart of the children "to the wisdom of the just" means to be conformed to the faithfulness of our Christian heritage.

This is made very clear by v. 4, the summons to remember with obedience the law God gave to Moses. Hengstenberg, in commenting on this text, summarized the meaning of the chapter beautifully: "The law of God and his people are inseparable. If the law is not fulfilled *in* the nation, it must be executed *upon* the nation."[60]

Jesus Christ came to redeem us, to heal us of our fatal infirmity. His person, work, and law-word are for "the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2). Jesus Christ is the tree of life, and one of the first symbols of Christ in church history was the tree, any ever-green tree. The fact that paganism has often been given to tree-worship should not lead us to confuse the Christian use with the pagan, as many have done. Christ is the tree of life whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations."

The Church thus is called to be the healer in Christ's name, to summon a sin-sick world, "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). A church which has this power in and through Christ will be a joyful church. Like St. Ephrem of old, it will know both its joy and power. In Jesus Christ, God's treasure-house of grace and blessing has been opened to us: "let us grow rich from it."[61]

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[59]. Thomas V. Moore: *A Commentary on Haggai and Malachi.* (London, England: Banner of Truth Trust, (1856) 1960). p. 172.
[60]. E. W. Hengstenberg: *Christology of the Old Testament.*, Vol. IV. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, (1872-78) 1956). p. 191.
[61]. St. Ephrem, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

16. Authority

The question of *authority* is among the less popular subjects of our time. Our era is marked by two seemingly contradictory trends. We have on the one hand the rise of strong but false authoritarianism in church, state, and society, and, on the other hand, the breakdown of authority. These two phenomena are related. Where God-ordained authority is denied, totalitarianism and anarchy prevail, because every man sees himself as a god, and every man is thus lawless. The powerful exert a false authority, and the weak react with more lawlessness.

In the church, much of the problem can be viewed from the perspective of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.[62] We seriously misinterpret the Bible if we fail to see how basic this doctrine is to the Old Testament, as witness Exodus 19:16 and Isaiah 61:6. The New Testament was not stating a new doctrine but rather declaring it to be the mark of Christ's covenant people (I Peter 2:5, 9; Rev.1:6; 5:10); the Old Israel being set aside, the New Israel was now the royal priesthood.

One of the great rebellions of the Old Testament era was over this doctrine, the rebellion of Korah and other Levites, and Dathan and other Reubenites. The Levites resented the prior authority of the House of Aaron; the Reubenites used this revolt against Moses and Aaron to assert themselves also; Reuben, the eldest, had been set aside, and the tribe resented its subordinate position. Both the Levites and Reubenites used the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers to assert an equality of authority in "the congregation of the LORD" i.e., in both church and state. All of Numbers 16-18 deal with this struggle, but our concern is with the theological issue as set forth in Numbers 16:1-15:

> 1. Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men:
> 2. And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown;
> 3. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?
> 4. And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face:
> 5. And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying: Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy: and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

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62. See R. J. Rushdoony, "The Puritan Doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers," in the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Summer 1979, Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 14-26.

6. This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company;
7. And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.
8. And Moses said unto Korah, hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi:
9. Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?
10. And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also?
11. For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?
12. And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up:
13. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?
14. Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: will thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.
15. And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

First, this rebellion, while led by Levites and Reubenites, included 250 "princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown." It had deep popular roots and expressed a sentiment strong in all the people.

Second, as Moses rightly saw it, they were "gathered together against the LORD." Their failure to enter the Promised Land they blamed on Moses, not on their sins. They applied the term, "a land flowing with milk and honey," to Egypt, not to Canaan, as Scripture normally does. In other words, they saw their slavery as an ideal condition, and freedom as a burden. Now they were revolting against freedom in the name of democracy. They challenged authority in both the civil and ecclesiastical spheres. God met this challenge with judgment: the earth opening up to swallow some, fire from God destroying others, and plague the rest. We are not told how many perished in the judgment of Korah; 250 perished also, the princes of the assembly; and 14,700 of their followers. The rebellion was against God, and the judgment came from God. The rulers who normally should have judged righteous judgment were judged by God. Whenever the normal channels of justice are evil, God brings judgment on a people.

Third, the basic premise of the rebellion was the equal authority of all the people. The priesthood of all believers was affirmed, and the equal civil authority of all the people. "All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them." This was the fundamental premise of the revolt, and it was a sound principle put to evil use. To declare the priesthood

of all believers does *not* invalidate the authority of some over others. *There is a difference between priesthood and authority.* Priesthood is a calling, one common to all believers. The priest dedicates himself and all that he possesses or represents to God. Basic to priesthood is *access to God.* Every believer who has the atonement has access to God and is called to dedicate himself and his domain to the Lord. A careful examination of the Old Testament gives no evidence of any governing power over men by the priests of Israel; that such a power developed later, is an aberration, not an aspect of Biblical law. Authority did exist among priests, some ruling over others, because authority is common to every realm. It is not a specific attribute of any one realm. In very simple terms, the priesthood of all believers means that a child can approach the Lord in prayer as readily as a father or mother, but this equal access does not invalidate the parental authority. On the contrary, precisely where this equal access exists, authority is most stressed and respected. Thus, Exodus 21:17 states, "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." Both the priesthood of all believers and the authority of men in their spheres is God-given; we cannot affirm the one without affirming the other.

All too commonly, on the current scene, contempt for godly authority is seen as a mark of intellectual and religious freedom. Every church today faces a crisis, in that godly authority is replaced by ungodly authoritarianism and anarchism. Rebellion frequently parades under the banner of righteous indignation and protest. Given the prevalence of ungodly authoritarianism in church and state, how do we contend against such an evil?

We can only do so lawfully, i.e., in terms of God's law. As we have seen, Exodus 21:17 pronounces a fearful penalty against an evil and rebellious son. It should be noted, in passing, that in Biblical law treason is *not* against the state but against the family, which is God's basic institution; hence, offenses against the family and marriage are treason.

The Ten Commandments declare, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). The requirement is *to honor*, not necessarily *to obey*. Unconditional obedience belongs to God alone; a true priesthood of all believers obeys God and recognizes His lordship or sovereignty in all things. The apostolic principle is "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). In terms of this, the apostles did challenge both Judea and Rome, not in rebellion, but in terms of God's authority and a just premise of law and order.

The modern rebellion against authority is destructive in every sphere, never constructive. It is revolutionary and disintegrative in all its ways.

The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers places men under godly authority to discharge their calling under God. We have today in the church a

fearfulness to exercise godly authority as well as a prevalence of humanistic authoritarianism.

Moses, in answering the rebels, asked, "What is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?" Aaron's authority over men was slight; his sacrificing and intercessory work before God was very great. Aaron had not diminished the authority of a single prince of the assembly. He did, however, clearly set forth the holiness, dominion, and separateness of God. What the rebels, then as now, could not tolerate was God's hierarchy of powers over men. The princes were not about to surrender their powers over the people, but they could not tolerate a God-given order beyond their power to alter or control. Democracy is often a facade for oligarchy or autocracy, and the lawless demand for freedom the harbinger of slavery.

Authority is a fact of life. The parent has an unavoidable authority over a child, an employer over an employee, and the captain of a ship over the stokers. To deny godly authority is to affirm death. We live in a death-oriented culture (Prov. 8:36), and contempt for authority is a clear mark of it.

One telling evidence of this hatred of authority is the love by many of asserting their supremacy by attacking all authorities. No one is good enough for them to "accept" or submit to. Their delight is to prove their own righteousness by finding fault with all others. All they do, besides demonstrating their own sinfulness, is to manifest their love of death.

All authority in Scripture, and all obedience, is from God and to God. All false doctrines seek to displace authority and obedience from God to man. With every man his own god and law, authority collapses; this is the consequence of explicit humanism. Implicit humanism maintains a godly facade but makes human authorities central. The greatest human authority is by virtue of his position and power all the more under God's authority than lesser men. The obedience of an Aaron and a Moses is more critical than that of an insignificant herdsman, because their authority affects more people. Authority gives only *godly* privileges, and it gives and requires great responsibilities.

17. Fringes and Tassels

Our subject now is a minor one, in a sense, if we can call anything in the Bible *minor*. It is, in reference to major concerns like the doctrine of the atonement, a minor subject. Where we are dealing, however, with God's word, even the minor subjects are important. Let us add further that this subject deals with the life of the believer primarily and secondarily with the life of the church.

Our subject is tassels, tassels on clothes, a matter we find in God's law:

37. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

> 38. Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:
> 39. And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:
> 40. That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.
> 41. I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God. (Numbers 15:37-41)

This, it should be remembered, is a law. It had no equivalent in the New Testament, although we are told how very important it was to the Pharesees (Matt. 23:5). Our Lord wore fringes or tassels on His clothing, and the sick were healed on touching them (Matt. 9:20; 14:36).

Before discussing the meaning of this law and its use in church history, let us look at the law itself. Each tassel had to include a thread of blue color. Wenham calls attention to the fact that blue, the color of the sky, is a color symbolic of royalty (Esther 8:15) and divinity. God's throne, the ark, was wrapped in a blue cloth (Num. 4:6), and blue cloth was used in the tabernacle to mark it as the palace of God the King (Ex. 26:31,36). The clothing of the high priest also included blue (Ex. 28:31,37, etc.). The blue thread in the tassel was a reminder to the wearer that he belonged to a holy nation of royal priests (Ex. 19:6). The Old Testament believer was thus required to wear a reminder of his royal and holy priesthood, and, as this law states clearly, to be holy in all his being and obedient to God's law (Num. 15:40).[63]

This gives us some indication of the meaning of this law. A man cannot be a secret believer. His faith must manifest itself in all his life and being, in his faith, obedience, and his clothing, according to the law. Our Lord's criticism of the Pharisees at this point is because they tried to make up for their lack of true holiness by advertising. (Matt. 23:5). He thus did not attack tassels as such, but rather their hypocritical use. The tassels called attention to a privileged status, to the fact of a royal priesthood; the world might regard that status with contempt, but the Old Testament believer rejoiced in it and wore it, not with shame, but proudly. The Hebrew and later the Jew could be spotted by his tassels; it often made him the target of instant hate, but it was to be his glory.

Paul makes reference to this condition of reproach mingled with a joyful glory. Paul, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, dressed in the same style, with tassels, as did all the Jewish converts. The church at Rome included a number of Christian assemblies or synagogues, of whom about half were Gentiles, and the other assemblies were entirely or mainly Jewish converts. These were

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[63] Gordon J. Wenham: *Numbers*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981). p. 132f.

small groups, meeting in homes, and they included slaves. There were thus two despised groups, slaves, and Jews, both now taking on a reproach with the rest, the reproach of Christ. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, i.e., to the Christians in Rome, speaks directly to this fact: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). All believers felt what Paul calls "the offense of the cross" (Gal. 5:11). They were to be "not ashamed." Rather, they were to glory in Christ and His cross. It is not fanciful or unreasonable to assume that Paul had, in the back of his mind, the fact of tassels; he earlier had not been ashamed to be a Jew, marked as one by his tassels. He was now not ashamed to be a Christian, and to "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness, But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:23-24). Not surprisingly, very early Christians began to use the cross to mark themselves, as their own version of the tassels. When women made bread, they made the sign of the cross on top of the loaf before baking it. It was their way of saying, We belong to Jesus Christ. It was the Christian version of the tassel, or one example of it. It was also a way of saying to a hostile world, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

Let us turn again to the tassels or fringes. Failure to wear them on the part of a Jew meant, *first*, that he had forsaken the covenant, or, *second*, that he was ashamed to be identified as a covenant man, or *third*, to save his life in a crisis he chose to dress differently.

The rabbis of old said that the fringes or tassels did two things, among others. *First*, they required holiness of the covenant man, because they marked and separated him from others. The tassels kept a man from the anonymity which made sin easier. *Second*, the tassels marked the wearer as God's property, God's slave.[64] The tassels reminded the wearer of the Divine Presence and omnipresence.[65] It was also, a reminder of the love and grace of God, and also His law.[66] Rabbi Nathan told the story of a man who went to a prostitute, a very beautiful one; before he undressed, the sight of the tassels reminded him of God and His law, and he stopped; the woman surprised by his action, asked the reason for it and ended a proselyte.[67] Rabbi Simion B. Yochai said of Proverbs 3:9,

> 'Honour God with thy substance'; that is, by dedicating to Him gleaning, forgotten sheaves, corners of the field, tithes, dough, by

64. C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, editors: *A Rabbinic Anthology*. (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company (1960) 1963). p. 117f.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

> making a booth, and a *lulab* by *shofar* and phylacteries and fringes, by feeding the poor and giving drink to the thirsty.[68]

From this it is clear that the tassels were a badge of faith and placed a man under obligation to manifest his faith. This is no small matter. The tassels reminded the believer that a man is surrounded by God's world and can only live on God's terms in order to live successfully and truly. Rabbi Phinehas stated it clearly:

> Whatsoever you do, the commandments accompany you. If you build a house, there is Deut. XXII, 8 (battlements); if you make a door, there is Deut. VI, 9 (text on the door); if you buy new clothes, there is Deut. XXII, 11 (linsey-woolsey); if you have your hair cut, there is Lev. XIX, 27 (corners of beard); if you plough your field, there is Deut. XXII, 9 (ox and ass together); if you sow it, there is Deut. XXII, 9 (mixed crop); if you gather the harvest, there is Deut. XXIV, 19 (forgotten sheaves). God said, 'Even when you are not occupied with anything, but are just taking a walk, the commands accompany you,' for there is Deut. XXII, 6 (bird's nest).[69]

The law on tassels was a direct requirement that a man show his colors.

As has been pointed out, very early Christians used the cross and other symbols to mark themselves. A very interesting development of this principle came after 438 A.D. with the reign of Theodosius II. Pagan temples were being confiscated by the state, and in many instances were given to Christians as a form of restitution for persecutions, executions, and confiscations. Under these conditions, syncretism came readily in some areas. Pagans continued to use the old temple, and some Christian leaders accommodated pagan beliefs to make for an easy transition, supposedly, from paganism to Christianity. *The Theodosian Code* 16.10.25 required either the destruction of the pagan temples and shrines or else "the sign of the venerable Christian religion," the cross, be erected over them.[70] The state required the church to identify itself, apparently because some pastors were hesitant about doing so.

Through the centuries, a variety of rules and laws have been used to require some kind of identification by Christians. Sumptuary laws have been used by Catholics and Protestants, including the American Puritans. While such laws also enforced a class bias, their basic intent was to require simple clothing as befitting a man of God. The Quakers continued the use of an identifiable garment for generations, and most Amish and Mennonites still require them. In most churches, this was gradually limited to clerical garb for the pastoral, conventual, or teaching offices. (In other areas, we have the remnants of an identifying garb in academic processions and by judges.) Now, of course, the

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[68] *Ibid.*, p. 503. A Lulab is a palm branch; the shofar is the ram's horn blown on Rosh Hashanam, the Jewish New Year.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

[70] Clyde Pharr, editor, translator: *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions.* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1952). p. 476.

world sets the styles, and the fashion designers are often homosexuals and almost never Christians.

What shall we conclude from all this? When I wrote the *Institutes of Biblical Law*, I unwisely failed to take this law seriously, whereas everything God says must be taken seriously. What I have said here is by no means the last word on the subject; it is barely a preliminary word.

Our Lord says very plainly, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). This means practical and faithful service to the Lord. It also means that we are not ashamed of Jesus Christ; the law of the tassels tells us that our faith must be visible in our lives; we dare not conceal it. The church did not continue the use of tassels, because they marked the old Israel, but it has been concerned with an open profession. The cross has been commonly used for this purpose.

The implications here are far-reaching, not simplistic. For example, all too many Christian schools, colleges, and graduate schools seek identification in terms of a non-Christian accrediting agency which often forbids the school from requiring Christian faith of every teacher. Some churches in the 5th century were apparently using pagan temples in a compromising way. Theodosius II required them to be marked by a cross. Is not submission to an alien accrediting board a similar compromise? Is it not a violation of the law of tassels?

18. Baptism

The subject of baptism is a highly controversial one, and, unhappily, an area of thinking where the church has suffered from hardening of the arteries. Many very thorough and able works are written, but, on the whole, they share a common weakness: they restate, develop, and reinforce long-standing ecclesiastical positions without rethinking the basic Biblical position.

There is one notable exception to this, David Kingdon's *Children of Abraham* (1973). Kingdon, a very superior scholar, a Baptist, offended both Baptists and non-Baptists with his study, which departed from the traditional arguments. Without agreeing with the infant baptism doctrine (or, paedo-baptism), he stated clearly, "It is my considered opinion that Baptists must recognize the analogy between circumcision and baptism."[71] On the other hand, he objected to any identity of meaning. He saw clearly that "circumcision in the Old Testament is the type of which inward circumcision, *i.e.*, regeneration, is the antitype. If this is so, how can it be argued that baptism is equivalent in meaning to circumcision, when circumcision in the New Testament is clearly related to regeneration?"[72] While retaining the Baptist position, Kingdon works towards a Baptist theology of the covenant

[71] David Kingdon: *Children of Abraham*. (Haywards Heath, Sussex, England: Carey Publications, 1973). p. 28.

with a slight dispensational bias. The very great importance of Kingdon's work is that he recognizes the necessity for a covenantal view.

Any Biblically governed view of baptism must begin and end with the doctrine of the covenant. The covenant is an act of sovereign grace whereby God calls a people to be members by the adoption of grace of His royal family.

This calling is an act of grace. The life of the royal family is set forth in royal court's law, to which all are bound; it is the life of the royal family. God the King gives His law and grace to His people, and he promises faithfulness to them even to the death of God the Son on the cross, to redeem His people. All who become members of God's covenant are His total possession, they, their children, and their possessions. In giving their firstfruits, they symbolically give all; in giving their children to the Lord in baptism, the covenant people signify that their children belong to the Lord and are to be reared as God's possession. "Children are an heritage of the LORD; and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Ps. 127:3). The meaning of the baptism of infants and adults alike is similar to the faith expressed in William Walsham How's hymn (1864):

> We give thee but thine own,
> Whate'er the gift may be:
> *All that we have is thine alone*,
> A trust, O Lord, from thee.
>
> May we thy bounties thus
> As stewards true receive,
> And gladly, as thou blessest us,
> *To thee our first-fruits give.*

Baptism is above all else the sign of the covenant. It is the recognition that we and our children belong to the Lord; we are His possession and property. It is the affirmation which Hannah made in taking the child Samuel to Eli:

> 27. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him:
> 28. Therefore also I have lent (handed him back, Berkeley Version) him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent (returned, B.V.) to the LORD. (I Sam. 1:27-28)

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 6:19-20 that we are not our own, because we have been bought with the price of Christ's blood, and we must therefore serve and glorify God.

In terms of this covenant fact, the unbelieving spouse of a believer as well as the children are holy, set apart, given a protected status before God (I Cor. 7:14). They are within the covenant family and hence have certain blessings

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 34. Circumcision did not always result in regeneration, any more than baptism does, it can be said in response to Kingdon.

because of that fact. True, in the long run those privileges bring greater judgment if they continue without faith. Thus, even cities within the covenant land which refused to believe would be more harshly judged than Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 11: 20-24).

Baptism is a covenant fact. The church has converted it into an ecclesiastical fact. Circumcision in the Old Testament is a family rite, because the family is the primary covenant institution; the family gives birth to and rears the child. It is the family thus which must vow to rear the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. However, the family does not make the covenant; so it is God the Lord who establishes and verifies the covenant sign.

Baptists, Presbyterians, and Catholics, as well as the Campbellites and others, have vied with one another in arrogating baptism to the church. At some points, Protestants have gone beyond Catholics. For example, many Protestant churches do not condone baptism outside the church and apart from the due process of the church's official bodies. Was the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip invalid because it was performed outside the church and its government and in waters by the side of a road (Acts 8:36-38)? The usual discussion of this text concentrates on the depth of the water: was it by immersion or sprinkling? The evidence indicates that the baptisms were by aspersion, i.e., standing ankle or knee-deep in a stream, and then having water sprinkled or poured over one.

Calvin gave very succinctly the classical church definition of baptism, writing thus: "Baptism is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the Church, in order that, being incorporated into Christ, we may be numbered among the children of God." This is a good definition, and yet a defective one, because neither the covenant nor the Kingdom of God are mentioned. We are not baptized merely into the society of the church but into God's covenant, family, and Kingdom. We are given remission of sins (Mark 16:16), not merely to sit in church, but to serve the Lord with all our heart, mind, and being (Deut. 6:5).

Paul summons us to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." The word translated by the King James Version as *righteously*, and by Moffatt, as *integrity*, is more plainly translated by the Roman Catholic Confraternity Version as *justly*. The word in the Greek is *dikaios*, just or justly, from *dike*, justice. We live justly when God redeems us and makes us a new creation. As Paul goes on to say in Titus 3:1-9,

> 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,
> 2. To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.
> 3. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,
5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost:
6. Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
7. That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
8. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.
9. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

Verse 5, with its reference to "the washing of regeneration," or, with Moffatt, "the water that means regeneration and renewal under the holy Spirit which he poured upon us richly through Christ Jesus our Saviour," is a classic text with reference to baptism. It is used as an argument for baptismal regeneration, and also for adult baptism, because an adult profession of faith is presupposed by many. Baptism does indeed refer to covenant salvation, but no more than all the circumcised of Israel were saved are all the baptized of the church redeemed. If this were true, Stalin and Hitler, as baptized men, would be in heaven. Adult confessions of faith in Baptist churches are no better an index to salvation than infant baptisms. God's electing grace is as efficacious with an unborn or newly-born babe as with an adult. It is not our choosing, but the Lord's choosing, which saves us. Our Lord says, "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). We have been chosen to bear fruit, to be productive; in this calling, we can pray, knowing we shall be heard.

The point of Paul's words to Titus is practical. *First*, we have been baptized into God's covenant and regenerated by His grace to be no longer rebels against God and man, but subject to God and in the Lord to men, "ready to every good work." He has saved us to serve Him in faithfulness in every area of our life.

Second, Paul says that he and we were once deceitful fools, rebellious men, slaves to our appetites and given to malice, envy, and hatred. Now we are to speak evil of no man, to be courteous, and to be honest workers. We should be careful to maintain good works.

Third, we must avoid controversy and contention where it is not productive of good works. James 1:22 declares, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Paul says the same thing: be doers of God's word, not disputers thereof. Moffatt renders Titus 3:9 thus: "But avoid foolish controversy, and let genealogies and dissensions and strife over

the Law alone, for these are fruitless and futile." To illustrate, one presbytery of older men fought endlessly over infra-lapsarianism versus sub-lapsarianism while the church went modernist; it was not that the doctrine of predestination is false but that their controversy was wrong and foolish. Again, one man has tried for some time to carry on a dispute with me concerning the law and adultery and fornication; the law is just and right in all its pronouncements, but his disputations rest in a bad conscience, not a desire to grow.

Fourth, those who are regenerated do believe, and Paul declares it to be a faithful saying, that all such, being justified by grace, are heirs of eternal life. Moreover, they who believe do maintain good works; their lives manifest their justification and grace.

Thus, Paul is saying that the baptized who are truly regenerate, *i.e.*, those whose circumcision is one inwardly, of the heart, and in the Spirit, not in the letter, manifest in the totality of their lives, civil, familial, ecclesiastical, commercial, and in every other way, the righteousness or justice of God. They are a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). They will therefore be instruments in making all things new in terms of God's law-word. It is commonly agreed that the one basic meaning of the water of baptism is cleansing, regeneration, and renewing; this does not exhaust the meaning of baptism, but it is clearly central. Can we stop there? Does not our entrance into the world of the remission of sins and regeneration require us to apply its mandates to the whole of life? All of life and the world must either come under the waters of regeneration or face the floods of judgment.

Having said all this, let me add that much of the church's teachings on baptism are very important. The error has been to limit its implications to the society of the church, and membership therein. The implications of baptism are covenantal. Baptism sets forth the remission of our sins, our dying in Christ and being born again in Him, and our doing all therefore to bring all things under the dominion of Christ our Lord. Because "all power is given" to Christ "in heaven and in earth," our Lord commands us, saying,

> 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;
>
> 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:19-20)

Baptism both with John the Baptist and with the ministry of our Lord preceded the establishment of the church. It marked the calling of a new people into the covenant and Kingdom of God.

19. Communion

As we have seen, baptism is in to the covenant of our God. It is the sign of Old Israel's covenant. The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter XXVIII, I, "Of Baptism", declares that baptism is "a sign and seal of the covenant of grace," citing Romans 4:11 and Colossians 2:11, 12 as proof-texts. Because baptism signifies entrance into the new covenant, and therefore into the new humanity of the great Adam, Jesus Christ, the early church saw baptism as man's coronation and made use of the crown as a symbol thereof.[73]

Like baptism, the Lord's Table or communion is rooted in the Old Testament, in the Passover. Our Lord's institution of this rite came with the Passover celebration and with His interpretation of the meaning of Passover as fulfilled in Himself.

In the modern era, a serious error governs communion observances and interpretations. Perhaps few have summarized this problem more ably than Lovelace, in describing Cotton Mather's views:

> There is no mention in any of Mather's writings on the Supper of the corporate inclusion of all believers in the body of Christ, symbolized in their joint participation in the sacrament. In his celebration of the sacrament, believers do not so much eat together as a body; rather, each concentrates his attention wholly toward God in spiritual self-concern, as if the members were isolated points on a wheel's hub connected to the center by spokes.[74]

We would add that, while personal self-examination is a necessity, as is also the corporate body, a covenantal faith includes far more. The personal element cannot be overlooked. The Heidelberg Catechism 81 speaks of this:

> Who are to come to the table of the Lord?
> Those who are displeased with themselves for their sins, yet trust that these are forgiven them, and that their remaining infirmity is covered by the passion and death of Christ; who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and to amend their life. But the impenitents and hypocrites eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Again, the corporate aspect is no less to be remembered. Paul in I Corinthians 11:18-22 strikes at the lack of unity. There are divisions and heresies in the group, he states; also, they do not eat the Lord's Supper but their own, because they do not eat as a body, "for in eating every one taketh before other his own supper" (I Cor. 11:21). The Lord's Table is the Royal Table, and it transcends us.

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[73] Jean Danielou, S.J.: *Primitive Christian Symbols.* (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1963). pp. 18, 71.

[74] Richard F. Lovelace: *The American Pietism of Cotton Mather, Origins of American Evangelism.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979). p. 138.

> 27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
> 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.
> 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
> 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (I Cor. 11:27-30)

Paul condemns unworthy partaking of the elements. It is important to understand what it means to partake in an unworthy manner. Grosheide put his finger on the meaning in stating that it means "not in accordance with their value," i.e., without objective reference to the meaning of Christ's work and atonement.[75] Our subjective experience is not the point. We can, in some services, have a magnificent aesthetic experience; there is no error as such in this, unless our personal experience replace the objective fact. A common word for the communion service is *eucharist*, from the Greek *eucharistia*, *eu*, well, *chairo*, rejoice. Communion is a joyful fact, a eucharist, but it is so because of the objective fact of Christ's work.

Hence there is to be a self-examination, a proving to sift out the unworthy in our lives. This self-examination is in terms of Jesus Christ and His word and work. Is our reliance on His atoning work, or on our abilities, with some help from the Lord? Just as our righteousness and our self-atonement will not save us, so too our own "law" and "justice" are ineffectual and evil. Our self-examination is towards conforming ourselves to Christ's atonement, work, and law word. Failure to do so, and partaking unworthily, however religiously, emotionally, or mystically, makes us guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. This means "to break the body of Christ and to shed His blood."[76] To despise Christ's sacrifice is to assume a part in Christ's crucifixion. To despise Christ's body is a like offense. Our Lord makes clear the meaning of this: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

As we examine the Lord's Table or eucharist from the perspective of Scripture, we must recognize that it is the Christian Passover. The Passover of Exodus is a family rite; it was oriented to admitting the smallest child able to speak and understand into the joy of salvation and the meaning of salvation (Ex. 12:21-27). It is no less a family celebration in the New Testament; the family is now Christ's family.

In the early church, and beyond the time of Charlemagne, communion was given to baptized children.[77] This is a very important fact, because it

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[75] F. W. Grosheide: *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955). p. 273.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 274.
[77] Joseph Bingham: *The Antiquities of the Christian Church.* (London, England: Reeves and Turner, 1878). Vol. I, p. 545, Vol. II. pp. 797, 829.

documents for us the continuity of the Christian Passover with the Old Testament practice and law. The decline of fidelity to this and other aspects of the law coincided with the rise of anti-Jewish sentiments in Christendom.

There is, however, another aspect. Approaches to the sacrament have too often been influenced by rationalistic and by romantic and emotional considerations. Both of these represent a humanistic emphasis; centrality is placed on man's understanding and on man's response. If we emphasize rationalism, which is not the same as understanding, we most certainly will exclude children from the eucharist. If we emphasize emotional experience, then we will do what the Enlightenment did, make the church the province of women and children on the fallacious ground that their reasoning powers are limited.

The Passover stresses the family fact. Christ makes clear that believers are His body, household, and members, all images which stress even more strongly the same tie. The family is a blood tie; communion celebrates the body and blood which makes us one family. Paul, in giving us the words of institution, sets them in the context of a rebuke to the Corinthians for failing to be members one of another (Eph. 4:25). Calvin, in discussing "the Lord's Supper and Its Advantages," declared it to be a family rite:

> After God has once received us into his family...he also undertakes to sustain and nourish as long as we live...For this purpose...he has favoured his Church with another sacrament, a spiritual banquet, in which Christ testifies himself to be the bread of life, to feed our souls for a true and blessed immortality...In the first place, the signs are bread and wine, which represent to us the invisible nourishment which we receive from the body and blood of Christ. For as in baptism God regenerates us, incorporates us into the society of his Church, and makes us his children by adoption, so we have said, that he acts towards us the part of a provident father of a family, in constantly supplying us with food, to sustain and preserve us in that life to which he has begotten us by his word. Now, the only food of our souls is Christ; refreshed by a participation of him, we may gain fresh vigour from day to day, till we arrive at the heavenly immortality.[78]

Calvin went on to say that communion sets forth the reality that "we are incorporated into one body with Christ."[79] Theologians of almost all churches have said the same. However, we miss the meaning of this if we see ourselves *only* in union with Christ and not with one another as well. To be a member of Christ's body is to be a member of all His covenant people. Hence, Paul says, the sin against the Lord's Table is the sin of division (I Cor. 11:18). Too often, this is interpreted to mean the divisions which divide one group of churches from another. However, the essential meaning has reference to the

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[78] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. IV, Ch. XVII, i; Vol. II. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1936). p. 641f.

[79] *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, Ch XVII, iii; Vol. II, p. 643.

internal life of a congregation. Are they members one of another? Is there community in their communion? Are they "discerning the Lord's body" (I Cor. 11:29) in one another?

Turning again to Calvin, we read:

> Of all these things we have such a complete attestation in this sacrament, that we may confidently consider them as truly exhibited to us, as if Christ himself were presented to our eyes, and touched by our hands. For there can be no falsehood or illusion in this word, "Take, eat, drink; this is my body which is given for you; this is my blood which is shed for the remission of sins."[80]

Calvin is here speaking of the doctrine of the real presence of Christ; this doctrine then as now greatly divides churches, and each believes its doctrine to be the correct one. I have no intention of entering into that dispute, nor any interest in doing so. The foundations thereof are philosophical rather than Biblical. They rest on varying philosophical definitions of being, form, substance, and accident. What must be asserted is that there is a Biblical announcement in our Lord's words of the doctrine of the real presence. Let us glance at our Lord's other comments about His presence:

> 19. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.
> 20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18:19-20)

Clearly, we have a doctrine of the real presence here. Where believers are in agreement in their lives and requests, our Father hears us, because Christ is truly present with us. We see some common ingredients: *First*, a unity of Christ's covenant people, in physical presence and in a common life and faith. *Second*, there is a unity in what they ask for, the presupposition being that, given the unity of faith and life, their requests are in conformity thereto. *Third*, these two or three, or whatever larger number, are in unity *because* they are in union with Christ. Their gathering together is in Christ's name and spirit, and therefore with one another. The human unity presupposes the unity with Christ. *Fourth*, this means that Christ is in their midst, central to their being and truly present in His power and Spirit. In such a natural gathering, there is a supernatural presence. Clearly, we have the very real presence of Jesus Christ.

For another example, let us turn to Matthew 25:34-40:

> 34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

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80. *Ibid.*, p. 644.

35. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Our Lord's emphatic words, "ye have done it unto me," and His declaration that it is He who is hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison whenever and wherever His people are, is an emphatic assertion of His real presence in His people. If, given our own sins and shortcomings, Christ can assert His real presence with us and in us, how can we dare deny it to the Lord's Table? On the other hand, we cannot limit it to the elements but must see it in the Head of the Church and in His family gathered at the Table, in their membership one with another.

With this in mind, let us glance at the words of institution:

23. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (I Cor. 11:23-26)

What does it mean "to shew the Lord's death till he come?" Grosheide's comment is excellent: "He that comes to the Lord's table declares that he not only believes that Christ died to pay for the sins of His people, but that he also believes that Christ lives and that His death has significance for all times."[81] Let us add that Christ's life, death, atonement, law-word, and all that is His governs us for all times. He is the living Word, our ever-present help in time of need (Ps. 46; Heb. 13:5-6; etc.).

In this sacrament, we affirm our unity with Him, and with one another in Him. To discern the Lord's body is to be members of Him, and of one another in Him.

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[81] Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

20. The Ark and the Presence

The doctrine of the ark of the covenant is basic to the doctrine of the church, but, unfortunately is very much neglected and by-passed. This neglect is due in large part to controversy, hostility, and ill-will between Christians and Jews over the centuries. At the beginning, Judea was hostile to Christianity as a schismatic group of Jews; during the first century, the church was overwhelmingly Jewish. The fall of Jerusalem intensified that hostility. After the fall of Rome, Christian missionaries and Jewish merchants tended to work together among the barbarians as common forces for civilization. With the Crusades, hostility towards and persecution of Jews for religious reasons began. Both the earlier Jewish hostility and the later Christian hostility had far-reaching effects on both groups. After the apostolic age, Jewish scholars re-interpreted the Old Testament to down-grade everything which pointed to Christ; the doctrine of the atonement was one of the casualties, so that the basic fact of the covenant ceased to have its earlier meaning. In the Christian Church, the Old Testament was down-graded after c. 1000 A.D. out of hostility to the Jews, and the slow but steady attrition led to modern antinomianism; here also the doctrine of the covenant suffered.

One consequence of this development in the church has been the absence of any great interest in the ark of the covenant. The result is an anemia in Christendom.

First of all, before discussing the significance of the ark, let us follow Oehler in his summary of what the ark was. It was "the symbol and vehicle of the *presence of the revelation of Jehovah among his people.*" We can be more specific than Oehler is: the ark of the covenant set forth *the real presence* of God among His covenant people. The doctrine of the real presence is basic to Scripture. Most Protestants are fearful of the doctrine, because it seems to point to Rome, or at the least to Lutheranism. On the contrary, it points to the Bible and to the ark of the covenant. The Roman Catholic doctrine, as well as the Lutheran version, points to Greek philosophy, as do various doctrines of Eastern churches. My hostility to Greek premises is very great; this should not blind one, however, to the fact that the doctrine of the real presence is not tied to this philosophy.

The ark is called the throne of God; Jeremiah says that in time the new Jerusalem, God's people, shall instead become God's throne (Jer. 3:16-17). The ark is also described as God's footstool (I Chron. 28:2; Ps. 99:5; Ps. 132:7).

There were three parts to the ark: The mercy seat on the ark, the tables of the law in it, and the cherubim over it. Since the cherubim were the most dramatically visible aspects of the ark, we should consider them first. We meet them in Scripture in Genesis 3:24, barring the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Next, in Exodus 25:20, the cherubim protect and shade the ark. Again,

in Psalm 18:11, we meet the cherubim as the cloudy chariots on which the Lord rides. In Ezekiel 10:1ff., and Revelation 4:6-11., the cherubim are called living creatures. When God manifests Himself to the world, the cherubim reflect His glory to make God accessible to man's eyes. God's real presence is veiled as well as marked by the cherubim. In their appearance, they evoke many natural phenomena, indicating that this world itself reveals God to us, and God's real presence in it transfigures things around Him. The cherubim signify the presence of God, and, because God in His majesty is beyond the grasp of man's mind, so too the very beings of His presence are beyond our ability to comprehend.

Next, we have the mercy seat, the throne. God says, "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat" (Ex. 25:22). The mercy seat represents atonement, which alone makes communion possible. A cloud of darkness, like the cloud in the wilderness, veiled the glory or presence of God on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:2; Ex. 13:21; Ex. 40:34-38). The atonement makes communion possible between God and man, but, until the Lamb of God comes and makes that atonement in fact, replacing symbol, man could not see the unveiled glory of God, His real presence (Heb. 9:8).

In the ark were the tables of the law, the testimony. Oehler's comment here is excellent:

> This means that God sits enthroned in Israel on the ground of the covenant of law which he has made with Israel. The testimony is preserved in the ark as a *treasure*, a jewel. But with this goes a *second* consideration; while the law is certainly, in the first place, a testimony to the will of God *toward* the people, it is also (comp. what is said in Deut. xxxi. 26f. of the roll of the law deposited beside the ark of the covenant) a testimony *against* the sinful people,–a continual record of accusation, so to speak, against their sins in the sight of the holy God. And now when the kapporeth is over the tables, it is declared that God's grace, which provides an atonement or covering for the iniquity of the people, stands above His penal justice.[82]

The ark of the covenant thus represents an awe-inspiring fact: the real presence of God was in the holy of holies. We are, however, given an even more startling fact in Jeremiah 3:16-17. In the Messianic age, the real presence of God will no longer be in the ark but will be so much among God's people that the glory of the ark will be forgotten and not missed.

Very plainly, we are told that the real presence is a fact of the Christian era. If Christians are not mindful of the real presence, it is because of blindness, and it is a judgment against them. The prophet Ezekiel tells us that, because of the sins of Jerusalem and Judea, the glory of the Lord, His presence, left

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[82] Gustave F. Oehler: *Theology of the Old Testament.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan). p. 258. cf. 257-261.

the Temple and Jerusalem (Ezek. 11:22-23). Only Ezekiel, God's faithful man, saw it. Will not this generation, which does not even recognize the real presence, lose it also? Can we dare neglect the real presence? Over the generations, the church has erred in neglecting this fact. The real presence in communion is only one facet of this doctrine.

To deny this doctrine is to court disaster. It leaves the Christian alone before the world. For the modern Christian, the triune God is very remote. Even those churches holding to the real presence in communion now show a very real attrition of this faith. The charismatics have insisted on the real presence of the third person of the Trinity, and while I cannot see tongues as a valid fact, very clearly charismatic churches have an advantage in faith and power in seeing the reality of the divine presence in various ways.

The real presence must be seen, however, as a total fact. The ark of the covenant moved with Israel, and, in fact, led the way, protecting, guiding, and leading the covenant people. We are told that we have this same invisible but real presence now and throughout life. According to Hebrews 13:5-6,

> 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,
> 6. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

This is simply the repetition of a promise made repeatedly in Scripture, as witness these verses:

> And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. (Gen. 28:15)

> 6. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee: he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.
> 8. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee: he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. (Deut. 31: 6,8)

> There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee (Josh. 1:5)

> The LORD is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps. 27:1)

> 4. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
> 11. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.
> 12. Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. (Ps. 56:4,11,12)

> The Lord is on my side: I will not fear: what can man do unto me? (Ps. 118:6)

If we try to weaken the force of these words from the Old Testament by saying they were promises to very great saints, we cannot alter the fact that Paul applies these promises to all of us. The truth is that in both Testaments we have the same God and the same real presence. He is the Lord: "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter I, "Of the Holy Scripture," says plainly that, as the believer reads the Bible, he has "the inward illumination of the Spirit of God." Biblical texts in confirmation of this are cited. But why limit this instance of the real presence to Bible study? Or why limit it to the communion elements? Is it not rather a basic fact in the life of the church, and in the life of the faithful?

It is a serious offense against God to limit the scope of His real presence. The denial of this doctrine also makes a eunuch out of the church and the believer.

In 451 A.D., when the Armenian hostages were before the Persian court, most of the religious leaders of Armenia were there facing death. These included Sahag or Isaac, the Rushdoony bishop. The nakharars or nobility declared there that the church was not man's creation nor stood in man's power. The church, they declared, is the gift of God, established upon the rock, unmovable and unshakable.[83] The priest, Ghevont, declared: "We are not alone as you suppose." "There is no empty space where Christ our King is not revealed."[84]

The real presence is a fact of church history. To deny it is to invite disaster. It means separating Christ from the believer, and Christ from the church. A church without the real presence cannot long endure. To disregard the presence of a friend at a gathering leads to trouble; how much more so to disregard the presence of the Lord? When Israel did so, God abandoned them to their enemies, and the ark was taken by the Philistines (I Sam. 4:11). This judgment brought disaster to the Philistines, but even more to Israel. Asaph tells us:

> 56. Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:
> 57. But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.
> 58. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.
> 59. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:

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[83] Yeghisheh: *451 A.D. (Chronicles)*. (New York, N.Y.: The Delphic Press, 1952). Translators: H. Zovickian, D. Boyajian. p. 53.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

60. So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men;
61. And delivered his strength (ark) into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.
62. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.
63. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.
64. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation. (Ps. 78:56-64)

It is clear from Scripture that God's judgment is most obviously severe on His own people, who, having enjoyed His providential care and mercy, despise Him and His presence. As Peter declares, "For the time is come that 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?" (I Peter 4:17).

Note that Asaph speaks of the ark as the "strength" (or might, *oz* in the Hebrew) of God. Jesus Christ is the manifest power of God incarnate. To deny His real presence with His church is to insist on powerlessness.

In *The Foundations of Social Order*, I discussed and summarized the meaning of the iconoclastic controversy.[85] This struggle had roots in Greek philosophy, but it also had a premise very important to us. The issue was the incarnation: does the state manifest the visible power of whatever gods may be, or does Christ's real presence govern history? Today, in the current war of the state against Christian schools and churches, we have a like battle. The state insists on its sovereignty or lordship, and the church, either denying or having a weak doctrine of the real presence of the Lord, is faltering in that battle. In the course of that battle, the church must remember that it takes more than a mere affirmation of the real presence to ensure victory; faithfulness is required. Israel, facing the Philistines, sought to gain an advantage by bringing the ark into the battle (I Sam. 4:1-11). Because of their sins, the presence of God brought judgment upon Israel.

21. Laymen and the Church

The word *church* in the New Testament is in the Greek *ecclesia*. In the Septuagint, the Hebrew *qahal* is rendered as *ecclesia*. The meaning is a meeting or a gathering, civil, religious, or military; such a meeting can be good or evil. The Lord's *qahal*, *ecclesia*, or gathering can be men meeting for worship, an assembly of prophets, of princes, or of men for military service. When Israel assembled before God at Horeb (Deut. 4:10; 9:10; 10:4; 18:16), it was a congregation.

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85. R. J. Rushdoony: *The Foundations of Social Order*. (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, (1968) 1972, etc). pp. 148-160.

An *ecclesia* is an assembly of persons gathered together by God through Christ. They are united by a common purpose, to serve the Lord. The *ecclesia* has a common faith, and it knows that the Lord rules and shall prevail over all His enemies. The church is God's covenant people; these people are the recipients and channels of God's real presence and glory on earth; they are soldiers in God's war against the powers of darkness, the heirs of God's Kingdom, and the possessors of eternal life.[86]

A church is thus not essentially a building or an institution, although both can be manifestations of its life. It is a covenant people who believe and apply the covenant law-word to all of life and who seek to bring men, nations, and all spheres of life under the dominion of Christ as Lord. Thus, while the church may be a building and an institution, and both can be important and needed aspects of its life, it is primarily a power and a government at work in the world.

A familiar illustration may shed light on this. The military chaplaincy is an aspect of the life of the church, a very important ministry all too often underrated and neglected today. Let me say parenthetically that, in the past couple of years, I have learned of two incidents in which two denominations dishonored themselves, the chaplaincy, and this country. Two incompetent and unworthy ministers were eased out of churches they were destroying and given strong commendations to get them into the chaplaincy. In Scripture, the military are often seen as the congregation of the Lord, a church on the march. The true purpose of the chaplaincy is to make the army godly insofar as is possible. Modern man tends to see the military in evil terms, when its true purpose is the defense of the country and the maintenance of law in times of crisis. The army *can* be a godly calling, and the chaplaincy is an affirmation that this is an area where the Lord's covenant, calling, and assembly must be manifested. It is thus an important ministry and an aspect of the life of the church. The chaplaincy means that we cannot withdraw God from the world of national defense into the walls of a church.

The work of the laity must be seen as a chaplaincy, a carrying of the life of the faith into every area of life and thought. The layman does not leave the church when he walks out of the building; if it is not his life in his calling, then he is never in the church on Sundays either.

We have seen that every man is called to be an elder, an elder over his family *and* in his calling. The synagogue, and for a time the church, was constituted when ten heads of households, elders, came together. It is the elders who establish the church as an institution. To this day, in many denominations, the pastor is not and cannot be a member of the local church. He is its teacher and pastor, but it is the laymen who are the members. The

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86. P. S. Minear, "Church, Idea of," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, A-D.* (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1962). p. 608f.

church cannot be restricted to the place of teaching nor to the teaching ministry. *It is a dominion ministry*, and this dominion is to be manifested in the life and the work of the members.

It would be a serious error to limit or identify this ministry with witnessing. It is living and working in terms of obedience to Jesus Christ. Let me cite an example. A bank loan officer shook up more than a few people, including bank officers, by calling attention to the financial penalties of long term debt and the advantages of obedience to the Biblical law. He had brought the church into the bank, and very practical consequences followed, *dominion* in the lives of those who listened to him.

The life of the church is not to be directed to developing an institution but to establishing God's saving power in their lives and in the lives of others, and in bringing dominion into the lives of men and institutions. Church members are the people of God, and they must further God's reign and government.

Evangelism is the basic task of the church. This is very much stressed in our time, and rightly so, but it needs to be followed by application. As members one of another, Christians need to care for one another, for the sick, the elderly, the needy, and the troubled. Visitation is not in Scripture the duty of pastors but of Christians (Matt. 25:31-46). If it is a sin in the eyes of Paul for members at a communion love-feast to segregate themselves from others, is it not a sin also when it is done in all of the life of the church (I Cor. 11:17-21)? The church cannot be an exclusive fellowship; while it requires a separation from sin and unbelief unto the Lord, it clearly does not mean a separation into social classes within the church.

The work of the laymen within the church is a work of unity, "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 10:17). Paul says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection" (I Tim. 2:11). The meaning of this is all too often simplistically interpreted. Paul then says, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (I Tim. 2:12). The silence enjoined is with reference to two facts, teaching, and authority over the man. It is important to understand this. All too often, in churches where women are nominally silent, this requirement is transgressed. How can a woman usurp authority? All too often, church problems are caused by rivalries and antipathies between women. The women may be silent in meetings, but *not* to their husbands or to other women, as they spread their dislikes and hostilities. This is a usurpation of authority and an attempt to rule the man and the church in terms of a personal feeling. It is this which is clearly forbidden, and the man here must very firmly rule, or he himself will be judged by the Lord. A woman's antipathies cannot govern Christ's church. The requirement of church officers is the requirement of all men, "ruling their children and their own houses well" (I Tim. 3:12).

Paul in I Thessalonians 4:1-12 gives a brief summary of the duties of members:

> 1. Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.
> 2. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.
> 3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:
> 4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;
> 5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:
> 6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.
> 7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.
> 8. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.
> 9. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.
> 10. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;
> 11. And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;
> 12. That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Paul says, *first*, that the will of God is the sanctification of every member, their growth in holiness. This sanctification is not gained by spiritual exercises but by the practical application of God's law-word to the totality of their lives and world. *Second* this application very clearly begins in their marital lives. Holiness means, among other things, sexual purity. The casual attitude towards sexual offenses which had developed in the Greco-Roman world is thus emphatically condemned. Then as now, the idea of a "good man" was divorced from sexuality, so that adultery and homosexuality were not seen by many as a moral impediment. Paul firmly condemns all such thinking. Marriage is man's normal estate, and the only legitimate sphere of sexual activity.

Third, there must be strict honesty in all dealings one with another. To defraud a Christian brother adds to the serious offense of theft and makes it all the more repulsive. God avenges all such dealings and calls them through Paul *akatharsia*, uncleanness, thus comparing them to evil sexual practices; they constitute a form of moral perversion. To defraud our brother in any way, or to wrong him, financially or sexually, is to despise, "not man, but God," Who takes all offenses very seriously. "Brotherly love" is a mandate. This means helping our brethren afar off as well as near at hand.

Fourth, it means living honestly, quietly, and industriously. The old Hebraic requirement of all parents was that a boy be taught God's law, and how to work with his hands; the father who failed to do so in effect taught his son to be a thief. This Hebrew belief is echoed more than once by Paul, as here: "study...to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." This belief, reflecting the spirit of the Old Testament, has had a long history in the life of the church. It created the working and studying monastic orders of earlier centuries, and it governed the Puritan perspective.

Fifth, to live in such a manner brings the blessing of God, and we then "have lack of nothing." This is a clear echo of Deuteronomy 28:1-14. The faithful or obedient life is the blessed life.

Sixth, all of this holiness and training in godly living gives the Christian the ability to command respect in the outside world and to be an effectual witness to the Lord and to the way of holiness. The fellowship of faith within the church flows out towards the world in grace, love, and the witness of the gospel. The schooling within the household of faith prepares us for dominion in the world at large.

Our Lord summarizes the law and the prophets, and the duty of man, in two commandments:

> 37. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind.
> 38. This is the first and great commandment.
> 39. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
> 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matt. 22:37-40)

This is the requirement our Lord makes of all believers. It is the essence of the life of faith and the life of the church. Laymen thus are a chaplaincy to the world.

22. Women and the Church

The place of women in the history of the church has been a varied one. Although Biblical faith accords them a very high place, other influences have undermined that fact. The Hellenic tradition, especially neoplatonism, gave pre-eminence to spiritual things, to ideas, and men were seen as more rational and hence higher, whereas women had an ostensibly lower status. The Enlightenment with its rationalism had a like impact. Men were seen as the embodiment of reason and hence higher on the scale of being, whereas women were seen as essentially emotional and hence lower.

The Bible, however, gives a different perspective. Women are different from men, even to the cells of their bodies, so that the differences are very real. They are, however, essentially one: they are *man*, the human being

created in God's image. They are subordinate to men, *not inferior*; there is a difference between the two concepts. Proverbs 31:10-31 makes clear the status of women was a high one. The wife ran the farms, businesses, and estates when her husband sat "in the gates" (Prov. 31:23) as either a ruler (elder of the city) or as a judge. While normally God used men as prophets, His use of Deborah, Miriam, and Huldah caused no dismay or surprise among a people taught to view women in God's revealed terms. The plain teaching of Genesis 2:21-24 is the unity of male and female in God. The idea of the war of the sexes is a product of sin, so that both the idea and the fact of such conflict reflect a fallen world and are evil.

The respect for women is a matter of Biblical law. Widows represent women at their most vulnerable point. God is emphatic about His severe judgment on any nation that afflicts widows (and orphans), as witness Exodus 22:22-24; Deut. 14:29; 16:11,14; 24:17; Jer. 7:6; etc. This same concern appears in James 1:27. Our Lord condemns the Pharisees for their exploitation of widows (Mark 12:40). Before the church had a building or any formal organization beyond the twelve apostles, it was caring for widows materially (Acts 6:1-4). The diaconate was created to expedite that care.

This care and activity clearly went beyond the work of the male deacons and was also carried on by women, as witness the work of Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43). "All the widows" of Joppa within the church circle witnessed to Peter of the activities of Tabitha or Dorcas. In I Timothy 5:9,10, we see that an order of widows existed, widows of 60 years or older, who were active in the ministry to needs and in hospitality. There was thus an actual organization of women in this service. These women were called deaconesses. Some churches today are very hostile to the "office," because all "offices" have a voice in the government of the church; this problem is a local and denominational one and not related to the Biblical data.

What is clear is that Paul, in Romans 16:1, refers to Phoebe as a *diakonon* of the assembly or *ecclesias* in Cenchreae. The King James translates *diakonon* as *servant*, "a servant of the church." However, if Paul had meant the word *diakonon* to mean the more general *servant*, he would have said "servant of the Lord," not "of the church." By relating *diakonon* to *ecclesias*, he is marking it as an "office" of the church. The evidence points to such an office. About 111 A.D., Pliny, Governor of Bithynia, questioned under torture two maidservants about Christian meetings; these two were called *ministrae*, deaconesses (Ep. xcvi). This alone is perhaps not conclusive, but, even in our Lord's ministry, the twelve disciples were sometimes accompanied by women who had given themselves, like the disciples, to the Lord's service (Luke 8:1-3).[87]

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87. A. F. Walls, "Deaconess," in J. D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1962) 1973). p. 298.

The deaconess thus was an important part of the church's ministry. At the same time, it was a very practical office. It provided for widows while giving them a place of service within the church, and an income. Paul is very explicit:

> 1. Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;
> 2. The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.
> 3. Honour widows that are widows indeed.
> 4. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.
> 5. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.
> 6. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.
> 7. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.
> 8. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.
> 9. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.
> 10. Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.
> 11. But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;
> 12. Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.
> 13. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.
> 14. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.
> 15. For some are already turned aside after Satan.
> 16. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. (I Timothy 5:1-16)

Paul is here counselling Timothy as pastor with respect to his relationship to members of a particular kind. *First*, he is told not to go at an elder roughshod; the rebuke is to be with respect to the fact that every man is an elder before God. Age is no immunity against rebuke, but age requires respect all the same. The same is true of all older women; younger women are to be treated as sisters and with purity.

Second, Paul discusses *widows* in the church. There are four kinds of widows in view: a) widows who have children and/or relatives who care for them; this is a necessary Christian duty, and failure to do so makes one worse than an infidel; b) there are young widows, whose basic desire is to marry again; these need financial and other aid, but, to make them a member of the order is to invite trouble and hypocrisy, because they perhaps will desert if

any opportunity to remarry presents itself; c) there are needy widows to be cared for, but who are not of a calibre to be included in the order; these need support, but not inclusion in the order; d) there are the widows over sixty, whose character is excellent. They have the attestation of such things as good works, rearing children, washing the disciples' feet, relieving the needy and afflicted, and being generally a blessing. Paul does not cite these as each a *requirement*, but as areas of investigation. Was the woman as a wife one who was mindful of the needs of other believers, helpful and gracious? If she had children, did she rear them well? It was the custom, since travel on dusty roads left sandalled feet dirty, to have a servant wash a guest's feet. Some, lacking or in the absence of servants, omitted this task. An example of this unwillingness we find in John 13:4-15; none of the disciples were willing to assume the task, and our Lord washed the feet of all. Had the widow manifested such grace and courtesy, i.e., in acts of like humility and thoughtfulness? Clearly, superior women alone were to be admitted. In vv. 3,5, the real widows are those without descendants; they are particularly to be honored, especially if their estate has led them to "supplications and prayers night and day" for the Lord's work, instead of bitterness. Whereas Hebrew women saw childlessness as a curse, Paul here says that such childless women are especially to be honored and respected when their condition has led to a greater reliance on God. Psalm 127:3 is clear that children can be a blessing; Paul makes clear that childlessness can also be blessed of God, and is to be honored where grace marks it.

Hospitality was and is a requirement of all believers. Presbyters were to set an example therein (I Tim. 3:2); so too were those women who became members of the order: their past life must reveal gracious hospitality towards Christ's family.

The early church at times read Paul's words too literally. They barred women who had borne no children, for example, and required very exact compliance to the details of v. 10, but soon less strict compliance to the age requirement.[88] As time passed, younger women were admitted, and then young virgins, first as aides to the older widows and then as members of the order. The rise of convents came out of this development. In origin, the widows taught women and visited them, as well as martyrs and confessors who were under sentence or in prison. The government of the other widows (not in the order) was in their hands, and a ministry generally to women and children, which included teaching.

The term "wife of one man" is not a ban on second marriages, but rather, like the term "the husband of one wife" in I Timothy 3:2, means faithful to one's spouse at all times.[89]

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[88] Joseph Bingham: *The Antiquities of the Christian Church.* (London, England: Reeves and Turner, 1878). Vol. I. p. 99.

A key point in Paul's statement is v. 13, which is plainly applied to all women. Assistance and guidance are to be given by godly women one to another without inter-meddling, gossiping, and backbiting. Paul sees *women and men alike* as essentially family members. The church is Christ's family, and we are to be members one of another (Eph. 4:25). The Bible sees the family as basic to the life of both men and women, and it is clear that the church is the Lord's family. The present down-grading of the family is totally anti-Biblical. The widows or deaconesses, like the elders, deacons, *and all men and women*, are to manifest the family virtues one towards another. Life within the family is true life, and the highest manifestation of family life is within the family of God the Father.

23. The Foundation Rock

Central to the doctrine of the church is Matthew 16:13-19, in which our Lord makes clear whereon He shall build His church:

> 13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Phillippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?
> 14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.
> 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 Barjona; 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.

This is obviously a text of central importance; unhappily, too many discussions thereof have suffered from hardening of the arteries as churches have sought to interpret it against one another. St. Augustine's interpretation is of interest, because it represents the standard understanding of the text in his day. Moreover, Augustine saw Peter in this instance as personifying the church "on account of the primacy of his apostleship." Augustine then went on to say of Peter,

> ...he represented the universal Church, which in this world is shaken by divers temptations, that come upon it like torrents of rain, floods and tempests, and falleth not, because it is founded upon a rock (*petra*), from which Peter received his name. For *petra* (rock) is not derived from Peter, but Peter from *petra*, just as Christ is not called so from the

[89] Patrick Fairbairn: *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (1874) 1956). p. 203f.

> Christian, but the Christian from Christ. For on this very account the Lord said, "On this rock will I build my Church," because Peter had said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On this rock, therefore, He said, which thou hast confessed, I will build my Church. For the Rock (*Petra*) was Christ; and on this foundation was Peter himself also built. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. The Church, therefore, which is founded in Christ received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven in the person of Peter, that is to say, the power of binding and loosing sins. For what the Church is essentially in Christ, such representatively is Peter in the rock (*petra*); and in this representation Christ is to be understood as the Rock, Peter as the Church. This Church accordingly, which Peter represented, so long as it lives amidst evil, by loving and following Christ is delivered from evil.[90]

This interpretation is not unlike that of Reformed scholars; in fact Bannerman actually puts slightly more stress on Peter than does Augustine.[91]

In the era prior to the Norman Conquest of England, Aelfric gave a like interpretation in one of his sermons, saying:

> 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, (Note: Literally 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' (of all of us) 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 those 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.[92]

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90. St. Augustine, "Tractate CXIV, on the Gospel of St. John," in Philip Schaff, editor: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series. Vol. VII. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956 reprint). p. 450.

91. D. Douglas Bannerman: *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church* (1887), pp. 176ff.

92. E. Thomas, translator, editor: *Select Monuments of the Doctrine and Worship of the Catholic Church in England before the Norman Conquest.* (London, England: John Russell Smith, 1875). pp. 75-79.

Now Alfric did go on to say that the power of the keys belonged to the successors of Peter and all the apostles, to all bishops and priests, only "if they carefully hold it after the evangelical constitution."[93] Alfric stressed strongly that only through faith are *any* accounted members of Christ.

When we come to the 20th century, we find that G. Campbell Morgan, the British evangelical leader of the early years, or first quarter or so especially, said much the same thing in *Peter and the Church.*[94] When we turn to the Reformation era, and to Calvin, we find him referring to Augustine, and saying, among other things:

> *Thou art Peter.* By these words our Lord assures him that it was not without a good reason that he had formerly given him this name, because, as a *living stone* (I Pet. ii.5) in the temple of God, he retains his steadfastness. This extends, no doubt, to all believers, each of whom is a temple of God, (I Cor. vi. 19,) and who, united to each other by faith, make together one temple, (Eph. ii. 21.) But it denotes also the distinguished excellence of Peter above the rest, as each in his own order receives more or less, *according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* (Eph. iv. 7.)
> *And on this Rock.* Hence it is evident how the name *Peter* comes to be applied both to Simon individually, and to other believers. It is because they are founded on the faith of Christ, and joined together, by a holy consent, into a spiritual building, *that God may dwell in the midst of them,* (Ezek. xliii. 7.) For Christ, by announcing that this would be the common foundation of the whole Church, intended to associate with Peter all the godly that would ever exist in the world.[95]

I have cited these various churchmen to indicate that there has been a substantial body of common faith over the centuries. On the other hand, some Catholic thinkers, like Kirsch, have held to another, in disagreement with Augustine and others. According to Kirsch, "By the word 'rock' the Saviour cannot have meant Himself, but only Peter."[96] This is the position most clearly set forth by men like Pelliccia, an Italian scholar of the early 19th century.[97] However, when Pelliccia was translated into English, the editor-translator, Rev. Y.C. Bellett, noted, "it is very far from adequately putting the whole case."[98] I cite this simply to point out that the Catholic position is not as fixed or unvarying as some would hold, nor the Protestant view so fluid, either. We need not go to men like Hans Kung, a modernist, to find Augustinianism in Catholic circles.

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93. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
94. G. Campbell Morgan: *Peter and the Church.* (London, England: Pickering and Inglis, 1937).
95. John Calvin: *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke,* Vol. II. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957). p. 291.
96. J. P. Kirsch, "Peter," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI. (New York, N.Y.: The Encyclopedia Press, (1911) 1913). p. 746.
97. Alexius Aurelius Pelliccia: *The Polity of the Christian Church.* (London, England: J. Masters, (1829) 1883). pp. 113ff., etc.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

With this in mind, namely, that Christ is the Rock, and that Peter's faith, and our faith, makes us members of the Rock, let us turn to the text as a whole. In passing, let us remember that in antiquity *rock* was a common symbol for God or the gods. In the 'Song' of Moses, his concluding words, we find several references to God as the Rock (Deut. 32:4,15,18). In one passage, Moses contrasts the pagan *rocks* or gods with "our Rock:"

> 30. How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?
>
> 31. For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. (Deut. 32:30-31)

God the Lord is the Rock; we can become members of that Rock, or *rocken*, as Aelfric said.

Matthew 16:13-19 tells us, *first*, that the people clearly saw Jesus as a supernatural person, one of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, or a like man, come from the dead to prophesy. Herod himself said fearfully to one of his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him" (Matt. 14:2). Since John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins, a family resemblance may have encouraged Herod in his belief. However, very commonly, it was assumed that Jesus was a supernatural person.

Second, the disciples held to another belief, which may well have been shared by others of the followers, and by some of the public. Peter gave voice to this: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Very obviously, our Lord recognized some kind of eminence in Peter; his new name signalled this. Moreover, the inspiration of God was declared to be behind Peter's confession. In terms of this confession, Peter is "blessed" and strong. Apart from it, he is even evil. Immediately after this blessing of Peter, our Lord spoke of His coming atoning death and resurrection:

> 21. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.
>
> 22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.
>
> 23. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. (Matt. 16:21-23)

The blessing and cursing of Peter go hand in hand, as do our blessing and cursing. None of us, whatever our status within Christ's church and Kingdom, can stand except by His grace and by faith, or, as Aelfric stated it, only if we carefully hold to the evangelical constitution, to God's total gospel. The church has never implemented our Lord's standard of preeminence and rule.

When the twelve debated the question of superior authority, our Lord told them:

> 25. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.
> 26. But it shall not be so among you: But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;
> 27. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant;
> 28. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:25-28)

The meaning becomes clearer if we realize that in v. 26 *minister* in the Greek is *diakonos* as in *deacon*, one who serves and ministers to needs in Christ's name. In v. 27, *servant* is *doulos*, bondman or bondservant. In v. 28, *diakonos* is again used. Clearly, key positions within Christ's church and kingdom run counter to the way of the world; instead of giving us power to dominate others, their purpose is to enable us to have a larger scope of service, a greater means of establishing Christ's dominion. Sadly, churchmen have too often seen this as "impractical" and have played the power game.

Third, this is not to say that Christ intends the church to be powerless. On the contrary, if the Peters of every generation, great and small, are faithful to Christ their Rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail or hold out against them. Hell will be on the defensive and losing side, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:4)

Fourth, Our Lord spoke of *the keys of the kingdom*. The keys are an old Hebraic symbol for the power to interpret Scripture. Our Lord's condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees had to do with this fact. As the possessors of the keys, they shut up the kingdom, neither entering nor allowing others to enter therein (Matt. 16:19). The same must be said of all too many men of today's pulpits. The *keys* as a symbol of having command of the doors of knowledge survives among us today in a good rabbinic and Biblical symbol, the Phi Beta Kappa key.

Fifth, the binding and loosening power is not legislative but ministerial. No man can set aside God's law: it is the canon or rule of the church. Churchmen are called to administer that law, not to alter nor supplant it. Today, virtually all churches are antinomian. The blessing and the cursing of Peter and of all of us is in terms of this: are we ministers, or do we, in terms of the tempter's program, seek to determine law, good and evil, for ourselves? Do we seek to legislate as little gods? (Gen. 3:5). There can be no binding nor loosening apart from God's law-word. To confess Christ, and to be of the Rock, means to minister in His name, to be faithful to His law-word, and to further His Kingdom and Dominion as His bondservants. Then whatever our status, we are blessed and great indeed.

24. Loosing and Binding

All too often, churchmen have considered texts in isolation from their context; this approach assumes that the arrangement of Scripture is accidental, not purposive. This is certainly true of the classic text on church "discipline," Matthew 18:15-20, which is normally wrenched out of its context.

Matthew 18:1-6 speaks of the necessity of conversion, of becoming "as little children" in our trust of our Father in heaven. To offend "these little ones which believe" in Christ is declared by our Lord to be a most fearful offense. The world will see offenses, our Lord continues (vv. 7-9), and we are to beware of becoming offenders, and we are to cut off or eliminate that aspect of our lives which leads to offenses. Our Lord, in these verses and what follows, makes clear that, while He began with children, He continues then to speak of all *His* children, old and young. The primary reference in v. 10 is to little children, but vv. 11-14 makes clear that these little children can include straying sinners, or lost sheep. The Good Shepherd seeks to find and save his straying sheep, and so too must all who are His undershepherds:

> 10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.
> 11. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.
> 12. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?
> 13. And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.
> 14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.
> 15. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.
> 16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.
> 17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.
> 18. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
> 19. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.
> 20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18:10-20)

But we cannot stop here. The whole chapter is concerned with the same subject. The vv. 15-20 are usually seen as the classic text on church

"discipline," and, unhappily, by discipline men usually mean punishment or chastisement. The key concept in the word *discipline* is disciple, a very different idea. It is much wiser to see this chapter as a whole in terms of a mandate to effect *restoration*, and, failing that, to proceed with *separation*.

The disciples saw this fact. Hence, Peter raised the question, how much forgiveness and restoration shall we "indulge" in? Since *forgiveness* is in Scripture a juridical concept, and law is covenant law and hence the means of personal covenant bonds, it is not an emotional concept but a legal one in terms of the most personal tie imaginable, between God and man. Marriage is a legal relationship, but this does not make it an impersonal one. Our Lord says we are to forgive continuously, seventy times seven, which means as long as restitution is made. The whole point of going to our brother about his offense is to *restore* a relationship by means of a true change within him, repentance and restitution.

With this in mind, we can view the subject more clearly. *First*, our Lord warns all of us against offending one another by sin. To be great in the Kingdom is to be of a simple, trusting faith, as a little child, following and obeying our Father. While offenses against God are presupposed as similarly under the ban, our Lord here concentrates on problems within the assembly, congregation, or ecclesia. To offend against the children of God is to offend against God, and our Lord pronounces a woe against all such offenders.

Second, our Lord makes clear the importance of the least of His brethren. He came to seek and to save the lost, not to gather the great men of the earth to Himself. Like the Good Shepherd who seeks to restore His lost sheep to the fold, so we too are to restore brethren to the church. Our mission is thus not to punish but to restore, and, failing that, to separate ourselves from the sinner.

Third, thus the first step is individual, personal, and restorative. We who are offended go to the offender. The second step is again restorative, in that now two or more are involved in the effort. Only when this fails can we be punitive and effect separation. This latter is a process which involves the church.

Fourth, separation is excommunication, separation from the table of the Lord and from its fellowship. The excommunicated are to be to us then "as an heathen man and a publican." At this time, because they are no longer a Christian brother, we can take them into a civil court if the problem requires it (I Cor. 6:1-6). On occasion, it may be wiser to accept the defrauding (I Cor. 6:7-8) and be content with the excommunication, which for Scripture is the greater punishment.

Fifth, in terms of these ministerial powers, we have great authority, of binding and loosing. If two or three gathered together in Christ's name, either as a church court or as simple believers, agree on something in faithfulness to

Scripture, we can bind and loose men. Now normally this is a function of church authorities. This private reconciliation and absolution is spoken of by our Lord in Matthew 5:23-24:

> 23. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
>
> 24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Thus, before the church as a ministerial government is involved, private confession and absolution can be made. St. Augustine, in his work on "Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," stressed this private reconciliation. Because our life in Christ and His assembly is a personal one, the necessity for this personal and specific confession to the offended party is very important. This power and duty to forgive and to be reconciled is then on the ground floor, on the personal level, even when it is also on the church level. There is a ministerial binding and loosing required of all of us. We cannot refuse to excommunicate someone because we are attached to them. The law requires this at the most telling point: the father and mother of an incorrigible delinquent must stand with God's law and give testimony in the trial of their son (Deut. 21:18-21). With this binding and loosing power goes also the power of petition, the right to ask in Christ's name and be heard.

Sixth, ministerial faithfulness and life in Christ mean power. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Christ's presence means Christ's power, and, hence, "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." If two have such power, how much more the church? Our Lord's plain implication is that the powerlessness of the church is due to the lack of Christ's presence. He is not present, because the gathering is not in His name, not in faithfulness to Him, nor in the faithful use of the keys.

Seventh, our Lord, in answer to Peter, uses the parable of the unmerciful, unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:23-35). Peter is plainly told that he has no rights in the matter of forgiveness: the Lord prescribes the terms. Moreover, we cannot be forgiven by God if we are not forgiving one to another. For our sins, God provides the atonement and restitution in Jesus Christ. The sins of our brothers require a trifling restitution by comparison. To forgive in the Bible is to drop the charges because satisfaction has been rendered. The unmerciful servant or steward *refused* to allow the possibility of restitution or repayment on the part of those in debt to him (Matt. 18:28-30). Rather than receive the 100 pence which was his due, the unmerciful servant chose instead to condemn and punish his debtor. Instead of restoration, he chose condemnation and was thus himself condemned. (Matt. 18:32-35)

The church has a duty to strive for restoration, and, failing to effect that, to proceed with separation or excommunication. Beyond that, the punishment is in the Lord's hands. Paul, in dealing with the case of incest in Corinth, required the church to excommunicate the proud offender, which meant delivering him over to Satan and Satan's destructive jurisdiction, in the hope that repentance might follow (I Cor. 5:5).

In the Old Testament, excommunication was similarly required. However, what Matthew 18 stresses is that the church's ministry is a ministry of grace. Its purpose is restorative. Paul thinks primarily of restoration even as he orders the excommunication of those involved in the incest. The state bears the power of the sword, and the purpose of that power is that it be a terror to evil-doers (Rom. 13:3-4). The modern state, by being a terror to the righteous, as in the persecution of churches and Christian schools, is an evil minister and therefore faces judgment. The church has a ministry of grace and bears, not the power of the sword, but of the keys of the kingdom. The purpose of its power is to open and to shut, to loose and to bind, ministerially, only as God's law-word allows. Neither sentimentality nor harshness can supplant God's law-word, in terms of which restoration and separation are a mandate. The freedom and the power of the church come in faithfulness to this calling. To seek a freedom apart from Christ, and to punish or forgive apart from God, is to incur punishment.

If the church thus attempts to confront the sin of abortion, or of homosexuality, on any other terms than God allows, it surrenders the keys and incurs judgment. Instead of having the power of loosing or binding, restoration or separation, it has instead the certainty of God's judgment.

25. One Flock, One Shepherd

When we come to the doctrine of the unity of Christ's Church, we find commonly two factors which govern theological analyses. *First*, too often the discussion centers on union rather than unity. Union is not in and of itself wrong, and it is in fact a very real virtue, provided that unity precedes and is seen as basic to union. Unity presupposes an inner agreement; union can be no more than an outward bond. Unity is theological; union is administrative.

Second, the goals of unity and union are too often divorced from the world task of the church. The life of the church must be ruled from start to finish by the purposes of God. In a telling prophecy in Ezekiel, we have a beautiful statement about both the unity of the church and its calling:

> 22. Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.
> 23. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

24. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.
25. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.
26. And I will make them and the places round about my hills a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.
27. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.
28. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.
29. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.
30. Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the LORD God.
31. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezek. 34:22-31)

This is a Messianic prophecy concerning David's Son, the Prince (*nasi*) of God, the appointed One who is to come and to rule over the Kingdom of God. It is also about His *flock*, His holy congregation. In faithfulness to His covenant, the Lord God will provide the covenant Prince and covenant deliverance, protection, and prosperity.

First, God will save His flock and will set up a Shepherd over them, the promised seed of David. The work of a shepherd is the care and feeding of his flock. God's great Shepherd will do these things for His flock.

Second, God's covenant of peace with His people will extend to the extermination of everything which can harm them. The wild beasts will be restrained or eliminated, so that covenant men will be able to sleep in the woods. There will be natural consequences of a supernatural sort.

Third, these natural consequences will extend to the weather, showers in season, showers of blessing. The fertility of the earth will be greatly enhanced, and the harvests will be rich ones. God's holy congregation must thus see natural consequences to Christ's reign over them.

Fourth, this means safety from human enemies. Instead of being a prey, the Lord's realm shall be one of safety, with none to make the people afraid.

Fifth, this means a freedom from bad shepherds as well as external enemies, because God Himself shall feed His flock. This is an aspect of God's salvation.

In brief, all life and society is transformed. The coming of the Messiah marks the beginning of the new creation. This is the plain meaning of

Ezekiel's prophecy. The goal is a new creation. The church is called in that perspective the *flock* of the Prince.

The word *flock* is an important one theologically. It appears in John 10:16, although mistranslated as *fold*. The English Revision of 1881 corrected this to read, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." The word *flock* is in the Greek *poimne*, and *poimen* is shepherd; the Greek text reads one *poimne*, flock, one *poimen*, shepherd. The word *fold* is *aule*, a very different word. Many versions fail to note the difference, because scholars, being ignorant of sheep, do not see the very great difference. A flock of sheep can be divided into many folds under a variety of under-shepherds; thus, there can be many folds in the one flock.

The primary meaning here is that our Lord, the Good Shepherd, makes clear that Judea and Galilee together make up one fold. The Lord's flock is not exhausted by these believers; there are other folds in the one great flock.[99] The secondary meaning is that, instead of a necessary union of the various churches on the human level, a unity in the Great Shepherd is instead posited. In brief, many folds are assumed in the one flock, which is under the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

It is important to study briefly the difference here between *flock* and *fold* in the theological implications thereof. The use of *fold* exclusively in John 10:16 is a reading which goes back to Jerome and has a long history in doctrines of the church; its use in the King James Version is surprising, since Jerome's version led to the emphasis on organic unity in terms of Rome. The Greek text has been heavily used by Protestants to vindicate the modern divided church scene and to buttress the "branch" theory of the church.[100] It is important to ask whether or not this verse has been over-interpreted by Catholics and Protestants alike.

In John 7:35, we read that the Pharisees and chief priests asked contemptuously of Jesus, "will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" Now our Lord makes clear that He has His elect ones among the Gentiles also. "Them also I must bring," He says, or, more accurately, "I must lead." Thus, the Gentiles are not brought into the same fold, but they too are led. They are not yet even a fold; "there shall be one flock, one shepherd," or, literally, "they shall *become* one flock, one shepherd." There was as yet no other fold.[101]

The Anglican Bishop Hart gave a more Catholic interpretation, stating:

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99. B. F. Westcott: *The Gospel According to St. John.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1881) 1954). pp. 155., 162f.

100. Raymond E. Brown, S.S.: *The Gospel According to John I-XII.* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966). p. 387.

101. A. Plummer: *The Gospel According to St. John.* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, (1880) 1906). p. 216.

> The fold is a necessity of administration with a view to the safety of the sheep. We must read "one flock, one shepherd", not "one fold." The fold is a necessity of administration with a view to the safety of the sheep, and because of the existence of a hostile environment. A shepherd with so large a flock in a world-wide pasture might well have more than one fold; but if he does, unity will be preserved because they are all his, provided by his one loving purpose, and usable by any of his sheep when he moves them from one place to another. As applied to the Catholic Church the figure justifies local or national churches with independent features and organization, but not schismatic divisions. Even so, we must notice that Christ hints only at many folds by speaking of other sheep which are not "of this fold", and of a unity still to be created. Unity is His concern.[102]

Dr. Leon Morris gives a somewhat similar reading:

> The other sheep are not to remain distinct from the existing sheep, as though there were to be a Jewish church and a separate Gentile church. They are to become united in one flock. And they all stand under the leadership of one shepherd. The unity is not a natural unity but one brought about by the activity of the Shepherd in "bringing" them.[103]

When we turn to St. Augustine, we have another emphasis, one which is in the text itself: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, *and they shall hear my voice*; and they shall become one flock, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). Augustine stressed the hearing of the voice, i.e., the faithful proclamation of the word by under-shepherds.[104] Calvin followed Augustine with a like emphasis:

> That is, that all the children of God may be gathered and united into one body; as we acknowledge that there is one holy universal Church, and there must be one body with one head. *There is one God*, says Paul, *one faith, one baptism. Therefore we ought to be one, as we are called into one hope.* (Eph. iv. 4, 5.) Now though this *flock* appears to be divided into different *folds*, yet they are kept within enclosures which are common to all believers who are scattered throughout the whole world; because the same word is preached to all, they use the same sacraments, they have the same order of prayer, and every thing that belongs to the profession of faith.
>
> *And they shall hear my voice.* We must observe the way in which the *flock* of God is gathered. It is, when all have *one shepherd*, and when *his voice alone is heard.* These words mean that, when the Church submits to Christ alone, and obeys his commands, and hears *his voice* and his doctrine, then only is it in a state of good order.[105]

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102. J. Stephen Hart: *A Companion to St. John's Gospel.* (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1952). p. 132.

103. Leon Morris: *The Gospel According to John.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1971) 1977). p. 512.

104. St. Augustine, "On the Gospel of John," Tractate XLVII, 10:14-21: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. VII. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956 reprint). p. 262.

Calvin rejected the idea that Rome represented that voice, while affirming the need for one body.

How shall we react to these diverse opinions? *First*, it needs to be noted that all, in varying degrees, seek to understand Scripture in terms of the present church scene. They assume two deposits of interpretation, the actual words of our Lord, and the current church scene. The current church scene, good and bad, is a part of God's providence, but it is not a hermeneutical principle; it cannot govern our interpretation. To allow it to do so is to give to the current church scene an interpretive power over Scripture. Far too much has been read into John 10:16 by both Protestants and Catholics. Our Lord is simply saying that His church will transcend the national boundaries of Israel, and that it is greater than any national or racial limitations. The doctrines of the branch theory of the church, and of its world unity, may or may not have merits, but they simply are not in view in this text. Centuries of interpretation pro and con do not give validity to an unwarranted expansion of meaning.

Our Lord spoke with reference to Ezekiel 34:22-31, and also to Isaiah 56:8; 60:3; and Zechariah 2:11. In other words, the plain reference of John 10:16 is to the great ingathering of the nations. It speaks of the new creation therefore, and of a changed world order. Those who heard our Lord and caught the references to Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah knew that he spoke of a world triumph, of the glory of the Messianic age.

The ecclesiastical interpretation placed upon John 10:16 reduces its meaning, and it also reduces the life of the church. The whole world is to be brought into the one flock of the one Shepherd. The church is the instrument, not the goal. The church, however, is not the only instrument. If the prophecy of Ezekiel is to be fulfilled, the school, family, state, law school, and more must all become instruments of Christ's voice. The church, as the agency of the keys, must unlock the meaning of the Lord's word for every area of life and thought. Only in so doing can it make the many folds Christ's one flock.

26. Apostolic Succession

Our hope, in discussing apostolic succession, is to do so without animosity to any of the differing doctrines held on this subject, but rather with a concern for the truth. The term *apostolic succession* is usually used to describe a Roman Catholic doctrine, but, because the underlying concept is common to all churches, we shall consider it in relation to all. The Reformation, after all, regarded the practice of the early church, as we see it in the New Testament, as normative; the Reformation claimed to be restoring the apostolic faith and practice, so that it too claimed some kind of apostolic succession.

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[105] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949). p. 408.

There are essentially three versions of the doctrine. *First*, we have what is usually called the Roman Catholic version. Wilhelm, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, summarized the position thus:

> (1) That Apostolic succession is found in the Roman Catholic Church.
> (2) That none of the separate Churches have any valid claim to it.
> (3) That the Anglican Church, in particular, has broken away from Apostolic unity.[106]

Wilhelm, in this summary, omits a key aspect of this doctrine, namely, the role of the papacy as the transmitter of this succession. This is the reason for the exclusion of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and of the Anglican Church.

However, Wilhelm's approach is not very useful, because it cites the Roman Catholic position and in effect lumps all other doctrines together. There is, however, a clear difference between the positions of Lutherans and Anglicans, and between Anglicans and Reformed or Presbyterian churches. A more rewarding approach is to assume, with justice, that all churches claim some kind of succession from Christ and the apostles; it is their doctrines of the nature of that succession which differ. Again, what is called the Roman Catholic doctrine has had dissent within that church through the centuries.

We can best describe this first version of the doctrine as one that holds to *tactual succession*. This means that there has been an actual laying on of hands from the apostolic era to the present in an unbroken and continuous line. For this doctrine, what constitutes valid succession is the actual tactual succession, and, associated with this tactual succession, is a deposit of grace, the ability to bring about the transubstantiation of the communion elements, absolve sin, and more. Thus, a priest who leaves the church and becomes an atheist still has these powers. The powers go even to an evil man; during the medieval era, some men were ordained priests on one day, and popes or bishops the next, who had previously been pirates, reprobates, and the like. Dante put some popes in hell in his *Inferno*, but he did not deny their apostolic succession.

We can make a further point about tactual succession. We find this doctrine almost always in the same churches which believe in baptismal regeneration. Basic to baptismal regeneration, is the belief in the efficacy of *the tactual act*. Some Lutherans, Baptists, and Campbellites have a belief in baptismal regeneration, and I have known one Presbyterian pastor who also held it. All these men had in common a belief in a deposit of grace being conferred by their church's form of tactual succession and ordination.

A *second* doctrine of apostolic succession holds to spiritual succession. Wherever there is evidence of the apostolic faith, there is evidence of

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[106] J. Wilhelm, "Apostolic Succession," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. I. (New York, N.Y.: The Encyclopedia Press, (1907) 1913). p. 641.

apostolic succession. The validity of the succession depends upon being called of God and affirming the faith.

This doctrine is more popular in name than in fact. Tactual succession is easily criticized. It was a popular doctrine with the Pharisees, and it did contribute to the erosion of faith in Judea. We have a reference to it in John 8:33 (as well as other texts), when the Pharisees justified themselves by saying, "We be Abraham's seed," or, as John the Baptist encountered it, "We have Abraham to our father" (Matt. 3:9).

However, to affirm the sole sufficiency of spiritual succession is an anarchic principle. There are all too many examples of men who have insisted, on the basis of their own personal sense of calling, on their right to preach, marry, and give communion. There are all too many church disasters created by this principle, because every member feels an equal calling at times to assert authority. Some, but not all by any means, Anabaptists affirmed this purely spiritual succession. Best known among these were the Quakers, whose belief in the efficacy of the private call and succession led them into wild extravagances, private visions, and erratic behavior.

Calvin criticized the Roman Catholic view with no small intensity; he saw its relationship to the Jewish doctrine.[107] Calvin used Augustine and Cyprian to insist on the necessity for sound doctrine, and brotherly love. The early Anglican bishops held to a like emphasis. Bishop Jewel, in his answer to Harding, said, "Succession, you say, is the chief way for any Christian man to avoid antichrist. I grant you, if you mean the succession of doctrine!"[108]

Both Calvin and the English bishops stressed this succession in the apostolic faith, but they did not thereby affirm the purely spiritual succession. Calvin, for example, cited Ephesians 4:4-16 as basic to an understanding of ordination and true succession. Paul, in this text, says;

> 4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
> 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
> 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
> 7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
> 8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
> 9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?
> 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heaven, that he might fill all things.)

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[107] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Chapter II, Section III, Vol. II, p. 304.
[108] Philip E. Hughes: *Theology of the English Reformers*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). p. 179.

> 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
> 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
> 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:
> 14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
> 15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:
> 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love. (Eph. 4:4-16)

Paul makes clear that the church is not only a collection of individuals, which it is, but also one body, with one Lord, one faith, one baptism. It is not only the individual and his faith but the one body and its faith. Calvin said, of Paul's words:

> In this passage he shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in his government of the Church, is the principal bond which holds believers together in one body. He also indicates that the Church cannot be preserved in perfect safety, unless it be supported by these means which God has been pleased to appoint for its preservation. Christ, he says, "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." (Eph. 4:10) And this is the way in which he does it. By means of his ministers, to whom he has committed this office, and on whom he has bestowed grace to discharge it, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the Church, and even affords some manifestation of his own presence, by exerting the power of his Spirit in this his institution, that it may not be vain or ineffectual.[109]

Calvin spoke strongly about the spiritual succession: "No man can lawfully exercise this ministry without having been called by God."[110] He was equally adamant that "the election and appointment of bishops by men is necessary to constitute a legitimate call to office," and added that this "no sober person will deny, while there are so many testimonies of Scripture to establish it."

This was substantially the earlier Catholic position; it was the doctrine of the Anglican bishops, and of most communions, in some form or another. Differences exist with regard to the details and offices, but we can call this *third* form of apostolic succession one that stresses (a) a succession of doctrine, i.e., the apostolic faith preached faithfully, and a spiritual call to that faith; and (b) some form of tactual ordination and succession. Thus, in some form or another, Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists,

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[109] Calvin, *op. cit.*, Book IV, Chapter III, Section II, Vol. II, p. 318.
[110] *Ibid.*, Book IV, Chapter III, Section XIII, Vol. II, p. 328.

and others hold to apostolic succession. Their definition of what that means differs, and they have not normally used the term. It is of the essence of the Christian Church that it affirms continuity with the apostolic church, with the Bible. The question is the nature of that succession. The three basic forms are tactual, purely spiritual, and the combined emphasis on faith, calling, and the church's tactual verification.

To understand the unity of thought, let us look a little further into Calvin's thinking, which had the virtue of being systematic and usually consistent. Calvin spoke of the authority of the state as well as the church. Of civil authorities, he wrote: "Here let no man deceive himself. For as it is impossible to resist the magistrate without, at the same time, resisting God himself; though an unarmed magistrate may seem to be despised with impunity, yet God is armed to inflict exemplary vengeance on the contempt offered to himself."[111] Calvin clearly stressed very strongly the religious nature of authority in church, state, family, and everywhere. However, the resistance forbidden to private parties was for him a necessity on the part of civil authorities or magistrates. Resistance should be lawful, and in terms of authority:

> For though the correction of tyrannical domination is the vengeance of God, we are not, therefore, to conclude that it is committed to us, who have received no other command than to obey and suffer. This observation I always apply to private persons. For if there be, in the present day, any magistrates appointed for the protection of the people and the moderation of the power of kings, such as were, in ancient times, the Ephori, who were a check upon the kings among the Lacedaemonians, or popular tribunes upon the consuls among the Romans, or the Demarchi upon the senate among the Athenians; or with power such as perhaps is now possessed by the three estates in every kingdom when they are assembled; I am so far from prohibiting them, in the discharge of their duty, to oppose the violence or cruelty of kings, that I affirm, that if they connive at kings in their oppression of their people, such forbearance involves the most nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by the ordination of God.[112]

For Calvin, thus, resistance to evil was a necessity and a duty, but only in terms of duly constituted authorities.

Calvin stressed the necessity within the church of recognizing God's degrees or hierarchies of order and authority. The necessary functioning of the church requires, he held, such regulation, and it is not "an invention of men, but an institution of God himself."[113]

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111. *Ibid.*, Book IV, Chapter III, Section XIV, Vol. II, p. 328.
112. *Ibid.*, Book IV, Chapter XX, Section XXXI, Vol. II, p. 804.
113. *Ibid.*, Book IV, Chapter III, Section VII, Vol. II. p. 323.

What we have today is anarchy, not order. Churchmen, whether Catholic, Episcopalian, Baptist, Presbyterian, or any other affiliation, give a verbal affirmation of their church's position, while exalting their private claim to dissent to anarchic dimensions. Moreover, the premise of dissent is not, "thus saith the Lord," but, rather, "I don't agree with that." In a sense, therefore, any discussion of apostolic succession is perhaps academic. It is obvious by now that the term apostolic succession is here used to mean the claim to Biblical warrant, authority, and succession in some sense. Such a claim is not irrelevant and is basic to the faith.

In fact, Paul in Ephesians 4:4-16 does *not* assert that the church may be called one body; he rather declares that it is so. He does not summon us to come together in unity; rather, he declares that the church is one body, the body of Christ, and we are either of Him, or we are not. The church is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." We can only be baptized into Christ. We are not baptized in the name of the Catholic or Baptist churches, but into the name of the triune God. Within the church, there is a diversity of men and gifts, but, as Hodge pointed out,

> This diversity of gifts is not only consistent with unity, but is essential to it. The body is not one member but many. In every organism a diversity of parts is necessary to the unity of the whole. If all were one member, asks the apostle, where were the body?...The position, moreover, of each member in the body, is not determined by itself, but by God. The eye does not make itself the eye, nor the ear, the ear. It is thus in the church.[114]

The rule of Christ's gifts of grace and of place and function is not our merit but the Lord's own good pleasure. The ascended Lord as a conqueror distributes gifts to His followers to enable them to triumph. The purpose of Christ's exaltation and gifts is that He might fill all the universe with His presence, power, and rule. The gifts have a function, to bless us in our fulfillment of His purpose, to bring us to perfection. "The standard of perfection for the church is complete conformity to Christ."[115]

Basic to the unity of the church is the kingship of Christ. The theme of Judges is a clear statement of our current problem also: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Men today profess allegiance to a variety of churches, but their essential allegiance is too often to themselves. The consequence of this is the impotence of the church. If the triune God is our true source of power, as indeed only He can be, it is futile to seek power on any other terms. Apostolic succession means submission and a life in behalf of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). It means faithfulness to

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[114] Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint). p. 211.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

the triune God, and to all God-given authorities within that succession of faith. It is a recognition that the Bible has more authority than we have, and that it alone confers authority. A faith with such a past and present alone has a future.

27. Unity

To interpret Scripture is a very serious responsibility; to misinterpret it carelessly or through wilfulness is to incur God's judgment, because we then ascribe a false word to the triune God.

This caution is especially applicable to the interpretation of John 17, so that it is with more than a little fearfulness that I come to what has been called our Lord's High Priestly prayer. It sets forth some very important facts concerning the church. Before the prayer, our Lord states that His disciples will soon scatter, as men come to arrest their Lord. In the face of this fact, He summons them to peace, and the assurance of victory:

> 32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.
> 33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world. (John 16:32-33)

Westcott called Christ's prayer "a prayer and a profession and a revelation." Christ looks to the perfection of His work, and, beyond that, to the consecration of humanity to God through Christ.[116] Our concern here is with the implications of this prayer for the church.

First, Christ declares that He has been given power or authority over all flesh (John 17:2). This means lordship or sovereignty. Our Lord repeatedly declares His lordship and sovereignty (John 5:27; Matt. 11:27; 28:18; etc,). This authority and power are cosmic, and He enters into it with His ascension (Eph. 4:10). This glory God the Son had from all eternity; now, in His incarnation, He assumes it again in all its fullness with His triumph over sin and death (John 17:4-5).

Second, the purpose of Christ's incarnation, atonement, and sovereignty is simply this, "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2). It is very important at this point to correct a common misinterpretation of these words: eternal life is too often understood to mean heaven. Our Lord states otherwise: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life thus means knowing God, God the Father, and God the Son (through God the Spirit). In John 7:17, our Lord says, "If any man will do his

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[116] B. F. Westcott: *The Gospel According to St. John.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1881) 1954). p. 237.

(God's) will, he shall know of the doctrine (*didache*, teaching)." To have eternal life is to know God; to know God is to believe in Him, and to obey His every word. Life is not by bread alone, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

Thus, to speak of the church as a group of people determined to go to heaven is to falsify Scripture and the meaning of the church. The true church is a people who know God, i.e., who believe and obey His every word. The true church is a faithful church, an obedient church.

To know God is life. To know God is to be regenerated through Jesus Christ; it is more than knowledge about God; it is life in Christ, a life of faithfulness to the Father through the Son and the Spirit. It means being a new creation in Christ, and being a part of the new creation in process of appearing around us and through us.

Third, Christ declares that He has manifested the *Name* of God (John 17:6). "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26). At the heart of our Lord's prayer for His disciples is again a reference to the Name:

> 11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.
> 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:11-12)

The *Name* of God means the person, nature, definition, power, authority, and dominion of God. In John 17:11-12, Jesus speaks of His disciples being kept in the Name of God, in 17:26, of the church as a whole; He looks to the future, saying, "I have declared (or, made known) thy name, and will declare it (or, will make known)."

To be in the Name of God is to be in His jurisdiction, power, protection, and authority. We have thus no small promise concerning the church. To be kept in the Name of God means also to be kept in faithfulness to the triune God and His every word (Matt. 4:4). Christ makes known the Name of God to us "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26). True love means faithfulness; to be in the Name means to know God, to love Him, and to be faithful to Him.

Christ came in the Father's Name, to make known the Father. We are sent forth by Christ in the Name of the Trinity to make God known unto all nations (Matt. 28:18-20).

The name of God is "I AM THAT I AM," or He Who Is, Jehovah or Yahweh (Ex. 3:13-14); He is Life, the only creator of and lord over all things. Apart from Him there is neither life, nor love, nor truth. Jesus Christ is the full

revelation of God. He manifest the Name of God. It can thus be said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Fourth, our Lord declares of the church and His members, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth...And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through thy truth" (John 17:17,19). Our Lord says of the Father that He is "the only true God." Our consecration to God requires our total dedication to His word, which is truth. Jesus affirms plainly, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). God is truth and life; there is no reality, life or meaning which is not His creation. To seek anything outside of God is to seek death and to adopt illusion as life. The world and its potentialities are what God makes them to be. The life of the believer and of the church must thus be ruled and over-ruled by the reality of God and His word.

We are called to sanctify ourselves, to be set apart for God, in His word, the truth. As Plummer noted, "The Truth is the whole Christian revelation, the new environment in which believers are placed, and which helps to work their sanctification; just as a sickly wild plant is strengthened and changed by transplanting it to a garden." Moreover, our Lord sanctifies or sets Himself apart for our sakes: "As a Priest consecrated by the Father (x. 36), He consecrates Himself as a sacrifice (Eph. v. 2), and thereby obtains a real internal consecration for them through the Paraclete (xvi. 7)."[117]

Fifth, Christ prays that the church be one even as The Trinity is One: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11). Later in the prayer, our Lord returns to this emphasis:

> 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
> 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
> 22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one;
> 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and has loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Here our Lord says something about the church which it is necessary for us to understand clearly. Plummer commented, on v. 21,

> The unity of the believers is like the unity of the Father with the Son (x. 30), not a merely moral unity of disposition and purpose, but a vital unity, in which the members share the life of the one and the same

[117] Raymond E. Brown, S.S.: *The Gospel According to John I-XII.* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966). p. 313.

> organism. A mere agreement in opinion and aim would not convince the world.[118]

Bannerman was even more specific:

> "That they may be one, even as We are." Who can tell all that these words foreshadow as to the final estate of the Church of the redeemed? Christ's disciples shall be one with each other, even as the Three who are most high in the unity of the blessed Godhead. They shall be one in heart and will, in righteousness, holiness, and love, in the unity of one new nature in Christ, and yet with no loss of personal character, even as there are high and mysterious differences between the Three who are One upon the throne in heaven, "the same in substance, equal in power and glory."[119]

The unity of the church must be like the unity of the Trinity, and its unity must be in the Trinity, "one in us" (John 17:21). In order to understand the unity of the church, we must know the unity of the Trinity. It is of the essence of the Christian faith that there is a perfect unity in the Godhead, that the three Persons are one God, the same in essence and being, with no lesser quality in any of the three. *Ontologically*, the three Persons are equally ultimate, equally God, and the same in nature, essence, and being. *Economically*, in their functioning, the three Persons have a varying character, in that the Son comes from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. There is no ontological subordination; there can be an economical one.

This tells us what the unity of the church must be: all the members are one renewed humanity in Christ, who is their head. There are no differences between them ontologically; they are alike creatures, Christ's new creation. Economically, there are differences between Christians in office, function, and calling.

This means that we cannot, *first* of all, be a church without this unity of life. We are one with one another because we have been made one in Christ. *Second*, we are one in being, a recreated humanity, having a common Head and a common nature. There is thus an equality between Christians. *Third*, this common status and equality cannot be used to nullify our varying functions, our callings, and stations. There is no ontological subordination in the Trinity; there is an economical one. The same is true of the church. The reality of our oneness does not negate the differences in our callings (Eph. 4:4-16).

We are one in the Lord, in the triune God, "one in us" (John 17:21). Our oneness in God is not by virtue of nature but by virtue of His sanctifying and redeeming grace. This unity is thus essentially the creation of the triune God.

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[118] *Ibid.*, p. 314.

[119] D. Douglas Bannerman: *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church.* (1887). p. 218.

Sixth the purpose of this unity is "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:21). This unity is a way of life, of brotherly love, of grace, of mutual forbearance, patience, and help. It is to manifest God's grace and salvation, and to witness to God's love. Without this unity in love and grace, the church is dead. We must daily give a natural witness to a supernatural grace and power. Before the church can even be a valid institution it must be a supernatural Presence, and a witness to the glory of that Presence through the manifestation of the Lord's grace, truth, and love.

28. The Church of the Resurrection

The church rests on a miracle; it was born out of a miracle, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can thus say, very simply: no resurrection, no church. The miracle on which the church stands is the destruction of the power of sin and death over us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As St. Paul states it, "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. 15:17).

The true church rests on a miracle, and the power of that miracle, and therefore the church and its members live a miraculous and providential life in Christ. The church thus cannot see itself as simply an institution: it is the power and presence of God the Son in history, and it is informed and guided by God the Spirit. The formal gathering and organization of the church followed the resurrection and the ascension. The miracle of Christ's resurrection means the miracle of our regeneration, and we by God's grace and power have been raised "up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). The exaltation of Christ by means of His resurrection and ascension is the exaltation of humanity in Him. Paul says:

> 1. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
> 2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
> 3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
> 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;)
> 6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;
> 7. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
> 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. 2:1-9)

From one perspective, we can say that these verses say nothing about the church; from another, we must say that they say everything about the church. We are told that we have been delivered from one *exousia*, dominion, to another, from the prince of the realm of disobedience to Christ; we have been removed from "the prince of the power of the air," from this world and the naturalistic power and dominion of this fallen realm, to the supernatural domain, to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We must not overlook the significance of to "sit together." Normally, in the presence of a king, a man prostrated himself at the King's feet, or, if he stood, it was by the grace of the king. By grace we are made to "sit together," i.e., to be enthroned and to reign with Him. Our calling and the church's calling is to power and dominion in Christ; we are rescued from the power and dominion of Satan over "the children of disobedience." The Messiah's resurrection is our resurrection; His ascension and enthronement are our ascension and enthronement. Because Jesus Christ is the head or Adam of a new humanity, the church and the members of that new humanity are born of the resurrection and are born to proclaim salvation by resurrection and regeneration into dominion.

The fallacy of most studies of Ephesians 2:1-9 is that these verses are seen as applying only to the individual. The Roman Empire, like modern culture, was atomistic. Paul speaks against this atomistic individualism. He contrasts the old and the new humanities, the fallen mankind governed by the spirit of rebellion, by Satan's dominion of sin, as against the new humanity regenerated and recreated by Jesus Christ, the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-50). Paul's words here are the prelude to his exposition of the union of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:21-33); it is set in the context of a covenantal view of man and life. What we too often forget is that Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism are defective, not only because of their false doctrine of sin, but also because of their lack of a true covenant; man is seen atomistically and individually, and man is thus capable to some degree of an independent approach to God. By closing the door to any such thinking as tenable, Paul stresses the corporateness of man, either in Adam or in Christ, and hence the necessity of the church. As a result, contrary to the modern emphasis, Paul is not so much stressing our salvation as rather what he cites in Ephesians 1:19, "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." We are saved by God's grace and the "the working of his mighty power," and we are summoned to rejoice in that mighty power, not simply our new estate. The church of the resurrection will thus do more than rejoice in its salvation; it will know and move to victory in terms of God's mighty power, His miraculous working in us, in the church, and in history. We are delivered from "the course of this world," or the evil power of this world which once worked in us, into the mighty power of the triune God. We move from a reprobate to a redeemed estate, but this is not

all, for to limit our salvation to this is to deform it. We move from the evil and naturalistic course of this fallen world, from the spirit of the evil one, into the supernatural working, power, and Spirit of the triune God. We move from death to life, and from defeat to victory, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

To "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" *is enthronement.* In Christ man is restored to his covenant calling to be God's priest, prophet, and king over the earth. This renewed status and calling is for all eternity; Paul speaks of it as "the ages to come" to emphasize to us, with our temporal consciousness, its continuous and unending character. All this is God's work, not man's effort or work, for we have been or are saved by grace; we are passive in salvation, and God is active.

Thus, it is not the Messiah who is alone raised from the dead, but all of us whom He chooses. Paul, in Ephesians 1:19-23, speaks of the resurrection of Christ, His exaltation, and His headship over the church (Eph. 1:22-23). The resurrected Lord then resurrects us, He makes alive or quickens us who were dead in sins and trespasses. Thus, Ephesians 2:1ff. speaks of the power of the resurrection creating a church and making a dead people alive. Only by ignoring Ephesians 1:19-23 can we then read the following verses individualistically. The early church rightly stressed the doctrine of the Two Ways, of which Scripture has much to say (e.g., Ps. 1; 34:12-22; Matt. 7:13-14; etc.). There is a way of death, and a way of life, a way of defeat, and a way of victory. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (Eph. 2:4), hath created us "in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). This is not all: God, while we were yet sinners and dead in sin, "quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5). Our regeneration is grounded in and an aspect of Christ's resurrection. The birth of the church and our regeneration in Christ are alike aspects of the miracle of the resurrection.

Thus, a church member or a church with a defeatist outlook is thinking in Pelagian and humanistic terms. Such a person or church assumes that only a naturalistic and educational power rests within its hands. It limits the power of Christ's church to the power of man and the power of numbers.

But the church and the Christian are miracle-born and Spirit and power endowed. To think naturalistically is to deny the Lord and our faith. "For we are his workmanship" (Eph. 2:10), or, as Markus Barth renders it, "God himself has made us what we are. In the Messiah Jesus we are created."[120] God sets forth in His word those good works which he "before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10), or, as Barth gives it, "these good works which God hath provided as our way of life."[121]

[120.] Markus Barth: *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation and Commentary on Chapters 1-3.* The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974). p. 226.

Good works are thus our way of life. *Good* in the Greek is *agathois*, that which is good in character and in constitution, beneficial in nature, and, because it manifests godliness, overcomes evil (Rom. 12:21). Because God is *good* (Matt. 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19), and because God alone is truly and absolutely good, all *good* works manifest the nature and the power of God. To believe in the impotence of *the good* is to believe in Satan and in Satan's program (Gen. 3:1-5) as alone powerful and effectual. To deny the power and the victory of the good (I John 5:4) is to affirm the victory of Satan. However, to be given power to do good by Christ's regenerating work is to be given the power to be victorious. The Church of the Resurrection is a victorious church.

29. The Church as Witness

It should be apparent by now that our concern is less with the church as an institution and more with the church as the witness to and the evidence of the life and the work of the triune God in history. The church must also be an institution, but, when it is merely an institution, or even primarily an institution, it ceases to be the body of Christ.

A volume can be written about the church as witness. What follows is a summary statement of a few aspects of that witness. *First*, the church is commissioned and sent out into the world to proclaim the risen and redeeming Christ. By the word of God, it is to declare men's sins to be remitted when God's requirements are met, and retained where there is neither repentance nor restitution:

> 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.
> 23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:21-23)

The sending forth of the disciples, and of the church, is analogous to the Father's sending of the Son: "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The Son represented the Father, and we must represent the Son. The Book of Acts is in a sense an unfinished book; the canonical book begins in Jerusalem and ends in the world capitol, Rome, to signify the world-wide scope of the gospel. It gives us the acts of Jesus Christ *through* His apostles. Their witness was this: Jesus Christ, whom you crucified, is not dead but alive, and in His Name and power we preach and heal (Acts 3:6). The living church manifests the living Christ. A dead church is a powerless church and can bury the dead, but it cannot witness to the power of God unto salvation.

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[121] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

Second, our Lord declares, "All power (or, all authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Total authority over every domain and realm belongs to Christ our King. We are summoned to declare the crown rights of Christ the King over civil government, education, the arts and sciences, and all men. Modern Protestants and Catholics too seldom appreciate or recognize the victories won here by the early church, the medieval church, and the reformed churches. This is disastrous, because victories forgotten are victories lost. The church for centuries has called itself catholic, a term stressed by Calvin and others, because it is called to set forth the catholic or universal dominion and jurisdiction of Christ the King. Christ is Lord and Savior of every domain, and neither men nor realms have any hope apart from Him. Today, tardily, many are recognizing that education apart from Christ is reprobate and evil. Hence, we are commanded to go and teach all nations, to bring men and nations under the dominion of Christ. The word *nations* is the plural of *ethos*, a multitude or a nation. Here, it reads literally (Matt. 28:19) *the nations*, so that it refers to all the entities or civil orders of all peoples. In particular, the usage here means all the Gentile nations; they were not to limit their commission to Israel.

Third, this witness requires teaching: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). The church thus is a teaching ministry in all that teaching implies. The word of God is to be taught, and it is to be applied to the totality of life.

Fourth, it is in the Spirit a witness of power, the power and presence of God. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). Kenotic theology, with its emphasis on a powerless Christ, deforms the faith and leads to the destruction of the church's witness.

Fifth, the witness of the church is a verbal one indeed, of preaching, writing, and teaching, but it is also a witness to and of the life of Christ, of supernatural grace and love. Our Lord said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish (or, accomplish) his work" (John 4:34). "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11). Again, "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). As a result, the early church from the beginning, had a ministry, not only to the unregenerate, but to the needy, to widows and orphans, and to strangers, in terms of Old Testament law. Because of the extensive work involved in the ministry to material needs, the office of deacon was created very early (Acts 6:1-4). The faith is to be manifested in life. Hence the summons to love one another (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27; Romans 13:8; I John 4:7; etc.). This love requires a practical and material expression, and, without it, the church is dead. As Bannerman stated it, "As he was, so ought we to be in this world."[122]

[122] D. Douglas Bannerman: *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church.* (1887) p. 248.

The Bible stresses the role of *the witness* in a double sense. We have a duty under God to be witnesses in court cases, in order that God's justice may be accomplished. A false witness is a criminal offense and a sin. Likewise, we are required to witness to God's dominion and salvation in the totality of our lives, by word and by action. This witness is more than the cheap verbalizing of some people, who substitute words for life. It is the witness of God's grace and power through us, not simply of our words.

The church and its members are called to be witnesses to the supernatural Lord, God incarnate, and to His redemption, power, victory and life. We too often today speak of the church's membership as a "congregation." The older term common to the medieval English Church, to Aelfric, Wyclif, and others, was *convocation*. The church is a convocation, a group called together by God, not simply a congregation, a group which comes together or gathers together. A congregation has an internal motive force, i.e., is self-generating and self-determined. A holy convocation is a group called together by an external power and authority, by Christ the Lord.

Thus, *sixth*, the church witnesses to the fact that it is a convocation, a holy convocation, called into being by the triune God through Christ, given a power not its own, and commissioned to bring all things into captivity to Christ (II Cor. 10:5). Too many churches today are congregations, not convocations. It should not surprise us that churches which took the name "Congregational," were, despite their great beginnings, the first in the United States to disintegrate into Unitarianism, Universalism, and modernism. What began with them as a form of ecclesiastical polity in time governed their theology. A very prominent Congregationalist leader some years ago, in a radio interview with me, spoke with approval of the common fact of weathervanes on Congregational Churches. This he saw as a sign of a receptivity to the currents of history and the needs of man. The church, however, is called to resist the currents of history, because they are the outworkings of sin, and to give to history a new direction through Christ. Only a church which is a convocation can give such a witness, because it is a witness to the power of God unto salvation.

30. The Church as Property and Function

As our study of the doctrine of the church now ends, it is apparent that many stresses made by various churches are overlooked. This is not because those emphases are irrelevant, but because factors which have led to too heavily an institutional emphasis are here set aside to place the priority more strongly on *the church as the Lord's property and possession*. All churches call themselves Christian; all, however, tend to some degree to stress the priority of the institution *and* to forget that the Lord calls it "My Church" (Matt. 16:18). Scripture is clear on this matter:

> For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. (I Cor. 3:9)

> 19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:
> 20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;
> 21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
> 22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. 2:19-22)

> 16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
> 17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. (II Cor. 6:16-17)

In these and other verses, what is clear is that we are God's property, and the church is also. When we are told by St. Paul that we are "the temple of the living God," we think of the privilege, but we forget the responsibility and ownership.

Our own property rights are severely restricted at best. We are subject to numerous regulations, controls, taxes, and the like. In fact, the enjoyment of our property is greatly curtailed by these interventions. No such restraint exists on God's possession of us and the church. Paul the apostle, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews knew the Old Testament and made this point clearly, and it is the heart of the doctrine of predestination:

> 20. Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
> 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (Romans 9:20-21)

We are God's property, and He has total property rights over His entire creation, and we have no claims against Him. The church as the Lord's property has no valid existence apart from Him. Position in the church is not an indication of a degree of power but rather a degree of service.

In Acts 5:1-11 we have the episode of Ananias and Sapphira. Its background is Acts 4:32-35, the so-called communism of the early church, one of the more misused texts of Scripture. Our Lord in Matthew 24 spoke of the coming fall of Jerusalem, which occurred in 66-70 A.D. He prepared the church for it, and no Christian lost his life in it. The early church lived in what it knew to be a doomed city. Men stayed on to evangelize their relatives, and they sold their properties to be in a liquid position, ready to leave almost at once. In this situation of liquidating properties, many shared their receipts with other believers who were in need, and new converts, but there was neither compulsion nor communism in the situation. Peter's statement to

Ananias makes this clear: Ananias, having sold his possession ("a possession," not his sole possession), gave to the apostles a portion, claiming to have given all. Peter makes emphatic the fact that Ananias was free to keep back what he did; his sin was in claiming to have given it all. He had lied "to the Holy Ghost." Peter says, "thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

We have then a judgment, a miraculous judgment. Ananias is struck dead on the spot, and, a little later, his wife Sapphira also for the same lie. This incident is not usually seen in relation to the doctrine of the church, but it is basic all the same.

In Numbers 4:15, we are told plainly that no man could touch the things in the Holy of holies, nor the ark, on penalty of death. Only God's appointed men could move them in His appointed way. Any form of transgression resulted in death from God, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron (Lev. 10:1-2). Later, in David's day, the same supernatural judgment of death struck down Uzzah (I Chron. 13:9-10). These judgments are the background to the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira.

A pale analogy might be of help at this point. Our guest room often houses friends whom we are happy to see. If an uninvited stranger were to break in and claim the room, we would treat him as a criminal and move against him at once. The church is God's property, and we are also. Any illegal activity contrary to God's law invokes God's wrath.

There is another parallel. The episode of Acts 5:1-11 reminds us of Joshua 7:1ff., the Achan crime. The word used in Acts 5:2,3 and translated as "kept back" is in the Greek *nosphizo*, to steal, or to set apart for oneself. This word is also used in Joshua 7:1, and we deal in both instances with *sacrilege*. Sacrilege means robbing God, lying to God, and attempting to appropriate what belongs to God for our own use. A common form of sacrilege over the centuries has been the Black Mass, breaking into the church to perform there Satanic rituals in order to profane the church. The Black Mass is an obvious form of sacrilege. However, we must see that the use of the church to further "liberation theology," humanism, or any like doctrines is even worse. Too often men are cowardly in facing the attacks of humanistic statism, and they use some excuse from pretended theology to justify themselves in their cowardice; this too is sacrilege.

What the Lord demonstrates in the cases of Achan, Uzza, Ananias and Sapphira is His judgment on sacrilege. The fact that people are not being struck down around us does *not* mean that judgment on sacrilege is now inoperative; in fact, slower judgment is commonly far more fearful. What is operative on sacrilege in every age are the judgments of Deuteronomy 28:15-68. We can never violate God's property rights over us, over all creation, and especially over His church, without judgment.

Not only was sacrilege involved in the sin of Ananias and Sapphira but a lie to the Holy Ghost, or blasphemy. In Exodus 17:2, Moses rebukes Israel, saying, "wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?" In Acts 5:9, Peter asks Sapphira, "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord." As Macgregor pointed out, Christ is here called "Lord" and seen as God. The great sin is against the Holy Ghost (Matt. 12:31-32). We are told that it is without forgiveness.[123]

Men think twice before they lie to the tax-collector, because they are fearful of the consequences. Because they do not fear God, they lie casually to Christ's Church; they join, promising their lives and money, while thinking of their social advantages. They pray earnestly when in need, but they are none too ready to meet the requirements and needs of Christ's Church. Men approach God and the church to use their faith as an asset to give an added dimension to their lives, but they do not see themselves and the church as the Lord's property, to be used at His discretion. Paul tells us,

> 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. (I Cor. 6:19-20)

Modern man, like William Ernest Henley in his poem, "Invictus," sees himself as lord;

> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul.

Such men will use the church to serve themselves, if they have anything to do with the church. We are told by these men that the church must minister to human needs, or that it must serve the community, forgetting that both they and the church must above all else serve the Lord. If we do not see ourselves as God's property, we surely will not see the church as His property.

The church is not only God's property, but it is also an aspect of His work and functioning in history. We tend to speak of church *offices*, and we ascribe dignities and honors to these offices, in plain violation of our Lord's words (Matt. 20:25-28). What we call church offices are rather callings to a function in the workings of Christ's church. The emphasis in *office-holding* is on *status*, whereas the emphasis in Scripture on *callings* in the church is on *service and action in Christ.* The difference is a very great one. The church as an institution stresses office and status; the church as the Lord's property stresses faithfulness, service, and praise. Paul in I Corinthians 12:27-31 speaks of what men now call offices as *gifts*, a very different concept. As Paul says earlier in the same letter, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it,

[123] G.H.C. Macgregor, "Acts," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. IX. (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1954). p. 78.

why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7). Every Christian, the church, and all its callings and gifts stand by grace and grace alone.

XIII

ESCHATOLOGY

1. The Meaning of Eschatology

A brief dictionary definition of *eschatology* is, "The branch (of theology) that treats of death, resurrection, immortality, the end of the world, final judgment, and the future state" (Funk & Wagnalls). This is the usual popular understanding also. For premillennials, eschatology has to do with the aspects of last things cited above, with the emphasis on the rapture and the millennium. Amillennialists would differ in that they see no millennium and only a deepening growth of evil until judgment. Postmillennialists would stress a growth into a glorious millennial era.

The word *eschatology* comes from the Greek *eschatos*, meaning extreme, last, or least; *eschaton* is the nominative form of the word.

Because man is a religious creature, his being is purposive, goal-directed, and meaning oriented. The meaning and the solution to a mathematical problem lie in the answer, the conclusion. We do not want problems without answers, nor stories with no ending. As a result, we tend to place great emphasis on *the end*, the last things. This is a very healthy demand, to a degree, but it can, beyond a point, warp our perspective. Martin Selbrede has called attention, after B. B. Warfield, to the way we read the parables in terms of the final end too often, rather than present realities, and we thereby miss the meaning of much of Scripture. We cannot read the Bible too heavily in terms of the end of all things, for to do so is to depreciate or negate the meaning of history. At times, in terms of a purely end-time evaluation, some have negated the meaning of marriage and sexuality, because neither has any place in the world to come (Matt. 22:30); such a conclusion is contrary to the plain meaning of Scripture. The reality of time is not negated by eternity, and *the present* is important because it is the matrix and the foundation of *the last.*

Moreover, the word *eschatos*, according to Link, in the Greek designated "the end-point of a continuously conceived succession of circumstances."[1] Link does not speak of the end-time but the end-point, a very important distinction. The end-point can come with the death of a man, or the judgment of a family, an institution, or a people. In this sense, history is continuously witnessing to end-points or *eschatons.*

This is the original Greek meaning; is it the meaning in the New Testament? Both Testaments speak of "the day of the Lord," and the day of the Lord, His judgment, has been a continuous and constant factor in history;

[1] Hans-Georg Link, "Eschatos," in Colin Brown, editor: *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. II. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976). p. 55.

it will culminate in the final and great day of the Lord, the final judgment. In the Bible, the *eschaton* is both an end-point which is repeatedly and constantly an historical fact, and also the end-time. We cannot limit to the one meaning only the Biblical *eschaton.*

There is another factor in Biblical eschatology. The prophetic announcements of the *eschaton* are usually a preface to the declaration of God's salvation, so that to limit the *eschaton* to the last is to limit salvation to the end-time also, as some cults have done. Link noted, "Eschatological time will be stamped by Yahweh's saving activity."[2]

Thus, the coming of John the Baptist was an *eschaton* in this sense. John proclaimed both a culminating judgment and salvation, declaring,

> 10. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
> 11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;
> 12. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matt. 3:10-12)

This is an announcement of an *eschaton*; so too is Paul's declaration in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Both John's and Paul's stress an eschaton in time, and both stress the judgment-end and the salvation-end.

It should now be apparent that we cannot have a sound eschatology if we limit the *eschatos* to the end-time aspects only. *Very emphatically*, "death, resurrection, immortality, the end of the world, final judgment, and the future state" are important matters, and eschatological concerns but if we limit eschatology to these things we warp Scripture.

To understand eschatology in the fullest sense of the term, let us begin therefore with the Bible's first eschatological statements. We cannot be exhaustive, because page after page the eschatology of Scripture is set before us, but it is helpful to begin at the beginning and then to consider a sampling of relevant texts later:

> 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

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

> the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Gen. 1:26-28)
>
> 15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.
> 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. 2:15-17)

These are eschatological words: they set forth God's purpose and goal for man, as well as the end for disobedience. *First*, because man is created in God's image, man has a different *end* than the rest of creation. Man's *eschaton* is dominion under God over all the earth, and over all the creatures thereof. It is precisely because man is created in God's image that such an end is possible for him.

Second, we see a fact generally neglected, namely, that God's first eschatological word for man includes marriage, sex, and procreation: "Be fruitful, and multiply." While there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage in eternity, there is obviously much in eschatology which concerns itself with them. Add to this God's statement, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18), and we must recognize man's unity in marriage in God's calling is an essential part of eschatology. William Buckley has a facetious love of words, and for a time liked to use the phrase, "immanentize the eschaton." We can apply the term to God's purpose, to immanentize the eschaton, to work in terms of a calling and to find fellowship therein, to procreate towards creating the citizen-workers of God's Kingdom, and to unite with others in the Lord to exercise godly dominion. Not only is marriage basic to God's temporal eschatology, but it provides, in the typology of the Bride of Christ, a type of the historical and eternal eschatology.

Third, God pronounces a blessing upon realized eschatology, upon faithfulness to God's calling and end-point. We do not labor for the Lord in a vacuum but under God and in His total universe of law and government. No more than we can step outside of this world at will can we step out of the realm of God's blessings and curses (Deut. 28:1,15). We live in an eschatological universe, God's creation, and there is no escaping that fact.

Fourth, a fact we have already cited, God's curses are a part of eschatology. Death is pronounced by God as the sentence for sin. The contrast between the realms of blessing and cursing is very pronounced. As sinners, we tend to see the whole world as full of "thou shalt nots," because for us the world of reality is the world of sin, of rebellion, anger, and questioning. Hence, the forbidden looms very large for us, and the permitted and blessed is small and uninteresting. The contrast is between "every tree of the garden" that may be freely eaten and the one tree which man must not touch. As God

presents the two ways in Eden, the choice given to man for blessedness is clearly the *broad* and easy way. Our Lord, however, tells a fallen world, that the way to the Lord, i.e., the Lord's way of faithfulness, of obedience, is "the strait gate" (Matt. 7:13-14). The word translated as *strait* is in the Greek *stenos*, from a root meaning to groan. We have the word in English as *stenographer*, literally, narrow writing, with a narrow time limit, and hence, figuratively, with groaning. What for Adam was a broad way has become in a fallen world a groaning way, and God drags us sometimes kicking and screaming into the way of righteousness. The fact that we depreciate both blessings and curses is an eschatological fact.

Fifth, we are told, "the LORD God commanded the man." Because God is the Lord and creator, He commands men. God's law is thus another eschatological fact. It sets the terms for our eschatological functioning. We cannot separate God's law from eschatology without doing violence to Scripture. All the prophetic declarations concerning the Day of the Lord are in terms of God's law. We cannot limit the scope of eschatology without limiting God.

2. The Eschaton and Man

As we have seen, eschatology cannot be reduced to only the end-times; it means also the end-point of a course of events. Thus, the Flood was an eschatological event. God judged the antediluvial world and destroyed it. According to Genesis 6:11-13,

> 11. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.
> 12. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.
> 13. And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

It is noteworthy, *first*, that God announces an *end*, a judgment and a salvation. The earth in its corruption will be judged and destroyed. *Second*, God takes a man, Noah, into His counsel. We can say that it was in a sense necessary to do so, since Noah was to be saved, and Noah had to prepare for that deliverance. However, in Genesis 18:17, as God prepares to destroy Sodom, He declares, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" The reason God gives for revealing His plan to Abraham is that, Abraham, as the covenant man, is to be the father of a great nation, the Kingdom of God (Gen. 18:18-19), and thus God includes Abraham in His counsel. He shares with Abraham His purpose and the reasons for it.

This makes clear a very central aspect of eschatology. Man's major concern with eschatology has been a sick curiosity: what will happen, how

will it affect me, and how can I escape from tribulation? God speaks of the things to come to Abraham to prepare him for a world-governing responsibility.

> 17. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;
> 18. Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?
> 19. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. (Gen. 18:17-19)

Thus, God declares that eschatological knowledge is knowledge necessary for godly action, because it declares God's purpose, and it establishes our role therein. Abraham had to know God's judgment and justice, teach it to his descendants, and make them aware of God's calling and commandments. The precondition of eschatological blessings and deliverance is keeping "the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." In God's predestined purpose, man has a part in bringing about the *eschaton*.

Eschatology gives us *the framework of history*. In Genesis 3:15, we are told, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise (or, crush) thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." At the very least, this text tells us that God and Satan, or good and evil, are in a battle or war unto death. The human race is now exposed to this struggle. Mankind shall be injured in that battle, but the enemy shall be crushed and destroyed. History is given an eschatological framework; we are on the battlefield of a war to death, but the victory is the Lord's, and ours in Him.

Let us now recapitulate a portion of what we have discussed. *First*, eschatology gives us the framework of history. It tells us the nature and direction of events, describes God's judgment and victory in history, and gives us the meaning of our lives in the context of God's plan. This latter is of great importance. Noah's place in God's eschatology was a very real one. God determined the course of events, but Noah was an important part thereof. *Second*, as we have already seen from the foregoing, Noah had an importance in God's plan, in God's *eschaton*. All too often, eschatology is seen in non-Biblical terms, as an act of God in which man plays no part. But all through history, God points us to His *eschaton*. According to Isaiah 30:20-21, even when we go astray, and turn our backs on His prophetic servants, we are still pointed towards His *eschaton* by the word of warning:

> 20. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

> 21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Scripture is clear that we cannot know God's timing, either of His judgment on the world of our day, nor on the world at the time of the Last Judgment. "That day and hour" (Matt. 24:36) are unknown to us, but their *coming* is not unknown. The reality of judgment and justices, and curses and blessings, is inescapable knowledge. Men may for a time suppress that knowledge in sin (Rom. 1:18), but it will soon come, with "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:26).

Two serious errors are common with respect to our Lord's comments on "that day and hour" being unknown to us. *First*, all too many churchmen are determined to know the year and day of the Lord. Church history attests to the many derelictions of churchmen in this respect. Such men are determined to walk by sight and to avoid tribulation. *Second*, many others stress the radical unknowability of the end-time (which is the concern of all such people). Our Lord and all of Scripture give us many prophecies concerning the end-point and the end-time. We cannot disregard these by any means. History does have a framework, an end-time, and many end-points in between, and this is what we call eschatology. There could be no eschatology if the Bible did not speak of end-points and an end-time.

Let us return now to Genesis 18:17, "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" God reveals to man His *eschaton* in order for man to work together with God towards bringing in the *eschaton.* In Abraham's case, we see certain aspects of this. *First*, the *eschaton* is totally determined by God. He does not ask Abraham's counsel but rather announces to Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah shall be destroyed. God determines the *eschaton* and then reveals it to man. *Second*, Abraham is clearly encouraged to have a role in the *eschaton.* We must *work* while it is day, for "the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). Abraham prayed to God, and, in the process, not only was Abraham's prayer answered, but he learned much about God's forbearance and mercy. Abraham asked God, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (Gen. 18:23). "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). God answered Abraham that, for fifty righteous men, He would spare the city. Abraham knew that these fifty had to be men of justice, grace, and power. Abraham then asked for the sparing of the city for forty-five men, then forty, then thirty, then twenty, and finally, ten. God said, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (Gen. 18:32). There were no such ten men, only one, Lot (II Peter 2:7). Sodom was therefore destroyed.

Abraham was concerned about the destruction of Sodom, because his nephew, Lot, lived there. The destruction of Sodom meant the possible destruction of Lot, and the sure destruction of all Lot's assets. God saved Lot,

but Abraham was not told of it. In the process, Abraham came to understand the Lord's *eschaton*. The end towards which God works is the destruction of sin and the purging of the earth. Abraham never mentions Lot in His prayers to the Lord. He recognized at once that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is unrighteousness, injustice, and God's justice is no respecter of persons (Ex. 23:8,9; Deut. 1:17; Acts 10:34, etc.). If Lot were righteous, God's grace would cover Him; if he were not, it would be evil to seek a covering for Lot from God's justice. Abraham in the process not only learned how to pray but what God's grace and judgment are.

But why would God spare a place like Sodom for ten men? Our Lord gives us in brief what the answer is: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). We are called to be the salt of the earth, the preserving force, and the light of the world, the light-bringing power. Our Lord says, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). If, however, we fail to be salt, and we fail to be light-bringers, we are cast out, to be trampled under foot by God's avengers.

Thus, we either grow in terms of God's *eschaton* as our life's framework and calling, or we are judged and trampled by it. If we are not a part of God's *eschaton*, we are judged by it.

3. Law as Eschatology

J. S. MacCulloch, in his study of eschatology, followed the tradition which limits the subject to the end time, i.e., the final judgment, the catastrophic end of the world, and the final state of the dead. His approach was from the perspective of comparative religions and began with "savage races."[3] In spite of this, MacCulloch does see clearly as a central aspect of eschatology, *retribution*. We can add that it is perhaps *the* central aspect. Retribution means judgment, blessings, and reprobation.

In some non-Christian eschatologies, non-moral elements are present. In all, however, the moral factor is clear-cut. In some, it takes over totally, so that an automatic and unrelenting retribution governs all things, as with the doctrine of *Karma*. We encounter *psychostasia*, the weighing of works or deeds, in some religions, as in Indian, Egyptian, Persian, and Mohammedan beliefs. Wherever the doctrine of retribution wanes in a culture, we see a decadent religion and society.

At the heart of eschatology there is thus retribution, and retribution means justice, or righteousness. For an eschatology to postpone justice to the end-time means to strip time and history of justice. It means surrendering the

[3] J. S. MacCulloch, "Eschatology," in James Hastings, editor: *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, (1912) 1937). p. 373.

world to the devil. The rapture and the final judgment then become man's only hope for victory.

Abraham knew better. Hence, he talked with God in terms of a simple and fundamental presupposition: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). Paul tells us that justice and retribution are a constant force in history, in the natural world as well as man's realm: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Thus, when God's *eschaton* came to the antediluvial world, it did not terminate retribution. God only promised that no such total judgment against the earth *such as a flood* would again occur (Gen. 9:11). Retribution was not thereby eliminated from history. Instead, God charged man with the moral responsibility for *applied eschatology*. This is clear in Genesis 9:5,6:

> 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.
> 6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Retribution or justice is required in the world of men and also of animals. We have here implicit the law of retribution, as in Exodus 21:28,31, which requires judgment against an animal goring or injuring a man, and possibly against the owner of the animal. Capital punishment is required, because man is created in the image of God, and therefore murder, by man or by an animal of a man, is a capital offense. As Stigers noted, "It would appear that the murderer has assaulted the government of God and so *lies beyond the protection of the divine will.*"[4] *All men* have a responsibility, "every man's brother", for any and all acts of murder. As Moffatt rendered this clause, "I will avenge man's life on man, upon his brother-man." Unavenged murder places blood-guilt upon all living members of a society.

Thus, what God required of Noah and all men is the execution of justice, i.e., the application of God's law to all of life. Justice is and requires retribution. *God's law is applied eschatology*. This is a key and basic fact of Scripture. God's law gives us the practical steps towards God's *eschaton*, and, if we deny God's law, we have only an end-time justice and eschatology. The denial of justice, of God's law, means that the Bible is read as speaking concerning the end-time only.

Genesis 9:5-6, among other things, sets forth two basic facts. *First*, all life is God-created and to be regarded as God's property and subject to God's law (Gen. 9:2-4), but man's life is in particular separated from all other life because man is created in God's image. A transgression against man's life is a violation of God's sovereign law and right. Murder presupposes man's right

[4] Harold G. Stigers: *A Commentary on Genesis*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976). p. 116.

to govern and take human life apart from God, an untenable claim. *Second*, man has a responsibility, as a creature made by God, to uphold God's order. God's end must be man's end, God's *eschaton* and law must be man's also.

Moreover, in Genesis 9:2-6, we have another fact set forth, as Atkinson indicated:

> This is the requirement of a judge, and we have here one of the earliest of the many emphatic passages in the Bible, which represent God as the supreme Judge and Lawgiver. Man as a moral being is responsible to God as judge, and it is an erroneous idea of the Gospel to suppose that this responsibility and relationship are ever superseded. The Gospel does not tell us that God had ceased to be judge. It tells us that His just requirements as judge have been met on our behalf by the Lord Jesus Christ.[5]

In Christ, we are turned from outlaws to friends of the law, and keepers of the law. The Judge is our Lord and Redeemer, and we work to uphold His law-order.

Leupold, in commenting on Genesis 9:5-6, noted, "The publishing of this word is to induce man to act."[6] Furthermore, Luther saw in these words the institution of civil government to enforce God's justice. We may differ concerning the time of origin for civil government, but this much is clear. Civil government has justice as its legitimate purpose and end. As such, it is an eschatological institution whose ordained purpose is the attainment of God's end-point. The same is true of the church. Matthew 28:18-20 is an eschatological test; it requires the church to disciple all nations and to teach them all that the Lord commands. The church's legitimate concerns include both the end-points in history as well as the end-time.

The word *require* in Genesis 9:5 is a judicial term. God as the supreme Judge requires all of us to live and labor for His *eschaton*.

Hence, eschatology means that justice must be our end-point in history as well as our end-time triumph. Eschatology thus is inseparable from law. If we are antinomians, then, whether we call ourselves premillennial, amillennial, or postmillennial, we have surrendered justice as an end-point in history. We thereby deny the validity of righteousness as a valid goal in history. We cannot share in Amos' demand, "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24). Isaiah tells us of God, "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9); how can we apply God's judgments to the earth if we have surrendered the world to the enemy? We are then definitely not

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5. Basil F. C. Atkinson: *The Pocket Commentary of the Bible: Genesis*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1957). p. 82.
6. H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of Genesis*. (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1942). p. 332.

hungering and thirsting after righteousness or justice, as the Lord requires us to in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:6).

God's law is eschatological, as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 make especially clear. False eschatologies see disasters not justice, as indicative of the end, so that God's *eschaton* is accomplished by defeat, not justice! In a much reproduced article, Marvin Moore cites the "Increasing Evidence of Jesus' Soon Return." The "signs" Moore gives are vaguely drawn from the Bible, especially from random texts taken out of context. Moore also gives us 23 "Fulfilled Prophecies" which to him indicates "we have come to the very last days." His list tells us:

> The last days are to be characterized by–
> 1. Accumulation of wealth, James 5:3.
> 2. Labor troubles, James 5:4-8.
> 3. War preparations, Joel 3:14, 9, 10.
> 4. Disarmament talk, Isa. 2:2-4.
> 5. Awakening of the East, Joel 3:12.
> 6. Increase of knowledge, Dan. 12:4.
> 7. Unrest and upheaval, Luke 21:25-27.
> 8. Craze for pleasure, 2 Tim. 3:1-4.
> 9. Religious skepticism, Luke 18:8.
> 10. Intemperance and physical degeneracy, Luke 17:28,30; Eze. 16:49-50.
> 11. Falling away from Bible truth, 2 Tim. 4:3,4; Isa. 30:8-10.
> 12. Moral degeneracy and decline of spirituality, 2 Tim. 3:1-5.
>
> The last days are to be a time of–
> 13. Unparalleled travel, Dan. 12:4.
> 14. Destructive earthquakes, cyclones, etc., Luke 21:11.
> 15. Destructive insects, pests, etc. Joel 1:1-4; 2:1.
> 16. Abounding lawlessness, Matt. 24:12.
> 17. Bloody crimes, Eze. 7:23.
> 18. Breaking of marriage ties, Matt. 24:37-39.
> 19. Scoffing at the Lord's coming, 2 Peter 3:3-5.
> 20. Turning to spiritism, I Tim. 4:1-2.
> 21. Deceptive miracles, Rev. 18:14.
> 22. Rise of many false religions, 2 Peter 2:1.
> 23. Giving of special message of Revelation 14:6-14, to all the world to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.[7]

Most of these reasons are valid for many previous eras of history, in many cases more so than today. Some texts represent misinterpretations. In most cases, the texts cited are so irrelevant to Moore's thesis, and so badly interpreted, that his position represents wishful thinking, not exegesis. Much modern day Protestantism, with its fanciful concerns with "prophecy", represents theological senility, not sense. God's end-point and end-time are

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[7] Marvin Moore, "Increasing Evidence of Jesus' Soon Return," in *Signs of the Times*, Special Issue, 1982. pp. 5-7. The first article in this issue is entitled, "Three Reasons Why Jesus Wants to Come Back."

converted into defeat, not victory. Paul, however, gives us a vision of total victory preceding the end-time:

> 24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
> 25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
> 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (I Cor. 15:24-26.)

Because the nature of law is eschatological, so too is the nature of the state: it must serve God's purpose, justice. The modern state, however, serves a false and even demonic course. It has pursued the course set forth by the tempter in Genesis 3:1-5, to be its own god and its own lawmaker. The modern state is messianic: it sees itself as the messiah, not as the servant of the Messiah. The calling of the state and all things else is to be the servants of the Messiah, of Christ our Lord, Savior, and King.

4. Eschatology and the Covenant

The doctrine of the covenant is basic to Scripture and to God's relationship to mankind. Men are either covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers; they are either in obedience to the covenant law and grace or in contempt of it. Because God in a covenant with man is manifesting sovereign grace to man His creature, and because every such covenant is also a treaty of law, the covenant is also predictive of the future. It sets forth the blessings and curses of the covenant upon faithfulness and disobedience (Lev. 26; Deut. 28).

The making of God's covenant with man is accompanied with eschatological predictions. This was apparent even in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9, 16-17). It is also the case in the covenant with Abraham:

> 1. After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.
> 2. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what will thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?
> 3. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.
> 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.
> 6. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.
> 7. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. (Gen. 15:1-7)

The *first* thing to be noted here is that, with the covenant comes God's declarations concerning the future. Later, these declarations are expanded, so that Abraham is told that he will be the "father of many nations" (Gen. 17:4), and the whole earth is implicitly to be the heritage of Abraham's seed, like the stars, virtually limitless (Gen. 15:5). Thus, the making of the covenant is an eschatological fact: it declares what, in the Lord, future history shall be.

Second, the covenant is again eschatological in nature because we are told that the covenant God is Abram's shield and exceedingly great reward (Gen. 15:1). Because the Lord is Abraham's covenant protector and blessing, He is also ours, because we are by faith the children of Abraham (Gal. 3: 6-8). "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9).

Third, all this is so because today and tomorrow are determined by God; the future is a natural development but a supernatural fact. Concerning the purely naturalistic forecast Abraham makes concerning his heir, God says, "This shalt not be" (Gen. 15:4). God's determination rules and over-rules in all of history.

Fourth, faith, a supernatural grace, means believing God's promises and seeing the future as God sees it. Faith is thus also eschatological in nature, as Paul and the apostolic company tell us (Heb. 11:1-3). By faith we live and stand today in terms of God's promised and assured victory; although we may be killed by the enemy, we know all the while that "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:28-39). "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

We now come to an amazing passage. Abraham affirms his faith in God's promises (Gen. 15:6); God recognizes Abraham's faith and blesses him. Then Abraham asks, "Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (Gen. 15:8). This is not an expression of any fresh doubt. Abraham's question here is akin to his question in Genesis 18:25, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Abraham *knows* that the Lord *shall* do right; he wants the specifics of the extent of God's grace and mercy. Abraham *knows* that he shall inherit great things in the Lord; he asks for the specifics thereof.

God's answer is especially revealing: He orders the cutting of the covenant to proceed. The sacrificial animals are cut in two (as in Jer. 34:18f.), and Abraham and the presence of God passed between the halves of the animals. God passed between them as a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch (cf. Ex. 3:1-6; 19:18). The dismembered animals set forth the penalty of death upon either member of the covenant upon breaking the covenant.

God's declarations concerning the next five hundred years or so, about a century to the Egyptian sojourn and captivity, and "four hundred years" (Gen. 15:13) in Egypt, make more specific the predictions concerning the future. The central reason given for the delay in the inheritance of Canaan is that "the

iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). The promise of the land is re-affirmed. Why then Abraham's "horror of great darkness?" (Gen. 15:12).

To answer this question, we need to look again at the earlier one: "Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (Gen. 15:8). The Lord has already told Abraham that he *shall* inherit it, and Abraham most obviously *believed*, said *amen* to God and to all His ways and promises. Now God's answers are not irrelevant nor beside the point. By way of answer, God orders the making of the covenant, places Abraham in a deep sleep, gives to Abraham a vision of the future in very plain words.

We are told that Abraham's terror was a very great one. Was it because of the future bondage of his descendants in Egypt? This is a possible answer. However, God assures Abraham of the certain deliverance of his seed, and their return "with great substance" to possess the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:14-16). The Egyptian captivity might be the occasion of Abraham's horror, but it is hardly sufficient grounds for such a reaction. Atkinson tells us that Abraham saw, in the vision of the severed halves, and God passing between them, God's own covenant faithfulness as revealed in the cross of Christ, Christ's death as man's representative to redeem man.[8] By means of this, Abraham understands that he shall indeed inherit Canaan, and all the earth, because covenant man's status before God is preserved by the very Son of God. Since Abraham's question is answered by the order to proceed with the covenant, the certainty of God's promise concerning the inheritance of Abraham's seed is set forth by the covenant. The answer is Christ. The seed of Abraham is Christ, and all who are members of Him, and, as long as Abraham's natural seed are in that covenant, they are in the promises.

Our Lord tells us, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Genesis tells us of his horror. Why the difference? When Peter first clearly understood what that *day* meant, his reaction was one of shock: "Lord, this shall not be unto thee" (Matt. 16:22). In later years, he gloried in the cross. The same was probably true with Abraham.

At the heart of the covenant is God's word to Abraham: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. 18:17). David tells us, "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him: and he will shew them his covenant" (Ps. 25:14). J. A. Alexander translated this verse thus: "The friendship of Jehovah is to (those) fearing him, and his covenant to make them know." The covenant thus gives knowledge to man.[9] Leupold's translation is similar: "Intimate association with the LORD is for those that fear Him; And His covenant aims to give them understanding."[10] Psalm 25:8-14 says much

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8. Basil F. C. Atkinson: *The Book of Genesis.* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1957). p. 144.
9. J. A. Alexander: *The Psalms, Translated and Explained.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, reprint of the 1864 edition). p. 116.

about this fact, and v. 12 is very clear: "What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." The covenant thus opens up to us the grace and law of God. It reveals God's end-points and end-time, and it is wisdom, instruction, *and* eschatology. The Lord does not hide from His covenant-keepers that thing which He shall do.

5. Eschatology of Everyday Life

It should now be apparent that, while history has an end-time, the second coming of Christ, it is also a multitude of end-points. From beginning to end, the Bible is God's law word. It sets forth by commandments and by history the God-ordained end-points of all human action. Because we live in God's universe of moral consequence, all human action has a moral framework. We live and move and have our being in God and His creation (Acts 17:28). We cannot step outside of God's world into a morally neutral realm. Our lives are purposive, and their goal reveals our faith and morality. Paul requires us to be mindful of this, saying, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). To limit eschatology to end-time concerns exclusively is thus to deny the relevance of God's law, of morality, to the historical process. Antinomianism leads to eschatological distortion.

Let us consider the implication of the eschatology of everyday life. Paul, speaking of rulers as the ministers or servants of God, says of the purpose of rulers that they are to be a terror to evil works (Rom. 13:3), i.e., to be a ministry of justice. This means that judges, civil authorities, and rulers in every sphere have an eschatological function. The curses and blessings of God's law (Deut. 28; Lev. 26) set forth the end-point faithfulness and lawlessness. All who work to establish the jurisdiction of God's law, and of His blessings and curses, in any and every human agency, are thereby instruments of God's applied eschatology in history. The law repeatedly speaks in terms of an end-point. This end-point is sometimes called "the end of the days", or, "the latter days", or, in time to come, as in Deuteronomy 4:30; 31:29, etc.). The victories and defeats of Israel, its captivity and restoration, and much, much more are all eschatological events.

When eschatology is limited to the end-time, and end-points in God's plan are down-graded, the consequences are serious. *First*, people are morally disarmed, because the historical relevance of end-points, of blessings and curses, is diminished. Time loses much of its meaning, and meaning is more and more relegated to eternity. The historical process is thereby rendered less relevant to man. Because of this moral default, the humanist, for whom meaning in history, if it exists, is simply temporal and man-made, takes over the direction of societies and institutions.

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[10] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms*. (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1959). p. 224.

Second, because man is created in God's image, his being is governed by God's purpose. Sin deflects, warps, and distorts that purpose. In the sinner, scientific socialism is in our century a very popular eschatological goal. Churchmen who deny God's end-point eschatology have always tended to replace the historical end-points with an imminent end-time. This has been a common error in church history. We certainly see it today. All too many such people are ready to dismiss resistance in the courts to state controls over the church, or to dismiss political action, on the ground that "Jesus is coming soon." He is, indeed, coming to bring judgment on all such who run from the battle and justify their flight or surrender in His name. He comes in an end-point judgment on all such men.

Let us examine some central eschatological focal centers in terms of their importance to God's end points. *First*, there is *retribution*, and heaven and hell. Is retribution to be excluded from history? Do we not see collective and individual retribution in history? The fall of Rome is surely an obvious example of this. Moreover, historical retribution is in terms of Scripture to be seen in terms of God's law and requirement. When David spared Saul's life, he witnessed to Saul about the fact of God's retribution, so that his own forbearance did not negate the pressing fact which Saul faced: "The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into my hand today, but I would not stretch forth my hand against the LORD'S anointed" (I Sam. 26:23). In brief, David reminded Saul of the fact of retribution as inescapable. Where end-point retribution is weakened, end-time retribution is also in decay. When justice declines in the state, the doctrine of hell has already waned in the church. End-point and end-time retribution are closely related.

Second, basic to end-time eschatology is the resurrection of the dead. Those who deny or undermine the end-time resurrection of the dead soon logically do the same to the end-point resurrection from the death of sin of living sinners. Life *on God's terms* is not too important for such men. Paul, echoing Isaiah 60:1, says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). The dead are irrelevant to life and history; we are summoned to arise and to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). The Bible speaks of the resurrection from the dead as the grand climax of history and the second coming. A more dramatic event is hardly conceivable. The regeneration of man, his resurrection from the death of sin and guilt, is an equally dramatic historical event. It means a change and a reversal in a man's history, as witness Paul. It marks the entrance into the new creation of the new man (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). God's end-points are manifestations of His end-time; the two are inseparable.

Third, history began in the Garden of Eden, with a hint of the end-time eschatological paradise. Men are to work towards the establishment of God's Kingdom in time, and they are told of end-point fulfillment, as in Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:6-9; 51:3; 65:17-25; etc. Remarkable end-points will be reached in history. In terms of this, we are to *occupy* till He come (Luke 19:13). The Greek word translated as *occupy* is *pragmateuomai*, which means *trade, do business*. It is the same word we find in Luke 19:15, translated as *had gained by trading*. The word appears in the Parable of the Talents (Luke 19:13-27). Funds are given by the Lord to *trade*, to *occupy* and to possess the earth for the Lord. At the time of accounting, the Lord requires an increase, on penalty of radical judgment.

> 26. For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.
> 27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. (Luke 19:26-27)

From Matthew 25:30, as well as the context of Luke's account, we see that the enemies are those *servants* who do not trade or occupy. There is no eschatological result in time to their ministry or service. The Lord clearly demands an end-point result. The Word *pragmateuomai* and its various forms has reference to man's works in history, to what man does under God.

Fourth, there is also the eschatological prediction in Scripture of a new temple of God in some sense, and a Messianic banquet (Rev. 19:7-9; 21:22-27). At the same time, we are told that believers here and now, and the church in time, are temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16-17; etc.). Here and now, we are made partakers of the great Messianic banquet in the service of the Lord's Table (I Cor. 11:20-34). Very clearly, no end-time promise is without its provisions or foretastes in the context of time and history.

We are thus required by many typologies and commandments to recognize the reality of the eschatology of everyday life. To postpone eschatology to the end-time is to rob history of meaning. Our Lord declares, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). His rule, plan, and authority are present in all things and in all of history. We cannot postpone His reign to the end, nor His purpose to a late, last-minute entrance. At all times and in all places, He is the Lord.

6. Eschatology in "Nature"

Eschatology is an everyday fact, and all of life is a complex of end-points, all leading to and indicators of the end-time. Man is an eschatological creature; he lives in terms of meaning and purpose, and to deny him the focus of goals is to threaten his life. Dostoyevsky cited the destructive nature of

meaningless work. Prisoners in Siberia who were assigned the task of moving rocks from one place to another, and then back again, were broken by means of meaningless work.

However, we cannot limit eschatology to man. The material world around us is very much a part of God's eschatological activities. Because we have a false concept of "nature", it is difficult for us to recognize this fact. The Bible never speaks of "nature", only of creation. All of creation is God's handiwork, and it moves to fulfill His purposes. Our concept of "Nature" is in essence Roman, as is the word, and it tends to personify and even deify the created order. Moreover, the concept of "Nature" is especially dangerous because it is by implication a closed system and a self-sustaining entity. From the moment men adopted the concept of "Nature", both pantheism and evolution became logical developments of Western thought. *Nature* as a closed system did not need God, except at best as the first cause. The rule of natural laws in this autonomous realm emphasized the fact that God's miracles are extraneous to and an intrusion in the natural order. Conflict ensued between the natural and the supernatural.

In the Bible, just as God is in a continuing relationship to man, in revelation, providence, judgment, and blessing, so too He is in a continuing relationship to the rest of His creation. Such texts as Habakkuk 3:1-19 make no distinction between God's dealings with men and nations, and His activities in and upon the physical universe. In Psalm 18:6-17 this is especially clear. The Bible assumed their unity. When the Lord moves against His enemies and for His people, the whole earth is often affected, as witness Judges 5:4-5:

> 4. LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.
> 5. The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

The Flood is the great example of end-point eschatology. While God promises no such *total* judgment will again strike the earth by water (Gen. 9:15), He does not thereby abandon the use of water, storms, earthquakes, and the like to judge men. On the contrary, the Flood is rather typical of God's continuing judgments. Because Adam and Eve had used God's blessing, a chosen portion of creation, the Garden of Eden, to sin against God, the Lord used the earth to curse them (Gen. 3:17-19). In fact, God often uses a combination of human enemies and storms, floods, and other disasters to bring His end-point judgments upon a people, as witness Amos 9:1-6:

> 1. I saw the LORD standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake; and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with my sword: he that fleeth of

> them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.
> 2. Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down;
> 3. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them:
> 4. And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.
> 5. And the LORD GOD of hosts is he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn; and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and it shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt.
> 6. It is he that buildeth his stories in the heavens, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.

In v. 3. "the serpent" symbolizes God's omnipresent power of judgment. In Amos 5:19, it refers to a literal snake but as a symbol of final judgment: "As if a man did flee a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him." Such a judgment has an inescapable and final quality: a man cannot escape from God's end-point judgments. In Isaiah 27:1, God symbolizes the nations which oppose Him as "leviathan that crooked serpent" whom He shall destroy. God uses His created forces to destroy men and nations, and He reduces these proud men and nations, who imagine themselves to be gods, into dust (Gen. 3:19), and symbolically presents them as animals to be destroyed.

Very often, God destroys the animals, the fish, and the fowls of the heavens as a means of dispossessing a people, as Zephaniah 1:2-3 makes clear:

> 2. I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD.
> 3. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD.

This end-point judgment is called "the great day of the LORD" (Zeph. 1:12-18). The reference is to the forthcoming judgment upon Judah and Assyria. Again, in Nahum 1:2-8, we are told that God's judgments affect the physical realm around us as well as men and nations:

> 2. God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.
> 3. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked; the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.
> 4. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

> 5. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.
> 6. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.
> 7. The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.
> 8. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

It is obvious that the idea of "nature" as an independent law-realm separate from God is radically unbiblical. The order of the physical realm, as well as its "disorders", is entirely the handiwork of God. This is clear in all the Bible, as in Habakkuk 3:3-15.

God's end-point eschatology is operative also in the psychological and economic realms, as witness Haggai 1:5-6:

> 5. Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.
> 6. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

There is a unity of life and consequences, life and judgment, in God's creation. This means also a proportion between sin and judgment. The premise of an "eye for an eye" and "life for life" (Ex. 21:23-25) is that there must be restitution, and that there must be a correspondence between sin and the penalty for sin. In Leviticus 26:21-38, we see the consequences of apostasy from the covenant:

> 21. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me: I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.
> 22. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in numbers; and your high ways shall be desolate.
> 23. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me:
> 24. Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.
> 25. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant; and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.
> 26. And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.
> 27. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;
> 28. Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

> 29. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.
> 30. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.
> 31. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.
> 32. And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.
> 33. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.
> 34. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.
> 35. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.
> 36. And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.
> 37. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.
> 38. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

All this, God emphasizes, is "according to your sins." Men find any judgment from God oppressive, but their own sins as trifling. Hence, they refuse to believe that judgment is very near.

This unity in God's eschatology applies also to His blessings, as Leviticus 26:3-9 makes very clear:

> 3. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;
> 4. Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.
> 5. And your threshing shall reach unto vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.
> 6. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.
> 7. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.
> 8. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.
> 9. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 is a particularly moving statement of this same fact.

Despite the fact that Scripture, from beginning to end, is full of such statements, many object to them and justify their insistence on the neutrality

of "Nature" by reference to one verse, Matthew 5:45. There is a remarkable audacity in such claims which use God's words to correct God. To say that one verse can contradict or correct all the rest of the Bible shows a very strong perversity. Moreover, the verse has a radically different meaning:

> 44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
> 45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matt. 5:44-45)

God does not go down a street and make His sun to shine upon the Johnsons, but not upon the Jones! The grace of life and light, within limits, is given to all. Thus, we too are to manifest the same grace to all men, friends and enemies alike. If a man transgresses the laws of God and of nations, we leave it to the Lord and the nation to deal with him. We have no right to deny such a man his life, or separate him from the immunities of his home (Thou shalt not commit adultery), his property (Thou shall not steal), or bear false witness against him. We have a duty of love, which is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:9-11). This means also blessing all such, praying for them, and being a good neighbor to them.

On the other hand, as men in faithfulness keep God's covenant, the curse is removed from men and the earth, and God's blessings flow out to men. To be in Christ is to be a new creature or a new creation (II Cor. 5:17), and to be a part of the new creation which began with our Lord's resurrection (I Cor. 15:20,23). The new creation which began with Christ will, before the end, see life both extended and blessed, as Isaiah 65:17-25 tells us:

> 17. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.
> 18. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
> 19. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.
> 20. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.
> 21. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
> 22. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
> 23. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.
> 24. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

> 25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

This has reference to time and history. Men die, and sinners still exist. Children are born, and life continues as before, but with a remarkable difference. Man's life expectancy is greatly increased; the world resembles the Garden of Eden, "and dust shall be the serpent's meat", i.e., the tempter will have no one to tempt or to harm.

History's end-points are essentially tied to the end time. The curse is progressively removed from men and the earth, and then, later, the end-time comes, and the fullness of the new creation (I Cor. 15:23-26). The resurrection of the body and the destruction of death bring in the totality of God's new creation. All of creation shares in the end-time glory, because all were involved in the fall and in the end-point curses and blessings.

We are told that "there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him" (Rev. 22:3). There is thus a continuity between this world and the world to come. All of creation, human and otherwise, is restored and remade. Work continues, but without the curse. The words, "his servants shall serve Him", are remarkable, *first*, because the word *servants* is *bondmen* or *bondservants*. Although sons by the adoption of grace, we are also eternally God's creatures, made for His service. *Second*, the word "serve" is *latreno*, or *latreusousin*, from *latris*, a hired servant; it means to work for hire. Our response to an eternal salvation is a happy recognition that our services to the Lord are an eternal expression of praise and gratitude for a gift we can never repay. We are then told that we "reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5), so that it is precisely this, our status as servants, which makes us Kings.

This sheds a light on our Lord's words in Luke 22:25-27:

> 25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lord-ship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.
> 26. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger: and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.
> 27. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

God's end-time sees the perfection of this kind of greatness. It is thus necessary for us to make it an end-point in history.

7. The Restoration of the Earth

Eschatology in the natural world is so obvious a fact in Scripture that it is remarkable that it is so neglected in much theological literature. The cause for this is the Hellenic influence on the Western world. If, as good Hellenes, we

believe that the higher the "concept" or "thing", the more abstract it is, we end up idolizing the higher abstraction. The more abstract we render the meaning of Scripture, then it follows that the truer it is! Hence the popularity of spiritualizing and rationalizing the Bible.

But what meaning does Isaiah 2:1-4 have, if "spiritualized" or rationalized? For nations to cease from warfare can mean only what the plain wording tells us. When we are told that man's life expectancy is greatly increased as the curse is removed (Isa. 65:17-25), it means that man lives longer; any spiritualizing or rationalizing of the text reduces it to nonsense.

Sin destroyed the original splendor of the earth. The *first* stage of that destruction was the Fall (Gen. 3). The Garden of Eden was barred to man, and the earth began to frustrate man. The *second* stage of that destruction by sin came with the Flood (Gen. 7:1-24). The continuing although diminished excellence of the earth gave way to a harsher world, a greatly diminished life expectancy, and a greatly changed environment. The *third* stage in the destructive work of sin is set forth in Leviticus 26:14-46 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68. As lawlessness abounds, so too does the curse. We are not allowed by Scripture to think of the curse as a static or a past event. The curse is a continuing and pursuing fact (Deut. 28:15), and its only logical conclusion is in hell. Hell is the scrapheap of creation, where nothing is in any meaningful relationship to anything else, nor is there any communication. No more than in any city dump, where objects lie helter-skelter, does hell have any coherent meaning or order. The logic of Genesis 3:5 there comes to its logical end. Hell is an eschatological fact, as is heaven.

Just as the curse is a continuing and developing eschatological fact, so too is God's blessing. Thus, we are told that the most desolate places will be some day like the Garden of Eden. The following texts are typical of many:

> 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.
> 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.
> 7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. (Isa. 35:1,2, 5-7)

The desert itself shall become a part of the new world-wide Garden of Eden, and physical infirmities such as blindness, deafness, dumbness and

lameness shall disappear. As creation has all alike been under the curse, so too shall all be under the blessing.

> 33. Thus saith the Lord GOD: In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.
> 34. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.
> 35. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. (Ezek. 36:33-35)

God through Ezekiel makes clear that this restoration, which follows after redemption and regeneration, requires growth in sanctification. We must be made holy; we must be cleansed from all our iniquities by the Lord. Where man is truly sanctified, nature is also.

> And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. (Hosea 2:18)

The salvation and sanctification of mankind is accompanied by world peace. God, having created all things, manifests a common meaning, purpose, and eschatology in all things.

The coming of the Messiah marks the beginning of a new creation. It means the dawn of righteousness, and its conclusion is a world-wide peace among all nations. This restoration affects the relationship of man to man, of man to the animals, and of animals to all other animals. The restoration affects thus every aspect of God's creation. This is very clearly stated in Isaiah 11:1-10:

> 1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:
> 2. And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;
> 3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:
> 4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
> 5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.
> 6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.
> 7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

> 8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.
>
> 9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
>
> 10. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

This is a remarkable prophecy. Unhappily, it is too often spiritualized into nonsense. As a result, such churchmen take very seriously all humanistic forecasts and prophecies of a total and world-wide nuclear holocaust. The prophecies of evil are then for them true, whereas the prophecies of the restoration of creation are simply symbolic of a vague something, or, better, nothing.

The logical conclusion then is to see a natural *deterioration* of the physical creation rather than God's *restoration.* The best possible destiny for man is to be abstracted out of that universe, and the physical creation dismissed as God's job that failed. Man, abstracted out of the creation of which he is a part, winds up a pale abstraction or spirit in an eternal vagueness.

The Bible tells us that God created man *a living soul.* The word is *nephesh*; it speaks of the unity of life, of man's body and spirit. James Moffatt rendered Genesis 2:7, "man became a living being." Knox translated it, "a living person." Man is not an abstraction, and the resurrection of the body is not only the fullness of his salvation but a part of the general resurrection and regeneration of all things (Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:21).

The Fall began the descent of creation. That descent was not into matter but into sin and death. Man's redemption is not out of matter into spirit but from sin and death into righteousness and life. Even as the Fall affected and continues to affect the material creation, so too does Christ's work of salvation redeem and affect both man and the earth. The power of sin, and, finally, of death itself, shall be destroyed (I Cor. 15:24-26).

In considering this prospect, we should never forget the part man has in eschatology. Man must work to exercise dominion towards restoration. Deuteronomy 28 as well as Leviticus 26 make clear man's role in the outworking of the curse, and also in the development of the blessing. It is immoral and unscriptural for man, whose sin has polluted and destroyed God's original creation, to expect God's blessing on his sin by rapturing man out of the mess man has made of the earth. On the contrary, man must make restitution: he must restore the earth and develop its potential.

We are too often unmindful of man's sin, and how much of what is called "nature" is simply a consequence of sin. We are equally unmindful that many of the beauties of "nature" as seen in the English countryside, for example, are products of man's dominion.

The Sahara Desert was once fertile farmland and ranches. It was not only a weather change, but even more man's destructiveness and false religion which destroyed it. Islam has been especially ruthless in its treatment of the earth. Turkey taxed even trees and led by this and like policies to the destruction of forests; the brutal destruction wrought by Turkey against men and the earth has not been given the attention it needs.

In Holland, the early monks began the reclamation of land from the sea. All over Europe, both waste lands and heavily forested and unusable lands were regularly given to monks to be turned into rich and prosperous farmlands over a period of many years.

Man has a task of restoration. It is a religious task. Any theology which by-passes this task makes itself irrelevant. The fact that our salvation is an act of sovereign grace and not our work does not absolve us from the necessity of obedience and sanctification. Rather, redemption leads to and requires holiness. In fact, all things must therefore be made "Holiness unto the LORD" (Zech. 14:20-21), and this includes the earth itself.

8. The Eschatology of Covenant Man

As we have seen, man has an important part in end-point eschatology. By effecting God's righteousness or justice on earth, by restitution and restoration, man has an essential role in eschatology.

To understand this aspect of the life of faith more clearly, let us remember that Paul, in Galatians 3:6-9, says that we are "blessed with faithful Abraham", or, as Moffatt rendered it, "blessed along with believing Abraham" (Gal. 3:9). What this blessing is we are told in Genesis 12:1-3:

> 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.

These promises to Abraham are valid for all who by faith are the children of Abraham, so that for Christians to make no claim to these promises is to deny their relationship to Abraham.

First, there is the promise of "a land"; for us, the promise is of the entire earth. "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:11). Our Lord restates this promise in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:5), and in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The promises of God, both material and spiritual, are only increased with Christ's coming. The power of sin and death having been broken, the

blessings abound. To see any decrease of God's promises and blessings with Christ's atonement and resurrection is a strange "gospel" indeed!

Second, God declares, "I will make of thee a great nation." The Old Testament Israel is only a preliminary stage in the fulfillment of this promise. Note that God does not despise the idea of a nation. The Kingdom of God is to be the world community, and churches are the advance guards in an army of occupation (Luke 19:13). In due time, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

Third, God says, "and I will bless thee, and make thy name great." Proverbs 10:22 tells us, "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." Again, blessing is seen as both material and spiritual. The word *great* is related to the derivative word *great* in "great nation", great in any terms, powerful, older, established. *Great* here ("make thy name great") means to advance, lift up, or magnify. Both words have a clearly open sense of exaltation in status and power on earth. This promise is a necessary part of the previous clause. Thus, the Soviet Union (Red Russia) is a great nation but emphatically not a blessed one.

Fourth, God now says, "and thou shalt be a blessing." The material aspect in the previous promises is clearly paramount. The fact of grace and faith is assumed. Abraham and all who are truly members of Abraham are a Spirit-governed people; because they are spiritually blessed by God, they will be materially blessed also in due time. As men rich in things material and spiritual, the sons of Abraham can be a blessing to other peoples.

Fifth, God goes further, saying, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." God has a yardstick for judgment: His law. He also has a personal stake, His people. If we are touched, He declares that He is touched. Those who bless us, God will bless. God emphatically declares that His judgments are highly partisan, but He is the lawgiver and the judge of all men's lives.

Sixth, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Christ is the great Son of God and the seed of Abraham. All families of the earth shall be blessed in and by Him. As members of His body, we share in His work and in His blessings. The promises of God to Abraham are His promises to us also in Christ. To neglect this fact is to paralyze the Christian in his covenant life and activity.

The Lord God renews His covenant with mankind in the persons of Abraham and Christ. His covenant is a covenant of law, as all covenants are, and a treaty or covenant of grace, because for the Lord God to make a covenant with man is an act of grace. The covenant pronounces blessings for faithfulness and curses for faithlessness. The world is also judged by its relationship to covenant man, the last Adam, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:45-49), and therefore to us, who are members of His body (I Cor. 12:12; Rom. 12:4-

5). If we are members of His body, the world will persecute and wage war against us for Christ's sake (Matt. 5:10-12). It is wrong, however, to see our relationship to the world as a one-way street. A very interesting sentence of our Lord's is telling in this context:

> 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 wise lose his reward. (Matt. 10:42)
> For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41)

Our Lord, like a good preacher, repeated Himself often, making the same point in differing situations in order to drive home its implications. Mark reports this sentence in the context of a statement by John that a man, not of their fellowship, was casting out devils in Christ's name. Our Lord says, "Forbid him not", and then goes on to state that even so insignificant an act as a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the Lord's name has a reward. To bless a disciple is to be blessed. Matthew records the use of this sentence at the end of the commission to the twelve disciples to teach, preach, to heal, and to exorcise (Matt. 10:1; 11:1). In Matthew, it is preceded by two like sentences:

> 40. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.
> 41. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.
> 42. 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 wise lose his reward. (Matt. 10:40-42)

There is disagreement over the meaning of "these little ones." Some see it as referring to children who were present, others to humble converts. Ellicott said, "The term was familiarly used of the scholars of a Rabbi, and in this sense our Lord, as the great Master, sending forth His disciples, now employs it."[11] Ellicott's interpretation, however, destroys the balance and gradation of the text. Our Lord cites four classes of covenant persons: the disciples, prophets or preachers, righteous or just men, and, finally, "these little ones", the humblest of His followers and members. How the world is judged depends in part on its relationship to these four classes. Hence, we are talking about end-point eschatology. The reaction of the world to these four groups of covenant peoples varies from faith to courtesy or kindness, and each reaction has its temporal and/or eternal reward. To receive the disciples in faith is to receive the Lord. Those who receive a prophet or preacher, i.e., one

[11] C. F. Ellicott: *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Vol. VI. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.). p. 164.

who truly and faithfully proclaims the word of God, shall receive a prophet's reward. Thus, to honor and reward God's faithful servants is to be honored and rewarded by the Lord. To receive a righteous or just man in the name of a righteous man, i.e., knowing that the only standard and source of justice is God's law-word, means to receive a righteous man's reward. This *receiving* of which our Lord speaks means far more than favorable hearing. We have an indication of its meaning in Acts 28:2, 7-10; the people of Malta, or Melita, received Paul and gave him hospitality. Many were healed, and those who received Paul were variously blessed as a result. To *receive* thus means to believe and obey; it means hospitality, support, and more. The blessings extend even to those who give a cup of cold water to a humble believer "in the name of a disciple", out of respect for the apostolic faith, they also have their reward. This latter reward may not involve eternal salvation, but even here and now God rewards those who honor His covenant people.

These are very clear and obvious promises. On their negative side, i.e., judgment on those who do not receive us, the church has had problems of recognizing the validity of these covenant hedges and protections. Revelation 6:9-11 gives us the cry of the slaughtered saints (Rom. 8:36) to the Lord, asking for judgment, and God's answer:

> 9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:
> 10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?
> 11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

In due time, Rome fell, and all the other ancient oppressors of God's covenant people. The blessings, the curses, and the timing are God's not man's.

What is essential is that man sees himself as a man in Christ. To the extent that he is in Christ, to that extent the world is cursed or blessed in its relationship to him. We are not our own (I Cor. 6:19), and therefore whatever is done to us is done to our owner and Lord, Jesus Christ. He does not take lightly the abuse of His property, of ourselves, either by others or by ourselves.

However men may interpret the typology of Ephesians 5:21-33, of Christ and His church and the husband and his wife, it should be clear that a man and woman in Christ are closely related to the divine economy in the life of the church. Both belong to the Lord, and their typological meaning has essential roots in their being. Neither husband nor wife can treat one another as their own possession; each belongs first of all to the Lord, and if to bless or curse

a simple disciple has its consequences, how much more so one given to us in so integral a relationship? Paul's words in Ephesians 5 are preceded by Ephesians 4:20-32, which summons us to give no opportunity to the devil in our lives; to let no corrupt communications or bad words pass our lips, no contempt nor reviling one of another. Bitterness, wrath, malice, and evil speaking are to be put away, and we are to be members one of another.

As we grow in grace, we become a blessing to the world around us, and the world, in terms of its relations to us, is blessed or cursed.

This means that the politics of the world capitols, however important, is not as determinative of the future as the faithfulness of the covenant people to their God and to His covenant law-word. When history wallows needlessly in the seas of politics, it is simply because the rudder of the ship, the Christian, is giving no direction and is neither a curse nor a blessing, only salt which has lost its savor and is good for nothing except to be thrown out on the road of history, "to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13).

The Sermon on the Mount, beginning with the Beatitudes and concluding with the parable of the two foundations, gives us very clearly some of the essentials of end-point eschatology. It needs to be taken literally. "To be trodden under foot of men" is a very grim historical curse; equally historical are the promises of inheriting the earth (Matt. 5:5), and of being a light to the world (Matt. 5:14-16).

9. Captivity and Restoration

A basic aspect of Biblical eschatology is the fact of *captivity and restoration*. It is strange that books are written, and courses taught, on eschatology without reference to this fundamental fact.

Captivity is a punishment for sin and a judgment on a people. The Lord declares that history is His handiwork, and events manifest His judgments. Hosea 10:12-15 makes this very clear:

> 12. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.
> 13. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.
> 14. Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.
> 15. So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

The Lord declares that He uses captivity and judgment as a means of recalling His people to Himself:

> 4. Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
> 5. Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.
> 6. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up.
> 7. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. (Jer. 24:4-7)

We can add that all soundly administered and theologically motivated chastisement is eschatological in nature. It has a goal, a purpose in view, and correction towards that end. God's judgments in history cannot be limited to the Old Testament era; they are a continuing fact.

It has become commonplace in recent years to belittle the Babylonian Captivity of Judah. The number of captives taken out of Judah is held to be limited, and the colony in Babylon small. The fact is that at the very least the leaders of the country were removed by the thousands; others drifted away or were removed later. Jerusalem remained a ruined and deserted city, and the nation ceased to exist as a nation for at least seventy years. It was thus a judgment of considerable dimensions.

The *first* stage of captivity is moral and religious; it is a captivity to sin. Our Lord is emphatic in John 8:31-36 that He, the truth, can alone make us free. All who commit sin are the slaves of sin. All captivity thus begins with covenant-breaking, with rebellion against God and with the violation of His law. It is this captivity to sin which precedes all physical slavery at a later date. While we cannot equate the fact of physical captivity with sin, we can equate sin with captivity, i.e., the innocent remnant went into captivity with the guilty, so that captivity did not mean that all captives were guilty. On the other hand, sin resulted in a captivity which brought suffering and disaster to all alike. In brief, we are members one of another (Eph. 4:25), not only in the church but in the world. When we become members of the last Adam, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:45-49), we do not thereby leave the world of the first Adam. It is all around us. The world of the fallen Adam affects us politically, economically, socially, and in every way virtually. We cannot forget our responsibility to reclaim that world from captivity lest its captivity overwhelm us.

Second, moral and religious captivity leads to political and economic captivity. We are surrounded today with the politics of constipation. The more things change, the more they stay the same; nothing moves. The same old failures are endlessly practiced. The politico-economic order of the 20th century has been bankrupt from its inception, but men have clung to it despite its failures. The slave mentality leads to the politics of constipation, to an order which cannot relieve itself of its evils nor its problems. The term

politics of constipation may seem rather crude, but the facts of modern politics are increasingly brutal ones.

Third, the consequences of all this is a slave state. Captivity can be to one's own authorities, or to another state. The Soviet Union is a land in captivity as well as a state taking other nations captive. In many ways, the people of Russia suffer the severest captivity of all. Thus, national captivity need not be to a foreign power, although it sometimes is.

With repentance and regeneration, restoration follows. When the covenant people are faithful to the Lord and live in His covenant grace and law, the Lord treats them as His tabernacle or temple. Isaiah 4:5-6 compares God's care of His restored people to the wilderness care of God's holy place and people:

> 5. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.
>
> 6. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

In Isaiah 4:4 we are told that, before restoration, there must be a necessary purging and cleansing. The purpose of judgment and captivity is to bring about this washing away of sin. Young's comment on the next verse, Isaiah 5:5, is especially good: "When the LORD will wash away, then He will create. First, however, the filth must be washed away. The coming glory is comparable only with the creation."[12] Young saw regeneration and restoration as comparable to the beginning of creation. The word *create*, *bara*, is the same word used in Genesis 1. We thus have two images used, and two historical references made, to illuminate the meaning of restoration. *First*, it is compared to creation, and, *second*, to the care given in the wilderness journey.

Clearly, the Lord God regards eschatology in history as important as creation. Precisely because God created time and this world, He regards both as important. The fact of death should not cause us to undervalue this world, for to under-rate history is to under-rate both sin and righteousness. This, of course, is exactly what the church has done. It has with antinomianism undercut the importance of God's law and righteousness or justice. To undermine the law is to undermine the seriousness of sin. Some years ago, "Ilico" summed up the matter tellingly in his observation:

> The present generation is not morally serious enough to believe in hell; it can scarcely understand Calvin's words, "Without judgment there can

[12] Edward J. Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. I, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). p. 184f.

> be no God"; it has sympathy with the gibe of Heine, "The good God will pardon me, for that's His job."[13]

To undervalue God's eschatological processes in history is to lose all sense of reality and to become irrelevant.

Why have men separated eschatology from everyday life? Scripture is very plain on the subject. The separation exists, because there is a prior separation of God from the realm of "the natural" to the supernatural. "Nature" has been given an independent existence as a self-governing entity, and God has been limited to the supernatural realm. As a result, God has been reduced, in His historical role, to interruptions and miracles, and the day by day functioning of creation has been given a major measure of autonomy. Because what we call miracles are few and far between, and uncommon in most of Biblical history, we assume that God is also remote, because we limit the activity of God to His miracles. As a result, God's actions in history are seen simply as intrusions and break-ins, whereas God's total government and presence are overlooked. It follows consequently that eschatology is also limited to the supernatural, the miraculous, and the spectacular.

10. The Eschatology of Bones

One of the more vivid psalms, 32, is a penitential psalm. Its subject is the blessedness of forgiveness (Ps. 32:1-2). In vv. 3, 4, the experience of guilt and its effects is graphically set forth. In v. 5, we have a summary statement of the whole episode, and then, in vv. 6, 7, an appeal to the godly to walk, not in impenitence and guilt, but in grace and forgiveness. God Himself then summons us, in vv. 8, 9, to repentance, and learning from the Lord. Those who have known this experience are then told to rejoice over it, but "many sorrows shall be to the wicked" (Ps. 32:10-11).[14]

In two telling verses, we are given a glimpse of the format of guilt:

> 3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
> 4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. (Ps. 32:3-4)

David did not confess his sin, but his entire being confessed it by psychosomatic ailments. It was more than a whispered confession: it was a roaring. His strength left him, and his very bones aged because of the roaring of his being. God's hand was heavy upon David, whose very "moisture" was "turned into the drought of summer." This image hints at a number of things: David's bones seemed old and dry like a dead man's bones. His strength and energy left him, and the blasting of his "moisture" may *in part* refer to a

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13. "Ilico": *No More Apologies*. (London, England: The Religious Book Club, 1941). p. 76f.
14. H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms*. (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1959). p. 224.

temporary impotence. David's entire being was devastated by the fact of unconfessed guilt.

Must we dismiss this fact on the grounds that David, as a man of God, had a tender conscience, whereas others do not? Some men are indeed brutalized and seemingly impervious to a sense of guilt, but to place a man's sin-acquired thickness of skin over God's work as creator is absurd. God has so made man that man cannot escape his Lord. No man's conscience can acquire enough callouses to escape God's penetration. Men's consciences can be seared with a hot iron (I Tim. 4:2), but no such scar tissue can keep God's truth out.

We have here the eschatology of bones and blood. God's law-word, being written into every atom of man's being, will declare God's truth and judgment (Rom. 1:18-32). We can escape men, but never God. The inevitable eschatological fact is that everything in us and around us will witness to and serve the Lord. Thus, to retreat into our own being is no escape from God: He is there.

A verse, which from my childhood, rings gloriously in my mind, is from the magnificent Song of Deborah: "They fought from heaven: the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20). Nothing in this universe is remote from God and His purpose, and therefore nothing is remote from us when we serve the Lord. The stars in their courses, the seconds, minute, and hours in their passage, war against man in his sin. Eschatology is written into the atoms of creation, and into every moment of time.

This is not all. Not only does history have a pattern of captivity and restoration, of judgment and justice, but also a *shaking* in terms of a planned destruction of everything which is against our Lord and His Kingdom. According to Hebrews 12:22-29,

> 22. But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
> 23. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
> 24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.
> 25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:
> 26. Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying. Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.
> 27. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.
> 28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29. For our God is a consuming fire.

We have here a comparison of two "mounts", Sinai, where God gave the law through Moses, and "mount Zion", the Kingdom of God and the true Jerusalem. These two "mounts" are not seen as contrary, nor as the one superseding the other, but as stages in the Lord's eschatology. On both "mounts", God's sovereignty is plainly manifested. As a result, from both "mounts" judgment went forth.

At Sinai, the people were separated from the mount. Now, in the true Zion, angels and men are invited in one great assembly of the living and dead. It is the great assembly of *the firstborn* of God, all who are members of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. The assembly or congregation come together to exercise their eschatological power. Their names are "written (or, enrolled) in heaven." The image is of citizens enrolled on the register of their city and therefore possessing the full privileges thereof, an important fact in the ancient city. This same image we find also in Exodus 32:32 f.; Revelation 13:8 and 17:8.[15]

To this assembly of citizens, full justice is granted: their vindication by God's judgment, the triumph of truth, and the open triumph of Christ our King. Jesus Christ, as "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2), is He through whom all this is accomplished. Jesus is not *contrasted to* Moses, but rather *connected with* Moses. Moses delivered God's people from the Egyptian bondage; Jesus Christ delivers us from the bondage to sin.

Jesus is also connected with Abel, whose blood cries out for vengeance, i.e., whose blood is an eschatological fact. Restitution must be made for murder, and Abel's blood by God's ordination cries out to God from the ground for justice (Gen. 4:10). Jesus Christ, by His shed blood, affects forgiveness for His people, and by His royal power, vengeance upon all the unrepentant. Christ's blood speaks peace thus as well as judgment. (The blood of Christ brought judgment upon Jerusalem.)

We are therefore not to refuse Him who speaks, God the Son. We are called to responsibility under Him in terms of His word. At Sinai, the mountain quaked, signifying the great shaking of the nations from that time on to the fall of Jerusalem. All the nations of antiquity, like Babylon, were weighed in the balances and found wanting (Dan. 5:25-28). Now the Greater Moses leads a greater shaking, one which will shatter all the nations and leave only the Kingdom of the Lord in power. Thus, the great shaking which began with Moses is now intensified in Christ's Kingdom, to prepare for the triumph of the Lord over all the earth.

The revelation of God at Sinai was a revelation of consuming fire. The revelation at "Mount Zion" manifests only more fully that consuming fire of

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15. Brooke Foss Westcott: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1892) 1952). p. 415.

judgment. The dross of sin is burned up by His judgments, and history, from the fall of Jerusalem, the last episode in the first shaking of the nations, to the triumph of Christ's Kingdom. The powers that be shall be shaken so that only those which cannot be shaken may remain.

11. The Restoration of God's Order

Peter J. Leithart, in his study of *Calvinistic Politics in France and England, 1560-1650* (1982), has called attention to Calvin's eschatology and its relationship to political action among Huguenots and Puritans. Calvin's commentaries on the Psalms and Isaiah are particularly telling in their emphasis on end-point eschatology, or God's manifestations of judgment and blessing in history. I am indebted to Leithart for calling my attention to certain aspects of Calvin's eschatological emphasis.

In his comments on Psalm 11:4, Calvin said in part:

> There is in the words an implied contrast between heaven and earth; for if David's attention had been fixed on the state of things in this world, as they appeared to the eye of sense and reason, he would have seen no prospect of deliverance from his present perilous circumstances. But this was not David's exercise; on the contrary, when in the world all justice lies trodden under foot, and faithfulness has perished, he reflects that God sits in heaven perfect and unchanged, from whom it became him to look for the restoration of order from this state of miserable confusion. He does not simply say that God dwells in heaven; but that he reigns there, as it were, in a royal palace, and his throne of judgment is there. Nor do we indeed render to him the honor which is his due, unless we are fully persuaded that his judgment-seat is a sacred sanctuary for all who are in affliction and unrighteously oppressed. When, therefore, deceit, craft, treachery, cruelty, violence, and extortion, reign in the world; in short, when all things are thrown into disorder and darkness by injustice and wickedness, let faith serve as a lamp to enable us to behold God's heavenly throne, and let that sight suffice to make us wait in patience for the restoration of things to a better state.[16]

Here we see Calvin's emphasis clearly. The goal of history, and God's actions in history, is "the restoration of order from this state of miserable confusion," or, "the restoration of things to a better state." Much earlier, the vitality and power of some of the monastic orders was grounded in this same faith.

Calvin went a step further in his comments on Psalm 82:8, "Arise, O God! judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations":

> It is therefore our bounden duty to beseech him to restore to order what is embroiled in confusion. The reason of this which immediately follows–*for thou shalt inherit all nations*–is understood by some as a

[16] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Vol. VI. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949). p. 164.

> prophecy concerning the kingdom of Christ, by whom God has brought all nations in subjection to himself. But it is to be viewed in a more extensive sense, as implying that God has a rightful claim to the obedience of all nations, and that tyrants are chargeable with wickedly and unjustly wresting from him his prerogative of bearing rule, when they set at nought his authority, and confound good and evil, right and wrong. We ought therefore to beseech him to restore to order the confusions of the world, and thus to recover the rightful dominion which he has over it.[17]

Calvin said, *first*, that it is "our bounden duty" to beseech God to restore His order and end the confusion of sin. For Calvin, prayer is inseparable from action, and thus he meant that we have a duty to work for the restoration of God's order. Calvin, because of the political climate of his day, could not speak as openly as we can, but his hearers understood what he meant. *Second*, Calvin declared that "God has a rightful claim to the obedience of all nations," so that we must assert the crown rights of our Lord over all men and nations. *Third*, tyrants are "chargeable" before God's court and must be charged with tyranny and the confusion of good and evil. *Fourth*, the goal is "to recover the rightful dominion" of the triune God over all things.

In so speaking, Calvin was simply asserting the belief of Christians over the centuries. The Vatican had, in the later Middle Ages, made that recovery and dominion ecclesiastical and institutional rather than theological and juridical. Since then, Protestants and Catholics have alike drifted into a pietistic abandonment of this task.

In Psalm 145:10-11, David says:

> 10. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.
> 11. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.

Calvin in his comment saw God's sovereignty over all things as basic to restoration:

> In using the term *kingdom*, David intimates that this is the tendency of the manifestation of God's works, to reduce the whole world to a state of order, and subject it to his government. He insists upon the excellency of this kingdom, that men may know that things are to be considered as in disorder and confusion unless God alone be acknowledged supreme.[18]

The Lord's purpose in history is to end its "disorder and confusion." This evil results from man's rebellion against God the Lord, God the King. *Unless we submit ourselves, our families, calling, politics, economics, and all things else to God the King, we are a part of that rebellion.* We then seek with the

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17. *Ibid.*, III., p. 336.
18. *Ibid.*, V., p. 277.

tempter and fallen Adam to be our own god and king, our own law and our own self-possession.

There is no sideline living where eschatology is concerned. We are either a working part of God's order, or a working part of Satan's disorder. The myth of neutrality is here as elsewhere a delusion. Eschatology is a fact of everyday life, and to be supposedly "neutral" towards eschatology is to deny the Lord and to be irrelevant. It is a sad fact that Lutheranism is on the whole indifferent to eschatology, and this fact is important in understanding the tragic failures of Lutheran history.

Calvin cited Psalm 82 in speaking of the restoration of order. That psalm is most instructive in this respect:

> 1. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.
> 2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
> 3. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
> 4. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
> 5. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
> 6. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.
> 7. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
> 8. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations.

It is ironic that one of the better expositions of this psalm is by H. C. Leupold, a Lutheran, but its eschatological application *to our time* is missed by too many Lutherans.[19] The term "gods" here refers to courts of law and judges. The Old Testament speaks of bringing a man to God, i.e., to a court of law where God's law is applied. We find this usage in the Hebrew of Exodus 21:6 and 22:8,9. We are told repeatedly that judgment is to be given in terms of God's law, and "the judgment is God's" (Deut. 1:17). Jehoshaphat, on appointing judges, tells them, in terms of God's law, "For ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts" (II Chron. 19:6-7).

In this psalm, Asaph tells us that God is "in the assembly of the mighty," or the Mighty, this being one of the names or titles of God.[20] The word *assembly* is one commonly used in the Hebrew for Israel. In the midst of the rulers, who are called *gods*, He judges. Rulers and judges are said by Scripture to sit on the throne of the Lord (I Chron. 29:23). Hence, as long as civil rulers and judges rule in terms of God's law, they are called *gods*,

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19. H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms*. (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1959). pp. 592-596.
20. J. A. Alexander: *The Psalms, Translated and Explained*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, reprint of the 1864 edition). p. 349.

elohim, because they sit in effect on God's throne. Our Lord makes clear that, when men apply God's law-word faithfully, they are properly called gods, because they function for God the King and Lawgiver (John 10:31-36).

That rulers and judges are intended by this term *gods* is clear in vv. 2-5. They are indicted for ruling unjustly, accepting or showing partiality to the wicked. They are ordered to administer justice to the otherwise defenseless, the poor, needy, and fatherless. Because these judges and rulers refuse to obey God and to understand His law and their place under Him, "all the foundations of the earth are out of course," or are shaken. Therefore God's judgment will fall upon those who refuse to apply God's law, and they, who were called *gods*, will die like any other man who despises God's law, or like the princes, i.e., any pagan ruler, who, holding an exalted position abuses it.

The concluding verse, "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations," is not the expression of a pious hope. Rather, it is comparable to the proclamation of a court officer, as he heralds the decision and conclusion of a decision by the Great Judge.

This psalm is not only an eschatological one, but a statement concerning the role of political leaders, lawyers, and judges in God's end-point eschatology. As Calvin in commenting on the psalms pointed out, the restoration of God's order is basic to the task of all Christians, and central to those in authority. Failure to work for the restoration of God's order means that we are a part of the disorder to be overcome.

The foundations of the earth being out of course or shaken has reference to a moral and physical fact. There is a moral dereliction; men and nations are off course, and there is a physical shaking in history and the natural realm. One disaster leads to another.

12. Eschatology and Prayer

One of the most obvious facts about prayer is that it is eschatological in nature. Every time we pray, we are witnessing to our personal doctrine of eschatology. Is our praying in essence self-centered, or do we have Christ's Kingdom in view? Do we feel that the goal of history is personal self-fulfillment, or do we seek "first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33)? The strength of liturgical prayer is that it fixes our praying on things more than ourselves, on the totality of Christ's work and kingdom; its weakness is the insufficient emphasis on our personal life and needs. On the other hand, extemporaneous prayer among evangelicals becomes too often narrow and personal and overlooks the full extend of God's Kingdom.

Paul, in I Timothy 2:1-4, declares:

> 1. I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.
3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

The meaning of this passage is usually lost in the controversy over verse 4: does God will the salvation of all men? Thus, to understand this text, let us first look at this "problem." The verdict of Calvin was that this sentence has nothing to do with salvation.[21] John Gill wrote at length to refute the opinions of Arminians on this text, stating in part:

> By *all men* whom God would have to be saved, we are not to understand every individual of mankind, since it is not the will of God that all men, in this large sense, should be saved; for it is his will that some men should be damned, and that very justly, for their sins and transgressions; *ungodly men, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation* (Jude 4); and to whom it will be said, *go, ye cursed into everlasting fire.* Moreover, if it was the will of God that every individual should be saved, then every one would be saved; for who hath resisted his will? or can do it? Does he not do *according to his will in the armies of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth*? (Rom. ix. 19; Dan. iv. 35; Eph. i. 11).
>
> Nay, does he not *work all things after the counsel of his own will*? and it is certain that all men, in this large sense, are not saved, for some will *go away into everlasting punishment*, when the *righteous* shall go *into eternal life* (Matt. xxv. 46).[22]

The word translated as *saved* is the Greek *sozo*, in I Timothy 2:4, *sothenai*. It *can* mean salvation, but it often has another sense and must not be restricted to salvation unless the text obviously requires it. The word comes from a root meaning *safe*, and it can and often does mean safe from material and temporal dangers, as in the case of the cry of the disciples in the storm at sea: "Lord, save us: we perish" (Matt. 8:25). The disciples were not talking about salvation from hell to heaven but being saved from drowning. With this meaning in mind, let us look at the text.

First, Paul requires that we pray for *all men*, and he makes clear that this includes prayers "for kings, and for all that are in authority." It required a commandment to make such prayers a part of the life of the church. Even in the best of times before the outbreak of persecution, civil authorities in Judea *and* the Roman Empire were anything but popular. The distaste men have felt in recent years for presidents like Carter and Reagan is mild compared to the distaste then of Jews and Christians alike for all civil rulers. As a result, Paul not only had to require such prayers but add, in v. 8, "I will therefore that men

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21. John Calvin: *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 54.
22. John Gill: *The Cause of God and Truth.* (Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, (1738) 1978). p. 50.

pray every where, lifting up holy hands, *without wrath and doubting."* To pray with wrath meant to pray with bitterness concerning rulers. It was not easy to avoid this, but it was a Biblical mandate, and one required in Israel. We should remember that even in the times of pogroms in Old Russia, Orthodox Jews prayed for the tsar as a religious obligation.

The question then remains, how shall we pray for such men, for civil authorities? Too often in the church prayers for rulers are simply meaningless, i.e., "bless the president, Lord," which often is tantamount to saying, "Bless evil, Lord." The prayer in the *Book of Common Prayer* (Episcopal) is somewhat better than this, but still leaves something to be desired:

> A Prayer for The President of the United States, and all in Civil Authority.
> O Lord, our heavenly Father, the high and mighty Ruler of the universe, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favor to behold and bless thy servant THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, and all others in authority; and so replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way. Endue them plenteously with heavenly gifts; grant them in health and prosperity long to live; and finally, after this life, to attain everlasting joy and felicity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Erastian nature of the Church of England at the time of the adoption of the Book of Common Prayer limited this prayer. Calvin, facing a hostile civil order in Geneva almost all his life, still dealt plainly and Biblically with the matter of prayers for rulers. The General Prayer in his Daily Offices reads thus, with respect to civil authorities:

> Rule thou and govern with thy Spirit all kings, princes, and lords, who hold the administration of the sword; that their dominion be exercised not in avarice, cruelty, and oppression, or any other evil and inordinate affection, but in all justice and rectitude. May we also, living under them, pay them due honor and reverence, and lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty.[23]

John Knox was in unceasing conflict with the state, but, in his "Prayer for the Whole Estate of Christ's Church." paragraph 3, which is for civil rulers, is milder than Calvin's General Prayer:

> Moreover, because the hearts of rulers are in thine hands, we beseech thee to direct and govern the hearts of all kings, princes, and magistrates, to whom thou hast committed the sword; especially, O LORD, according to our bounden duty, we beseech thee to maintain and increase the noble estate of the Queen's Majesty, and her commonwealth. Let thy fatherly favor so preserve her, and thine Holy

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[23] Charles W. Baird: *The Presbyterian Liturgies.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1957). p. 68f.

> Spirit so govern her heart, that she may in such sort execute her office that thy religion may be purely maintained, manners reformed, and sin punished, according to the precise rule of thine holy word.[24]

Catholic liturgies have often been more ready to remember persecuted Christians than civil rulers, and Protestant churches have too often neglected prayers for the persecuted. *The New Saint Andrew Bible Missal* which was prepared by a Missal Commission of Saint Andrew's Abbey in 1966, is a missal for the lay Christian and includes the following "Intentions" for one celebration:

> 1. That Christian people everywhere assume their responsibility to be witnesses to God's kingdom in matters of state: we pray to the Lord.
> 2. That Christian officials by their obedience and witness to the truth prove their belief that all power comes from God: we pray....
> 3. That our persecuted brethren by their patience convince their masters of the power and rights of God: we pray....
> 4. That the new nations of the world do not become self-centered or forget the rights of other countries and of God's people everywhere: we pray....
> 5. That the members of our parish assembly accept in every way their duty to take part in the affairs of this community: we pray....[25]

In each of these liturgies we have cited, we see more clearly what Paul intended in I Timothy 2:1-4.

Second, we can summarize what we have been setting forth thus: Paul in these verses is concerned with the peaceable and favorable social conditions which make possible the propagation and growth of the Kingdom of God. We pray for rulers that they provide us with a social order, in spite of themselves, in which we can "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." We pray for "all men" (other than criminals) that in the discharge of their callings, they contribute to that general state of safety and order, and we pray that all men "be saved" or be safe and free from peril in this world. We are to give thanks for all men, because the truckers bring us our food, the postmen our mail, the industrial workers our technology, the farmers grow our food, and so on. We pray not only for our safety but theirs, because we need to recognize our interdependence. Instead of expressing wrath against any group in society, we are to give thanks for their contributions to the general welfare. We can see why Calvin dismissed any reference in v. 4 to soteriology. It is such praying which Paul says "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour," but it is such praying we generally most neglect.

Third, this does not mean that we are not to pray for the eternal salvation of all men. Our Lord requires this in the Lord's Prayer, but it is not man-centered but God-centered. We do not pray that John Doe be saved from hell,

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24. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
25. *The New Saint Andrew Bible Missal.* (New York, N.Y. Benziger Brothers, 1966). p. 719f.

but that John Doe serve and glorify God as a redeemed member of His Kingdom. The priority is the Kingdom of God. Our Lord therefore teaches us thus:

> 9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
> 10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
> 11. Give us this day our daily bread.
> 12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
> 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Matt. 6:9-13)

Our daily needs have an emphatic place in the Lord's Prayer, but the priority is on giving Him the glory, hallowing or making holy His Name and every aspect of His approach to us. His word (the Bible), the church, and more. We are to pray that His Kingdom come, that it rule in our hearts and in the hearts and lives of all men. Our lives and therefore our prayers must be God-centered, because the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are not man's but the Lord's.

Thus, in terms of I Timothy 2:1-4, 8, we pray that a "quiet and peaceable life" be possible for us and for all men, in order that Christ's work may flourish. This does not mean that we do not pray for judgment. The judgment of God upon sin is a necessity for order, and a step towards its realization. We are commanded to pray for all men and to remember the contributions of all to our common life. We may be irritated with the power company, the mails, the auto mechanics, and others, but are dependent upon them, and indebted to them, and they to us. We need that stable and safe society in order to further our task of evangelization and bring all to "the knowledge of the truth." A state of anarchy or disorder is not conducive to anything worth while, although our God is able to bring good out of all things (Rom. 8:28).

We also work to bring men into Christ's Kingdom as a redeemed people, glorifying God and serving His Kingdom.

To read I Timothy 2:1-4 in terms of a purely personal and soteriological interpretation is to miss its point. What Paul had to say was not new. When Judea was taken captive into Babylon, the grief and bitterness of the people was intense. Psalm 137 is a witness to that fact, and God recognized the validity of their bitterness. Judgment was indeed to come to Babylon, and, as they had treated Judea, so too they would be treated. And yet, in the face of this, God through Jeremiah sent word to the captives in Babylon *to pray for Babylon*: "And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. 29:7). In the providence of God, Nebuchadnezzar was converted (Dan. 4:28-37). Irrespective, God's people were to pray for Babylon, that its peace make possible their peace and prosperity.

Prayer thus is to have God's end-point eschatology in mind. It cannot be egocentric. The Kingdom of God requires that all things serve God, and we are told that even the wrath of man shall praise God (Ps. 76:10). Our praise should be self-consciously so, in word, thought, and deed, and surely in prayer. God has a work to do in our time; we need to pray that we are a part of it, and that our times and the rulers thereof be so ordered that Christ's Kingdom prosper and flourish. The more we thank God for all men and their part in that order, the more our Lord will bless us therein.

13. Eschatology and Causality

The question of causality is a very interesting one. Over the centuries it has greatly concerned philosophers and scientists, who have seen it as essential to knowledge and understanding. The attempts, however, to comprehend causality suffered from two serious defects. *First*, they were simplistic, and, *second*, they were materialistic. The two are very much inter-related. One classic analysis of causality, early in the modern era, epitomizes both errors. Cause and effect were seen in billiard ball terms: when one billiard ball is propelled across the table and strikes another causing motion in the second ball, we have cause and effect. We also have the diminution of energy from ball to ball; as each ball hits another, the energy and motion diminishes. This simple picture was most gratifying to the Enlightenment era, because it "explained" causality simply and materialistically.

As time passed, however, this model was shown to be defective precisely because of its simplicity. The world, it was held, does not give us a simple cause and effect pattern; instead of one cause for one effect we have a multiplicity of causes converging to produce an effect, or a multiplicity of effects. Genetically speaking, all of us represent a vast network of genes converging to produce us.

As a result of this fact, *concerns* for causality have been by-passed by philosophers and scientists alike. The problem is that there are too many of them. Moreover, since the *only* place God was given in the scheme of causality was as the First Cause, causality was seen in essentially non-theistic terms. God was simply a limiting concept, providing the necessary starting point in the causality chain. When the causality problem was dropped, the God-concept was also dropped by modern philosophy and science.

The Bible tells us, however, that God has a purpose in creation, and that He is always active in the totality of the universe. Deism and its absentee God were logical inferences from the older concept of causality. Once the First Cause set the billiard balls in motion, all things proceeded in terms of a loss of energy and a declining universe.

Given this premise, any eschatology which assumes the older scientific out-look will of necessity have a perspective which requires that all things

decay and go downhill; the good will be a part of this decay and the age of gold will go from iron finally to clay. Amillennial thinking holds plainly to such a view, as does premillennialism, which requires the great miracle of the Second Coming and the millennial age to alter it.

The Bible, however, gives us a very different view of causality. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 tell us that decay is not a natural but a moral fact, and renewal is the outcome of covenant faithfulness. In fact, such faithfulness will lead to the regeneration of the earth, radically changed circumstances among animals, and a greatly increased life span for man (Isa. 65:17-25). All this is impossible in terms of naturalistic science, but it is one of the most basic premises of Scripture.

For the Bible, causality is a covenantal and eschatological fact. God's purpose is from all eternity: this is predestination. At the same time, despite, or rather together with this divine causality, we have the moment by moment responsibility to and interaction with God and His righteousness. The billiard ball analogy was very false in the view it gave of causality. It led to a non-Biblical determinism. If God set the first ball into motion, then all subsequent motions were totally *mechanical* products of the first act. If some accident of evolution set the first ball into motion, or something in our original environment or heredity, again a *mechanical effect* followed. Instead of an interaction between the Sovereign Life, the triune God, and a created life, made in God's image, man, only a *mechanical cause and effect* existed. The Bible affirms a personal causality between the primary freedom of God and the secondary freedom of man.

All "solutions" to the problem of causality leave us with a mystery. So too does the Biblical one. The difference, however, is this: the materialistic views of causality leave us with a non-personal world of atomic billiard balls; the Biblical faith does justice to the reality of the world around us and our experience of it.

In terms of this, let us examine briefly Isaiah 58, remembering that the causality it gives us is both *personal* and *covenantal*:

> 1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.
> 2. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching to God. (Isa. 58:1-2)

God requires Isaiah to cry aloud, at the top of his voice as it were, i.e., to make it a central effort of his preaching, to let the people know of their sins and transgressions. The people regard themselves as a faithful covenant nation because they are careful to go through all the prescribed forms of religion. They equate the observances of formal religion with observance of God's law; they delight in the form and the hearing, but not in the doing. They want

justice ("they ask of me the ordinances of justice") without seeking to be just. They delight in religion as ritual and observance of forms, not as righteousness, faithfulness to God's law.

> 3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.
>
> 4. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.
>
> 5. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?
>
> 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?
>
> 7. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? (Isa. 58:3-7)

In v. 3, the first two sentences give us the response of the worshippers. They complain that God is blind; He has not seen their fasting, and the afflicting of their souls by pious religious exercises. God's answer is that, on the day of their fast, i.e., the Day of Atonement, there is no attention to the meaning of atonement. Also, on that day they make their workers go on working and drive them hard. Their fasting only gives vent to wickedness, not to prayers, so that the Day of Atonement becomes a day of sin. If they do observe the day formally, with sackcloth and ashes, it is only an outward compliance with no inner faith.

The fast God wants is a day of rededication to observing His covenant law. This means overthrowing wickedness and freeing those in bondage to injustice. This may refer to the failure to release bond-servants, among other things. In Jeremiah 34:8-22, we have an indictment of such a failure. Every unjust yoke is to be broken. The hungry and needy covenant brothers must be cared for. True fasting results in clothing the naked, i.e., making sure that the essentials of life are provided. They are not to hide themselves from the need of their own flesh, i.e., their kindred. While elsewhere the needs of others are mentioned, here we have the same emphasis and requirement as in I Timothy 5:8: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." The word *flesh* is used in the sense of kindred in Genesis 29:14; 37:27, and II Samuel 5:1.

> 8. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be tht rereward.

> 9. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;
> 10. And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday;
> 11. And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thou soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.
> 12. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.
> 13. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:
> 14. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. (Isa. 58:8-14)

Of the first words of v. 8, E. J. Young commented:

> The introductory *Then* is of tremendous significance, for it points to the time when the glorious change will have occurred and God's people will do those things just described. In these first two clauses the emphasis falls upon speed. Elsewhere Isaiah uses the verb *break forth* of the hatching of eggs (59:5) and of water gushing forth (35:6). The word seems to suggest suddenness, swiftness, and novelty.[26]

This is an emphatic declaration of religious and moral causality, or, more simply, of theological causality. The world and man, physical and non-material, are governed by God, and all causality is in terms of His covenant. Our healing and restoration shall be like a plant springing up.

Moreover, when we cry for help, the Lord God will answer, and will shower His blessings upon us, if we are faithful to Him, and to His covenant law-word. He only answers when we turn from evil to righteousness or justice, when we put away oppression (v. 9). Not only must we put away oppression, but we must see ourselves as one with our kindred and our fellow covenant men. We must be concerned with the oppression of any man, and end it. We must have *compassion with action* for the hungry and the afflicted (v. 10).

Then the Lord will guide us continually. In the time of drought and hunger, we shall be blessed and fattened. Our light will shine, and the dark hours of our lives will be as the noonday sun. We shall be like "a watered garden." This analogy is most telling. An area depending on rains has an uncertain

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[26.] Edward J. Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. III. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). p. 421.

watering, an irrigated area a more dependable one, but none more dependable or better cared for than a chosen garden. We are also then "like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (v. 10-11). The cause for this is the Lord, who is the cause of all things. Plainly, eschatology and causality are very clearly inseparable.

Then we and our true heirs become the rebuilders of the earth. We make the world a fitting place for covenant life. God's grace pours out upon us continuously. We live in terms of godly reconstruction, and God's grace is central to it. In Young's words,

> Thus, ever abounding continuous grace comes to man from the God of all bounty. It is only man's sin, as Calvin points out, that can stop its course.[27]

The purpose of this restoration is to establish godly man in covenant life. We become "The restorer of paths to dwell in." Covenant man is God's appointed lord over the earth (v. 12).

Our delight must be in the Lord, not in our own goals. Thus, *God's eschatology* must be our eschatology (vv. 13-14). It is not our deliverance from tribulation, nor anything that centers on us. It is the Kingdom of God and His justice or righteousness (Matt. 6:33).

If we deny this Biblical doctrine of causality, and its inseparable relation to eschatology, then we are left with a Bible which can only be mined for stray spiritual nuggets. It has no governing word then for the totality of life and creation.

If we affirm this doctrine, then we at every point have to do with the God who is closer to us than we are to ourselves. We then too have His governing word that gives us the key, power, and plan for victory in all things. Having this wealth, to beggar ourselves by abandoning it is an amazing thing.

Because the Biblical doctrine of causality has been denied, we have been prone to false eschatologies. God has been pushed out of most of history and relegated to an occasional interference, mostly in the past. Christ's work ended to all practical intent with His ascension. And the Holy Spirit has become an intruder, whose work, apart from a vague spiritual influence, ended with the New Testament canon. The results of such a view are all around us in the impotence of the church. Given the humanistic view of causality, the triune God is to all practical intent dead or asleep. To affirm Scripture without a Biblical doctrine of causality is in effect to deny it.

14. The Necessary Connection

Causality means that there is a necessary connection between events. It is important to begin with this definition, because it tells us in part why the

[27] *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 424.

concept of causality, since Hume, is largely by-passed in the modern world. The idea of a necessary connection is alien to the world of humanism, because it presupposes a necessary order and a necessary governing agency, God.

In Aristotle's day, a first cause, God, was still posited to avoid an infinite regress, but, beyond that, God had no real function for Aristotle. For him, something had to initiate change; the change was then identifiable and orderly, thus subject to analysis; and the change had a goal or an end. Causality thus dealt with a universe of meaning, and the entelechy of things could be studied.

In the modern age, with the 18th century, causality was made mechanistic and material, and also contiguous to the effect, i.e., as with one billiard ball striking another. Causality thus became non-theological and mechanical, or at the least physical. However, the theological implications inherent in the idea of causality led to its replacement by other concepts: regularity, probability, sufficient condition, and the like, such as contributory condition. The word *causality* does not often appear in contemporary scientific and philosophical thinking, and its use will bring a pained expression to the faces of many in the academic establishment, but the idea is still presupposed and functions in practice if not in theory.

In practice, this sub rosa use of the causality concept is important, because it gives to causality, in view of the history of the idea, a *materialistic* and a *past-oriented* nature. As we have seen, it is materialistic, in that, behind every effect, there is a long chain of physical causes stretching back into infinity. It is past-oriented, because the present effect is viewed in terms of this long physical chain. We explain animal and human biology in terms of remote time and long, slow, physical changes and evolution. We explain our problems, personality conflicts, psychological difficulties, and the like in terms of the past, the family, race, and more. Causality is thus *limited* to the past, and to material causes, in our popular thinking.

The 18th century and Deism saw God merely as the first cause. The Bible declares God to be the omnipresent and constant cause. Regeneration is not a "cause" from out of the past, nor from material sources. It is a present and immediate act of God, totally His doing, and one dramatically negating our past. Paul, in Ephesians 4:20-32 tells Christians that they, who were once bound by a former behavior governed by the old man, are now renewed in Christ; they are a new creation, and they can thus drop theft, corrupt communications, and more. Their lives now have a new direction because there is a new life and a new causality operative in them. *The necessary connection* between all things, all persons and events, is now Jesus Christ. He is not a past cause but a present one.

Dispensationalism limits the causality of God; certain things could be true in the Old Testament, others can occur now, and still others in the future.

However, unless the Bible itself declares that something is at an end, such as animal sacrifices, we cannot limit either God's word or God's working.

Neither can we limit God as the omnipresent and absolute cause of all things, *not merely their original cause but their continuous and sustaining cause*. The very present reality of God as the Lord means that not only is He closer to us than we are to ourselves, but that He is also the very present and governing cause in all our being. Now to say that God is closer to me than I am to myself does not make me absent from my own being. Rather, it means that God, with His total knowledge, and because "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13), is closer to us than we are to ourselves and knows us better than we can ever be able to know our own being. God's presence and knowledge does not obliterate our presence and knowledge but rather undergirds it.

The same is true of God's determination. Our creaturely freedom and responsibility are not curtailed by God's freedom and predestination but are rather made possible by it. We do not operate in a meaningless vacuum in which freedom has no meaning but rather in a totally meaningful context in which we, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), live, and move, and have our being in God the Lord (Acts 17:28). There is at every moment an interaction; the fact that He is the sovereign and governing power does not negate the reality of our own decisions and freedom. Predestination establishes the reality of a world of purpose and meaning and our place therein. We have then neither an empty and meaningless world of chance, nor the mechanical causality of Newton's world; man has no freedom in either view.

Prayer cannot become the vital force it is intended to be unless we reject the humanistic views of causality. Prayer presupposes the sovereign God who has ordained and controls all things and who hears and answers prayer. There is thus implicit in prayer God's sovereign predestination and our free interaction with Him by His grace. The classic statement of this compatibility of predestination and our secondary freedom is in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter V. According to Section 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.

The Confession goes on to say that all things are used by God "to raise them (i.e., His people) to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself."

If God is not the determiner of all things, there is no point in prayers to Him; if God does not hear and answer prayers, there is again no point to prayer. This involves a mystery, but life is full of mysteries. We do not

postpone eating and drinking until we understand the processes of digestion and the vital role of water in life. We daily accept mystery in our physical universe without rejecting it; to refuse mysteries in the transcendental realm of God's being means that we reject them because we make a demand of God we do not make of the world, our friends, and ourselves, namely, to be totally knowable and understandable.

At any rate, we cannot accept the modern world-view and its concepts of causality without an implicit denial of the God of Scripture. Of course, all too many professing Christians do combine their faith with a materialistic idea of causality; the result is that God is for them remote, or else God's contact with history is sporadic and intrusive. Since the universe is God's creation, no one is less an outsider to it than He. His actions in history are thus not occasional intrusions but total possession, control, and interaction.

This is important to an understanding of the doctrine of the Spirit. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been neglected in the history of the church because Greek and Enlightenment views of causality have been so prevalent. As a result, where doctrines of the Spirit gained attention, as in frontier revivalism and then later in Pentecostalism, the working of the Spirit was seen as something alien, strange, and intrusive. Instead of the Spirit bringing man to the fuller realization of his being, the experience meant an abandonment of reason, and abnormal behavior. In frontier revivalism, it meant "the jerks," convulsive reactions, rolling around on the ground, and more. The Spirit being seen as an outsider to this world, His entrance was seen as of necessity a disturbing one. In Exodus 31:3, however, we see God declaring to Moses that the filling with the Spirit of God means being "in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." The Spirit meant for Bezaleel the realization of his God-given potentialities. More recently, some branches of the charismatic movement are coming to this realization and are seeing the work of the Spirit as a commanding of the believer in dominion action.

When our Lord speaks of the Spirit, He speaks of Him as the one who links God and the believer in dominion action. Our Lord's reference to the Spirit is preceded by the call to keep His commandments:

> 15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.
> 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
> 17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.....
> 23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
> 24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

> 25. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.
> 26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
> (John 14:15-17, 23-26)

By separating this promise of the Spirit from its context, the meaning has been altered. It is clear, *first*, that to love the Lord means to keep His commandments. Our Lord identifies Himself with the Father. His word is not a new word but the word of the Father who sent Him. All of Scripture is one word. Our Lord is always emphatic about His continuity with the word spoken from the beginning. He comes to fulfil it, to put it into force.

Second, if we keep His commands, the Father and the Son will send us the gift of the Spirit. This is a permanent and an abiding gift; our Lord sends Him "that He may abide with you forever." The world *cannot* receive the Spirit, only those who "keep my commandments," or who "keep my words." Thus, the Spirit is *not* with the men of this world, nor with or in those who do *not* obey the word of God.

Third, the Spirit is the Paraclete, Advocate, or Comforter. He is the Spirit of truth. Our Lord says, "my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:16-17). When we obey God's law-word, we have the gift of the Spirit, who, as the Spirit of truth, enables us to know the doctrine. Thus, there is a very present interaction between God and man whereby the redeemed man, being faithful or obedient, has the gift of the Spirit who teaches us "all things." Faithfulness, action, and knowledge are thus linked, and the causal factor in all is the Spirit. The Spirit also governs our memory ("He shall....bring all things to your remembrance"), because He governs all our being.

Fourth, we come now to eschatology. The Spirit works in us to fulfil God's purposes. We are made a new creation; we are given grace to keep the Lord's law-word, and we are given knowledge and wisdom. It is impossible for a man to be regenerated without consequences for his life, his family, community, and world. Consider then the implications of the conversion of a million, a hundred million, or billions. When in the creation "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2), the form of creation came forth. When the Spirit of God moves in the lives of men, the new creation comes forth in and through them.

The Spirit is at work in recreation. In that task, He now works in and through men. The world around us may be like a valley of dry bones, but, as God made clear to Ezekiel, He is able to make dry bones live and serve Him (Ezek. 37:1-14). He told Ezekiel then, "And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live" (Ezek. 37:13-14). The dry bones of this world may not know it, but God is totally at

work today, bringing forth a new creation. He is the necessary cause, connection, and power between all events.

15. Motivation

One of the situations I have learned to dislike over the years occurs when a woman traps me and her husband or son in a situation where departure is tantamount to being very rude, and then starts a religious discussion to give me an "opportunity" to convert her husband or son. The husband or son is angry and sometimes insulting; I try to keep quiet, since people are not converted by words or arguments but by the Holy Spirit, Who does not favor strident words or emotional pleas. On one such occasion, the husband answered his wife with disgust and contempt, as well as a resentment I shared. Life, he said, was a product of an accident; there was no God, and, if there were, He would not have a hell and no second chance, but opportunities for all. His wife spoke of the dramatics of death and hell. I tried to keep out of it, knowing none of the discussion or argument was profitable. The man, however, turned to me cynically, asking, "What happens when we die?", expecting to hear more about hell and judgment, and ready to pounce on me with ridicule. Without aforethought, I answered briefly, "Nothing much, only more of the same. If life now is for us meaningless, then we are also, and so is our future; if life for us now is salvation and the Lord, then that is our future. It's the same life we live here brought to its fullness." Neither liked the answer, but it ended the futile discussion. My answer was far from adequate, but at least it pointed to the eschatology of life. In the parable of judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 our Lord tells the sheep and the goats that what they were before their judgment they shall be thereafter.

We have seen the relationship of causality to eschatology, it is important to recognize the relationship of motive and eschatology. Motives are not rationalistic, although they can be reasonable; they are in essence religious. Rationalistic attempts to provide motives are a conspicuous failure. To cite one example, atheists in bygone years held that the spread of atheism would greatly enhance the quality of life. Their rationale was that a belief in life after death led to a failure to prize man's brief span of life on earth. As against eternity, a few decades on earth had less significance. When men realized, atheists held, that life on earth is all there is, then men will value that life highly. Wars and crimes against life will drop dramatically, and reverence for life will replace reverence for God. The contrary has been true. The loss of faith in God has been accompanied by a loss of respect for life. Wars and crimes against life have increased in scope and terror.

This has happened, *first*, because the loss of cosmic meaning renders personal meaning futile. If the universe is an accident of chance and empty of meaning, man cannot establish a meaning against this vast cosmic void. The

loss of a cosmic motive force, God, means the loss of a sound personal motive. The logical reasoning then becomes, Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. The next stage is to be unable to be merry, because life and mirth are alike meaningless. Joy, like all things else, requires a framework. Man feels impotent in the face of an ocean of meaninglessness, and, as a result, the quest for power replaces the quest for meaning. Pragmatism, existentialism, and other modern faiths deny meaning to life, but they aggravate the quest for power. Power can be sought politically, economically, sexually, or criminally, but power in some form replaces God and meaning.

Second, the denial of God means also the denial of responsibility. This was early affirmed by Stirner, also by Nietzsche, and, more recently, by Walter Kaufmann in *Without Guilt or Justice* (1973). If there is no God, there is no final accounting. Evil is more conducive to a senseless universe than righteousness, and men will pursue the course of evil on pragmatic grounds.

Paul stresses the fact of motive constantly. At times, he likens it to a race with a prize at the end (I Cor. 9:24-27). The motivation in that race comes from Jesus Christ, who gives total meaning to every atom and event in the race of life (John 1:3; Rom. 8:28). We are therefore told:

> 1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
> 2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
> 3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.
> 4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. (Hebrews 12:1-4)

The meaning of this text is often lost in the discussions concerning the nature of the "cloud of witnesses." Let us deal with that question briefly. *First*, the cloud of witnesses is described in Hebrews 11, the Old Testament saints who walked by faith, seeking God's Kingdom and seeing themselves as aliens to the fallen world around them (Heb. 11:13-16). These men are not spoken of as witnesses to what we now do but as witnesses to God the Lord. We are summoned to follow them in their witness. It is not the witnesses of old who see us but the Lord. In Hebrews 4:13 we are told, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." This brings us to the heart of motivation. For the unbeliever, the only observers are other men. The atheist has the privacy of his mind, and, if he keeps out of the sight of men, a privacy of actions. The only audience he knows is man. This fact creates a special kind of motivation. If only our words and actions which are observable by men can judge us, then we readily become hypocrites and

actors. Putting on a front is thus essential to humanistic man. Life becomes mainly a front, because the knowledge available to others is *appearances*. Modern philosophy, especially since Hume, has held that the only knowable reality is appearances or phenomena. Things in themselves are unknowable for Kantians; hence to all practical intent the world of reality is the world of appearances. Because of a like epistemological skepticism, the nature of Far Eastern philosophy similarly stressed appearances or phenomena, so that Oriental cultures became *face* cultures, i.e., societies in which *face* or appearance became all that mattered. To lose face was to lose life, and hence, as in Japan, led to suicide.

However, when we know that all things are naked and open to the eyes of the triune God, an emphasis on appearance becomes absurd. Add to this the fact of the indwelling Holy Spirit and you have the simple fact that there is no hiding place for man. The reality of a Christian profession appears at this point. All who know the presence of the Holy Spirit know that there must be a holy unity between the inner and the outer man, because nothing can be hidden from the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.

The difference in motivation is enormous. With the humanist, motivation is concealed behind appearances, and motivation is purely personal, because the world outside of man has neither meaning nor purpose. That personal motivation begins with a rejection of all cosmic meaning and all cosmic justice; as a result, that personal motivation is implicitly beyond good and evil, i.e., it rejects the ultimate reality of truth and morality.

On the other hand, for the Christian, motivation is essentially the work of the Spirit. This means that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. Since the triune God knows us better than we know ourselves, hypocrisy is futile. It does not fool the Spirit: it grieves Him. Thus, we live, and move, and have our being in the Lord and always before His eyes. Either our motivation comes from Him, or our judgment.

Accordingly, we "lay aside every weight." The masks, appearances, and facades our humanism encourages in us must be laid aside, and "the sin which doth so easily beset us." This is our original sin, to be as God and to determine good and evil for ourselves (Gen. 3:5). We are all too prone to see ourselves as the source of judgment, and to indict God if He does not order events to suit us. Because of this original sin, and our proneness to hypocrisy, it requires faith and patience for us to run our race. We are impatient with the Lord, Who is very patient with us.

Second, our motivation is in "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." This is Jesus in His humanity, in His office as our Adam, the head of the new humanity and the giver of the Spirit. In Hebrews 11, we have a summary history of the men of faith, a great cloud of witnesses from the past. Now we are told to look to Jesus, in Whom we are re-created, as the great

witness and as our motive force. He is the great exemplar of faith, the perfect Man. The sufferings of the Old Testament saints, and our own sufferings, are nothing compared to His Who "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." We are the children of God in Him, "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" (Rom. 8:17). This is, of course, an eschatological statement. It gives us the motive for triumphant joy even in adversity. Most of us have not "resisted unto blood, striving against sin," so we have no reason to be discouraged or down hearted.

Our regeneration gives us a motive. It means that we are a new creation. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or, creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). We belong to the new creation; we are the people of the Lord and of His victory over sin and death. For us, all things work together for good, because we are the Lord's (Rom. 8:28), but, for the unregenerate, all things work together for evil: they cannot win. The reverse of the Golden Rule is their lot. As the Lord declares through Obadiah, "For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head" (Obadiah 15; cf. Lamentations 1:22; Jeremiah 50:29).

As members of Christ, we know the meaning of life, time, and history. We are never alone. We are governed by the Holy Spirit, and we are not our own. The motivating force and power in our lives is the Lord and His victory.

16. The Real Presence and Eschatology

The doctrine of God tells us, among other things, of God's transcendence and immanence. God transcends creation; He is uncreated Being, separate in essence and nature from the realm of creation. God the Creator cannot be confused *or intermingled* with His creation. He is separate from it and beyond it. At the same time, God is also immanent; He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. "All things were made by Him: and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Every atom of creation, and the universe within and without each atom, bears His imprint, His total knowledge thereof, and His decree. He is omnipresent, and He knows us better than we can ever know ourselves, because we are totally naked and open to His sight (Heb. 4:13), but not to our own. David speaks of this omniscience, omnipresence, and immanence of God movingly:

> 1. O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.
> 2. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.
> 3. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
> 4. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

5. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.
6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.
7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
9. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
10. Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
11. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me.
12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee: but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
13. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
14. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. (Psalm 139:1-14)

There is no person, moment, nor event in time and history and God is not there. God is the great witness and governor of all things. Just as civil governments make laws and then enforced them as best they can, so too God the Lord, having given us His law-word, is ever present to enforce it in terms of His own plan and purpose. Thus, we are told in Deuteronomy 5:16, "Honor thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." This is the eschatology of law. God makes clear that there is a connection between longevity and prosperity on the one hand, with honoring one's parents on the other. This must be held as an article of faith with this proviso: God's causality is not simplistic; other factors and causes may intervene whereby God decrees otherwise in particular instances, but, as a general rule of law, this is the case; Deuteronomy 5:16 is a statement of fact.

God thus is present in all places and events. There is a close connection between God and His creation. He is never an absentee God nor a remote One. We have seen some of the factors which have led to man's sense of the remoteness and distance of God. Let us now examine another. The key to an understanding of it is the Lord's Table. In another context the Biblical doctrine of the Real Presence has been discussed. Let us now view it from another direction.

At the time of the Reformation, some groups broke with the doctrine of the Real Presence, which doctrine was held mainly by Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, and Calvinists on varying Biblical-theological grounds. Many of the Anabaptist groups denied the doctrine, as did Erasmus, a Catholic, Zwingli, a Protestant, and others as well. The roots of this denial are in pagan

antiquity and certainly in Greek dualism. The Albigensians represented a medieval dualistic faith very much against the orthodox doctrine.

This denial of the Real Presence reduces the Lord's Table to a memorial, and baptism to a public affirmation of faith. But in baptism we receive the forgiveness of sins and covenant membership; in communion, we celebrate our covenant membership and our bond with Christ and His people.[28] Granted, that the identification of God with bread, wine, and water can lead and has led to dangerous and heretical beliefs; God and His creation can never be identified or absorbed into one another. On the other hand, to deny that the Word of God and a sensory element can in some sense come together is to abolish God from the world. The spiritual realm of God is separate from the sensory realm but never absent from it. We cannot identify the two realms, but neither can we ever abolish God from the sensory realm. Thus, we must say that the Real Presence *cannot* be identified with the sacramental elements, but neither can He ever be separated from them. Similarly, God's grace cannot be separated from baptism and communion, but neither can it be made one with them.[29] There is a unity between God and the sacraments but not an identity.

Because this fact has been ignored, eschatology has suffered, and end-point eschatology has been neglected.

After we are told in Hebrews 12:1-4 that Jesus Christ is our motivating force, we are then told that God the Lord is no less active in our affairs and times than in Israel's wilderness journeys, when, by His pillar and cloud, He surrounded them and cared for them. Israel in the wilderness had the Real Presence to guide, chasten, rebuke, and bless His people. We too have the same chastening (Heb. 12:5-11); hence, as obedient and chastened children, we are to be a faithful people, lest a root of bitterness destroy us (Heb. 12:12-17). Even more than Israel at Sinai, we are in the camp and presence of the Lord.

> 18. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,
> 19. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:
> 20. (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:
> 21. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)
> 22. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

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[28] Willem Balke: *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981). p. 54.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

23. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

26. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29. For our God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:18-29)

The reference to Sinai is to a very great and supernatural manifestation of God's Real Presence. We are thus dealing here *first* of all with the Real Presence in the Christian era. We are told what it means in terms of eschatology, namely that God is present with us in history to shake all things which can be shaken so that only the unshakable may remain. History is thus a great shaking, and we are to be ourselves among those things which cannot be shaken. At Sinai, there was a mountain that could be (but was not) touched; there was the sound of a trumpet, and "the voice of words." The Real Presence was then not as full as it is now that we are in Christ. The people before Sinai had to stand apart; we of Christ are at the true mount Zion, and we are a part of it. We have the indwelling Spirit and the incarnate Christ, so that the Real Presence now is fuller in its manifestation than at Sinai.

Second, all the more must we "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire." Because the reality of the Presence is now *intensified, not diminished*, the consequences of faithlessness are more devastating. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." God has not left the world to run its own course since the close of the New Testament canon. As God's plan unfolds, our service must be more faithful. We are strictly warned against disobedience. If at Sinai they who touched the mountain lawlessly died, how much more so shall they suffer who have been brought up *into* Mount Zion, into the city of the living God, the company of angels, into "the general assembly and church of the firstborn!" As our Lord makes clear, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48).

Third, we have been brought into the Heavenly Presence in a way Israel did not experience at Sinai (Heb. 12:22 ff.). As Westcott noted, "In one sense the heavenly Jerusalem is already reached: in another it is still sought for: xiii. 14."[30] Too often the church has placed a great wall between God and history; we are told that His Real Presence rules our history. "God, the Judge of all," is not a remote power at the end of history but the very present and determining Lord.

Fourth, all this is because Jesus is the mediator of the renewed covenant with God, a covenant with a new people, who are members of the new humanity of the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-50). His blood is spoken of in the present tense, as a living power and presence in our lives; it speaks, not of victimization, but of salvation and victory.

Fifth, the punishment of Israel (Heb. 12:25 f.) is cited to remind us of our responsibility to *obey* the Lord. The word spoken from the mount at Sinai was the law. We who are redeemed by the blood of Christ must never disobey that word, "For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." There is no valid ground for antinomianism.

Sixth, the process of history, whereby the things which cannot be shaken are separated from those things which collapse under God's shaking (Matt. 7:24-27), brings us ever closer to the great end, the Lord's return and the new creation. In that process, the Real Presence is always active and ruling, and also progressively more manifest in the results, in His Kingdom, and in His people. Because our God is a consuming fire, He not only burns up those things which are not of His making but of sin, but He also purges and purifies us who serve Him. In the words of Malachi:

> 2. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap;
>
> 3. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purge the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. (Mal. 3:2,3)
>
> For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (Mal. 4:1)

On the one hand, destruction, on the other, purifying: thus the Lord will accomplish His purpose.

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30. Brooke Foss Westcott: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1892) 1952). p. 415.

17. The Body

When we come to the "question" of life after death, it is necessary for us to begin by dropping all the pagan ideas which prevail on this subject, most of them being summed up in the doctrines of ancient Greece. The Greeks saw man as made up of two substances or two kinds of being, mind or soul on the one hand, and matter or body on the other. Some Greeks held to a tripartite view which is shared today by many churchmen, man as body, mind, and spirit. For the Greeks, the body perished forever at death, whereas the soul continued a pallid existence as a shade.

The Bible emphatically gives us a different doctrine. Man is created as a unity by God; man is one being, created being. There are different aspects of that being, but it is a unity, a created unity. The Bible does not teach the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul, i.e., that man's spiritual being is imperishable and thus survives the death of matter. On the contrary, we are told that God "only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (I Tim. 6:16). Strictly speaking, immortality means life *before* birth and *after* death, and paganism often so understood it. We receive a different kind of immortality as a part of God's grace and plan, so that we who are corruptible put on incorruption by God's decree, and we who are mortal put on immortality (I Cor. 15:53). God, by His sovereign grace, has created us to put on immortality, but it is not of the pagan variety, and Paul speaks of immortality in I Corinthians 15 in terms of the resurrection of the body.

Our Lord gives us a very telling vision into the subject in Matthew 22:31-32:

> 31. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,
>
> 32. I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

God is emphatically separated by our Lord from the realm of death or extinction. God is life, not death, and separation from God is death. Because sin separated man from God, sin brought death into the world. The essence of death is thus separation from God, who is the essence and the principle of life. When God created man, He created man "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Man was not created a transitional being who was to outgrow his body and realize himself as a spirit. When we are told that God created man "a living soul" (Gen. 2:7), the meaning of *soul* in the Hebrew is "a breathing creature;" it has clear reference to man as a living bodily being. A Greek meaning is commonly read into the word "soul."

Warfield, in commenting on Matthew 22:32, said:

> From the standpoint of the Bible the souls separated from their bodies, though living, are *dead*: they are under the power of death. They are, because dead, still enduring the penalty threatened against sin. The Living God is the God of the living, not of the dead: he cannot have proclaimed himself the God of those hopelessly under the power of death, suffering the penalty of sin. If he proclaims himself, therefore, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, this is proof beyond cavil, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whatever temporarily may be their state, belong fundamentally to the realm of the living, not to the realm of the dead; and cannot therefore be permanently held by the bonds of death. And the realm of the living is the realm where not dead souls are, but where living souls are, souls not suffering disabilities through death. Death cannot have permanent dominion over those whose God is the Living God: in the very nature of the case they belong to the Kingdom of Life. They must therefore emerge from Sheol and return to the light of life–soul and body alike partaking of the undivided life that belongs to human nature. If we believe this, and so far as we believe it, we shall cease to wonder at the effect of our Lord's argument on the people: "And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching." It is the strength of the Old Testament religion....that the Living God has nothing in common with the shades of Sheol: that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" that in him is the fountain of life, which to quaff is to abide forever in fullness of life.[31]

Warfield's point is very important, and it gives us a clear understanding of Scripture. Creation was not an intermediate stage in God's eternity, nor are matter and the physical body created and ordained for a short span of years. To view the material creation as merely a way-station between eternity and eternity is to import Greek philosophy into the Bible. The whole of creation was in God's sight "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Evil is not metaphysical but moral; it is not a matter of time and matter but of moral choice. Satan was never a material being, but by his moral choice fell into sin and reprobation. The birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the vindication of matter and its reclamation together with all other aspects of creation. This vindication and restoration is completed with the resurrection of the dead and the regeneration of all creation (Matt. 19:28).

Life in heaven is thus an intermediate state; man's normative condition is a physical existence without sin or death. The Bible speaks of life in heaven as a "sleep" (I Cor. 15:51), but this is not the heretical doctrine of soul sleep. It is the body that sleeps, not the man, who lives on in heaven. To cite Warfield again,

> These all, dying in Christ, die not but live–for Christ is not Lord, any more than God is God, of the dead but the living. We must catch here the idea that pervades the whole of Jewish thought–inculcated as it is with the most constant iteration by the whole Old Testament revelation–

[31] B. B. Warfield: *Selected Short Writings*, Vol. I. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970). p. 346f.

> that death is the penalty of sin and that restoration from death, that is resurrection, is involved, therefore, in reception into the favor of God.[32]

Thus, it is clear that sin, sickness and death are not natural to the body but are malformations and perversions thereof. God made the body for life; man by his sin has made it the locale of moral and physical death.

The eschatology of the body thus has a key place in Scripture in both the end-point and end-time aspects. *First*, to treat the body with disrespect is to despise God's handiwork and to sin. It is not an accident that dietary laws are a part of scripture. The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," tells us that all life can be dealt with only in terms of God's permission. Life can only be taken in terms of God's law. One of the horrors of abortion is its contempt for physical life.

Second, the practice of medicine is a priestly calling. The word *salvation* comes from a Latin word meaning health. When Jacob, in Genesis 49:18, says, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD," the word he uses, common to the Old Testament, means victory, deliverance, and *health*. This should not surprise us. Since sin means death, and sickness is a step towards death, salvation means in part deliverance from death and therefore health. This tells us too that the quest for health apart from Christ is ultimately self-frustrating, because to reject Him is to deny life and affirm death. A concern for health is thus a valid and necessary Christian concern.

Third, as Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:35-44, the bodies we are born with are only a pale shadow of the resurrection body. The fall and sin have warped our physical existence, and our total being, dramatically. With our regeneration, the restoration of our total being begins. Basic to this restoration is the moral factor, and this means a faithfulness to God's law-word. We are sanctified by God's law, and this has an effect on our total being. Isaiah 65:20 tells us that, as the whole world comes under the lordship of Christ our King, our life expectancy is dramatically increased. Because holiness and righteousness or justice are life, life in Christ brings about changes in man's health and life expectancy, and in the weather (Deut. 28:12).

Fourth, the full restoration of our physical life awaits the end of the world. Our physical existence is a part of God's creation of the universe, and the restoration of our perfect bodily life awaits the restoration of the whole creation at the end of history. The present order shall be melted, burned, and recast into its perfect and final form (II Peter 3:10-14), at which time the resurrection of our bodies will also take place. In the beginning, God created a world which was entirely good as man's habitat (Gen. 1:1-3). In the new creation, a like act occurs. The world and all creation are remade to be

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[32] B. B. Warfield, "The Millennium and the Apocalypse," in *Biblical Doctrines*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House (1929) 1981). p. 652.

eternally good, to be the habitation of life, and man is given the resurrection body to be a citizen of the new creation.

To depreciate the body is to misunderstand the faith. The body has a key place in eschatology, because God works for the redemption and regeneration of all creation. Our end-point eschatology thus calls for the care of the body as God's handiwork, and as a temple of the Holy Spirit, and as God's property (I Cor. 6:13-20). Biblical law does not treat physical sins, such as adultery, lightly, because it does not regard our bodies lightly.

In end-time eschatology, our bodies are ordained for the general resurrection. We thus prepare a body for eternal life or for eternal reprobation and death. Paul says, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot? God forbid" (I Cor. 6:15). We cannot in this life plumb the full meaning of these words, but they do tell us that every act of our body is an act of membership, an affirmation of faith. God is the God of the living, and our every act is an affirmation of life or death.

18. The Body and Christ

St. Paul tells us, with respect to the bodies of all men, that they were created for the Lord, and for His purposes and glory. "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body" (I Cor. 6:13). Our physical being has a function; this use is not for fornication but to serve the Lord and to be a covenant member of His family. We must never forget that the covenant establishes a blood bond between two parties, a kinship. In the covenant of grace, God makes us members by adoption of his family. Since all men in Adam were included in that covenant, all men are by covenant law required to make their bodies God's instruments, and to do otherwise is sin. Sin invokes the covenant penalty of death, but it does not render the covenant law dead any more than grace does. In our dying in Christ and being regenerated by Him, our old man is dead to the law as an indictment and penalty fulfilled in Christ; the law as penalty is dead for us, never the law as the righteousness or justice of God.

Then Paul declares, having said that the body is for the Lord, that the Lord is "for the body." He is our covenant head and our next of kin by grace. As Calvin noted, since "God the Father has united us to his Son, what wickedness there would be in tearing away our body from that sacred connection, and giving it over to things unworthy of Christ!" The covenant fact is that our bodies affirm either a covenant of death or a covenant with the Lord of life.

Paul stresses strongly the fact that this covenant relationship is a vital and determining one. Our physical and mental acts affirm our membership; hence, our Lord stresses the significance of adultery in the heart (Matt. 5:27-

28). Just as God has raised up Christ our Lord, so too He will "raise us up by his own power" (I Cor. 6:14).

> 15. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.
>
> 16. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.
>
> 17. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.
>
> 18. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
>
> 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 (I Cor. 6:15-20).

In the covenant of grace, we are members of Christ, and, because it is a covenant of grace, from an infinite superior to a creature, we are the property of Christ. To be made members of the royal family is the supreme privilege. To take what belongs to Christ and to unite it to a prostitute is an act of treason. In our union with Christ's humanity, we are one body; in our sexual union with a prostitute or an adulteress, or in any act of fornication, we are again one body. The creation word concerning marriage, Genesis 2:24, "and they shall be one flesh," is cited by Paul. Our covenant membership makes us one flesh. The covenant is thus as vital a union as marriage, and is in fact the archetype of it, and marriage is a covenant.

A central covenant fact is not only our union, but also the *indwelling* of the Holy Ghost. Marriage is thus a shadow of the reality of the covenant, because the parties to the marriage covenant do not have an indwelling of the one in the other. Not only are we the Lord's by creation, but by salvation, so that we are doubly His property.

The body thus is not an incidental matter, nor a subordinate fact, of our existence. What one did with the body was (and is) thus very important to Paul. The early church, in terms of Biblical law, regarded certain sins as *irremissible*, because they required the death penalty by law. The church could not enforce that penalty, but it did recognize the repentant sinner of such a status as legally dead and barred them from communion. I Samuel 2:25 says, "If a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?" This was the church's position. On repentance, such sinners were regarded as fellow members who were judicially among the dead. The sins were of three classes. (1) adultery, fornication, and other capital sexual offenses; (2) homicide, which included abortion; and (3) idolatry.[33]

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[33] J.N.D. Kelly: *Early Christian Doctrines*. (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row (1960) 1978). pp. 217ff., 439.

Paul returns to this matter again in I Corinthians 11:27-31, in reference to the Lord's Table:

> 27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
> 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.
> 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
> 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.
> 31. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

Paul here contrasts *profanity* and *discernment*. To be profane is to be outside the temple, here outside of Christ. Those who eat and drink unworthily, who assume the Lord's Table to be like their own, to be a natural rather than a supernatural and grace-endowed and given Table, are profane. They have no discernment of the Lord's body. All too often, "the Lord's body" is taken to refer exclusively to the elements. This is a serious error, and a lack of discernment. It refers, of course, to Jesus Christ and His atonement. There is, however, another very important fact. Both in v. 28 and v. 31, Paul asks us to examine ourselves, and to judge ourselves. It is eating and drinking unworthily and failure to discern the Lord's body which is condemned. Clearly, it is failure to see *ourselves* as a part of Christ's body, the church, which is meant; hence we all need to examine ourselves. When we partake of Christ's body, we are to ask ourselves, what have we done with our body, our person, which is Christ's?

This is why, in the church's history, either an individual or a general confession of sins, or both, has *preceded* communion. Hence, too, words of warning, in addition to Paul's, have fenced off the Table from all who are strangers to Christ by faith or by action. To illustrate, in Calvin's Geneva service, these sentences set forth the ban:

> Wherefore, in obedience to this rule, and in the name and by the authority of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, I excommunicate all idolaters, blasphemers, despisers of GOD, heretics, and all who form sects apart, to break the unity of the Church; all perjurers, all who are rebellious against fathers and mothers, and other superiors, all who are seditious, contentious, quarrelsome, injurious, adulterers, fornicators, thieves, misers, ravishers, drunkards, gluttons, and all others who lead scandalous lives; warning them that they abstain from this Table, lest they pollute and contaminate the sacred food which our Lord JESUS CHRIST giveth only to his faithful servants.
> Therefore, according to the exhortation of St. Paul, let each of you examine and prove his own conscience, to know whether he have true repentance of his sins, and sorrow for them; desiring henceforth to lead a holy and godly life; above all, whether he putteth his whole trust in GOD'S mercy, and seeketh his whole salvation in JESUS CHRIST; and

> renouncing all enmity and malice, doth truly and honestly purpose to live in harmony and brotherly love with his neighbor.[34]

In the Roman Catholic pre-Vatican II Saint Andrew Daily Missal, the prayer in preparation for Holy Communion not only has a petition for deliverance from sin but this: "make me always adhere to Thy commandments and suffer me never to be separated from Thee."[35]

We cannot come to grips with the nature of our covenant union with Christ apart from an understanding of the warning by Paul: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Note Paul's use of *many*; many had sickened, and many had died because of profane communion.

A generation or more ago, the idea of psychosomatic medicine was ridiculed; medical authorities denied that mental states could influence physical health. Now, of course, the reality of such ailments is well known. Doctors, however, once ridiculed the idea and insisted on physical causes only; they saw no psychosomatic sicknesses because they did not believe in them.

The same applies to Paul's warning. We are not accustomed to thinking of sin, such as fornication, leading to sickness, i.e., to a general effect on the person in every respect, and we are not accustomed to seeing profane communion as a cause of sickness or death. Paul, however, is emphatic about this, because our bodies represent a citizenship and membership, a unity either with Christ, or with sin. That membership has total consequences.

19. The Body of Humiliation

How seriously God views the use of the body is stressed in I Corinthians 3:17: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." These words are usually referred to the church, not to the physical bodies of believers. It is true that the primary reference in I Corinthians 3:1-17 is to the church. Paul uses three figures to describe Christ's church in these verses. *First*, it is a field cultivated by men under God's supervision (vv. 4-9). *Second*, it is a building whose foundation is Jesus Christ (vv. 10-15). *Third*, the church is the temple wherein God dwells (vv. 16-17).

However, it is not possible to restrict the meaning of this to the church. In I Corinthians 6:19, it is clear that our physical bodies as well as the church are temples of God. Moreover, (vv. 12-15) Paul refers to "every man's work" and "any man's" actions, indicating that the church as a unit and Christians as individuals are both in mind. This personal frame of reference appears again

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[34] Charles W. Baird: *The Presbyterian Liturgies*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1957). p. 53f.

[35] Dom Gaspar Lefebvre: *Saint Andrew Daily Missal*. (St. Paul, MN: Lolmann, 1949). p. 535.

in v. 18. Plainly, our bodies are equated with the church and regarded as temples. In Christ, we are each of us a holy place and must so regard our bodies.

Temples are sacred places because they are the house of God. How holy they are is apparent in Exodus 3:1-6, the incident of the burning bush. It is the presence of God, a theophany, which makes a temple.

This is not all. When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, to speak of the coming birth of Samson, "Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judges 13:22). Sin cannot live in the presence of God, and the sinner can only stand before Him by His grace. This same fact was the law of kings in antiquity, as apparent in Esther 4:11:

> All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live.

We still have an echo of this in the fact that any approach to presidents and other rulers is by their sufferance and grace alone.

The presence of God was and is death to sin and the sinner. The temple is God's habitation, and its defilement a most serious matter. The law of the tabernacle and thus of the temple was that defilement is death (Lev. 15:31; Num. 19:12). It is to this penalty that Paul refers in I Corinthians 3:17, and indirectly in I Corinthians 6:19. If in the law contact with a dead body gave temporary defilement, how much more so the use of our body, God's temple, for sin of any sort? Hence, we see the condemnation of uniting the body to a prostitute (I Cor. 6:15-18).

The Greeks treated sins of the body lightly, because, matter being a lesser form of being than mind, sins of the flesh were accordingly lesser sins. This heresy has widely infected the church, and sins of the flesh are thus lightly punished. The Greek perspective leads readily to antinomianism, because it depreciates the body and therefore law, since law deals primarily with the problems of a physical world.

Tertullian who is often accused of depreciating our physical natures, insisted that "even gold is earth," so that to depreciate matter is nonsense. He spoke then of "the gold of our flesh," which God purifies by His providence.[36] This is clearly in line with the Biblical emphasis on the body as God's temple.

It is important to recognize the covenant context of the body, as of all things. Man is covenant man. God by His sovereign grace enters into a

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36. Tertullian, "On The Resurrection of the Dead," in *The Writings*, Vol. II. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1874). p. 226.

covenant of grace with man and gives to man His covenant law. God's law is an expression of His nature, so that God's law reveals to us what God is like. When God gives us His law as our covenant law, and by adoption makes us members of His royal family, we are then expected to do more than keep the law. The law must become a part of our nature even as it is basic to and an expression of God's nature. It is only so that the covenant comes into its own, as Jeremiah 31:31 makes clear:

> 31. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
> 32. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:
> 33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
> 34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

If a man is not a walking law in that God's law is second nature to him and governs his being, then he does not belong to this new covenant. The people of the new covenant are those who have God's law written in their inward parts and in their heart. As we have seen, our bodies are called *temples* of God, the housing for God's Holy Spirit.

God's ark of the covenant rested in the Holy of Holies. Within the ark was among other things, a pot of manna and Aaron's rod, symbols of God's miraculous works (Heb. 9:4,5). Within the ark too were the two tables of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 25:16,21; 40:20, Deut. 10:1-5), and the whole of the law or "testimony" (Ex. 25:8,16,21).

Because our bodies are now the new holy of holies, and the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 6:19), we must therefore have the law of God written in our hearts as the law of our being. Profanation of the temple, and, above all, of the Holy of Holies, was a fearful crime, and so too now is any profanation of the body (I Cor. 6:13-20). Thus, very plainly, the body has a very important significance in theology, eschatology, and in everyday life.

At this point it is necessary to examine a very much misused text with respect to the body, Philippians 3:20-21:

> 20. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
> 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all thingsun to himself.

The key word here is *vile*, from a Latin source meaning cheap or worthless. It is a translation of a Greek word, *tapeinosis*, from *tapeinoo*, meaning to depress, humiliate, humble, bring low, or abase; *tapeinosis* means humiliated, a depression in rank or feeling, a low estate. When Paul calls our present bodies *vile*, he means that, because of the Fall, our bodies no longer have their original dignity, status, and power. Our bodies have been humiliated and depressed in abilities because of the Fall. Sin and death are cancers in our physical being, in our total person, to make us *vile*, i.e., humiliated. Our physical and mental potentials are only a fragment of their original powers. With our regeneration, the work of restoration begins, which is only completed by the resurrection of the body.

Thus, what Paul literally says in Philippians 3:21 is that Jesus Christ will change the body of our humiliation. The Fall has humiliated us in all our being. He will change our body to be like His own glorious body. The word *change* is literally *refashion*; we will be remade, so that, while we are still the same person, we have a new appearance which is glorious. There will be a correspondence then between our perfectly sanctified heart and our glorious bodies.

This resurrection body is a glorious fact, and an everlasting one. Hence, it is a prize to work for, Paul declares in I Corinthians 9:24-27:

> 24. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.
> 25. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible.
> 26. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:
> 27. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

All believers must be like athletes in competition. Because there is one prize, all exert their maximum effort. It is an evil indolence on the part of church members to assume that their prize is guaranteed by accepting an altar call. Paul requires an intensive training and faithfulness; only such a course will bring a prize, because only such a dedication will manifest the power of God in us like a consuming fire, and the force of the Holy Ghost. Such a striving requires self-control, and the prize is an incorruptible crown. Paul then calls attention to himself. He keeps his body under control, he buffets it, beats it black and blue according to the literal reading of the text; this symbolizes the rigorous training of an athlete who turns soft muscles into a hard, working force. Paul's course is not "uncertainly," literally on a zig-zag course, an unstable, uncertain course. If we profess Christ but serve ourselves, our course of action will be erratic. We will then be a *castaway*. The Greek word here has reference to something which fails to meet the test. It was commonly

used with reference to coins. A castaway or rejected coin was either counterfeit, or, because it had been stripped of some of its gold or silver, was short in weight. If our course is erratic, and our contest low, we are castaways.

It is noteworthy that the great logician, Archbishop Whately, when dying, had one of his chaplains come by during the night to express his sympathy for the archbishop's sufferings. The chaplain quoted the words, "who shall change our vile body." The archbishop immediately rebuked the chaplain, saying, "Read the words." When the chaplain again read the English words. Whately said, "Read *his own* words." This time the chaplain read it as "the body of humiliation." The Archbishop immediately interrupted to say, "That's right, not *vile*–nothing that He made is vile."[37]

20. "A Body Hast Thou Prepared For Me"

When Paul tells us that Christ shall change the body of our humiliation or refashion it, he says that our Lord shall make it "like unto his own glorious body." This transformation is a part of His eschatological working whereby He subdues "all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21). In other words, a key eschatological goal of the triune God is the restoration of the material world in history, of which our bodies are a key part, and the full restoration of all things in the great resurrection. Christ's resurrection body thus is the key to our resurrection bodies.

We find an indication of the importance of Christ's body in Hebrews 10:1-7:

> 1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.
> 2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sin.
> 3. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.
> 4. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.
> 5. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:
> 6. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.
> 7. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

These verses have reference to Christ, the great high priest, and to the laws of sacrifice. The Old Testament sacrifices could not cleanse the sinner of his sins; they were types of Christ's sacrifice, and they represented a faith in His coming and in His work, but they could not be equated with His atonement.

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[37] M. R. Vincent: *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. II. (Macdill AFB, FL: Macdonald Publishing Company, n.d.). p. 889.

God had made clear, by the necessity of continual repetition, how inadequate the sacrifices were except as an evidence of faith in God's coming and totally efficacious sacrifice. The sacrifices typified Christ's sacrifice.

As Christ came into the world, He declared, in terms of Scripture, "a body hast thou prepared for me." Hebrews 10:5-7 is a citation of Psalm 40:6-8, but with a difference. "Mine ears hast thou opened" in the Psalm is changed to "a body hast thou prepared for me." This change appears in the Septuagint. In either case, the point is that obedience to the will of God is the true sacrifice. The sacrificial system became a necessity when man disobeyed God; it witnessed to the death penalty against man, and to the fact that God provided a substitute. The sacrificer assented to the death penalty and promised to obey God's law. God's grace had opened the ears of the sacrificer to the meaning of his sin, the necessity for atonement, and the obligation of faithfulness to God's covenant law.

The rendering of the Septuagint stresses that the believer must in all his being, thus in his body, serve, obey, and glorify God. However, the full meaning appears only with the incarnation. John Owen pointed out that "A 'body' is here a synedochical expression of *the human nature of Christ.*"[38] This is very true; a physical body is very much a part of human nature. Christ in His incarnation "was made flesh" (John 1:14). For God the Son to become incarnate meant becoming flesh. The work of salvation and restoration could only become possible by the incarnation. Westcott stated this clearly:

> The King, the representative of men, recognizes in the manifold organs of His personal power–His body–the one fitting means for rendering services to God. Through this, in its fullness, He can do God's will. Not by anything outside Himself, not by animals in *sacrifices*, not by the fruits of the earth in *offerings*, but by the use of His own endowments, as He is enabled to use them, He will accomplish that which God designed for Him to do.[39]

What Christ did as the representative man and as the Head of the new humanity, we are to do. Our bodies are no more our personal properties for our personal use than was Christ's body. The sense of self-possession for purely private goals is an aspect of man's fall. Man plays god, beginning with his own body. He sees the service of God, if he believes in God, as something outside himself, as something he does. This something can include worship, good works, and more, all necessary and commendable and very clearly so. However, if we separate ourselves from our actions, assigning certain things to God and our physical persons to ourselves, we perpetuate an aspect of the Fall and our original sin.

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[38] John Owen: *An Exposition of Hebrews*, Vol. IV. (Evansville, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1960). p. 460.

[39] Brooke Foss Westcott: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1893) 1952). p. 415.

The incarnation begins the great work of restoration with a body prepared to serve and glorify God. Man was created to serve and glorify God and to be free of sin and death. Christ in His coming becomes flesh. By His perfect obedience to the every word of God (Matt. 4:4), He overcomes the power of sin. By His resurrection, He destroys the power of death over all for whom His atonement applies. Thus, the body is restored to its purposes under God, and the resurrection of the body completes that glorious purpose.

What Christ says, and we are to say, is, "Lo, I am come," literally, not "I will come," or "I come." "Obedience is immediate and complete."[40] Then, "In the volume of the book it is written of me." Westcott noted:

> Perhaps the simplest rendering is: *in the book-roll* (the roll of the Law) *a law is written for me, which lays down perfectly my duty.* The King acknowledges a definite standard of the will of God, before He undertakes to aim at fulfilling it....The Law which foreshadowed the duties of a King of Israel....was the rule of the King's life.[41]

To depreciate the body is to depreciate the law, because the law governs a material world. Faith is then spiritualized by antinomianism, and a lawless love becomes the new way to obey God. Christ is then dematerialized in effect to become a spiritual Savior who rescues us from a material world and its law. The result is a new form of gnosticism.

To do the will of God, "Lo, I come....to do thy will, O God," is to obey His law, which His covenant grace gives to us. Again citing Westcott, "The will of God answers to the fulfillment of man's true destiny; and this, as things actually are, in spite of the Fall. Christ, as Son of man, made this will his own and accomplished it."[42]

It may be objected that Hebrews 10:1-8 is talking about sacrifice, and this is true enough, but the goal of Christ's unique and perfect sacrifice is not to free us from the covenant and its law for lawlessness, but, like Christ our Head, to do the will of God. Paul makes clear that our salvation is by faith, i.e., by God's sovereign and regenerating grace through Jesus Christ and by His work of faith in us (Rom. 1:16-17; Heb. 10:38). This faith, however, manifests itself in works (Rom. 3:31; James 2:12-26). Thus, after Hebrews 10:1-22 speaks of Christ's sacrifice and obedience, Hebrews 10:23-31 warns us:

> 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised;)
>
> 24. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works;

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40. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
42. *Idem.*

25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

26. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Four things are stressed in vv. 23-25, faith, hope, love, *and good works*. If we do not manifest these things in all our being, and if we wilfully despise them, we reject the perfect sacrifice of Christ and invite judgment. We are apostate. *Good works* are the expression of faith, and of love for God (cf. Heb. 6:10). In the Old Testament, death was the penalty for *despising*, i.e., breaking "Moses' law." Now God's law has Christ's seal of blood upon it, and to sin is to tread "under foot the Son of God," i.e., to reject the sacrifice of Christ (v. 26). In the Old Testament, it was Moses who was the visible speaker; now it is Jesus Christ who sets His seal upon the law (Matt. 5:17-20), sheds His own blood for our atonement, and gives us "the knowledge of the truth."

Under Moses' law, two or more witnesses are required for the death penalty; Hebrews 10:28-29 does not annul this. Rather, it makes clear that human witnesses are not always present to spot and indict sin. The triune God, however, is omnipresent, and, where contempt for the blood of Christ is manifested, God acts, not needing human witnesses. We then fall into the hands of an infallible justice.

Finally, let us note the parallels. *First*, a body was prepared for Christ, and our humiliated body is to be transformed and refashioned "like unto his own glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). We are therefore to "glorify God in (our) body" (I Cor. 6:20). *Second*, the great act of apostasy is set forth in physical terms as a physical act in God's sight, i.e., trampling under foot the Son of God and despising His blood, the blood of the covenant. The image is of desecration, the desecration of the communion elements. A physical image is used, because sin is a physical fact; it is committed by creatures who are made in the image of God to manifest in their bodies the holiness, knowledge, justice, and dominion of God.

21. The Resurrection Body

As we have seen, hostility to the material and the physical has too commonly marked the church. Asceticism is a fact of church history; Protestants revolted against the Catholic form but have been all too prone to their own forms of ascetic practices. Plain to ugly church buildings are erected as though a lack of beauty were a virtue; such construction is defended as being more spiritually minded. The Bible is spiritualized to give it more "meaning," as though the physical sense were somehow lower. Because of the very material concerns of the law, some have held the Old Testament revelation to be a "carnal" one, and they will argue so. At every turn, in Bible reading to church construction, the physical is down-graded for the ethereal and the non-material. This is asceticism. To make plainness into a virtue is asceticism. In some instances, minister's wives have been viewed with a measure of suspicion because they were attractive, and the minister himself seen as "unspiritual" for having been attracted to such a woman. These are the extremes of pietistic practices, but they do manifest an inherent asceticism.

At the same time, this avoidance of the material world has led, in both Catholic and Protestant circles, to quietism. The Bible requires of us a quiet and contented heart because this is a mark of trusting God. Paul tells us:

> 4. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.
>
> 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
>
> 6. Be careful (or, anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
>
> 7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:4-7)

Again, we are told, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Tim. 6:6). Such contentment and quietness of heart must not be equated with an impassive and stoic mentality. A man I knew who lost both his wife and child was naturally grief stricken and sobbing in his anguish, but never, in all that, did he doubt the grace and justice of God. He believed, and he trusted the Lord, although he could not for a moment understand why these things had happened. He manifested a quiet, trusting heart even in his emotional distress. Quietism wants us to say that material things and people are nothing. A quiet, trusting heart is stayed on God even in the midst of grief and disaster. Quietism is ascetic; a trusting heart is godly.

In I Corinthians 15:35-58, Paul speaks of the resurrection and the resurrection body. As we have noted, man was created on the sixth day of creation as the culmination of God's creative works. We are not resurrected physically at death, but, even as our first creation in Adam awaited the

completion of creation as man's habitat, so too our full re-creation in a resurrection body awaits the completion of the new creation.

Two questions have been raised, Paul says in I Corinthians 15:35: *first*, in what manner are the dead raised up? The discussion and the reference is to the dead believers. How can the corrupted, decayed, and dissolved body be reconstituted and brought to life? *Second,* with what kind of body do they rise from the dead? Is it a body like the one buried? The assumption of these questions is that the resurrection body has the same characteristics as the buried body; this presumption has as its premise a belief that the body was not affected by the Fall and therefore is not changed by the new creation. Since it was sin which brought death into the world, the defeat and obliteration of sin, and "the last enemy," death (I Cor. 15:26), will dramatically alter man's physical state. Added to this is the fact that the new creation will far surpass the original one.

Paul answers that every time we sow seeds, the new life can *only* come forth if the seed perishes (I Cor. 15:36). Death is thus not only a penalty of the Fall but is used by the Triune God to give us a more glorious life and body. Thus, in answer to the assumption that the body cannot live again because it dies and decays, Paul says, as Hodge observed, "a seed cannot live unless it does die. Disorganization is the necessary condition of reorganization...Death is not annihilation, but disorganization; the passing from one form or mode of existence to another."[43] The body in the resurrection is *quickened*, made alive, and the verb is passive because the action is by God, not by the body.

In I Corinthians 15:37-38, Paul tells us the resurrection body is a very different one. The identity is the same, but the difference is dramatically great. One sows a *seed*, Paul says, and a *plant* appears; so too we sow one kind of body, and another comes forth. The world of plants, creation, gives us an analogy whereby we can understand the resurrection. Bare or naked grain leads to a plant, and a small seed to a tree. Just as at the creation, God willed the order which leads one grain to produce wheat, and an acorn an oak, so too the future form of the body was determined. No more than we can predict the wheat stalk and the tree, knowing *only* the seed, can we know the future of our bodies.

Then, in v. 39, Paul says, "All flesh is not the same kind of flesh." He speaks here of *flesh*, not *body*. According to Grosheide, "Flesh is the unorganized matter, body the organism. The body is built of flesh. The connotation, 'sinful flesh' which otherwise adheres to the word flesh is naturally absent from it in this context."[44] Thus, while Paul cites the analogy

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43. Charles Hodge: *An Exposition to the First Epistle to the Corinthians.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint). p. 343.

44. F. W. Grosheide: *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1953) 1955). p. 382.

to seeds, he here departs from it. The acorn and the oak differ in a way which our present bodies and our resurrection bodies do not; this means that, while the change is great, greater than from acorn to oak, the form is substantially similar.

In vv. 40 and 41, Paul speaks of the differing kinds of bodies; celestial bodies such as the sun, the moon, and the stars have one kind of body, and earthly bodies still another, and each has its own kind of glory and place in God's plan. The very stars differ one from another. As great as these differences are, i.e., between the sun and ourselves, "so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption" (v. 42). There is thus a vast difference between our bodies now and after the resurrection. Before death and in death, our sowing, we are in dishonored bodies which reflect the shame of the fall; they are weak bodies also. In the resurrection, our bodies have freedom from sin and death and have power. These are bodies in which God's Spirit governs rather than our mortal life or soul, so that our resurrection bodies are true temples of the Holy Spirit and are thus called *Spiritual* bodies.[45] Just as we now have a body which conforms to a fallen world, so then we shall have a body which is a crowning part of the new creation.

In I Corinthians 15:45-48, we are told that, because Christ is the Adam of the new humanity and the new creation, we shall be like His perfect humanity in our resurrection bodies. The resurrection of the body is thus inseparably linked to the great and last Adam, Jesus Christ. We were created to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). The fall led to a perversion of this dominion mandate. In the new creation, we are restored to full strength in that calling. No more than we can imagine our resurrection bodies can we imagine all the implications of dominion in the new creation. We are emphatically told, in Revelation 22:3, "his (Christ's) servants shall serve him." We have thus an eternal calling in which there is no frustration.

There is an order in God's creation. The first physical creation and bodies are of the earth, the second, of heaven (v. 47,48). Since both are by God, this means that God created the first as a preparatory stage for the second. The full implications of this are as much beyond us as is the glory of the resurrection body. The reason, however, is that our bodies as now constituted and as liable to sin and death, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God any more than corruption can inherit incorruption (v. 50). The miraculous act of God is necessary to change all creation and our bodies to be fit for His eternal order.

At the end, whether we are alive or dead, we shall all be changed, and death shall be forever destroyed. Everything which has wrongly assumed dominion since the Fall shall be destroyed. "The sting of death is (in) sin, and the

[45] M. R. Vincent: *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol II. (Macdill AFB, FL: Macdonald Publishing Company, n.d.). p. 805.

strength of sin is the law" (v. 56). It is sin which brings in death, and it is also sin which gives terror to death. The strength of sin is the law, because the sinner's will to dominion requires that he oppose and break the law (Rom. 7:8-12). It is the law which condemns the sinner (Rom. 5:13) and hence incites his hostility. To gain dominion, he must render the law null and void, and hence this fallen will to dominion gains its power by hostility to God and His law.

Against this power of sin and death, God gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 57). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (v. 58). Our labor *cannot* be in vain because, *first*, the Lord makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). As a result, our labor can never be in vain. *Second*, because of the resurrection of the Body, there is a remarkable and glorious continuity between our lives now and in the world to come. Paul tells us plainly, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, *whether it be good or bad"* (II Cor. 5:10). Nothing is in vain, and nothing is without consequences. Thus, to treat the body disrespectfully, or to depreciate the sins of the flesh, is to despise the resurrection of the body and the continuity between this body and life and that which is to come.

Paul, in a difficult situation and facing possible death, came to a conclusion which he commended to the Corinthians, and also to us: "We should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead" (II Cor. 1:9). Man must not live by bread alone but by every word which precedes from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). There is a continuity between our lives here and in the new creation because we are raised from the dead and each of us "received *the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

22. Judgment as Process and Event

When theology speaks of The Last Judgment, it thereby distinguishes the final event from all judgments preceding it. Very obviously, many previous judgments are presupposed by this language, and rightly so. The Fall was a judgment, as was the Flood; the conquest of Canaan was a judgment on the peoples of that land, and Israel's captivity, centuries later, was also a judgment. Judgment events are commonplace in history, and we live in a time of impending judgment. Supremely, of course, the cross of Christ and His resurrection were judgments on sin and death, a fact which makes clear another aspect of God's providence, the inseparable connection between judgment and salvation. *Without judgment, there is no salvation.* With the

Fall came the promise of the chosen Seed (Gen. 3:15), and with every subsequent judgment there came salvation. The judgment of Egypt was the salvation of Israel, and the judgment upon Christ is our release from the slavery to sin and death.

The judgment event recurs throughout history in a variety of forms. Every time a child is spanked for wrong-doing, or whenever a criminal is punished for his crimes, we have a judgment event. History is a succession of judgment events, culminating in the Last Judgment. All other judgment events are partial ones; the Last Judgment is final, absolute, and eternal in its consequences.

On the other hand, many judgments of God are a process rather than an event. Because God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein, His law-order is inherent to all His Being and also to all created being. As a result, God's law is not something external to my life but far more basic to it than my own thoughts. To illustrate, a man may, in the context of his daily life, think about his work or future, day-dream about things he would like, consider various sins he imagines would be profitable and beyond discovery, and so on. His consciousness harbors and exploits a wide variety of possibilities. All these are expressive of the heart and the life of the man; all, however, are capable of being changed, by fear, conversion, other interests, and a variety of factors. What cannot be changed is the fact that he is God's creation and creature and that every atom of his being has the law of God written into it. Paul makes this very clear in Romans 1:18-20:

> 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
> 19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath shewed it unto them.
> 20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

God's wrath is against all man's sin and lawlessness. Men hold back, hinder, or suppress God's truth in unrighteousness or injustice. Hating God's justice, they seek to hinder or obliterate its testimony in them. God's anger is against them for their sin, their injustice and ungodliness, and because, having sinned, they compound it by denying the truth or at best still holding it back or down. Their conduct is inexcusable, because God has both manifested His law *in* them, and *to* them. All men everywhere have inherent in their being God's law (Rom. 2:14-15); all men originally had and in some sense continue to have the witness of God's law to them, and this is most emphatically true of all who have been in the context of a Hebrew or a Christian culture. Hence, Paul emphasizes the fact that all men are without excuse. There is total justice to God's condemnation. Men choose death in preference to obedience to the triune God. Sin is not an accident; it is a wilful preference for our way as

against God's law. Of the knowledge of God, Hodge said, "This knowledge is a revelation; it is the manifestation of God in his works, and in the constitution of our nature."[46]

At this point, an aspect of v. 19 needs to be noted. God's nature, our duty, and the true knowledge of God Himself reverberates in every fiber of our bodies and every atom of our being. There is, however, a creaturely limit to this knowledge: "that which may be known of God," is only that which a creature can grasp. Calvin commented on this, saying, "Insane then are all they who seek to know of themselves what God is."[47] To seek to know or prove God on our own, on autonomous and rational grounds, is to deny that our being is an inescapable witness to the knowledge of God. It is presumption. Not surprisingly, such presumption then seeks exhaustive knowledge of God and treats Him as a creature to be examined, not revered.

Thus, everything within and without, the visible universe and our own being, witnesses to God's power, nature, and justice (v. 20). When men despise this witness, they pervert their own lives and begin a burning-out process, of which homosexuality is the culmination (vv. 21-32). They thus enter into the *process* of judgment, an inner disintegration and an outer life of evil crises brought on by their sin.

Judgment as process is summed up by Solomon in these words: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him" (Ecc. 10:8). What Solomon has reference to is sinful activities. If we by evil design plan to entrap another man, we ourselves open up forces of entrapment for ourselves. If we try to break down the hedge of the law, out of the law judgment comes forth to destroy us. All this is another way of saying that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Because "all things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3), any deflection of any segment of God's creation from God's law means that judgment comes upon the straying person or thing. St. Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Our very hearts condemn us, St. John makes clear, when we depart from Him and His word (I John 3:20-21). Judgment as process is the inescapable concomitant of all creation and life. To be a creature is to be either in the process of judgment or of life.

Judgment, however, is also an event. The reprobate blinds himself *as best he can* to the fact of judgment as process. He calls it a variety of names to disguise what is happening to him: "That's life," or "Those are the odds," and like terms are used to attempt to separate morality from the processes of judgment.

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[46] Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.* (New York, N. Y.: Armstrong, 1893). p. 54.

[47] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 69.

This is a little more difficult with judgment as an event, but it is still done. Malachi 2:17 tells us, "Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" The men of Judah knew of God's judgments in past history but nullified them in their thinking. The fact that judgment as a great event was sporadic in history enabled them to discount the relevance of God to everyday history. If a man at best sees God as clobbering him once or twice in his life, but, for the most part, leaving him alone, it becomes easy for him to see life on largely autonomous terms. The remote God is then only occasionally involved in history. This is why it is necessary to affirm judgment as both process and event. To do so is to affirm that God has an over-riding and governing purpose in every moment of time and every atom of the universe.

Moreover, because there is a totality of judgment, there is a totality of salvation, i.e., the whole creation is made new; the remnant of evil ones are separated from it, and the great processes and events of judgment culminate in the Last Judgment and the new creation.

If we neglect process judgment, we fall into eschatologies of defeat. Then only an outside judgment can salvage creation and rescue something out of it. With process judgment *and* event judgment, Christ reigns and puts all things under His feet. The end comes when "all rule and all authority and power" are in Christ, and all His enemies trampled and destroyed. Then comes the end, and the destruction of the last enemy, death (I Cor. 15:24-26).

Judgment as process has been neglected because of the influence of Deism. Too often, the church, in forcing heresy and evil, retreats to a lowest common denominator position, or to the defense of "essentials only." For man to rule that any aspect of God's revelation is non-essential means placing man in the judgment seat over God. Deism held to an absentee landlord God. In truth, God was simply a limiting concept for many Deists, who needed God only as the First Cause and no more.

It is notable that, while the church opposed Deism, it was not unmarked by that battle. The doctrine of Providence, so common to Reformation and Puritan thinking, receded into the background. The neglect of Providence meant also the neglect of judgment as process, because the totally present and personal government of God in history was thus down-graded and neglected. The providential activities of God were limited to pietistic experiences: "The Lord kept the train waiting for me even though I was late;" "When I looked at the mail, exactly what I needed had arrived," and so on. In other words, providence now existed for Pietists to care for them personally, not to further God's total and cosmic rule. The Pietists, having lost interest in the world at large, assumed that God had also lost interest in everything except their souls. The result has been egocentric religion, not the Providence of the triune God

for whom nothing is too great nor too small, nor anything that escapes His government and judgment.

23. Judgment as Crisis

The Last Judgment is no longer of central importance in contemporary theology because neither law nor justice are given their due place. Antinomianism militates against the judgment of God's law in time and therefore in eternity also. Scripture, however, makes clear that the Last Judgment is inseparable from the doctrine of the atonement. In Hebrews 9:27-28, it is plainly stated:

> 27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
> 28. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The context of these words is the discussion of the work of the high priest and its relationship to Jesus Christ. Westcott's comment thus gives us the meaning of the reference to Christ. The priest enters into the holy place and then comes out to the waiting people:

> The fulfillment of the work of the Levitical High-priest suggests another thought. When the atonement was completed the High-priest came out again among the people (Lev. xvi, 24). So too Christ shall return. He shall in this respect also satisfy the conditions of humanity. His Death shall be followed by the manifestation of His righteousness in the judgment of God.[48]

The high priest makes atonement by offering up the sacrifice, enters into the Holy Place, God's throne room, to declare that the penalty for sin, death, has been effected, and the sin atoned, and then he comes out to give absolution to the atoned, and to pronounce judgment upon the unatoned.

We can understand an important aspect of the meaning of all judgment, and especially the Last Judgment, by looking at the word used in the Greek text of Hebrews 9:27. The word is *krisis*, judgment; it means a separating in terms of justice, a decision or judgment rendered by God. This is a basic aspect of the meaning of judgment. It is a crisis: man comes face to face with the consequences of his sins. Men, however, dislike crises; they reject the necessity of an either-or moral decision, and hence they prefer neither hot nor cold, justice nor injustice, but a lukewarm position towards all things (Rev. 3:14-16). Our Lord, however, is emphatic about the necessity for decision and crisis. In John 16:8,11, when our Lord declares that the Holy Spirit will come to *convict* (which is the meaning in the Greek of the word translated as

[48] Brooke Foss Westcott: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans (1892) 1952). p. 276.

reprove) the world of judgment, the word for judgment is again *krisis*. Our English word crisis has carried over an important meaning of the Greek word. Men seek to evade life's moral crises and the requirements of God's law, but the Holy Spirit convicts the world of the inescapability of crisis, of the separation required by justice. Our Lord speaks of the Spirit's work of conviction, convicting men of their sin, bringing home to them God's righteousness or justice, i.e., God's law and its requirements, and of judgment or *krisis*, the necessary separation.

Where men will not separate themselves to Christ and His covenant, and to the law or life of that covenant, Christ returns to separate them. The *krisis*, decision, or separation cannot be avoided. Thus, those whose sins are not atoned for by Christ, and who have not confessed themselves to be sinners under condemnation, will be separated for condemnation by the Judge. John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The parable of the Last Judgment thus presents us with a crisis. The parable (Matt. 25:31-46) gives us an account of the judgment of the church. All who present themselves, or who stand before the Lord profess to know Him; they call Him *Lord*. He makes a division, and, in that division, some who believe themselves to be a part of His people are placed on the left. They protest, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" (Matt. 25:44). These failed to see Christ in His people, especially those in distress. These had "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (II Tim. 3:5), were themselves denied. For them, judgment was a crisis and a separation.

However, the *krisis* is not only to "everlasting punishment" but also "unto life eternal" (Matt. 25:46). Hence, the parable of the Last Judgment makes clear that, for the elect of God, the *krisis* is a separation to blessing. Having been previously separated to Christ, they were now separated to blessing and eternal life.

The *krisis* of judgment does not wait until the Last Judgment. It comes day by day as retribution from God, for "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), not merely at the end of history, but all through history. The *krisis* is continuous with life, and it is total and conclusive at the end. This is true of both condemnation and blessing.

One of the most common terms used in the Bible for judgment, both those in the course of history and at the end, is "the Day of the LORD." This usage was common to the prophets and, later, the apostles, but it was also used by the common people. In fact, a dramatic instance of this occurs in Amos 5:18-27:

18. Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.
19. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him: or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.
20. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
21. I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.
22. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard your peace offerings of your fat beasts.
23. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.
24. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.
25. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?
26. But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.
27. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts.

The people hypocritically assumed that, by using the name of the Lord, they qualified as His people and were thereby due to receive every providential care and blessing. The day of the Lord for them meant the fulfillment of their desires and lust. Amos makes clear that it shall be condemnation instead, a radical and inescapable one. In perhaps the most telling description of God's judgment, he likens the Lord's condemnation to a man fleeing from a lion, to be met by a bear. Escaping from the bear into the "safety" of his house, he leans against the wall to rest, and a poisonous serpent finishes him. The successive crises of judgment culminate in the totality thereof. So Israel shall meet its judgment. The day of the Lord shall for them be darkness, and not light.

In vv. 21-27, God Himself speaks. The offerings and sacrifices of these ungodly peoples are offensive to Him, and a stench in His nostrils. Externalism is sin. God's norm is His law-word, not man's surface conformity. In reality, God says, they are idolaters. It is the state and the king, their Moloch, whom they revere, not the Lord. Chiun or Chion is the Assyrian Kaimanu or Kaiwanu, identified with Saturn, and is also revered because they revere power as represented in Assyria. Their star-gods were carried about in solemn processions, and they themselves would be carried into captivity since they were already captives to sin.

Of the word *day*, A. B. Davidson noted, "The term 'day' is much used in Arabic of a battle day, as in the day of Badr, Ohod, and the like, and so in Heb. 'the day of Midian' (Is. 9:4), and this may be its primary meaning."[49] The day

[49] A. B. Davidson, "Eschatology," in James Hastings, editor: *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1898). p. 735f.

of the Lord is thus also the final battle and victory; it is the total overthrow of all the enemies of the Lord and His Kingdom.

It is therefore also a day of restoration. Every day of the Lord in history as well as at the end of history means restoration and restitution. Thus, of the Captivity, we are told that it came "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" (II Chron 36:21). At the same time, the Lord promised the faithful a restitution and restoration from the pagans: "I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth" (Isa. 43:6). Moreover, many verses such as Zechariah 14:14 declare that all the wealth of the world shall become the possession of the Lord's kingdom. All God's blessings shall be poured out upon His people (Amos 9:11-15).

The goal of all the days of the Lord and the final day is the coming of the perfect kingdom of the Lord. This shall be the final and eternal order, which shall begin with the destruction of death:

> 8. He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.
> 9. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (Isa. 25:8-9)

For the individual believer, the final crisis means that the resurrection body becomes his life forever, and he serves God eternally. For him, the crises of life culminate in the great and final victory of Christ, and his eternal blessedness and happiness in the Lord.

24. The Covenant Consummation: The Last Judgment

The covenant is basic to God's relationship to man. By an act of sovereign grace, God enters into a covenant with man, a covenant of law and of grace. A covenant is a treaty of law; however, for God to bring man into His law is an act of grace. Grace brings us into a community of life with God, and the way of that covenant life is set forth in the law. The law itself can bring no man to God; Christ alone is the way to the Father; to be in Christ, however, means to be in His righteousness and holiness, i.e., to be faithful to His law. There is no faithfulness to Christ possible in disobedience to His law, nor is there any faithfulness to the law possible unless we are in Christ. He is our covenant Head, and we are acceptable to the Father only in Him.

The covenant promises blessings for faithfulness or obedience, and curses on disobedience. As Deuteronomy 28 makes clear, these are operative throughout all history, from the Garden of Eden to the Second Coming and

the Last Judgment. However, in their *totality*, they are operative only twice. The *first* instance is the crucifixion and the resurrection. Paul tells us plainly, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). The atonement is the great judgment for sin, and the condemnation of Christ for the elect. *In the sense of condemnation*, all Christians can rejoice that their Last Judgment has come and gone. The full curse of the law fell upon Jesus Christ, who made atonement for us and redeemed us from the curse of the law. Peter says of Christ that He, in "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness (or, justice): by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24). The cross is the death penalty upon the elect as sinners, and the resurrection is their own resurrection from the death of sin to the life of justice and holiness. Our sanctification is not perfected in this life, but judicially we stand before God the Father in His perfect righteousness and sanctification. At the same time, the cross sets forth the final judgment upon all sin, total separation from God which is the great death. The curse of the law means to be abandoned and forsaken by God, Who alone is life (Matt. 27:46). The judgment of the cross is a judgment in totality upon our sins; nothing remains unatoned for in the sins of the elect. At the same time, it witnesses to the totality of God's judgment upon all sinners. If God's elect face death (vicariously), how can the reprobate escape?

The *second* instance of a total judgment is the Last Judgment. Those who despise God's covenant grace and law see the end of all patience and feel the curse of the law. The covenant law exacts the full and perfect measure of justice. The curse of the law separates the covenant-breakers forever from God and His covenant. The Last Judgment brings not only condemnation to the reprobate but also blessings to the redeemed. At the end of the world, says our Lord:

> 41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;
>
> 42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.
>
> 43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (Matt. 13:41-43)
>
> For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (Matt. 16:27)]

Here and elsewhere our Lord not only speaks of the final judgment but of Himself as the Judge. Moreover, His coming shall be to reward His people as well as to judge the reprobate. The principle of rewards is "every man according to his works." We are saved by God's sovereign grace, but we are rewarded according to works. To despise works is thus not only to despise

God's law but the plain words of our Lord. Paul makes clear that to walk by faith is to walk in the works of faith, i.e., in obedience to God's law-word:

> 7. (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)....
> 9. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.
> 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (II Cor. 5:7,9-10)

At the point of death, there is an immediate personal judgment whereby we are either in heaven or hell. To the thief on the cross, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). This judgment brings about a separation in terms of heaven or hell. The Last Judgment adds a reward to our salvation in terms of our works, or the fullness of the curse to the reprobate. The Last Judgment is a judgment not only upon individuals but all history, the world as a whole, all of creation. The fallen angels are included in that judgment:

> 4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment:...
> 9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. (II Peter 2:4,9)
>
> And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (Jude 6)

We are thus told that, with their fall, the evil angels were already "reserved" unto both "judgment" and "everlasting chains." At the same time, there is still a final judgment. This does not mean that the original "reservation" to judgment was at all tentative or temporary. Rather, as II Peter 2:4-9 makes clear, all this is an "ensample," in the Greek *hupodeigma*, something shown as an illustration or pattern. God tells us that we are to understand history in terms of God's dealing with these fallen angels. The world before the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah after it, and all evil-doers in every age, shall have in time God's judgment, and the fullness of it at the end. Moreover, just as Noah and Lot were delivered in the most difficult of situations, so too shall we be delivered, not only out of our oppressors' hands, but out of temptation. The Last Judgment is preceded by many judgments.

At the same time, our Lord tells us how total the Last Judgment is: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). Thus, the final judgment is not confined to generalities; "every idle word" shall be reckoned in the accounting, because the covenant law governs the total life of man, and covenant grace is despised by every "idle word." The covenant is God's act

of grace to all men; hence, all men are judged by the covenant law, *either in Christ or by Christ*. To be judged in Christ is salvation; to be judged by Christ is condemnation.

Paul also writes of the extent of the judgment, and he speaks of "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel" (Rom. 2:16). For Paul this judgment is essential to the Gospel because it is a necessary step in the completion of the covenant law and its justice. For the Christian, this exposure must be seen as a welcome one. The truth about all of us will then be revealed, and we must avoid premature judgment:

> Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (I Cor. 4:5)

For this reason, the Christian can never believe that what he thinks and does is hidden, for "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

According to Berkhof, "there will be different degrees, both of the blessings of heaven and of the punishment of hell. And these degrees will be determined by what is done in the flesh, Matt. 11:22,24; Luke 12:47, 48; 20:47; Dan. 12:3; II Cor. 9:6."[50] We cannot press this point to a naturalistic and non-covenantal length by making allowances for the "good pagan" as did Dante. The Last Judgment is a covenant fact. It is only governed by the covenant God and His law, not by humanistic considerations.

It must be seen, moreover, as a triumphant fact, as the triumph of our Lord, and of us in Him, over the Kingdom of Death by the Kingdom of God. It means the final destruction of sin and death, and the eternal reign of justice in the person of our Lord. It is a doctrine for the comfort of the saints.

25. The Covenant Consummation: Paradise

It is commonplace for theologians to write about the *soul* of the redeemed going to heaven at the point of death, and the *body* awaiting the day of the resurrection of the dead. There is a strong element of truth to such statements as well as an element of veiled meaning. Such a view assumes a Greek dichotomy in man, i.e., man as both soul and body. *Soul*, however, is Hebraic, not Hellenic, in its Biblical usage and thus refers to a *person*. To say that a man's soul goes to heaven is to say that he as a person goes to heaven. His body, however, remains and is buried. The *person* is more than a ghost; he is

[50] L. Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1946, Third edition). p. 733f.

the man, the whole man. In heaven, thus, he is somehow complete without a material body such as he possessed on earth, but, with the resurrection, he is more complete somehow.

Moreover, heaven is not spoken of as a ghostly or spirit-like place. Our Lord, in speaking to the thief on the cross, (Luke 23:39-44) called it *paradise*. He was then very close to that place, and He gave it a name which is highly material. *Paradise* or *paradeisos* comes from the Old Persian *pairidaeza*, and was related to the Greek word, *peri*, around, *teichos*, walled, a walled or fenced garden.

When Paul speaks of being caught up into "the third heaven" (II Cor. 12:4), he is referring to *paradise* (*paradeison*), although in II Corinthians 12:2, the word used is *ourarou*, (*ouranos*), a lifted up place. Revelation 2:7 speaks of the tree of life as being in "the paradise (*paradeiso*) of God." In the Septuagint, the word *paradeisios* appears in Genesis 2:8, Numbers 24:6, Isaiah 1:30, Jeremiah 29:5, and Ezekiel 31:8-9. These references are to very material gardens. Our Lord could have used a word with less physical connotations in speaking to the thief, *ouranos*, for example, but the text reads *paradeisos*.

Instead of a neat Greek solution, therefore, we must accept the fact that we are most specifically assured of life immediately after death, but its nature is not described for us. It is not a ghostly life. We are less limited there than we are in a fallen body in a fallen world under the limitations and restrictions of sin and death. It is a step in our realization, and that realization is completed with the resurrection of the body.

There is another very important fact. Man's history began in paradise, in the Garden of Eden, a covenant place created by the God of the covenant for man to develop his covenant dominion therein. Heaven or *paradise* is compared by that very word with the Garden of Eden to indicate the continuity of the covenant. In Revelation 22, we again are shown paradise, this time with the curse removed, and God's covenant servants serving Him forever (Rev. 22:4). With the Fall, the earth is accursed and becomes a wilderness. The last Adam's temptation (Matt. 4:1 ff.) was in a wilderness, a desert place. The heaven or paradise in which His elect are present with Him prior to the end is a foretaste of the great new and eternal paradise of God. It is total in its scope, a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1), because the last Adam's victory is total and cosmic. Thus, heaven or paradise is a foretaste of the new creation.

Our present bodies have the limitations of the Fall and the curse, the limitations of sin and death. These are so great that they constitute for the greatest saints a division from Christ. Paul says that, while we are "at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord" (II Cor. 5:6); Paul does not say we are at odds with the Lord but rather "absent," or away from home. In the

preceding verses, Paul speaks of heaven as a home, a house; whereas our bodies here are a *tabernacle* or *tent*, there "we have a building of God:"

> 1. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
> 2. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:
> 3. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.
> 4. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.
> 5. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. (II Cor. 5:1-5)

Paul says that we, the redeemed, find the burdens of a fallen world at times oppressive physically; this does not mean that we long to be unclothed or dead, but that we long for that fullness of life which is the meaning of life in the Lord. Our death clothes us with life without the limitations of a fallen world, so that our mortality is "swallowed up" by life. We have a foretaste of this in the gift of the Spirit. Thus, we have a succession in the life of faith. Our regeneration is followed by the gift of the Spirit; with death, we put on a fuller life and housing for our persons without losing but having more fully the gift of the Spirit; with the new creation, and the resurrection body, we enter into the totality of our covenant life.

In Philippians 1:21-24, Paul speaks of dying as "gain." Death will enable him to live more perfectly for Christ and to have life more abundantly in Him.

There is more to the covenant meaning of heaven or paradise. It is the home of the covenant God, according to Deuteronomy 26:15. It is also the habitation of the heavenly hosts (Nehemiah 9:6). It is the home too of the redeemed of God (I Peter 1:4). The covenant is not only a treaty of law but a union of persons or peoples; they become a common family or kingdom. The fact that paradise is the home of the redeemed is a covenant fact. It declares that God's covenant with man is for time and eternity.

The covenant is an act of law, a treaty of law, and, where made between a superior and an inferior, it is also an act of grace. A covenant also involves a *domain* where the covenant people shall dwell and the covenant law shall prevail. Before the Fall, the earth was the covenant domain, with the Garden of Eden as a pilot and testing area. With Moses and Joshua the covenant land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, became a reality. With Jesus Christ, the whole earth is set forth as the covenant domain in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

In Hebrews 4, we see this fact of the covenant domain from still another perspective, *time*. The covenant domain in time began with the Sabbath, a day in which man rests from his works in the perfected work of God. The

conquest of Canaan under Joshua gave Israel a time of rest, but a broken one because of their unbelief. The time-rest set forth in the Sabbath and in the limited peace in Canaan foreshadow the perfect and eternal rest in Christ. That covenant rest begins with our regeneration; it is furthered in Heaven and completed in the new creation. Hence, of Joshua's Sabbath-victory we are told, "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).

The covenant domain is thus over *time* and *space* (the new creation) and over our own beings, in that, in paradise and then the new creation, we are clothed more fully with life in Christ.

26. The Eschatology of Hell

One of the problems which plagues man's thinking is the Greek heritage and the tendency as a result to reduce life to abstractions. The Platonic ideas or forms condition all too much thinking, so that men see, not reality, but abstractions about reality. In the moral realm, good and evil are separated from God's law, and they are then abstracted from men also. To illustrate, it is a commonplace of humanistic thinking to praise *love* and to condemn *hate*, as though love and hate were things in themselves. The morality of love, however, depends on who loves and what is loved. Is love good if it is a love of narcotics, adultery, homosexuality, murder, or lies? Is hate bad if what we hate is injustice, bigotry, and dishonesty? It is clear that to abstract love and hate from the content of life and to give them moral status as abstractions is invalid.

If a man prefers abstractions to reality, he will regard the doctrine of hell as a monstrosity. Good and evil for him must remain in the area of abstractions, not reality.

There is another factor. Existentialism is a logical conclusion of the Fall and of humanism. We are here speaking of existentialism, not as a formal school of philosophy, but as an outlook which denies meaning to anything but man and the moment. Neither the past nor the future are real for such an existentialist, who says, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (I Cor. 15:32). Such an existentialism rejects heaven and hell, because reality can only be in the present. Not surprisingly, humanism has again and again developed doctrines of an immanent heaven and hell. Marxism is a conspicuous example. In the 18th century, the doctrine of poetic justice flourished. The full weight of all justice was seen as present: evil-doers received their judgment, and the good their reward, here and now. Poetic justice dictated a happy ending for all stories about heroes, and unhappy endings for villains. For example, in N. Tate's rewritten version of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (revised c. 1680, used in the theater till 1823, about 150 years), King Lear lives and triumphs to demonstrate that "Truth and Virtue" prevail. Tate began his version of the play with Act I, Scene 2 of

Shakespeare's text, and the "Bastard's" words, "Thou Nature art my Goddess: to thy Law My Services are bound." The play manifests the triumph of Nature over the "Storms of Fortune" in the form of poetic justice. This demand for happy endings in terms of poetic justice long marked drama and the novel.

In recent years, the doctrine of poetic injustice has replaced poetic justice. Beginning with Oscar Wilde, this concept insists on the radical perversity of all things around man, so that the world conspires against man. For poetic justice, there was total causality in time; for poetic injustice, there is no causality, only perversity. This concept of poetic injustice has been especially prominent in the homosexual view of life although not limited to it. It has fostered a sadomasochistic fiction and art. In the Greek "novel," there was no causality. In contemporary television and film stories as well as novels, we have again this rejection of causality in favor of a view of life and the universe as perverse. Much of this "literature" manifests a hatred of women, who are seen as perverse, senseless, and addicted to chance, but to a chance which is always perverse.

The rejection of God's law means the rejection of causality and meaning. We have seen a shift from poetic justice, with its view of nature as perfect, to poetic injustice, nature as perverse, and reality as perverse also.

In all this, man is at the center as the innocent victim standing up to the outrages of chance and the wheel of fortune. Since man is the victim, the doctrine of hell is especially an affront to the humanistic mind. Hell is in Scripture the triumph of God's justice. For humanism, only the vindication of man and the condemnation of the God of Scripture can be called justice.

Our Lord, however, speaks readily of hell (Matt.5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33, etc.). The name of hell in the Hebrew and Greek, Hinnom and Gehenna, has reference to Jerusalem's city dump, a place of burning trash, decay, and worms. Our Lord refers to this aspect of Gehenna in Mark 9:43-48 and elsewhere. The existential nature of hell is made very clear. *First*, in a city dump, there are no meaningful or related facts. All things are in discard; their use and meaning has been abandoned, and they have neither meaning nor any true relationship to anything else. Thus, in a dump, a discarded and rotten mattress can be smoldering next to rotting garbage, decaying and worm-eaten. Meaning has been abandoned by all items in a dump.

Second, the logic of the Fall is the logic of hell. If every man is his own god and his own determiner of good and evil (Gen. 3:5), then every man is his own universe of law, meaning and morality. He needs neither the past nor future, nor God and His law over him. He is his own total world. Jean-Paul Sartre saw this as the logic of hell in his play *No Exit*. Only if we are under God can we have any relationship to other God created facts. The more we grow in grace and in faithfulness to the Lord, the more total does our world of

meaning and inter-relationships become. Hell is the logic of the Fall realized, a domain of self-styled gods each incommunicado from all others.

Third, hell is a covenant fact, the covenant penalty. As Schilder noted, "all things are determined by covenant statute–the evaluation of sin, for instance, and its punishment. For punishment is an avenging of the covenant, even as sin is a breaking of the covenant."[51] To reject God is to reject life and the meaning of life; it is the rejection of communion and community and the affirmation of the absolute individual. In hell, the individual is forever alone, because there is no community or true communication in hell. We have all had the experience at times of talking to people who are so wrapped up in their own world and ego that nothing said to them penetrates far into their consciousness. They are their own world. Such a refusal to know others except on one's own terms is a prelude to hell, because the individual absolutizes himself and his mind. Such a perspective says, not, God made me, therefore I am, and I am His creation and possession, but, rather, I think, therefore I am, and, if I do not recognize you, you do not exist for me. Hell is the logical end of the Cartesian premise.

In I Corinthians 13:12, Paul says of paradise, "then shall I know even as also I am known." God knows us totally, and, once freed from the darkness of sin and death, we know Him as truly as a creature can know God. Now, Paul says, we see in a mirror, darkly, then face to face, i.e., fully and clearly.

On the other hand, in hell there is instead total blindness. The darkness symbolizing hell is above all else the darkness of sin enthroned, of the premise of the Fall made into the premise of a man's being. It is the self-willed total and eternal blindness of would-be gods who have finally limited the universe to themselves and are now by decree limited to no more than themselves. This is hell. It is a place with neither communication nor community, and hence without prayer. Prayer is the ultimate form of communication, man in communion with God the Creator. In prayer, man opens his life to God, and in the Lord to his own fellow men. In hell, man withdraws into his own being as self-sufficient, and closes the door to God and to man.

27. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

The Second Coming of Christ is the fulfillment of the promise of the resurrection and ascension. We are told that Christ arose from the dead as "the firstfruits of them that slept," and that His resurrection is the assurance of our resurrection "at his coming" (I Cor. 15:20,23). The angels told the disciples that Jesus would come again "in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). This latter verse should provide us with a warning; too

[51] K. Schilder: *Heaven, What Is It?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950). p. 86.

many texts on the second coming are exploited to read as much as possible into the wording. If we do this to Acts 1:11, it would mean a silent, non-public return! The point, however, is that Christ's ascension was *physical*, so too His return would be.

But, back to the fact of the resurrection: this great victory over sin and death climaxes in the universal victory of His coming again. It is, as Paul makes clear, *preceded* by His victory in history, "til he hath put all enemies under his feet" (I Cor. 15:25): *then* He returns. We have discussed the resurrection of the body and the Last Judgment out of context, i.e., before the Second Coming, although in fact they follow it. The reason for it is simply that these events are aspects of Christ's return. Christ's Second Coming means the advent of total justice and also total fulfillment. Christ's first coming, His incarnation and His atonement and resurrection, brought in salvation from the power of sin and death. It also unleashed the power of the resurrection to remake the world and to bring it under Christ's dominion (Matt. 28:18-20). It marked the advent of the new humanity and the warfare of righteousness or justice against injustice, sin, and all forms of covenant disobedience. His Second Advent makes total our salvation with the resurrection of the body, and makes total the reign of God's justice.

With this in mind, let us examine II Peter 3:1-15:

> 1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:
> 2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:
> 3. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,
> 4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.
> 5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
> 6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
> 7. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.
> 8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
> 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
> 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,
12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?
13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.
14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless,
15. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation. (II Peter 3:1-15)

First of all, Peter's major concern here, which should be ours also, is to urge Christians to continue in righteousness or justice, to walk by faith and in purity of mind, to be mindful of Scripture, to trust in God's promises, to avoid ignorance, to be holy in behavior and to be godly, to live in peace, and to be without spot or unspotted and unblemished in our Christian assurance. Above all, Peter warns us against doubting or being impatient with God; he reminds us that it is God who is patient and long-suffering with us, not we with Him. He concludes, "the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." This is a sentence we would do well to remember and consider. Our salvation is not only an act of grace on God's part, but an act of patience and longsuffering. It is insanity for us therefore to be impatient with God, an insanity we are most prone to manifest, and we surely should manifest something of God's patience towards one another. It would be very wise for us to remember always that we are saved by God's grace *and* long-suffering.

Second, Peter establishes the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming in the Old Testament, in "the holy prophets," and then in the affirmation of this by the apostles. Peter's own comments echo many Old Testament texts. There is neither change nor novelty in the doctrine.

Third, Peter speaks of "scoffers" in "the last days" mocking the doctrine. It is a serious error which dramatically distorts Scripture to see *the last days* as a limited span of time just prior to the Second Coming; it distorts history. *The last days* has reference to the age from the close of the New Testament canon to the Second Coming. Some texts take it from the First to the Second Advent. Hebrews 1:2 speaks of the New Testament and apostolic age as part of the last days, whereas Hebrews 12:18-29 sees the last days and the great shaking of the nations as beginning in earnest with the Fall of Jerusalem, as also Matthew 24 indicates. This fact is important; otherwise the text is distorted. Peter is writing about scoffers in his own day, about men and thinkers who were mocking the Christian faith and hope. This is still true, but Peter wrote about it as a concern in his own time. These no doubt included rabbinic scholars, and hence the reminder to them of the facts of creation and the Flood. Uniformitarianism was current then, and basic to current philosophies. Peter's comment also applied to them. The scoffers did not

believe in Christ's resurrection; how could they do other than ridicule His Second Coming? Men, they said, have died from the beginning of time (an implicit thrust at the resurrection), and they are still dead. Shall we believe that one man actually rose from the dead and shall return in the flesh, visible to all men? All such scoffers were "willingly...ignorant" of God's cataclysmic judgments in history. They are therefore themselves "reserved" unto judgment.

Fourth, Peter speaks of time. Man is time-conscious, time-bound; God is not. We sin when we demand that God compress His eternal and temporal plan within the limited framework of *our* time. Men demand that the conclusion be made apparent in their time. Hence, again and again in history men have distorted Scripture to make it mean that their day is the ultimate and final day. This is arrogance, and it is sin. It is also a fact of everyday preaching and thinking. It is, however, a form of idolatry to ask God to compress His eternal and temporal plan into the dimensions of our lives and our era. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise," but His promise is in terms of His day and time, His hour, not ours. Like God's long-suffering, the long span of His temporal plan is an act of grace and patience, because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Fifth, the coming of the Lord is described as comparable to "a thief in the night." This is a much abused phrase. All it means is that, even as a thief's coming is unexpected and unannounced, so too is the Second Coming. It shall be preceded, Paul tells us, by the destruction of all His enemies except death (I Cor. 15:24-26). However, there can be a *very* long time-span between the world-triumph and His coming again. Our Lord is explicit that *no man* knows the day nor the hour of His coming; all too many absorb themselves in trying to discover that hour.

Sixth, at that time, the heavens and the earth shall be consumed with heat, recast after being dissolved, and made into a new creation. In this new creation, righteousness or justice shall "dwell" or be totally operative and manifest. It will be God's Kingdom in all its fullness.

Seventh, the point of Peter's teaching concerning the Second Coming is practical, as we noted earlier. He urges believers to be faithful and obedient, to manifest their citizenship in that new creation daily. They are commanded to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

Earlier, Peter predicts that false teachers shall have a certain measure of success, but a certain ruin (II Peter 2:1-10). In II Peter 3, we have a second prediction, scoffers shall ridicule the doctrine of the Second Coming. Both are doomed to judgment. It is the certainty of His Coming which mandates godliness. The term *coming* is in the Greek *parousia*, which normally refers to a person. "The coming of the day of God" is the coming of the person, Jesus

Christ. History is a covenantal time-frame; it has a necessary *personal*, accountability. We prefer to impersonalize our fretfulness and irresponsibility; we see ourselves weary of things and times, when our weariness is a religious fact, a weariness with God. Peter, however, personalizes our impersonalized fretting and impatience to give it a proper perspective for what it is, sin. If we wait on time, things and men, we are not only disappointed but all the more impatient, fretful, and angry. When we wait on the Lord, we are aware of His long-suffering as our salvation. We are then also aware that time is His creation, and its Alpha and Omega is Jesus Christ. Not only were all things made by Him (John 1:3), but all things are brought to their glorious conclusion in Him.

28. The New Creation

In Adam's fall, the whole of God's creation fell, in that its covenant head had introduced sin and death into the world. All things were now separated from God by the fact of sin, which is rebellion. Thus, while all things were made by Him, and sustained by Him, their direction now was away from Him.

Jesus Christ came as the Adam of the new humanity (I Cor. 15:45-50); hence "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). In Christ, the whole creation shall be made alive, except for those who remain in the old humanity. The whole creation apart from man belongs to the true covenant man, Jesus Christ, and it is therefore made alive in Him and for Him. Thus, more than gravity or any other physical phenomenon, the universe is governed by its necessary direction, Christ and the new creation. More than plants turn to the light, the whole of creation moves towards Christ's consummation. Paul tells us:

> 19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.
>
> 20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.
>
> 21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
>
> 22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.
>
> 23. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:19-23)

It is clear that the reference here is to the whole of creation, outside of men and the angels. The animate and inanimate creation has in all its being the gravity of hope drawing it towards the great consummation to take place when Christ returns and all the sons of God stand forth in the glory of the resurrection. God declares plainly in His word that the natural world around

us responds to man's prosperity in grace. When man hears God, the natural world sings, according to Isaiah 55:11,12:

> 11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.
> 12. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: and the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

There is thus a relationship between the triumph of grace in the life of man and the joyful breaking forth of the natural world into a song of praise. Isaiah's description is of the growth in history of the Kingdom of God, and the response of nature to that godly dominion. The fulfillment in the new creation is far greater than any Isaiah can describe. There is an entelechy of hope in the very ground beneath our feet. We ourselves, Paul says, groan within ourselves, knowing how great is the potential of life and the hope written into our bones, and how great a contradiction to God's purpose this present world is.

The essence of this new creation is justice, God's justice. As II Peter 3:13 declares, "we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

In that new creation, sin and death are abolished (I Cor. 15:26). All things are made new. God Himself dwells in the midst of His people, and all tears, sorrow, and crying, as well as pain and regrets, are forever abolished (Rev. 21:1-6). Covenant man in Christ inherits all things (Rev. 21:7). The purpose of the inheritance is the eternal service of God in a creation where there is *no curse* on work, only joy and freedom (Rev. 22:3).

It is worthy of note that the fact of service in the new creation, the fact of work, has been so extensively neglected. Do-nothing people dream of a do-nothing heaven and eternity, and those to whom life means retirement long for an eternity of retirement, whereas the Bible tells us that perfect service is perfect rest. Schilder said, of Revelation 22:2,

> When the tree of life gives its fruit "from month to month," Scripture means that all living things will enjoy such regularity. Promise and fulfillment will have become one. Indeed, the very words "promise" and "fulfillment" will fall away. There is no longer a possibility of promise when fulfillment is rich and full. Thus the glory of the fulfilled covenant with nature is one of the foundation stones upon which heaven rests. All that which was created blossoms full in the sun of God's righteousness. There is no more change.[52]

In the new creation, potentiality and actuality are one. This is basic to the identity of work and rest. Because all things and all men are not totally

[52] K. Schilder: *Heaven, What Is It?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950). p. 86.

sanctified and totally under God's dominion and law, man rests in God's service. The Sabbath is God's rest; we rest in God's perfect work as our salvation, and we depend totally on God's work. In the new creation, we become fully and perfectly a part of God's finished work, i.e., His mature and perfected work. We know then the identity of work and rest.

Schilder said further of the eternal City of God,

> The city lies in the midst of the cosmos, its gates wide open to all creation. Its length and breadth and height are equal–the cube is the emblem of great peace. The sun standing still also speaks of rest. All rest and all work are identical; desire and fulfillment are one.[53]

The new creation is the perfect community and society. It is, however, to be seen in terms of God's law-word, not man's. Man's contemporary concept of the perfect society rests on the humanistic doctrine of equality. Since man is god for humanism, equality in the godhead requires the equality of all men, in principle if not in practice. This doctrine of equality is commonly read into the Bible in terms of Galatians 3:26-29:

> 26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
> 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
> 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
> 29. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Paul is here speaking of *salvation*. No man has by birth any special privileges which make unnecessary Christ's atonement. All men are sinners in Adam; salvation for all is only through Christ. No racial, sexual, social, or economic status makes any difference. Paul says all men are on an equal status in that only Christ can save them, and none have any special advantage by reason of birth, race, status, or sex.

It does *not* follow that *after* salvation there is any equality of status within the church. Paul himself speaks of the various offices, of the duty of obedience, and of his own status as an apostle. There is no hint of equality within the church; it is a monarchy under Christ the King.

The same is true of the new creation. In the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30), the Lord says to the most faithful servant, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21). In Luke 19:17, we read, "thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities;" another is made ruler over five cities (Luke 19:19). A third, who aimed at minimal status in order merely to be within the realm, is cast out (Luke 19:20-27; Matt. 25:24-30). Very clearly, the new creation is

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 117f.

one in which all men are totally in the Spirit and under God, but they are not equal in status and function. We are not given anything in the way of details concerning our service, but it is clear that there are degrees of status and authority.

The myth of equality has been projected onto the new creation with unhappy results. For one thing, it has made it difficult for people to think of either *service* or *community* in the new creation. The idea of equality makes this impossible. If I am equal to all other men, then I have no need for other men *except incidentally*; being equal to all men, I have all the resources and talents of all men, and I need not depend upon anyone other than myself. However, because of the very real fact of inequality, I am dependent upon a vast number of others. In a very few areas, I can feel confident of my superiority, but in the overwhelming preponderance of areas, I am dependent upon others. I need them in a very literal way for my survival. My inequality makes it urgently necessary and a fact of life that I must provide services to others in order to receive services. The reality of life is not equality but interdependence.

These facts of inequality and interdependence make community necessary. Neither economically nor socially can I stand alone. I need other people. Community is a necessity for true life. Hence, "the communion of saints" is an affirmation of the Apostles' Creed and a fact of our faith. "We are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). Here in this life, this membership is beset with problems, because we are all prone, even when saved, to Adam's sin, to be as gods (Gen. 3:5). We seek a false dominion over one another; we give vent to sin rather than to community. We want people to meet our expectations rather than the Lord's; as a result, our community is marked by divisions and disharmony.

Hell, however, has the perfect equality of many would-be gods, all living in total isolation and incapable of anything that even resembles community. Because of the equality of all men in hell, there can be neither service nor community there. Men who will not serve God cannot serve one another. Men who believe themselves to be gods will insist on their self-sufficiency; they will serve neither God nor man and are finally served by none.

The new creation is the fulfillment of the covenant, and the covenant is at one and the same time a covenant of grace and of law, a covenant of works. *Works* belong to the covenant, irrevocably and fundamentally. The new creation is thus the place where the covenant, in all its fullness, is the total fact of life.

29. Typology and Eschatology

Typology has an essential relation to eschatology, the doctrine of "the last things." Before developing briefly that relationship, it is best to understand

what typology is.[54] Our concern here is not with the three kinds of typology but with typology itself. To begin on a very necessary and elementary level, typology asserts a common meaning and relationship. When our daughter Sharon was about 20, she went to Kingsburg to visit her grandmother. As she was walking from the bus station to her grandmother's home, a man whom she had never seen before, stopped, offered her a ride, and said, "I'm not a stranger. You are obviously a Rushdoony, and we are related, so I know who you are." Albert's father and my father (Sharon's grandfather) were first cousins. Without knowing about Sharon, or her coming, he had recognized her, and she herself then recognized the common appearance, although she is blonde, and he somewhat dark of skin and hair. They shared a common bloodline, a certain characteristic manner and a sense of recognition.

This has a resemblance to typology. The reality of typology is that God is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things therein. As the Creator, He gives His meaning to all things, so that history and the universe have a common pattern. That pattern means that a discernible thread and strand of meaning govern every moment of time and every atom of creation. At certain points, one or another strong element in that pattern surfaces plainly and decisively; at all times, it is present and in the context of things. Thus, to cite a dominant pattern or type, Adam is the first man and head of the original (and fallen) humanity, whereas Jesus Christ is the second or last Adam, and the head of the new and redeemed humanity (I Cor. 15:20-23, 45-49).

In the world of Darwin, there can be no typology, because accident and chance determine all things; if there is a pattern, it is accidental, not purposive. Hence, the rise of evolutionary thinking has undermined the interest in and development of the meaning of Biblical typology. Typology presupposes creationism and predestination; it declares that a common and pre-determined purpose governs, directs, and informs every fact of history. For this reason, typology and prophecy are also inter-related. Fairbairn said of typology, "The typical is not properly a different or higher sense, but a different or higher application of the same sense."[55]

The type binds God's creation together; it points forward to the consummation of God's plan, and hence it is eschatological; it sees past history as essentially tied to the present and to the future, and hence prophetic. Types are thus set in God's Creative act and His predestinating counsel. It is the typological nature of creation which makes science and historiography possible. Scientific knowledge would be impossible if the universe of facts were unrelated and meaningless; it is the common factor in data which makes science possible, and the fact of development which is basic to history.

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[54] See R. J. Rushdoony: *Thy Kingdom Come*. (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1970, 1978). pp. 97-99.

[55] Patrick Fairbairn: *The Typology of Scripture*, vol. I. (New York, N.Y.: Funk and Wagnalls, 1911). p. 3.

In the strictly theological sense, the *type* is that which binds the Old and New Testaments together, so that we have apparent both a common purpose *and* a development in that purpose. Turning again to Fairbairn,

> It is held, first, that in the character, action, or institution which is denominated the *type*, there must be a resemblance in form or spirit to what answers to it under the Gospel; and secondly, that it must not be *any* character, action, or institution occurring in the Old Testament Scripture, but such only as had their ordination of God, and were designed by Him to foreshadow and prepare for the better things of the Gospel.[56]

The *type* is thus not a symbol. The eagle is a symbol of America, and the bear of Russia, but there is no essential link between an eagle and the United States, and a bear and the Russian Empire. The connection is arbitrary and man-made, whereas there is an essential relationship between Adam and Christ; it is God-ordained, and it is necessary to an understanding of man, history, and salvation.

It is this essential nature of typology which gives it power. It is where men, *first*, recognize the importance of typology, and, *second*, see its relationship to eschatology, that they begin to remake history in terms of God's pattern. Lowance, in studying the use of typology by American Puritans, titled his chapter "The Shaping of the Future: Eschatological Symbolism in Old and New England During the Seventeenth Century."[57] The Edwardians became post-millennialists, and they saw an historical sequence in the types which led them to work for Christ's reign in every realm. According to Lowance,

> Like modern charismatic and "born again" Christian groups, Edwards and the New Lights regarded man's life after rebirth to be an instrument of the Spirit. The conviction that their present lives prophesied future fulfillments was the deepest impulse of the New Light movement. New Lights read their Bibles to understand what future blessings God had revealed in the words and lives of His chosen peoples.[58]

Let us now examine an example of the link between typology and eschatology. *Priesthood* is a Biblical fact, and, like *kingship* has an important place in typology. *First*, there is an identification of the priestly and the kingly in Melchizedek, who is seen by David in Psalm 110 as God's Right Hand man, not Melchizedek personally, but a priest-king "after the order of Melchizedek," i.e., one who owes his rank and office, not to descent by blood but to God's appointment (Heb. 7:1-28). *Second*, in Isaiah 53:1-13, the priestly and royal person is also God's suffering Servant, making atonement for our sins. *Third*, the Davidic princely line shall bring forth a priestly ruler,

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
57. Mason J. Lowance, Jr.: *The Language of Canaan, Metaphor and Symbol in New England from the Puritans to the Transcendentalists.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980). pp. 115-177.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

according to Jeremiah 30:21. *Fourth*, Zechariah 6 portrays this coming Priest-King on the throne. *Fifth*, Isaiah 66:21 prophesies an international priesthood made up of the faithful brethren out of all nations. *Sixth*, in Revelation 1:6, we are told that all believers have been made kings and priests by Jesus Christ, "unto God and his Father."

This typological sequence is set in the context of many other sequences, all inter-related to this one. The Adam-Christ relationship is the central one, of course. Adam failed to be God's priestly king and sought to exercise these offices in terms of himself as his own god (Gen. 3:5). All the sons of Adam have sought a like independent jurisdiction, and a like status as their own gods. Jesus Christ, as the true man as well as truly God, is the new Adam, faithful to His office. He has, according to John, "washed us from our sins in his own blood," "loosed us thereby from sin and death, and has thereby" made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6). Thus, the type here begins with man, Adam, is debased by him, but is then re-established in its truth, justice, and holiness by Christ, and then it is made again the calling of the now regenerate sons of Adam who are members of Jesus Christ.[59]

To cite another example of typology, Christ is seen as the greater Moses, as the ultimate lawgiver. The Sermon on the Mount gives a deliberate completion to Moses' revelation on the mount, Sinai. Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, but Jesus said, I say unto you. When the woman at the well spoke to Jesus, she probably, if not certainly, in saying "I know that Messias cometh" (John 4:25; *Messias* is the actual word in the Greek text), said, "I know that the Taheb cometh," because, as Burch pointed out,

> The Taheb, which is the name for the Samaritan Anointed One, is a bringer-in of the Law. That is also the basal idea in the Hebrew conception of a Messiah. Both connote another Moses. We have found that the *Amen* name is borne by Him who surpasses Moses and who brings in the New Law. Jesus explained to one woman, "I that speak unto thee am he."[60]

Again we see typology bring to focus God's purpose. The law is given by God through Moses to a lawless generation. Christ comes as the true and faithful Adam to keep the law perfectly and to create a righteous and law-keeping, i.e., covenant-keeping, humanity. Calvin said, "the law is a silent magistrate, and a magistrate a speaking law."[61] We can in terms of typology extend this

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[59] On the priestly and royal typology, see Martin J. Wyngaarden: *The Future of the Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1955). pp. 57-69.

[60] V. Burch: *Anthropology and the Apocalypse*. (London, England: Macmillan, 1939). p. 202.

[61] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Chapter XX, Section XIV, Vol. II. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). p. 787.

to say that covenant man must be a speaking law, and a living witness of grace, mercy, peace and justice.

As we have seen, it is God's creation of all things which links all things to His purpose. In the life of man, there must be a moral link, the willingness to say in Christ and with Christ, "Lo I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). To be in Christ is to be in His typological purpose.

30. Eschatology and Man's Kingly Office

In Revelation 1:6 we are told that Jesus Christ, the last Adam, "has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father," so that in Christ the covenant believer has a royal calling. It is important to remember that the title of *king* was a very high one in antiquity, far more so than in our day. The Caesars of Rome did not dare assume the name of a king because of the Roman hostility to such a title; hence they ruled as emperors. In many states of antiquity, royal colors such as purple were forbidden to all but royalty. Pilate, to give validity to the death sentence against Jesus, had it set forth as His Kingship, since no such title not created by Rome was permitted (Matt. 27:37).

In the light of this, for Christians to declare themselves priestly kings marked them as a subversive group. Rome did not find it necessary for them to be charged with kingship; their mere refusal to confess, "Caesar is lord," was enough to make clear that Christians denied the sovereignty of Caesar. They were seen as men who made themselves and their church a separate empire. As such, they were persecuted.

Our concern now is with the realm of this kingly vocation: is it for time only, or for eternity? Do Christians reign as kings eternally, or is their role in heaven and the new creation simply that of harp players?

The verses sometimes used to indicate that the end of history is the end also of Christ's kingship, and therefore also of man's, is I Corinthians 15:24-28:

> 24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
> 25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
> 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.
> 27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.
> 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Christ came as the last Adam to accomplish the task in which the first Adam failed, to exercise dominion, and to bring all things into God's kingdom in terms of their destined place. Psalms 8 and 110 speak of the Messiah's universal dominion. This task is to be accomplished by Christ and His new

humanity during the course of history, until all enemies save death are placed under Christ's feet. As Hodge noted, "There is no limit to the *all things* here intended. Heb. 2:8."[62] The subjection then of the Son is not as the Second Person of the Trinity but as the incarnate God-man.

The text does not say the Son will surrender His kingship nor yield up the kingdom. Rather, then, when the new creation is totally realized, "then shall the Son also be subject unto him." There are thus two emphases: *first*, when all things are under Christ, death shall be destroyed, and the kingdom "delivered" to God, *second*, the Son shall also be subject to God. In what sense can we say that the sinless Son is not now subject to the Father? Clearly, there is no lack of a total *personal* subjection by Christ. It would be blasphemous to assume otherwise. The subject which is still lacking is covenantal, i.e., of the new humanity in Christ. Mankind is still far from subject to God, nor is even the church in anything near faithful subjection. Much needs to be done: the church in Christ must be made subject, all men must be brought into the Kingdom, and all the world must be made Christ's in its every aspect. Then, as Berkhof noted:

> And this kingship of Christ will last until the victory over the enemies is complete and even death has been abolished, I Cor. 15:24-28. At the consummation of all things the God-man will give up the authority conferred on Him for a special purpose, since it will no more be needed. He will return His commission to God, that God may be all in all. The purpose is accomplished; mankind is redeemed; and thereby the original kingship of man is restored.[63]

Berkhof's point is excellent, but it involved a contradiction: Christ surrenders His kingship, although He is the last Adam, and man assumes it. In Genesis 1:26-28, the original royal mandate and commission, man is called to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth and all things therein unto God, beginning with himself. What Paul means in I Corinthians 15:28 is that, when Christ, and all who are in Christ, accomplish this task, and all things "shall be subdued unto him," i.e., to God, then the Son, and all who are in Him, shall be truly and fully "subject unto him." To illustrate, if I am subject to Christ, but my wife, children, and work are not, then I am far from truly subdued under Him and subject to Him. When I reach that total subjection, I do not abdicate my place under God; rather, I realize it totally. Similarly, Christ, in presenting the kingdom to the Father in the totality of subjection thereby makes total His own subjection. In so doing, Christ makes total His kingship over the kingdom. Thus, Paul speaks, not of the end of Christ's royal office, but of its fullness. So too men enter into the fullness of their royal calling in the new creation. The culmination of the vision of Revelation is not one of

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62. Charles Hodge: *An Exposition to the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950). p. 332.

63. Louis Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941). p. 411.

Christ's abdication as king but His enthronement (Rev. 22:1). The pietistic reading of Scripture has too often obscured our vision.

The royal estate of man is also set forth in Revelation:

> 4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.
> 10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,
> 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (Rev. 4:4, 10-11)

We have here a vision of the throne of heaven, of God, and around it twenty four seats or thrones occupied by twenty four elders or presbyters. The word *elder* has reference to an office of ruler in Israel and the church. The text becomes meaningless otherwise. The elders of Israel ruled over the commonwealth; the presbyters or elders ruled over the church. Because they are *enthroned*, their function is seen as clearly a royal one.

Moreover, because they are in eternity and are totally sanctified, at one and the same time the twenty four elders reign, with crowns on their heads, and yet yield all their dominion and rule to God. The twenty four elders or rulers represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the new Israel, i.e., the fullness of dominion and the fullness of the assembly or congregation of Christ. The church of God in total surrender and total obedience is at the same time in total fulfillment, authority and dominion.

The kingship given to covenant man in Genesis 1:26-28 was lost by Adam and regained by Christ. Revelation gives us the prophetic account of the total war to regain the Kingdom for Christ and by Christ. The recapture of the world dominion marks, not the end of covenant man's kingship, but its fullness and its magnificent eternal inauguration. It is wrong thus to see Christ's kingship and man's as ending with the Last Judgment and the new creation. Rather, the battlefield aspect of the Kingdom ends; the realm at war is replaced by the realm in eternal peace. The dominion of conquest is replaced by the dominion of peaceful reign.

The implications of all this are clearly beyond us. This does not mean that we can neglect the very plain sign-posts to that realm. We are called to reign in and with Christ. We have a realm in which potentiality and actuality are one. Both an eternal Sabbath and an eternally curse-free service are identical, and man becomes what he was created to be.

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) tells us plainly that our exercise of dominion here is a preparation for dominion in the world to come. We dare not neglect that fact. It tells us clearly that if we do not exercise our royal

function and calling here, we have no place in the world to come. The very blunt statement from the Lord is this:

> 29. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.
> 30. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 25:29-30)

General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army and a great Christian Reconstructionist, once spoke of most church members as mummies. Their ostensible salvation was in reality a mummification, so that their function thereafter was to sit in a church pew, mummified for life and isolated from reality.

We are called to exercise dominion now in order to exercise it eternally.

31. Eschatology and Man's Priestly Office

Among the central functions of a priest relevant to our concern here is mediation and intercession with God. Through the priest, man dedicates himself, his possessions, and his life to God. The priest had to manifest the holiness of God in order to be God's priest, so that holiness must be his way of life. Not only is the true priest holy and separated to God, he also serves God by separating men and things to God. The priest can anoint kings and prophets, baptize, and dedicate peoples; he can also dedicate and set apart a building for the Lord's use, or certain utensils, furnishings, or lands.

The Hebrew word for priest is *kohen*, stand, and the priest is he who stands before the Lord. He is the favored servant of the Lord who does the Lord's bidding. The priest stands before the altar of God, before the Holy Place, and thus before the throne. In Isaiah 6:2, we see the seraphim standing above the throne of God, "in the position of waiting upon Him as His attendants."[64] The cherubim surround God's throne (Ezek. 1:22, Rev. 4:6). The seraphim in Isaiah 6:3 cry out, "Holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." In Revelation 4:8, the cherubim's song is, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." The antiphonal singing of God's praise is the continuous occupation of the seraphim and the cherubim. Very early in the Christian era, the clergy saw the analogy of their calling to the work of the cherubim and seraphim, and antiphonal songs of praise became a part of the church's worship. Antiphonal singing seems to have been a part of the priestly calling even among the ancient Hittites. Its presence in Old Testament worship is well known, as in Nehemiah 12:31-42, and its presence seems obvious in many psalms, as witness Psalms 24 and 136. The Hebrew superscription to Psalm 88 seems to indicate an antiphonal

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64. Edward J. Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). p. 240.

choir. Antiphony was a part of Old Testament worship.[65] In the synagogue, the antiphons were commonly Bible verses. An example from the morning service of week-days is the following:

> For the Kingdom is the Lord's; and He is ruler over the Nations.
>
> (Cantillated) And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the Kingdom shall be the Lord's.
>
> And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; on that day shall the Lord be One, and His Name be One.[66]

Antiphony is responsive singing; a common theme is heard on all sides. The most commonly used antiphony is the psalter; the Episcopal Church has an excellent use of congregational antiphonal use of the psalms.

The significance of this needs to be recognized. The priest is the servant of the Lord, who stands before God to serve Him. His service and dedication include praise. "The whole earth is full of His (the Lord's) glory" is basic to this praise. At the same time, the sanctification of persons and things, and their baptism into the Lord's service, is basic to the priestly calling.

The meaning of this is obvious. The priest stands before God to represent humanity in its praise of and service to the Lord and His Kingdom. It is his priestly calling to sanctify the whole creation by separating it to the Lord and His service. He dedicates all things to God, and acts as the mediator whereby all creation speaks to God and also sings His praises. The needs of creation go before God through His priests.

The great high priest and the one true priest is Jesus Christ, the last Adam and the head of the new humanity. All redeemed men are priests in and under Christ and by virtue of His salvation of us. Our life in Christ is thus a priestly life, and hence prayer is basic to our being. But this is not all. We dedicate ourselves, our families, work, society, and all our relationships to God, and we sanctify them by His law. Thus, day by day, our priestly calling is the sanctification or separation unto God of ourselves and of all that we are a part of in this worlds. This is our eschatological calling in time and history.

This calling does not end in eternity. Revelation 22:3,4 declares, "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face." Where Isaiah's vision, as well as Ezekiel's, saw the cherubim and seraphim we now see the redeemed humanity. The antiphony has become the eternal harmony. The perfect service of God, with the curse forever abolished, is the great response and antiphony of covenant mankind. The whole creation is now full of God's glory.

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65. Eric Werner: *The Sacred Bridge*. (New York, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, (1959) 1963). pp. 137, 146f., 175, 181f, 508-517.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 515.

It is possible that *curse* means "cursed person." There shall be no more "cursed person." All such are forever cast out, and the redeemed humanity of the last Adam now possesses the renewed creation. God is victorious, and His theocracy now is total in all creation. The destruction and the excommunication of all his enemies is complete.

The redeemed shall see God's face. In the days of the first Adam, man, being fallen, could not see God's face and live (Ex. 33:20; cf. 33:23). As Mounce notes,

> In the ancient world criminals were banished from the presence of the king and not allowed to look upon his face (Esth. 7:8; cf. II Sam. 14:24). Jesus taught that only the pure in heart shall see God (Mt. 5:8), and John in his first epistle speaks of the great transformation to take place at the return of Christ when "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (I Jn. 3:2).[67]

In time, the process of transformation takes place as we as priests sanctify ourselves to the Lord (II Cor. 3:18). In the new creation, "On the foreheads of God's servants will be stamped the name of God. His name stands for his character." The followers of the beast bear his mark on their foreheads (Rev. 13:16), and the faithful bear the Name of God. (Rev. 3:12).[68]

There is another aspect of priesthood which is eschatologically important. The priest brought tithes, offerings, and gifts to the Lord, firstfruits and more. All men, in their priestly calling, are required to offer themselves and the totality of their lives and possessions to the Lord. The firstfruits were the symbolic presentation of all. In giving them, the worshipper gave himself and all his substance.

In the new creation, all of us as priests have an equality in the fact that, without exception, we are totally given to the Lord. "His servants shall serve Him" totally and joyfully. It is this aspect which leads to the common association of heaven and the new creation with music. There is a totality of expression in music which is expressive of what the priestly dedication to God requires. Music and blessing readily go together, and, going back to the Old Testament era, worship has commonly been concluded with a sung or chanted blessing and benediction. The covenant man gives himself and his service unto God without reservation, and he receives God's benediction. There is joy in the giving and in the receiving, and hence there is song as well.

Jesus Christ as our great high priest above all else brought Himself to the Lord as an offering. We, His people, are only acceptable to God in Him, and in Him we can bring ourselves to the Lord as our first offering. This we are to do throughout eternity.

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[67] Robert H. Mounce: *The Book of Revelation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1977) 1980). p. 387f.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 388.

32. Eschatology and Man's Prophetic Office

Man, in his prophetic office, is called to speak for God to all creation, and to order, interpret, and understand all things in terms of the word of God. The popular understanding of a *prophet* is one who speaks predictively about the future. This, however, is a secondary meaning. The primary meaning of *prophet* is one who speaks for God, one who declares the word of God, i.e., a preacher. The prophet is thus God's *mouthpiece*. This at once suggests another aspect of the meaning of a *prophet*: he is a law-man, a lawyer, God's lawyer. The Old Testament prophets all spoke in terms of God's law, and, in any age, a lawyer is a man whose calling is to be God's prophet. I am often strong in my judgments on pastors and lawyers precisely because it is their calling to be prophets of God, not the servants of men.

We have a particularly telling light on the prophetic office in the Book of Job. Zophar, in his condemnation of Job, asked:

> 7. Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?
> 8. It is as high as heaven: what canst thou do? deeper than hell: what canst thou know? (Job 11:7-8)

That Zophar spoke accurately here is clear. His point is, as Caryl said, that "The wisdom of God is God."[69] That God is incomprehensible is basic to Christian faith; the mind of man can never grasp the totality of God's being. At the same time, we must assert also the simplicity of God, and the perspicuity of God. While we can never comprehend God in all His being, all that we can know of Him is totally and perfectly consistent with all His being. What Zophar did was to assert his own opinion about God onto God and then to preclude Job from questioning it. Job, in his reply, challenged Zophar's arrogance:

> 1. And Job answered and said,
> 2. No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.
> 3. But I have understanding as well as you: I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?
> 4. I am as one mocked of his neighbor, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.
> 5. He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.
> 6. The tabernacle of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure: into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.
> 7. But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:
> 8. Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

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69. Joseph Caryl: *An Exposition of Job.* (Reprint by Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1959). p. 61.

9. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?
10. In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.
11. Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?
12. With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.
13. With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.
14. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.
15. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.
16. With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.
17. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.
18. He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.
19. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.
20. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.
21. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.
22. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.
23. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: He enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.
24. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.
25. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man. (Job 12:1-25)

Job did *not* like what he was saying; rather, he spoke, because it was the truth. Thus, he spoke not for himself but for God. His friends were interpreting God in terms of the framework of their thinking. Job, however, insisted that God be interpreted in terms of His own creation. Zophar had asked, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job answered that no searching was necessary: "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee." The lesson it teaches is that the wicked prosper, robbers flourish, and just men are laughed to scorn. The hand of the Lord is of necessity in all these things. Job begins and ends with the omnipotence of God and His predestinating power. What our eyes see was ordained by God. "The hand of the LORD hath wrought" all these things.

Is this all? "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job stated what he found out with respect to God. However wise man is, or however experienced the ancients, true wisdom and strength and counsel and understanding, are with the Lord. All things come from Him; "the deceived and the deceiver are His." We cannot limit our knowledge of God to that which conforms to our preconceived ideas about Him. All things are subservient to God. As Caryl said, with respect to v. 10,

> Though there is much to be learned from beasts and fowls, &c. yet Job calls on them, in a special manner, to observe that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and that all these things are in his hand. Providence is as extensive as creation. Now, if providence (wherein man usually acts with God), acts so much above man, that the whole is ascribed to God, how much more does creation declare itself to be the sole work of God?[70]

Thus, Job does not seek a comfortable doctrine; he seeks God Himself, and he speaks the truth about God, whether he likes it or not. Job was thus speaking prophetically. A little later, Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him" (Job 13:15). Here Job made clear his distress over his lot, but, at the same time, he declared, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." This was prophetic speaking, because he accepted God's word unconditionally, whether he liked it or not. This prophetic commitment marks all the Biblical prophets, and Jeremiah especially reminds us of Job. In every age, the prophet sees God's total providential government and refuses to allow anything to diminish that clarity of vision. He brings to the earth a word which speaks of God's creation and rule, of God's word and eschatological government. Man and the earth are called to be much more than they are. Hence, Jeremiah cried out, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD" (Jer. 22:29).

The prophetic task is to apply the law-word of God to all the earth, to all men and nations, and to every aspect of creation. The prophetic task calls for the indictment of all sin as God's lawyers, and the application of God's law to the affairs of men and the earth.

This is the temporal, historical task of the prophet. What of his task in the new creation? In the prophetic vision of John in Revelation 4:1-2, the first thing John saw was the throne. From the throne, the law-word goes forth in terms of which all creation is to be judged and remade. In the new creation, that throne and God's law-word reign supreme and to perfection. What then remains for us as prophets?

It is a serious error to see the prophetic office as only negative. The perfect application of God's law-word is the fullness of the prophetic vocation. In Revelation 22:2, we are told:

> In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The imagery of this verse echoes Genesis 2:9 and 3:22, and also Ezekiel 47:12. In Ezekiel, the healing waters of the altar or atonement flow like a river on whose banks are trees which bring forth fruit continually. The healing

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70. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

leaves mean that all want and sin are now gone, because the leaves indicate that no problems can exist. The nations are now healed and are a part of the Kingdom. The tree is now open to all men, so that eternal life is now the lot of all.

This verse as well as the entire vision gives us the new Garden of Eden, now the world city, both a garden and a city at one and the same time. What man failed to do in Eden, he now does in the new creation, the New Jerusalem. Here and now, we have a radical departure from the creation mandate and man's prophet vocation. Adam was commanded to exercise dominion in terms of God's law-word. Modern man holds that the public law-word comes from the state, and that God's law-word only governs "private" morality. Even this limited sphere for God's word is under attack. Homosexuality, the pro-abortion movement, the sexual "revolution," antinomianism, and other movements insist now that "private" morality like public must be governed by man's word.

At the same time, eschatology holds that God's final judgment, a legal act, is between the just and the unjust. Because in antinomianism the validity of God's law is denied for the historical realm, it is increasingly dropped from the court of God's judgment. The result is the "evangelical" immoralism described by Arend J. Ten Pas in *The Lordship of Christ*.[71]

If, however, God's law-word is valid in history, its validity remains in eternity. The foundation of all rule is forever God's justice. The application of God's justice or righteousness to all creation will be man's eternal prophetic task. To apply that law-word here means a struggle against the forces of sin and death. To apply it in the new creation means not a struggle but a song. The arts and sciences will become the natural fulfillment of the prophetic vocation of man. In the sciences, prophetic dominion man will express his realized knowledge, and, in the arts, his human, creaturely expression of the glory of God's creation. Because God made man in His image, man will express his creaturely creative nature under God. It will manifest knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion. No more than a violinist works to master a difficult composition only then to cease ever to play it do we cease in eternity to express the image of God in our prophetic calling.

Of the new creation we are told, "And the nations (or, peoples) of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it" (Rev. 21:24). As the kings of the earth in Christ, we bring into the new creation all the glory and honor of our image and our prophetic calling.

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71. Arend J. Ten Pas: *The Lordship of Christ*. (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982, 3rd printing).

Let us consider this more specifically. Earlier, humanistic man saw himself as the man of reason, and reason as ultimate and autonomous. With Freud, reason gave way to man's unconscious mind and motivations, to the role of the id, the ego, and the super-ego. The interpretation of dreams became basic to psychoanalysis not what man *reasoned*, but what man *dreamed*, was the key to his psyche. This concept is now basic to modern thought, to the arts, and to much historiography.

At the same time, most psychoanalysts have dropped the use of dream analysis. What has been discovered is that patients dream as their therapists direct their thinking, i.e., in terms of the psychoanalyst's theory and analysis. Their rational assent and submission to the psychoanalyst determines their dreams. Thus, it is not the unconscious or sub-conscious which determines the mind, but the conscious mind which determines the sub-conscious mind. Evolutionary theory requires the priority of the unconscious, but the evidence points to the supremacy of the conscious mind. Modern man has thus forced himself into an unnatural relationship with his own being by assuming the priority of the primitive, the primordial, and the unconscious.

As we grow in grace, we reverse that relationship. Not only does our conscious mind then govern all our being, but we submit our conscious mind to the governance of God and His law-word. We grow in grace to the degree that we make that submission. At the same time, we grow in our prophetic office. In the new creation, in eternity, the governance of our mind and being by God is total, and so too is our expression of our prophetic office. Our being then finds its truest expression in full self-consciousness.

XIV

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

1. "A Little Lower Than Judges"

Psalm 8 is an important text in any study of the doctrine of man in Scripture, and its understanding is a necessity to any careful study thereof. It has been variously called a nature psalm, or a hymn to the dignity of man. It is, rather, an exaltation of the glory and grace of God. God's grace is set forth in His creation and calling of man, and the emphasis is not on man's dignity but on man's responsibility to God and under His authority. It is not man's dignity but God's Name which is "excellent...in all the earth!" David declares:

> 1. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
> 2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
> 3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained:
> 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him.
> 5. For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
> 6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet:
> 7. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
> 8. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
> 9. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

The psalm begins and ends with the same declaration of God's glory, might, or excellence. The focus is on God, not man.

The key verse in the interpretation of this psalm is commonly seen as v. 5: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." The word translated as *angels* by the King James Version is actually *elohim*, gods. Modern translators render it as *God*. In terms of this, they emphasize man's "dignity." Is this so?

First, *elohim* is, strictly, neither *angels* nor *God*. It is *gods*. This distinction is important. True, where *Elohim*, in terms of the context, plainly refers to God, it is rendered in the singular because it takes a singular verb, indicating a plurality in the unity of the Godhead.

Second, the terms *elohim*, gods, is used elsewhere of men. Both judges and prophets are referred to in Scripture as *gods* (Ex. 21:6; 22:8; I Sam. 28:13; Ps. 82:1,6; cf. John 10:35) in the Hebrew text. The context of Psalm 8 points to a

like usage. In other words, God declares that all men are only a little lower than gods, judges, and have a like authority under Him to establish dominion and exercise authority in the Name of the Lord.

Does the context support such an interpretation? *First* of all, the whole context of Scripture is against placing man a little lower than God the Lord, and this psalm also stresses the incomparable majesty of God. David is amazed at the grace of God, amazed that God is at all even mindful of man. In the universe alone, man is insignificant; how much more so before God! And yet God in His grace is so mindful of man that He makes him virtually a judge over all things, to exercise dominion over them under God.

Second, the context is also the wars of the Lord; enemies referred to in v. 2 who must be silenced and stilled. For this task, God calls forth His judges, as in the days of the Judges, to do battle in the name of the Lord. The calling then is to be judges like Gideon and Deborah, only a little lower than they, but all in the same calling.

In the Song of Deborah, we are told, "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20), one of the great, singing verses of Scripture. All creation works against those who are at war with God, so that the seemingly helpless who stand in God's power stand in a cosmic power. To move in God's power makes all of us only a little lower than the judges of the earth, who, if they forsake God and His law, shall perish (Ps. 82:1,6).

Third, the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28 is plainly recalled in vv. 6-8, man's calling to dominion. This dominion is to be as *judges*, according to law, God's law. When man substituted his fiat word for God's as the new law of being (Gen. 3:5), he fell, and the very stars in their course fought against him (Judges 5:20), as did the ground beneath his feet (Gen. 3:17-19). Instead of exercising dominion over the earth, the ground would receive his body and turn it into dust (Gen. 3:19). It is the redeemed man who can alone truly exercise dominion and under whose feet all things are rightfully placed (Ps. 8:6).

Thus, Psalm 8 is not talking about the dignity of man; man talks all too much about that himself, and is forever standing on his dignity. Rather, the psalm speaks of the *calling* of man. On this, it has some urgent things to say, and it sings them joyfully.

First, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Kirkpatrick stated it clearly: "The general sense is plain. Jehovah has ordained that even the feeblest representations of humanity should be His champions to confound and silence those who oppose His kingdom and deny His goodness and providential government."[1] The faith and witness of all mankind, from the child up, must be to God's Kingdom and law, and God has

founded strength, established His judgment and witness even in children. In our Lord's life, the prophetic manifestation of this appears in Matthew 21:15-16. The chief priests and scribes were the judges of Israel, but, being faithless, it was their judgment to perish (John 10:35). Against them and all Israel, the Lord established a witness in the children, whose cries of Hosanna to Christ filled the temple. When God's judges are silent, children will cry out. If children are silent, the very stones will "immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40), for the stones, like the stars which fought against Sisera (Judges 5:20), are created by God and fulfil His will. The judgment of the judges of Israel came from children, who were called to be a little lower than judges in the things of God.

Second, it is the enemies of God who are to be judged. These enemies are all who set aside God's sovereignty and law for their own claim to be as gods (Gen. 3:5). The enemies of God are all who implicitly or explicitly take the government upon their shoulders. One kind is especially singled out, the *avenger*. The avenger usurps God's judicial functions and makes himself the court and also law, and judgment. God is emphatic; "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense" (Deut. 32:35; see Nahum 1:12, etc.). The avenger believes his way to be wiser than God's and moves to "enforce" the law by denying the Lawmaker and by making himself both God and court.

Third, in this calling to be God's servant, the Lord crowns man "with glory and honour." What this coronation means is clear from the rest of the Psalm: it is *dominion* over the earth. It is to be like one of the *elohim*, a little lower than the judges of the earth. The difference between the *elohim* and men is that the judges exercise a particular power over men in courts of law, a power which is only legitimate if it is exercised in conformity to God's law word. Outside the court, all men are to exercise power over the earth, always subject to God's law-word.

Fourth, judges, elohim in the Biblical sense, cannot be restricted to the modern court of law. The framework of reference is God's law. Judges in Scripture are men who rule in terms of God's law. In the *Book of Judges*, the judges are military, civil, and juridical rulers who governed Israel in terms of God's word. Deborah ruled Israel and held public hearings under a palm tree; her judgments and rule were in terms of God's law (Judges 4:4-5). All men are called to be a little lower than judges, the governors of the earth, and this means that all men must govern, assess, and judge all things in terms of God's law-word.

The judges are called *elohim* because it is God's law which they are called to administer, God's righteousness or justice which they must set forth, God's holiness they must manifest, and the knowledge of God and His law they

[1] A. F. Kirkpatrick: *The Book of Psalms*. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, (1902) 1906). p. 38.

must possess in order to govern. When they fail to judge or govern according to God's law, then, Asaph tells us, God will come as their judge, to kill them as law-breakers and rebels:

> 1. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods.
> 2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
> 3. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
> 4. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
> 5. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
> 6. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.
> 7. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
> 8. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations. (Psalm 82)

Asaph here describes God's trial of the authorities of the nation. He sees no hope in these rulers. If God's covenant people are to possess the earth, then God Himself shall accomplish it (v. 8). These governors have respected the person of the wicked because they are powerful. They have accordingly sacrificed the poor and the fatherless, the afflicted who cry out for justice, and the needy or destitute, to their power game. As a result, the foundations of the earth, of human society *and* the natural order, are "out of course," or shaken. God will right those foundations by a sure and radical judgment: the mighty shall perish, and their plans shall be confounded.

The fall of Jerusalem is the most dramatic example of such a judgment.

The rest of mankind cannot sit back and delegate responsibility to the judges or *elohim*. Because all men are made only a little lower than the judges, all men have a responsibility before God to be active in the wars of the Lord.

The glory of man and the grace of God is seen in man's calling to be God's *covenant man*, to serve and obey God in faithfulness to God's law-word. This is a calling which cannot be delegated to other men, to the judges. God's righteousness or justice is every man's calling.

2. "What is Man?"

The question, "What is man?" is a question raised by Scripture itself, and one regularly raised and answered in theology. There is a difference, however, between the theological and the Biblical answers.

Theologians proceed at once to define man. Historically in terms of Greek premises, man has been defined as *having* a body and a soul, whereas Genesis 2:7 says that "man *became* a living soul" or breath. Theologians have then, in the classical tradition, discussed the birth of the soul, a matter of extensive debate. Modernist theologians have dissented and have defined man in terms

of an evolutionary perspective, in terms of modern rather than classical, Hellenic humanism.

However, the only definition Scripture gives of man is incidental to his calling and function. Thus, when David asks, "What is man?" (Ps. 8:4), his question is rhetorical in a sense; it expresses his amazement at the grace of God, Who has *called* man to be His vicegerent over creation.

The historical tradition of definition concentrates on man in terms of himself, man abstracted from his calling. The point of Psalm 8 is that man is that creature made by God to exercise dominion over the earth under God (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:6). Man is created in God's image (Gen. 1:27), in righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24), and in knowledge (Col. 3:10), and he is called to exercise dominion and subdue the earth, to make it God's Kingdom with himself as prophet, priest, and king under God, and to rule in righteousness and holiness, and with knowledge.

To define man beyond His creation and calling is to wander into an endless morass. God did not create man so that man might study and understand himself but rather that man might serve and glorify God. The surest definition of man is his calling. As men believe and obey God, they are definable in terms of their covenantal faithfulness. If they are covenant-breakers, they have defined themselves in terms of God's judgment and word. Biblical anthropology is not abstract: man can only be known in terms of God's creation and calling.

Man, says David, is "crowned with glory and honor" in his creation (Ps. 8:5). By God's grace, in his creation, man was born royal. Royalty in the modern world is symbolic and ornamental. In Scripture, kingship means dominion and authority. It means, moreover, military leadership against the enemies of the realm. In this Biblical sense, man was created to be God's prince of grace in the wars of the Lord. Man was not created for his own welfare, happiness, or goals. The goal of modern man is self-realization and fulfillment, a goal which places him in immediate conflict with God and on a collision course with reality. All things live, move, and have their being in terms of God's sovereign decree and purpose, and no departure from that course can mean anything other than disaster. It is the clay arguing against the Potter, and imagining that creator and creation must obey his imagination (Rom. 9:20-23).

Modern anthropology defines man in abstraction from God and in terms of an evolving cosmos which is a product of chance. Modern man defines himself in terms of his own "autonomous" will and desire, and he regards life and the universe as evil if he is not satisfied with his self-fulfillment. For theology to concentrate on man's being, and to seek to define man apart from his creation and calling, is to fall into the same kind of abstraction. We have

an abstract and therefore false definition of man whenever and wherever man is not viewed in his totality in terms of God's calling.

Thus, the coronation of man has nothing to do with man's glory and everything to do with God's calling. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Ps. 8:6). Immediately after creating Adam, God "commanded" Adam to do certain things: to dress and till the Garden of Eden, an agricultural task; to eat certain fruits but to abstain totally from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a moral obligation; and to name the animals, a scientific task of classification, since names in Scripture are definitions (Gen. 2:15-20). In so doing, Adam was to serve God. His classification of the animals was not for his own storehouse of knowledge, as a means of satisfying his curiosity, but to enable him all the better to serve God. His care of the fruit trees and vegetables meant a similar task of knowledge and classification.

But this is not all. David tells us that "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger" (Ps. 8:2). Note the emphasis: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings...strength." We do not always associate words with strength. The Hebrew word translated as strength can mean also force, security, power. When man speaks as God's priest and prophet, then even in the mouth of babes such speaking has power, because it speaks from God and to His glory.

Reference was made earlier to the fact that kingship in the modern world is largely ornamental insofar as traditional human monarchs are concerned. Theological anthropology, too has become extensively ornamental; it describes and defines man's estate, but it fails to stress sufficiently his calling. An ornament is an embellishment; it is something added, in its best meaning, to give grace and beauty but which is not a part of the thing itself. Man was not added to creation by God as an embellishment but as the working steward thereof. Man is a steward, not an ornament, and he is God's steward.

Psalm 8 begins and ends with the declaration, "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (vv. 1,9). *Excellent* in the Hebrew means expansive, great, and powerful. Because the Lord is the almighty one, the King of Creation, and because man is created in His image, the dominion of covenant man is assured. The joy of David in this psalm, his awe and confidence in man's calling, is possible only because God is the Lord, He whose Name is indeed the name of power in all creation. Thus, David does not speak of covenant man *hoping* to have dominion over all things: rather, he declares that God has ordained that covenant man shall have dominion over all things. Therefore, whatever evil men may do, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Tim. 2:19).

3. Christ's Resurrection and the Doctrine of Man

One of the boldest statements of Scripture concerning man is I Corinthians 15:12-28. Paul declares:

> 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 first fruits 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.
> 23. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.
> 24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power,
> 25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
> 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.
> 27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.
> 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Before going any further, it should be pointed out that Paul sees Jesus Christ, and all redeemed men in Christ, as the fulfillment of Psalm 8:6; in vv.24-27, Paul cites Ps. 8:6 as fulfilled in the resurrection, the world conquest and the dominion of Jesus Christ and His chosen in every area of life and thought. It is "all things" and "all rule and all authority and power" which will be subjected to the kingship of Christ and the government of His elect people. To deny this is an aspect of the denial of the resurrection.

Paul makes clear that to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ does not mean simply believing only that the crucified body of Jesus Christ arose from the dead. Plainly, this is the foundation, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ requires us to believe in the resurrection of the dead and the triumph of Jesus Christ in time and eternity over all His enemies. This triumph requires that we believe in our triumph together with Him.

In other words, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not an isolated fact. The universe is not a universe of brute factuality, of meaningless and unrelated facts. The resurrection thus, while a unique event, is not an isolated event: it is totally related to every other fact in creation and the source of understanding all.

In this understanding, however, the resurrection of Jesus Christ does not represent the potentiality of being in an evolving creation. The meaning of the resurrection is from beyond time and the universe and governs all things: it comes from the sovereign and triune God and His eternal decree.

Thus, the foundation of our faith, Paul declares, is to believe in Jesus Christ and His resurrection as the revelation of God's salvation and purpose for His creation. This means, *first*, that to deny Christ's resurrection from the dead, His physical resurrection, is to subvert the whole Gospel. Then, says Paul, our preaching is futile, and also your faith (v. 14). There is no Gospel apart from this fact. *Second*, this great fact is no isolated event: if we say that Christ is risen from the dead, we must also hold to the resurrection of all the dead (v. 12), of all humanity. Christ is the Adam of the re-created humanity (vv. 45-49), and, as we in the first Adam are partakers of his guilt and death, so in Christ we are made by grace partakers of His victory and resurrection. We are made a new creation, members of a new humanity, the humanity of the last Adam (Gal. 6:15). To affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ into everlasting life and freedom from sin and death, and all their penalties, is to affirm our own resurrection. *Third*, it follows thus that to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny that Christ is risen (v. 13,16). It is unbelief, "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised."

Fourth, to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny the apostolic witness and the word of God. It is more than a suggestion of error on the part of the apostles: Paul says we are then "found false witnesses of God" if "the dead rise not" (v.15). To be *found* means to be detected or exposed as dishonest men who pretend to be witnesses to a non-existent thing. According to Charles Hodge,

> Here again it is assumed that to deny that the dead rise is to deny that Christ has risen. But why is this? Why may not a man admit that Christ, the incarnate Son of God, arose from the dead, and yet consistently deny that there is to be a general resurrection of the dead? Because the thing denied was that the dead could rise. The denial was placed on grounds which embraced the case of Christ. The argument is, If the dead cannot rise, then Christ did not rise; for Christ was dead.[2]

However, what Paul is writing about is not a denial of Christ's resurrection but the resurrection of the dead. Paul's argument in I Cor. 15 is that we are all related to the first Adam, and that certain things follow because of that

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[2] Charles Hodge: *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint). p. 320f.

relationship, and that, by God's grace, we are members also of the last Adam, Jesus Christ, and certain things, notably the resurrection, ensue because of that fact also. Christ's victory over sin and death becomes our victory also, not only spiritually but totally, including the final destruction of death itself (vv. 26, 45-49).

Fifth, if Christ is not raised, then our faith is vain, empty, fruitless, or futile, and we are still in bondage to sin and death (vv. 17,18). Death and sin then still prevail over all men, without exception, and Christ is not Lord and Savior. There would then be no change of the picture set forth by Paul in Romans 5:12, that, "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."

Sixth, then too all Christians who have died "are perished" (v.18). Their faith was meaningless, and all life is meaningless. Even more, *perished* may mean here *lost*. They who died in a false belief are lost souls, and Paul implies that this is the "meaning" of the death of Christians if we deny the resurrection of the dead. Death is the outcome of sin, and if Christ has not overthrown death for His elect, neither has He overthrown the cause of death, sin. To break the power of sin is to break the power of death, and vice versa.

Seventh, there is then no true life in either time or eternity for us, if Christ did not destroy the power of sin and death in both time and eternity. A partial victory over death means that death still prevails, and sin is still the governing power over humanity. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (v.19), because we live in terms of a delusion.

However, *eighth*, Paul declares, Christ did rise from the dead as *the firstfruits* of the dead. All the dead shall arise, either to reprobation or to their full calling in God's eternal Kingdom, but our resurrection (*i.e.*, that of men) is "at his coming." Christ is our new Adam, the head of the new humanity. As all are born of the old Adam, so all the elect are born again of the New Adam, Jesus Christ, "made alive" in and by Him. It was the first Adam's sin which brought in death, and it is the last Adam's righteousness and victory which brings in "the resurrection of the dead." This will be done in God's time in its fullness: "every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (vv.20-23).

Ninth, the end will not come until Jesus Christ "shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." *Then* He will deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father (vv.24-25). This passage is very obviously one which does not make sense except in terms of post-millennialism. The end comes *after* Christ's total triumph in history.

Tenth, *after* that triumph, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (v. 26). When Christ's work of redemption is accomplished, and when all power, rule, and authority in history serve Christ, then will come the end, and

the destruction of the last enemy, death. The one enemy which shall remain until the Second Coming and the resurrection of the dead, death, will then be destroyed.

Eleventh, the total triumph of Christ as God's new and true man is over all things, but under God. It includes all things very literally (Heb. 2:8) except of course God, under whose dominion alone can man have dominion. Because Jesus Christ is the last Adam, He is, *in His perfect humanity*, the only true definition of man. Hence, the promises of Genesis 1:26-28 and of Psalm 8 are fulfilled only in Him. Hodge commented:

> The proof that death is finally to be destroyed is derived from the 8th Psalm, where the subjection of *all things to* the Messiah is predicted. There are two passages of the Old Testament frequently quoted in the New Testament as foretelling the absolutely universal dominion of the Messiah, Ps. 110 and Ps. 8. The former is quoted, or its language appropriated, in v. 25, Matt. 22:44; Acts 2:34; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 1:13; 10:12,13; I Pet. 3:22. In this there is no difficulty, as that Psalm clearly refers to the Messiah and to none else. The 8th Psalm is quoted and applied to Christ in this passage, and in Eph. 1:22, Heb. 2:8, and I Pet. 3:22.[3]

By limiting the reference of Psalm 8 "to the Messiah and to none else" Hodge not only undercut the meaning of that Psalm but also Paul's application of it here, in the context of the resurrection of the death. The point rather is this: because it applies to Christ as the true man and last Adam, it therefore inescapably applies to man. The requirement of dominion (Gen. 1:26-28) was spoken to Adam and to all men in Adam, and the same is true of Psalm 8; only in Christ can men meet this creation mandate.

Twelfth, Christ as man's mediator will retain all rule, power, and authority, until "all things shall be subdued unto him," and then He will deliver the accomplished work, and the death and sin free Kingdom to God, "that God may be all in all" (v.28). Then the Triune God shall reign over the new creation, with the incarnate person of Jesus Christ Himself subject to the Godhead: as the eternal Logos, He will reign; as the incarnate Logos, He will be the eternally visible Head and representative of His elect race.

It is a serious heresy to reduce Jesus Christ to the status of another man, or to confuse the humanity and deity of our Lord.[4] It is also destructive of Biblical Christology to separate Christ from humanity and absorb Him into the Godhead entirely. The reality of our salvation depends on the fact that He is indeed truly man and truly God, of two natures in perfect union and without confusion. Therefore, in Christ's resurrection and dominion, we see our own dominion and finally our resurrection from the dead.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 332.

[4] See R. J. Rushdoony: *The Foundations of Social Order*. (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, (1968) 1978).

4. The Predetermined Life of Man

Because man is God's creation and creature, man's life can never be discussed in abstraction from God and His decree, nor from God and His world. Man is a creature made by God, who lives in a world created by God, and whose nature and whose world are totally governed by God and His law. The total environment of man is God and His law-word.

Psalm 1, like all of Scripture, sees man only in the context of God and His unified world of law and consequence. According to the psalmist:

> 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
> 2. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
> 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
> 4. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
> 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
> 6. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The psalmist tells us, *first*, that the classification of men is by the Lord. Men are called "ungodly" or "sinners" or "blessed" in terms of God's judgment, not man's. In the Garden of Eden, man was given a task, naming or classifying God's creation, a scientific calling (Gen. 2:19-20). Adam was required to understand God's purpose, order, and design in creation in order to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. In his own classification, man must totally accept God's classification, or else his life is a disaster. In classifying plants and animals, it was necessary for Adam to understand not only their place and order in God's phylum but also their relationship and utility to himself in the exercise of dominion. Thus, man early came to see the function of the cow, chicken, and horse in relationship to himself as well as to God's order, and he acted on that knowledge. In his own classification, however, man must subordinate himself totally to God's purpose. Men and women cannot use each other or others in terms of personal utility: in every respect, they are totally under God. The creation mandate requires man to exercise dominion over all the earth, but his fellow men are left out of the mandate (Gen. 1:26-28). Furthermore, the ordinance concerning marriage does not cite dominion but *union* in God's calling as basic to marriage (Gen. 2:18-24). St. Paul, in speaking of marriage, does *not* use the word dominion but rather headship (I Cor. 11:1-12; Eph. 5:21-23). Scripture requires man to exercise dominion over the world; this does not make mandatory that we love the chickens we use in the poultry-yard. We *can* love the earth we till, but the *command* is to exercise dominion. Headship, however, is plainly associated

with love. Husbands are *commanded* to love their wives "as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25, 28-33). A man is a fool if he sacrifices himself to the cattle he is called to exercise dominion over, but he is *required* to exercise a self-sacrificing headship over his wife in order to further the unity of their marriage under God. His self-sacrificing headship is not one of a wife-centered nature but of a God-centered calling and obedience. In brief, every facet of man's life must be governed and defined by God's law-word. A man can use cattle, having dominion over them, in a variety of legitimate ways, developing many uses not only out of their meat, hide, and bones, but their "by-products" as well. As long as he abides by the general requirements of the Lord, he is lawful. In his relationship to God, to his wife, and to other people, man's ways are carefully classified by God's law. He cannot *use* other men; together, they must be governed and used by God.

The same applies to man's relationship to himself. His thoughts, acts, sexuality, and being are totally commanded by God's law-word.

Second, the psalmist makes clear that man's life is derived from God and is dependent on the every word of God. Our Lord declares, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4), echoing the words of Moses in Deut. 8:3. Man is all too prone to speak of the influence of his environment. For fallen man, the environment he was called to subdue and to exercise dominion over is all too commonly exercising dominion over him. Man victimizes himself in order to justify his sin. For the redeemed man, the determining environment is the triune God and His law-word.

In terms of God as his environment, the redeemed man is comparable to a tree planted by a river, drawing continuously its nourishment from a well-watered soil, so that, "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The ungodly, by rejecting God as their Creator, predestinator, and environment, wither away and are driven like chaff by the winds of judgment.

Because man is totally a creature in all his being, he is totally subject to God, and every condition of his life is created and conditioned by God. Man is not a self-made product.

To be a creature means to be under authority. As T. Robert Ingram has shown, modern man has replaced the mandate of God's law with the mandate of human rights. But "to be created means to be dependent." Man, however, is possessed by the sinful "dream that mankind might become its own law-maker." However, since "all power and authority is of God," it necessarily follows that "man's dominion vanishes without God's dominion from which it proceeds."[5]

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[5] T. Robert Ingram: *What's Wrong with Human Rights*. (Houston, TX: St. Thomas Press, 1979). pp. 6, 7, 11, 59.

Third, the "blessed" or "godly" is that man whose "delight is in the law of the LORD: and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Blessedness and godliness are not abstract conditions of spirituality but of very practical obedience to God's law. Holiness is not a self-induced feeling but that state of obedience by faith to God's every word which Scripture requires.

Humanistic holiness is a man-made product. It rests on man's spirituality and his self-hypnosis, not on obedience to the Lord.

Holiness is a *way* (*derek* in Hebrew), a trodden, *established* path ordained by God. "The way of the righteous" and "the way of the ungodly" are cited. Neither is man-ordained or man-created. God's law establishes which is the way of righteousness and also the way of the ungodly. Man has no independence nor any pioneering being even in his sin. Every *way* he takes is part of a God-created and God-ordained world.

Fourth, "For *the LORD knoweth* the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." "Knoweth," *yada* in the Hebrew, means, as Leupold points out, to care for, to recognize as a friend.[6] To be *known* by God is to be established and recognized as a member of His household and an object of His grace, care, and protection.

Each of the two ways of life is seen as a realm, so that we have here a hint of the two kingdoms, the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Man. The way of the ungodly is also called "the counsel of the ungodly," *counsel* meaning the way, seat, assembly, or dwelling.[7] In contrast to this is "the congregation of the righteous."

The psalmist thus classifies and identifies men in terms of God and His law. Man being God's creation and creature, any other classification is a myth.

One final point: when man denies that he is God's creature, and that God is his determinative environment, man then makes himself into a creature of nature, and his determinative environment becomes the world around. Instead of exercising dominion over that world, he is then driven and determined by it. He is like the chaff which the wind drives before it (Ps. 1:4). He looks to himself and to the world for salvation, and he becomes chaff and driven dust, born out of dust, driven like dust, and returning to dust (Gen. 3:19).

5. Male and Female

In Genesis 1:27-28 we read, "male and female created he them. 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,

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6. H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms*. (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1959). p. 38.
7. Derek Kidner: *Psalms 1-72*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, (1973) 1978). p. 47.

and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Matthew 22:30 makes clear that our sexuality is not an eternal condition but an aspect of this life only. This does not make it any the less real. This morning, while working on some tree-cutting, I was thirsty; my thirst was a very temporary condition, but it was all the same real. Reality is inclusive of the ephemeral and temporal as well as the eternal, and we neglect this fact only to our peril and confusion. While temporal, sexuality is a basic aspect of the life of man. We cannot think of *man* divorced from his maleness and her femaleness without involving ourselves in an abstraction, in mythology, and in absurdities.

In considering what Scripture teaches concerning *man*, it is important, *first*, to remember that, while headship is given to man, dominion is basic to the life of male and female. The word declares, "let *them* have dominion." Dominion is a shared attribute, and headship in that dominion is given to *man*, the male. Together they are told to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion. There is thus a common calling by virtue of a common creation in the image of God.

Second, dominion is an aspect of the image of God in man. It is thus both a part of the content of the image of God and a consequence of it. A being created in God's image will naturally seek to exercise dominion, and the image of God in man compels dominion: dominion is both content and consequence. The fall does not alter this fact: it merely perverts it, so that, instead of exercising dominion in terms of the Kingdom of God, man exercises it in terms of the Kingdom of Man.

Through Paul, we receive further details concerning the creation of woman, namely, that she is "of man," i.e., created from him, so that hers is a reflected image of God. However, Paul makes clear, God is the Creator (I Cor. 11:1-12). Man was created out of the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7), whereas woman was made out of man (Gen. 2:21-22). She shares with man God's image, but man has headship. This headship is in terms of a common calling under God.

Third, in this headship, man exercises authority, but his authority is only and entirely subject to his own submission to the headship of Christ. Man exercises authority when he is under authority. No independent and inherent authority exists on earth. When we obey civil authorities in their derelictions, we do it only "for conscience sake" (Rom. 13:5), because God's way is regeneration, not revolution. When wives are commanded to be "in subjection" to their husbands, the intent is similar. Rebelliousness does not change men: only the Lord does. However, it is very important to note that the most outspoken wife in the Bible is singled out by St. Peter as the pattern and model for godly wives (I Peter 3:1-7). Clearly, the Bible has no

unconditional headship nor subjection in mind. Only God the Lord can command an unconditional obedience.

Fourth, St. Paul, in speaking again of women's subjection in I Timothy 2:9-15, prefaces it with the statement, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting" (I Tim. 2:8). Because men are given headship, prayer is basic to that power, to keep them humble before the Lord and faithful to Him. Their life must be without anger or doubt. An angry headship leads to an abuse of power; an angry man is governed by his displeasure rather than God's righteousness. Furthermore, to doubt God's law-word and power means in part to trust our own word and power, and to rely on our wrath rather than God's sure word. As James makes clear, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

Fifth, while sexuality has its function, procreation (Genesis 1:28), it does not follow that sexuality is purely functional. It is a serious error to reduce God's purposes to functional ends only, and it leaves us then with a limited and even beggarly life. Man in his headship is commanded to be loving and faithful to his wife, and to "rejoice *with*" her (Prov. 5:18). This point is very important. The headship of the male does not entitle him to enjoy his wife, i.e., to use her for his pleasure, but to "rejoice *with*" her sexually, and in every way. The headship of the man is not for his own will even in the marriage bed; even there he is subject to God's word and a mutual obedience.

Sixth, Peter carries this a step further in I Peter 3:7, declaring:

> Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

A man's prayers and his relationship to his head, Jesus Christ, the true Adam, are hindered if a man does not live with his wife in a knowledge both of God's requirements of him and his responsibilities to his wife. Communication then ends in every direction, with God and with his wife. Thus, while marriage is a temporal matter, it has far-reaching consequences with respect to time and eternity. Where prayers are hindered, peace and happiness perish.

Seventh, an important aspect of the faith is here set forth in I Peter 3:7, namely, *the grace of life*. We are by God's creation and His gift of life made the objects of His grace. If we fail to live in terms of His law word, life, instead of being a grace, becomes a curse. In a particular way, husband and wife, in their life and calling in the Lord, are "heirs together of the grace of life." We are told in Genesis 1:28, "And God blessed them." He gave them joy and happiness in being His creatures, in being male and female, and in having so great a calling, to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and to have dominion...over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). Man's life is grace, his calling includes joy, and he is inescapably directed by God's image into knowledge, righteousness,

holiness, and dominion. When man turns aside from the headship of the true man, the last Adam Jesus Christ, he forsakes life, grace, and health. The words of Solomon are very much to the point:

> 35. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.
>
> 36. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. (Prov. 8:35-36)

6. The Blessing of Man

In Genesis 1:22 (cf. 1:28) we are told that, on the fifth day of creation, when God created animal life, "God blessed them, saying, be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth." *Blessing* here is clearly linked with fecundity, as in Genesis 9:1; 17:16,20; 22:17; 24:60; 26:3-4, 24; 28:3; 35:9-11; 48:3-4; 49:25; it is also in sight in 48:15-16.[8] In Genesis 1:28, blessing contains also another element, dominion over the creatures and over the earth.[9] In Genesis 3:16-17, as in Deut. 33:13-15, a *blessed* land is a well-watered and fertile land, whereas a cursed land lacks water and fertility.[10]

The Hebrew word *barac*, to bless, is, literally, to kneel. On man's part, to bless God means to give Him that praise and service which is His due from His creatures. The root, to kneel, implies submission and obedience, joyfully given. On God's part, to bless man or creation means to condescend, to manifest grace, to His creation.

The opposite of to *bless* is to *curse*. In a curse, i.e., as when God curses man or the earth, there is still the same implication of kneeling or submission, because *charam* in the Hebrew means *devoted.* That which will not joyfully kneel before the Lord in praise and service will still be used for His holy purposes in destruction. As Asaph says, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10). Paul stresses this fact that man is created for God's glory, for His blessing or cursing: He is the potter who can make of the clay whatever suits His sovereign purposes, making one "unto honour, and another unto dishonour" (Rom. 9:6-23).

God's creation of man is an act of grace. Man is called to *bless* God, to kneel before Him as His faithful and obedient covenant man. Man is created in the image of God (Gen.1:26-28) in order that he, more than other creatures, might with his knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion bless God, that man might devote all his life and being to the service and glory of God.

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8. Umberto Cassuto: *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, I. (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, n.d.). p. 52.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

At the heart of the common objection to the doctrine of predestination is the fact that it so clearly sustains the reality of man's created being. Men are ready often to acknowledge in vague terms the fact of creation, *provided* that man thereafter is turned loose by God to be an autonomous being. Many insist that to be created in God's image requires some kind of autonomy. Paul, however, strikes at the heart of this by declaring,

> 20. Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
> 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (Romans 9:20-21)

All men shall kneel before Him, either to be blessed or to be cursed, although the overwhelming majority, in the sum total of history will praise Him. God declares through Isaiah, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45:23). These words are cited by Paul in Romans 14:11, and Phil. 2:10, and echoed by our Lord in Matthew 28:18.

The Lord, however, in His grace, gives to man the privilege of exercising dominion over the earth under Him. One aspect of this dominion is the scientific task of naming or classifying creation, i.e., that part of creation over which he had been granted dominion, "every living creature." Cassuto observes with his usual clarity and power,

> The naming of something or someone is a token of lordship (cf. Num. xxxii. 38; ii Kings xxiii. 34; xxiv. 17; ii Chr. xxxvi. 4). The Lord of the universe named the parts of the universe and its time-divisions (i. 5,8,10), and He left it to man to determine the names of those creatures over which He had given him dominion.[11]

It is worthy of note that Eve named the children (Gen. 4:1,25), or at least Cain and Seth, although Gen. 5:3 refers to Adam also naming Seth. Apparently Adam concurred strongly in the naming. In Gen. 16:11, God orders Hagar to call her son Ishmael. The daughters of Lot named their sons (Gen. 19:37-38), having no husband, but Abraham named Isaac (Gen. 21:3). Leah and Rachel named their children, and the sons of their concubines (Gen. 29:32-35; 30:5-24). Rachel, on her death-bed, named her son Ben-oni, but Jacob changed it to Benjamin, or at the least "called him Benjamin" (Gen. 35:18). It would seem that the naming power normally belonged to the mother, although the father could possibly over-rule that choice at times. The wife shared in her husband's lordship, and the children were to be brought up into the exercise of a like power. Hence, before the birth of the first child in creation, the creation ordinance of marriage declares the necessary separation of the child in time: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This sentence

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 130f.

cannot be separated from the dominion mandate. Except on farms, children in the modern home have little share in the father's exercise of dominion. In Biblical society, however, the child very early became a working junior partner, as is still the case in contemporary farms, ranches, and some small businesses. With marriage, however, even if the son continues as a partner in the farm or ranch, as was the case in Biblical society, there was a difference, in that he now headed a separate dominion unit.

In all of this, however, father, mother, sons, daughters, and servants are accountable above all to the Lord. In Genesis 3:9, "the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" This word *call* (Heb. *qara* or *koro*) means to "summon a person to give account of his actions."[12] It is the same word used in Isa. 43:7, where the Lord summons "every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Again, among the many uses of this word is Isa. 48:12: "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called." To be called of the Lord is to be accountable, and to be at all times accountable. The *called* of God are those who by God's grace are summoned into the realm of *blessing*. Their necessary response at all times must be *faith and obedience*. The called of God are under the headship of their Adam, Jesus Christ, and they are faithful to His covenant law. Paul declares in Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God," a fact stressed in our Lord's teachings (Matt. 12:36; 18:23; Luke 16:2). The blessed are the called, and they are accountable.

7. God's Oath-Man

According to Genesis 2:16f, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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." The word translated as *commanded* is in the Hebrew *tsavah*, to enjoin, set up, order, or appoint. Stigers translates it very tellingly as *adjured*.[13] From the moment of his creation, God adjured or commanded man. The creation mandate, the limitations on his exploration and sampling of the garden, and the locale of his life were all ordained and ordered by God. Man was placed under orders; he was commanded or *adjured*.

In any court of law, men speak under oath. A royal throne, and its king, is always a court of law, so that men approach a king on a different basis than they approach other men. To be in a king's presence is to be there by his grace (Esther 4:11), and to be his oath-man, to be under his command and bound by

12. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
13. Harold G. Stigers: *A Commentary on Genesis*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976). p. 70.

his word. Even more so, this is true of God. Men stand before Him by His grace, not to debate with Him but to hear and obey His command-word under oath.

Man was created a covenant-man. All men are either covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers. Basic to the covenant is the fact that man is necessarily under oath, having been created by God to fulfil His mandate. This oath could be, on solemn occasions, formally ratified to emphasize renewed or particular promises, as witness Genesis 15 and Exodus 24. At all times, however, all men are under oath to God: they are either oath-keepers (or covenant-keepers) or oath or covenant-breakers. To be under oath is to be potentially under either blessing or malediction.

God, as the Creator-judge, places all men under His mandate, under His law, and therefore under oath. Men live in God's law universe, and every area of it is circumscribed by law and oath. Men remind themselves of this fact by extending the province of God's oath to human relationships. There is an oath of office, a court oath, and more. Marriage begins under vow, as does the ministerial office, the medical, legal, and other professions. In a variety of ways, men witness to the necessity of an oath-bound world.

The oath enjoins *consequences*: "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." To exercise dominion and subdue the earth under God ensures the blessings of Deut. 28:1-14, whereas disobedience ensures the maledictions of Deut. 28:15-68. These consequences are inescapable, because the world is God's creation, and there is no brute or meaningless factuality therein. No isolated act or fact exists in all of creation.

It is the essence of sin to believe in isolated facts and acts and in brute factuality. Original sin is to believe that man can be his own god, determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). Situation ethics believes that there are no moral absolutes and that the morality of an act depends on the person and his needs. Each opportunity to act, and each fact, are thus isolated from God's law and made dependent on participating man for meaning. Adultery in this perspective can be good or bad, depending on the situation. The sinner thus believes that his act is an isolated one, not a part of a chain of consequence.

When I was very young, as soon as I learned to read, I began to read the Bible, again and again, from cover to cover. It was often startling reading, as I came to understand more and more of it. A visiting American pastor was horrified to learn that I was reading *all* of the Bible, including Leviticus. He stated with some feeling, to my embarrassment, that he would *not* want his children reading such passages in their early years! An earnest man, he eyed me as though I were a potential menace. The fact is, however, that saturation in the whole of the Bible made me intensely and fully aware that this world is God's creation, and that there are *no isolated acts*, and *no reversible acts*. Later, in my teens, I found it appalling that others of my age failed to see that

acts have irreversible consequences and that nothing in God's universe is ever done in an enclosed or secret corner.

To be God's oath-man is to know that the Lord is the "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12-13).

This means that, *first*, we believe and obey every word of God, and live by them (Matt. 4:4). The Bible is God's covenant book which sets forth the covenant law. Traditionally, the oath of office in the U.S., especially the presidency, has been made on an open Bible, because the oath is to the covenant God in terms of His covenant law. The Bible is God's command-word because it is the oath book, God's oath to man, and man's responsive oath to the Lord.

Second, through holiness, righteousness, knowledge, and dominion we apply God's covenant requirements to every area of life and thought as our sworn duty. As Christians, we are doubly under oath, in Adam and in Christ. Our redemption restores us to an oath-keeping status in Him.

Third, while the consequences of our oath are for us blessing or malediction, the purpose of the oath goes beyond us: it is the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness or justice (Matt. 6:33). To narrow our concern to our consequences is thus to sin. The covenant book, the Bible, is not oriented to providing man with peace of mind, or personal fulfillment. These may come, and will come, only as by-products. God's holy purpose and Kingdom is all in all. We must look beyond ourselves to know the purposes of God.

To be God's oath-man means thus to serve no alien masters, including ourselves (Matt. 6:24), but rather to serve God with all our heart, mind, and being, and our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:36-40).

8. Citizens of Life or Death

In Matthew 8:21-22, we have a statement by our Lord which is commonly explained away:

> 21. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.
> 22. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Here as elsewhere, however, our Lord acts in conformity to the law. The law in question is Lev. 21:1-4, and vv. 10-11:

> 1. And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:
> 2. But for his kin, that is near unto him, that, is for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother,

> 3. And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath no husband: for her may he be defiled.
> 4. But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself.
> 10. And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;
> 11. Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;
> 12. Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD.

Clearly, in some sense our Lord requires His disciples to maintain the standards of a high priest. Several texts point plainly to this fact:

> Exodus 19:6. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.
> Isa. 61:6. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.
> I Peter 2:5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.
> I Peter 2:9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
> Rev. 5:10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.
> Rev. 1:6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The language of these texts is important. The only royal priesthood the Bible knows outside of Jesus Christ is Melchizedek, King of Salem (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1-21). A priest could mourn for and bury his father, but the high priest was forbidden all such contact. Our Lord, by declaring, "let the dead bury the dead," places His disciples and followers in the ranks of high priests. Even more, in various texts, they are declared to be a *royal* priesthood.

Respect for parents is clearly a part of Biblical law (Ex. 20:12; 21:15-17, etc.). So too is respect for the aged (Lev. 19:32; Prov. 16:31; 20:29; I Tim. 5:1). Thus, the point of our Lord's requirement is not a contempt nor disregard for parents or the aged.

The high priest, and in some degree all priests, was separated from death because he represented life. Death is a consequence of the fall of man, a penalty for sin, whereas the high priest and all priests represent not death but life and righteousness. As the ministers of God, they are witnesses to the freedom from the realm of sin and death which marks God's Kingdom. The Kingdom of Man is the domain of sin and death, of confusion and frustration, and it has chosen for itself the entelechy of alienation. Its pride is in its self-

determined chaos of being, because it finds it preferable to reign in a hell of its own creation than to live, serve, or reign in the heaven of God's creation and ordination.

Furthermore, our Lord spoke of Himself as the great Bridegroom (Matt. 9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34f.; Matt. 25:1; cf. John 3:29). Israel, recognizing that God's law gives priority to life over death, held that every wedding procession had the right of way over other processions, such as a funeral cortege. If a wedding procession should meet a funeral cortege, it was required that the funeral cortege follow the wedding procession a short distance to indicate the priority of life to death in God's sight.

The failure of the disciple was a fearful one. However important family obligations may be, and a funeral is an important family duty, they cannot take priority over Jesus Christ. When they do, they are not honored thereby, but despised. Disproportionate emphasis on a creaturely realm is destructive of that realm: no sphere of life can take God's place.

In our time, however, death takes priority over life, because, in a sinful world, death rules.

In the world of sin and death, problems and troubles concern men most, because they are governed by a self-created entelechy of alienation. The world *alienation* is important to modern man. He is at war with God and man, and estranged from himself. This is his choice, his preference of sin and death, but he chooses to regard his total warfare and its resulting alienation as "the human condition." For man to see his alienation as the human condition makes it possible for him to feed his favorite cancer, self-pity. Modern man is a creature who sins vehemently and courts death assiduously so that he might justify himself before God by his misery.

Even more, fallen man cheapens both weddings and funerals, life and death, in his narcissism, in order to be able to concentrate on the tender quiverings of his ego.

Those who live in the world of the resurrection of Jesus Christ are friends of the bridegroom. They are by His calling a royal priesthood, and they are *commanded* to "let the dead bury the dead." Life in the Lord must always have priority in their lives.

This means that the redeemed of the Lord move in terms of life and victory, for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). In Paul, words, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

We therefore separate ourselves from churches, causes, and doctrines which are governed by eschatologies of defeat and pessimism. We cannot be a party to actions which are not intended to triumph in Christ's name. We are not overwhelmed and over-impressed by the powers of death and hell, of

Satanism, communism, humanism, modernism, or any other form of evil. All such belong to the realm of sin and death.

Luther's hymn, "A mighty Fortress is our God," expresses this well in the third verse:

> Though devils all the world should fill,
> All watching to devour us.
> We tremble not, we fear no ill,
> They cannot overpower us.
> This world's prince may still
> Scowl fierce as he will;
> He can harm us none:
> He's judged, the deed is done,
> One little word o'erthrows him.

Not even when dying can the Christian move in terms of death; he is a citizen of the Kingdom of God; his realm is the realm of life and righteousness. The dead are all those who live outside of Christ, even if they call themselves by His name.

9. Adam and Christ

Adam is not only the father of the human race, but he also has a special relationship to America. When the Americas were discovered and then settled, there were two motives in force among men as they approached the new world. The humanists believed that the Americas represented an unfallen area of the world, and the natives, unfallen, untainted man. Horace, Ovid, and other classical writers had written of the golden isles of the West, where no plowing was necessary; unpruned trees and vines were always in fruit, and honey flowed from hollow oaks.[14] Cannibals in the Americas were seen as innocent children of nature by Aphra Behn and others, and the real evil to these humanists was Biblical faith.

The Christians, on the other hand, saw the Americas more realistically, as "a howling wilderness," but as a place of freedom from religious persecution and as a place to establish a base for Christ's Kingdom, and from whence to work to bring all men and nations under God's rule in the Kingdom of God.

Salvation to the humanists meant getting "back" to a God-free, Christ-free Adam, the natural man. Rousseau later set forth this hope in passionate form. Salvation for the Christian meant and means the death of the old Adam and the birth of the greater Adam, Jesus Christ, in all of us. It means being regenerated by God's sovereign grace and made members of the new humanity of Jesus Christ.

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[14] Hugh Honour: *The New Golden Land, European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time*. (New York, N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1975). pp. 3ff.

This conflict between the two Adams, between humanism and Christianity is very much with us still, in intensified fashion. In fact, David W. Noble, in *The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden* (1968), a humanist, tells us that, since 1830, the central theme of the American novel has been the effort of the natural man, the Adam of the humanists, to restore paradise in the Americas. The implication of this is that it is specifically the second or last Adam, Jesus Christ, whom these humanists reject in the name of saving the first Adam and his humanity. Salvation then is salvation *from* Jesus Christ, and from God and His law, which judges them, and requires of them that which they will not hear of doing.

It is necessary for us therefore to hear what Scripture teaches us. The cry of *all* outside of the true Adam, Jesus Christ is, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). *All* who conspire against the LORD and His anointed declare, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2:3). When the actress Joan Crawford lay dying, the woman who cared for her began to pray. The actress, in a coma, came to consciousness long enough to say before dying, "the last coherent word from her mouth, Damn it, don't you *dare* ask God to help me!"[15] Paul speaks to this, telling us:

> 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.
> 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Rom. 5:12-14)

Paul tells us, *first*, that by one man, Adam, sin entered the world. This means that all who are born of Adam are born, not only into sin and death, but into hostility and war against God, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). The Greek word *echthra*, translated "enmity," can be also rendered as "hatred." The unregenerate may not all be as honest about it as Joan Crawford, but they hate God and are at war with Him. They cannot obey the law of God because in principle they are committed to being their own law, in terms of the tempter's program (Gen. 3:5). Their sin is *anomia*, lawlessness, or being anti-law. All who are born are children of Adam: they want a world on their terms, a world without God and His law. If they make any room for God and Christ, it is only on their terms, reducing the Lord to the level of a peddler of life and fire insurance.

Second, until Moses gave the law, sin was in the world. Sin and death ruled over *all* men. But, Paul says, "sin is not imputed when there is no law." Since

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[15] Christina Crawford: *Mommie Dearest.* (New York, N.Y.: William Morrow and Company, 1978). p. 254.

Paul has just made clear that *all* are in sin and death, obviously *all* have sinned, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Thus, before the giving of the law, there was law, as Paul states in Romans 1:18-32, so that men "are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Moreover, as members of Adam they also share in Adam's sin. Murray commented thus: "The thought may be paraphrased thus: although it is true that from Adam to Moses sin was in the world *and therefore law*, though thus there was sin such as would explain the presence of death, yet in that period death reigned not only over those who were violators of expressly revealed law, as was Adam, but also over those who did not sin in that manner, that is, after the pattern of Adam."[16] To deny that there was law before Moses is to deny the fallen nature of those men, and also of all men who have not yet heard the Gospel. But Paul is emphatic: "all have sinned."

Third, Paul makes clear that the transgression of Adam was different, since Adam "is the figure (or, type) of him that was to come." The sin of Adam, like the righteousness and obedience of Christ, is different from that of all other men. Both have an imputation beyond themselves. Adam's sin is imputed to all the humanity of Adam, even as Christ's obedience and righteousness are imputed to all the humanity of Jesus Christ, His Kingdom or church. Our sins in Adam do not cause our fall: we are already fallen by being born in Adam. Our obedience and righteousness in Christ do not cause our salvation, because we are already born again in Jesus Christ. Our law-breaking in Adam simply manifests that we are the children of Adam; it does not reprobate us, because in Adam all are reprobate. Our law-keeping in Jesus Christ manifests that we are the children of Jesus Christ, the last Adam; our law-works do not save us, because we are already redeemed. Rather, they manifest our salvation and mark our sanctification.

Now, to return again to the old humanistic dream of a salvation through a return to the fallen, or, in their term, the natural, Adam, the belief is that *every man*, by his own free choice, can effect his salvation. If this sounds very much like Arminianism, it is because the same principle undergirds Arminianism and humanism: salvation as man's decision.

Salvation for the humanist means total personal fulfillment. David W. Noble, in describing the Romantic movement of 1800 and after, wrote:

> The European romantics had begun to dream of a hero who might transcend the restraints of society and the limitations of human nature to achieve total earthly fulfillment. This exceptional hero was to gain the strength for breaking his personal and social bonds by achieving organic union with nature; he would tap the vast power of the earth mother.[17]

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[16] John Murray: *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 189f. Italics Added.

[17] David W. Noble: *The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden, the Central Myth in the American Novel since 1830*. (Grosset and Dunlap, 1968). p. 4.

In America, it was held that every man could be that Adam, the natural hero, who, by his communion with an untampered nature, would restore the world garden or paradise.[18] It is not our purpose here to trace the history of this doctrine of Adam, but simply to call attention to contemporary examples of it.

Very early in the 20th century, many writers began to see the source of the evil which kept man from his paradise in the Biblical laws concerning sex. Man has only to abandon the so-called Puritan view of sex to gain freedom and enter paradise. Writer after writer saw the sexual regulations of Biblical law as the bar in the way to Eden, to paradise restored. More recently, as Noble pointed out, Norman Mailer has held this view: historical culture and the past were to be destroyed by a "free" sexuality, and Mailer was the prophet of the hippie movement. Subsequently, Mailer lost faith in the power of sex to give the natural Adam freedom and paradise.[19] Earlier, D. H. Lawrence had preached the redemptive power of "free" sex, sex as redemptive and as the source of new life.[20]

Marx, Lenin, and others had a similar doctrine of salvation: end the "alienation" of man created by religion and capitalism. By means of communism, sin and alienation would be abolished, and paradise regained.The environmentalists also believe in man's salvation by the abolition of history and the restoration of nature.

In these and other like doctrines *history is to be destroyed.* The goal of education in socialist Sweden, and with progressive or humanistic education everywhere, is *the abolition of the past.* History is the record of law, conscience, guilt, hunger for redemption, and, above all, of God's dealings with man. History is to be abolished, and life is to begin with man's break with God and the past. The Social Democrats, antichristian to the core, came to power in Sweden in 1932, and a student of political economy at Lund University declares, "Nothing matters before 1932."[21]

History is to be destroyed, because a new lord or sovereign claims sway, humanistic man, Adam without God. *To destroy history is to destroy law, i.e., to deny consequences and causality.* The natural Adam abolishes God, law, and history, and he declares himself free. Abolish God, Jesus Christ, sex laws, capitalism, marriage, etc. and free man to be himself.

But only Adam and Jesus Christ can affect man's future. Adam could affect it in one direction, and did, by his fall. Jesus Christ changes man and history by His coming and His atonement. *No other Adams exist.* Paul is emphatic: Jesus Christ is not only the second but "the last Adam" (I Cor. 15:45). This

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 4f.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 204ff.
20. Leslie Paul: *Eros Rediscovered, Restoring Sex to Humanity.* (New York, N. Y.: Associated Press, 1970). p. 139; cf. 153.
21. Roland Huntsford: *The New Totalitarians.* (New York, N.Y.: Stein and Day, 1972). p. 211.

means that the initiative and the choice in history claimed by fallen men and by Arminians *does not exist.* No one from Adam to Moses, before the written law, nor anyone thereafter, can sin or act "after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14). This means that all the efforts of the humanists and of the Arminians are futility and blasphemous pretension. Our history has no other Adams than the first and the last, Adam and Jesus Christ, and all men born in the old humanity are bound by the work of the old Adam, even as all men in the new humanity are free by the work of the last Adam, Jesus Christ.

All men in Adam are born into sin and death, and "all have sinned;" hence, all are under the law. They are all under the law and its condemnation in Adam, and they are all under the law because they are God's creation, made in His image, so "that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them" (Rom. 1:19). All men in Adam, being sons of Adam, have an imputed guilt and death. But, because all are Adam's sons and share in his nature, all have a natural guilt and death. They are partakers of Adams's nature and inheritance.

All men in Christ, the last Adam, have life and righteousness by imputation. By their regeneration into the new creation and into the new humanity of Christ, they "put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53). Immortality is natural to the last Adam, and, insofar as we are partakers of Jesus Christ, it is natural to us, not because of us, but because of Him. The resurrection of the body miraculously completes this new nature of the new humanity in Christ.

Adam I gives us original sin; Adam II gives us original righteousness. Man in history is under Christ or Adam. Man seeks originality in history, but there is no creation or re-creation apart from either Adam. We are created in the first Adam, and our nature is given in him; we are created in the second or last Adam, and our nature is given in Him. The law of our being in the first Adam is given in him: it is sin and death; it is the principle of Genesis 3:5, the attempt of man to free himself from God, to be his own god and his own law, his own creator of good and evil. The law of our being in the second Adam is righteousness (or justice) and life; it is the life of Christ, which means the life of obedience to the law of God, to His righteousness. We do not establish law nor ordain good and evil: we come to do the Lord's will according to His word. Man has no originality apart from Christ or Adam.

Man wants freedom from God to be god (Gen. 3:5). He wants freedom from guilt, and from good and evil, except on his own terms. Mooney has called attention to a key aspect of William Friedkin's film of *The Exorcist.* Evil enters the world, not because of man, but in spite of man, to lodge itself in the body of an innocent girl. The point is that, instead of being evil, man is seen as the innocent victim of evil. Thus, we are not responsible for evil, yet somehow we can hope to control it.[22]

Man wants to be a victim where Adam touches him, but a god where he touches the world. He wants the power to play god, but not the responsibility for the evil he commits.

This has been regularized into politics, and into psychology. We cannot sue any branch or agency of state unless it gives us permission to do so, but the humanistic state claims total power over us. Psychologists and psychiatrists ascribe our sin to the environment, but they encourage us to play god and seek to free us from the claims of the triune God.

All over the world today, there is a revolution, as Eugene Rosenstock-Huessy pointed out, in *Out of Revolution* (1938), and it is a revolution from Christ to Adam, from the redeemed man to the natural man, and by natural man is meant an unnatural and impossible creature, man without God. Here in the United States, where the effort to establish God's Kingdom was so strong with the Puritans, the effort to establish the Kingdom of man is very strong, a kingdom or realm without God, in freedom from God's Son and God's law in every realm.

Paul, however, tells us that, even *before* God's enscriptured law was given, "nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5:14), because God's law always was and is, and sin is therefore always imputed. How much more so are men now without excuse, having Jesus Christ and the whole of God's law-word. Therefore, the rule of the Kingdom of Man is the reign of death. This is true, whether the current name of that kingdom be Judea, Rome, the United States, Britain, or the Soviet Union.

The word of the Lord remains: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). Too many so-called Christians talk about separation today who will not separate themselves from statist controls over Christ's church and school, who assume that the old Adam has a right to govern Jesus Christ. But this is *the reign of death*, not life in Jesus Christ.

Sin has in Adam "reigned unto death," but we have been called out of that world of death in the last Adam, Jesus Christ, so that grace might now "reign *through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). If He is not reigning in and through us in and by righteousness, His grace is not in us.

10. Man in Adam and Christ

Paul denying to all men save Adam and Christ any *original* power in history, goes on then to affirm the very great forces unleashed in all of us

[22] Christopher F. Mooney, S. J.: *Man Without Tears, Soundings for a Christian Anthropology*. (New York, N. Y.: Harper and Row, 1975). p. 78.

through Adam and Christ, i.e., original sin and original righteousness. Paul declares, in Romans 5:15-21,

> 15. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
> 16. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification.
> 17. For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.
> 18. Therefore as by the offense 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 offense 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.

Let us paraphrase these verses freely, in order to help understand what Paul, in concentrated and almost 'short-hand' form, is saying: (15) There is a different ratio between sin and grace, i.e., between the offense and the free gift. The fall indeed brought death to all men, but God's gift of grace through Jesus Christ brought proportionately far more, i.e., life and much more. (16) Adam's one sin brought death, first of all, but God's grace justifies man in his many offenses. (17) Second, while one man's sin meant the reign of death over humanity, through Jesus Christ's work all who are members of His new humanity receive the overflowing of grace, and the gift of righteousness or justice, and they therefore reign as kings in life through Jesus Christ. (18) It follows therefore that, while the judgment upon Adam brought death for all, a fearful result, making all sinners born to die, the work of Jesus Christ accomplishes far more. It meant that by Christ's atonement all His new humanity live a justified life. They have been made legally righteous in Jesus Christ and have a permanent status for time and eternity. (19) The sin of Adam placed all men in the position of sinners; the obedience of Jesus Christ places His people in the position of righteousness, of just men. (20) The written law of Moses came in to make very clear to man the full extent of his transgression. It spelled out in detail the meaning of God's justice and man's rebellion against it and thus stressed the seriousness of man's offense. However, grace is greater than sin: where sin prevails, grace overflows and prevails. (21) Sin in the old humanity means the reign of death. The grace of God unto salvation means in the new humanity the reign of Christ's people with righteousness or justice in history and into eternity. They reign in Him and by Him.

Paul here speaks of the implications of justification and righteousness. In New Testament Greek, *just* is *dikaios*; *justice* is *dike*; *justification* is *dikaiosis*; and *righteousness* is *dikaiosune*. The Hebrew *tsedeq* is also translated as *righteousness* or *justice*. To abstract righteousness from justice and to try to make it some kind of neoplatonic spiritual virtue is to deny its Biblical meaning. Righteousness has to do with God's law. It means obeying God's law, both with respect to laws governing our relationship to God, and also our relationship to man. All of Scripture sees it as such, as witness Amos 5:24. Christ's justifying work makes us legally just or righteous before God, and His regenerating power makes us a new creation, with a new nature dedicated to righteousness or justice.

Now, Paul speaks of two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Man or Adam, and the Kingdom of God or Christ, the last Adam. In the Kingdom of Man, it is man's goal to reign as king; in reality, it is, Paul declares, death which reigns, or, rather, sin reigns and results in the reign of death. In Christ's Kingdom, Paul speaks of both the reign or rule of righteousness or justice, and the reign of the redeemed: "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17).

The culture of the two kingdoms differs radically. In Adam's realm, man seeks to be his own god, *and hence responsible to no man and to no other god.* Such a goal means a flight from responsibility and from reality. Michael Wood has called attention to the dream of freedom which is basic to American movies (and to much else). It is a dream of freedom from other people, and from entanglements, a refusal to get involved on moral terms. The popularity of the Western film is that it gives man a depopulated world where he can be his own law and be free of human claims on himself.[23] Moreover, sin is seen humanistically as a product of deprivation, a lack, so that "There is no guilt, there are only unhappy circumstances leading to treason (and murder, and prejudice, and drink, and drugs, and delinquency, and attempted rape)."[24] The humanity of Adam is thus doomed to an endless repetition of both its sin and its self-justification. It goes nowhere but to the grave.

Jesus Christ, Adam II, creates a new humanity, with a new status, and a new nature. Man can now make a new beginning in history in terms of the creation mandate (Gen. 1:26-28). He can reverse and overcome the process begun by Adam I; he can replace sin and death with righteousness (or justice) and life. All originality rests with Adam II, Jesus Christ, but the redeemed humanity of Adam II can work in terms of the original righteousness of their federal head. As the Kingdom of Christ, the realm of the justified, they move out to claim all things for Jesus Christ and to conquer all things for Him. They are called, Paul tells us, to *reign* in *righteousness* or justice, i.e., in terms of

[23] Michael Wood: *America in the Movies.* (New York, N. Y.: Delta, 1975). pp. 28, 50.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

the whole law-word of God. Even as the fallen humanity of Adam I reigns or is reigned over by sin or unrighteousness, i.e., injustice, so the new humanity of Adam II reigns as Christ's kings, priests, and prophets in righteousness or justice.

Paul very plainly speaks of the reign *in history* of sin and death, and equally plainly of the reign *in history* and into eternal life of righteousness or justice. Where Adam I reigns, sin and death reign. Where Adam II reigns, there His people reign triumphantly in Him. A true church can suffer in battle, because it confronts the enemy; a false church refuses to battle, because it is at peace with sin and death, and does not know Jesus Christ as Lord.

11. "After The Image"

As we have seen, it is an error to see man in independence from the two Adams, and with any original powers.

The first Adam was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). Thus, all men born of Adam are inheritors of this nature, i.e., they are image-bearers, reflecting God's image. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, no. 10, asks, "How did God create man?", and answers, "God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures" (Gen. 1:27; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; Gen. 1:28).

However, although we must declare that all men are created in God's image, we must recognize that we are not all special creations as was Adam, and also Eve. Our image is transmitted through and derived from Adam, and we bear the image as affected by Adam and his Fall. Thus, the sons of Adam were (and are) born "after his image" (Gen. 5:3). This is a key fact. We have a heredity, and it is shaped by Adam's fall. The image of God within us is in Adam given over to the desire to be God, to determine good and evil for ourselves (Gen. 3:5). Our motivation in Adam is predetermined, and our development of the implications of God's image are thus humanistic and sinful: they are man-centered.

In Jesus Christ, the second and last Adam, we are born again (John 3:3-8). We die to the old Adam, and we are made alive in the new Adam. The Larger Catechism, no. 31, asks, "With whom was the covenant of grace made?" and answers, "The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed." We are members of the renewed covenant, not on our initiative, but on Christ's initiative (John 15:16). The covenant rite of communion affirms our membership in the new humanity by our participation and life in the last Adam. We are members of His humanity, not of His deity. Salvation is not deification but regeneration as a new man. We are not regenerated and made a new creation to be new Adams, but as members of Jesus Christ, the last Adam. We are re-created after the image of His perfect humanity. Some of the texts which speak of this are:

> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:29)
> As we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (I Cor. 15:49)
> But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (II Cor. 3:18)
> And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. (Col. 3:10)

Thus, our growth and sanctification in that renewed image is our growth in Christ. The measure of that growth is obedience. Faith obeys, as Abraham obeyed (Gen. 22). Christ, our greater Adam, obeyed, and He requires us to obey Him:

> 8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he *obedience* by the things which he suffered;
> 9. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him. (Heb. 5:8-9)

> Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. (John 15:14)

The fall of Adam and Eve began when doubt and disbelief replaced faith, when they allowed the tempter's question, "Yea, hath God said?", to become their question (Gen. 3:1,6). They then disobeyed God. Faith, on the other hand, moves in and with Christ to obedience: "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7; cf. 10:9).

Thus, the life of a Christian is not a life of pious gush: it is a life of faith, and therefore obedience. All men reveal their membership by their lives, their works, and their communion. If we are members of Adam I's humanity, we manifest it, sooner or later, whatever our pretenses and evasions. If we are members of Adam II's humanity, we shall manifest its life and fruits. The old humanity culminates, Revelation 19:17-21 shows us, in a feast of vultures. However much humanism dreams of a one-world order of peace, it leads instead to the world of vultures, to the disaster of total collapse and dismemberment (Rev. 18:1-24). The new humanity, on the other hand, triumphs in the communion of a wedding feast, the great festival of the ancient world (Rev. 19:1-9). It is the humanity of faith and obedience, whose fruits manifest that they are members of Christ, the true Vine (John 15:1-6). The Larger Catechism, no. 91, reads:

> 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. (Deut. 29:29; Micah 6:8; I Sam. 15:22)

This is plain enough, and thoroughly Scriptural. Man, however, seeks all kinds of means to free himself from God's reins and reign. He seeks an independent holiness, and assumes that God will be honored and content with

pious gush. The Lord made clear through Micah His contempt for and judgment upon all lawless piety (Micah 6:6-15). God has not changed since then (Malachi 3:6), and pious gush is never cited in Scripture as a substitute for the obedience of faith.

One Old Testament professor, however, insists on eliminating obedience to Biblical law on the ground that it is "kingdom typology." The resurrection can also be called "kingdom typology," and also the virgin birth (John 1:12-13), but this does not abolish the resurrection nor the virgin birth.

The claim that the New Testament offers a "higher" law, the law of the Spirit, means in effect that man separates the Holy Spirit from the word, and then identifies the Spirit with man's spirit, man's pious gush, man's self-appointed holiness, and with man's way generally.

The fact of Scripture is that man has no independent way. He is either of Adam I or Adam II. The image of God within man is a mediated image, coming either from Adam I or Adam II. The law of Adam I's humanity is sin and death. The law of Adam II's humanity is righteousness or justice, the whole law-word of God, and life, life in faithfulness to Jesus Christ and His whole word. Our Lord declares of His law:

> And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. (Luke 16:17)
>
> 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
> 18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
> 19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:17-19)

Those who assume that the Lord is like unto them, and does not mean what He says, are in for judgment.

12. Man's "Rights"

About 40 years ago, perhaps more, when I was somewhat younger, I spent an hour or two one day in an argument with a self-consciously Bohemian young artist. His talent was real, but had little chance against his way of life and his ego; he died before he was 31 years old. His hostility against God was intense. He did not believe in God, and yet God was very real to him in that at all points he was at war with God. He held that, if God existed, He was a monster for His treatment of mankind. "Man was not meant to live this way," he declared. Two or three days later, I suddenly realized that I had neglected my best argument against him. His contempt for his fellow men was intense and pornographic, and yet, in indicting God, he did so in the name of Man,

humanity, or mankind. It came to me that he, and so very many like him, meant themselves and themselves only when they said mankind. "Man was not meant to live this way." Earth could be fair. Why does God bar the gates to paradise? Even the Bible admits that He does so, this Bohemian charged (Gen. 3:24).

This long-dead young man came to my mind again this week, when I received a telephone call from a very dedicated pastor, who was ousted for preaching on God's law. A sermon on Leviticus 18, sexual sins, especially upset the many antinomians in that sizable congregation. At the meeting which dissolved the pastoral relationship, one reprobate stated that general feeling in summary form: "His preaching never made me feel good." The purpose of God, of His word, of preaching, and of the church, is thus seen as making man "feel good." God should see to it that every man has his share of heaven in this life and the next. In another church, during this week, the members of an adult class insisted that the meaning of the name *Jesus* is that God saves His people from hell. They were dismayed when told that it means that God saves His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). People nowadays do not want to be saved from their sins: that is where their life and hope is.

Man feels that paradise or heaven should be his due. The power of the modern state lies in its promise to deliver heaven on earth, to give man deliverance from hell, but not sin, into a world paradise which belongs to every man by right, by virtue of being human.

The psalmist, however, reminds us that we are God's creatures, made to serve and praise Him, not ourselves:

> 2. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
> 3. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (Ps. 100:2,3)

To be called "the sheep of his pasture" was more than lovely imagery to the psalmist; it meant that we are God's to be used at His will, to be sheared, to produce, and to live and die at His will. A more anti-humanistic image is difficult to imagine.

Solomon is equally forceful and clear:

> 1. The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.
> 2. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.
> 3. Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.
> 4. The LORD hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. (Prov. 16:1-4)

Again and again, rebellious and sinful men seek to justify what they have done, and, sometimes what they have not done, by prefacing their excuse with the words, "I'm *entitled* to something out of life!" All we are entitled to is to "serve the LORD with gladness," because "The LORD hath made all things for himself." In other words, life is God-centered, not man-centered. Our misery comes in attempting to make it man-centered, which is as futile an effort as de Sade's dream of blotting out the sun and destroying it. Man is not God, and he cannot compel life to revolve around himself.

Has man then no *rights* as he faces life, and as he is confronted by God? Before answering that question, let us first look at the idea of *rights*. Two ideas are implicit in the term. *First, rights* implies justice, the right, a belief that one has a just claim against another. *Second*, it implies a claim. Thus, both justice or right, and a claim, are involved. I can have a position of right against another man, and a claim upon him, or he upon me, but never against God. "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Ps. 100:3), and "The LORD hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. 16:4).

But this is not all. Even my *right* against my neighbor is invalid except in terms of God's law. Unless my claim to justice is grounded on God's law, it is no claim at all, but a pretension. As T. Robert Ingram has shown, in *What's Wrong With Human Rights* (1979), the doctrine of human rights is a substitute for God's law.

The language of God's law, moreover, is not the language of rights but of *blessings* and *curses* (Deut. 28). In my calling, I have no *rights* as I face God; I am, by His sovereign pleasure, the subject of blessings and curses as I obey or disobey Him. The same is true of my calling as a son, as a father, and as a husband. In not one of these areas, nor in any other, can I claim any right because of my person, sex, office, status, or any other thing, but only by virtue of God's law and my relationship to God. I have no *right* to claim from others anything God requires of them when I myself will not give God what He requires of me.

In a very devastating passage, God, speaking through Hosea, declares:

> 12. My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.
>
> 13. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.
>
> 14. I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall. (Hosea 4:12-14)

The Lord here speaks to the *men* of Israel, to the males. They are faithless and disobedient; "they have gone a whoring from under their God," i.e., are faithless to Him, and they therefore treat their obligation to their wives as lightly. If we are faithless to God, and contemptuous of Him, then we will certainly be so to our superiors and inferiors, to our parents, wives, and children. The men of Israel had carried their apostasy to the point of taking part in false religious exercises with their whores.

Having dissolved their relationship of faithfulness and obedience to the Lord, God dissolves the sanctions of the law (i.e., the death penalty) against their daughters and their wives for their fornications and adulteries. Instead of particular judgment, there will be a general judgment: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

The only way to prevent this disaster is the way of faith and obedience. Man's life and freedom means faith and obedience; it means God's law, not a mythical concept of human rights. When we treat any *privilege* God's law gives us as our *right*, we claim what is of sovereign grace as a natural right. No man can claim that his sex, birth, status, position, or authority is his *by right*. Paul's blunt warning is to the point:

> For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? (I Cor. 4:7)

I cannot disobey or deny God, and claim by right any gift, office, or privilege which God's creation and His law give me. *We cannot have God's law-world without God.* When we deny the Lord, we implicitly deny all things else that His creation, providence, and law give us. God then proceeds to dissolve these things, and to give us the whirlwind.

Man sees heaven and paradise as his *right*. In his sin, he says in effect to God, Serve me at my will, and prove that you are indeed the Almighty. Man says to all around him, Jump at my command, and bow to my every word as final wisdom. Man wants paradise at his beck and call, and people too, but the sinner is at every point frustrated. Whatever he may get or command is always futile, because he always carries hell within him.

His only hope is to be converted, and to say with the psalmist: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn they commandments" (Ps. 119:73).

13. Non-Private Man

An organization in Connecticut which calls itself the Church of Truth has issued a new set of ten commandments in the name of God. This re-writing of God's law is based on their logic and reason, which enables them somehow to "correct" God. The pronouncement in full reads:

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD
as revealed through logic and reason to
THE CHURCH OF TRUTH

1. I thy Lord and thy God command thee not to bother thy neighbor so long as thy neighbor is not a clear threat unto thee.
2. Whatsoever thou shalt do unto thy neighbor thou shall have done also unto me. By this law will I measure thy worthiness to enter the kingdom of heaven.
3. Thou shalt honor thy contracts with thy neighbor.
4. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
5. Thou shalt not steal.
6. Thou shalt not harm the property of others.
7. Thou shalt not commit murder.
8. Take care not to sanction any group which breaks my laws.
9. For sins of impurity and disrespect thou shall answer to me, and no other.
10. For sins of covetousness thou shall answer to me, and no other. My highest law is: Every person has an absolute right to do anything that is not a provable threat to others.

The Church of Truth, Enfield, Conn., 1979.

In this pronouncement, God is simply a stage-prop and no more; "logic and reason" of a humanistic, libertarian variety prevail. Moreover, we clearly have salvation by works, i.e., "worthiness to enter the kingdom of heaven." But central to this bit of arrogance is the assertion of man's "absolute right to do anything that is not a provable threat to others." The realm of the absolute is man, not God; law and right are man's prerogatives, not God's.

The opinions expressed in this pronouncement are commonplace, both outside and within the church. They are basic to the sexual "revolution" and to the homosexual's self-justification that consenting acts between adults are private and therefore outside the law.

The idea of private rights and immunities is increasingly important in modern thought. Privacy is spoken of as a human need, as a right, and as a necessary aspect of human development. Of course, mankind for centuries had no such doctrine, and great men appeared in history who never heard of this concept. Why is it suddenly so prevalent?

The word *private* tells us much. It comes from the Latin *privatus*, the past participle of *privo*, separate. In the process of its English usage, it has picked up meanings and connotations which reflect Christian history. For the Christian, the separate or separated is usually equivalent with the holy, the uniquely dedicated. The army private is separated from rank and office and dedicated to the front lines in war. The sexual organs are called "privates," because they are separated from public view to a particular function. The public sector and the private are set apart, the private being ostensibly outside the law and purely personal. That which is *private* is separated from

something, whether it be an army office or officership, or from public law and jurisdiction.

We see at present efforts to increase the public and private sectors alike. Both efforts are humanistic. The public sector means the state, usually, and statist jurisdiction, which increasingly encroaches on every other area of life. The private sector is the concern of various libertarian and anarchistic groups, who wish to challenge state sovereignty with man's personal sovereignty. Neither view can be squared with Scripture.

Rather, according to the Bible, man can have no private domain before his Maker, Who knows him totally and has decreed all man's ways. The Lord told Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). Jeremiah was totally known to God before his conception: no private realm outside of God is possible for man, since man is totally God's creation.

Modern man, however, insists on his "privacy." A common form of self-flattery is to say "I'm a very private person." It means commending ourselves as more advanced self-made gods who have a right to our own idea of holiness, separation, or privacy.

The earlier insistence on privacy was mystical. The way to holiness for the mystic means a withdrawal into himself as the way to the holy of holies. For modern man, in the full-fledged mysticism of the ego, it is to avoid the continual drain of the demands of society and responsibility that an emphasis on privacy is made. One self-tortured "very private person" once remarked, 'If I were God, I would never have made the world, except maybe to have something to get mad at.' The holy sanctuary, the place of separation from the world, is turned into ourselves, our privacy. The result, among other things, is a profound pessimism.

This is very sharply stated for us by Asaph in Psalm 73. A private person has private reactions, not godly ones. Asaph, reacting to the evil around him in personal and private terms, recounts his progressive despair and virtual abandonment of hope (Ps. 73:2,3,14,15). Quite plainly, Asaph, like all of us, faced here a particular problem, or a complex of problems, which not only brought him personal distress and grief, but also made him intensely aware of the evils and miseries of this present world. He was "almost gone," he was so deeply shaken. His problem was in being a "private person," in seeing the world only through his situation and experience. "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee" (Ps. 73:22). As ox or a buffalo sees the world only in terms of his needs and experience; Asaph says that, in his foolishness, he similarly limited his vision.

This continued, "until I went into the sanctuary of God: then understood I their end" (Ps. 73:17). Asaph's reference to going into God's sanctuary is

significant: there, Asaph was in God's House, a place of separation. Asaph's pessimism rested on private, separate thoughts and concerns; he had viewed the world in terms of his predicament, not in terms of God. Being a private man, with private thoughts and judgments, had well nigh destroyed him.

The same holds true for our time. Modern man's insistence on private rights, private comforts, and privacy in general is suicidal. It is an insistence that it is our separation unto ourselves which is decisive for our lives, when it is rather our separation unto the Lord, His word, and our calling in Him. Such a separation can be difficult, as it was for Jeremiah, but it means life and righteousness, whereas our idea of separation is sin and death. Man is non-private man, because he is God's man.

14. Non-Public Man

Modern man is public man, and therein lies a problem. To be a public man is to be a creature of the public, or of the state. If we believe that man is a product of evolution, whose life must be lived in terms of himself, other men, or the state, it is easy to despair of life and the world. Man's life then involves no more than himself: there is no supernatural plan, grace, nor logic to man's life.

Thus Zolla, in *The Eclipse of the Intellectuals*, speaks of "the horror of mass society and the sin of mass-man." "Something difficult to define is missing, a capacity to raise life to a loftier plane."[25] Mass-man, being only a higher animal, has serious limitations. Zolla lists some "truths mass-man must learn and cannot master." These are: "There is no reason to life... There is no ideology in which we can believe...We cannot act positively as the result of a voluntary decision" because there is no truth to act on. Man wants things to be personal, but "all that is valuable is impersonal."[26] Public man thus falls prey to elitist man. Since mass-man is limited in his capacities, those who have advanced further than he has then must assume power and rule.

Moreover, public man does not live, and move, and have his being in the God of Scripture (Acts 17:28), but rather in humanity. The focus of his life is therefore humanity. Thus, Ronald J. Sider, in *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study*, redefines sin to make poverty the ultimate evil, and the essence of the gospel as the re-ordering of society to eliminate wealth.[27] Man looms very large, wherever the supernatural recedes from man's view, until man becomes the world, and his needs the law.

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[25] Elemire Zolla: *The Eclipse of the Intellectual. (New York, N. Y.: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968). p. 152.*

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

[27] Ronald J. Sider: *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study.* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978).

Public man's escape is to try to be private man, his own universe, rather than a mere atom in the statist universe, but, in either case, man faces frustration and defeat. He belongs to a world without reason or logic, and his own efforts to supply that reason and logic are futile and impotent.

Within this empty universe of public man, one law prevails, and by that implicit law man seeks to project purpose into the universe. That law is the priority and the supremacy of the will of man. All things are made subject to man's will, his vote, or his court. Man becomes the final arbiter of all things in all areas of life and thought. In 1899, Kellogg, in commenting on Leviticus 18, observed:

> But in these days, when there is such a manifest inclination in Christendom, as especially in the United States and France, to ignore the law of God in regard to marriage and divorce, and regulate these instead by a majority vote, it assuredly becomes peculiarly imperative that, as Christians, we exercise a holy jealousy for the honour of God and the sanctity of the family, and where it contravenes the law of God. While we must observe caution that in these things we lay no burden on the conscience of any, which God has not first placed there, we must insist–all the more strenuously because of the universal tendency to license–upon the strict observance of all that is either explicitly taught or by necessary implication involved in the teaching of God's Word upon this question.[28]

Today, almost nothing is held to be beyond the authority of either a majority vote, a democratic consensus, or the dictatorship of the proletariat, in every case, the will of man.

However, the prologue to Leviticus 18, vv. 1-5, gives us the reality of the matter:

> 1. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
> 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God.
> 3. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.
> 4. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God.
> 5. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, He shall live in them: I am the LORD.

God here declares, *first*, that no custom, majority vote, public opinion, nor any other public sentiment can alter the reality that He alone is the Lord, and His law must be obeyed. We are never permitted to walk in the "ordinances" or laws of man. God's law *always* stands, because God is *always* "the LORD." Public man thus has no standing: he is not the Lord. All over the

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[28] S. H. Kellogg: *The Book of Leviticus*. (Minneapolis, MN: Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, (1899) 1978), p. 384.

world, we have a variety of laws, customs, and sexual practices. Some of these have an air of pseudo-innocence, because "everyone does it," and they are a part of the culture and faith of the people. God declares that no such "ordinance" has any standing before Him. Leviticus 18 concludes, in fact, with the declaration:

> 24. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you:
>
> 25. And the land is defiled: therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.
>
> 26. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations: neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you:
>
> 27. (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled:)
>
> 28. That the land spew not you out also when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you.
>
> 29. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.
>
> 30. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.

Clearly, all men and nations have alike an obligation to be holy unto the Lord. If they "defile" themselves by their man-made customs and laws, God judges them.

Second, the premise of all this is, "I am the LORD your God," and God is the Lord over believers and unbelievers alike. We cannot speak of the believer as alone under God's Lordship: all men are under His government, His law, and His judgment. Our acceptance or non-acceptance of the reality of the sun, gravity, and death does not alter the reality of these things; our response only affects us. So too with God: He is the Lord, whatever we may do. Our rejection of Him affects us, not the Lord. He is the sovereign.

Third, God contrasts the ordinances of men with His own judgments and ordinances (vv. 3-5). Man is religious man, created in God's image. Public man is a myth; having blinded himself to reality, public man sees nothing, and declares, I am the universe, and, I am the law. His blindness is followed by death.

Fourth, while to live as public man is death, those who live by faith in and obedience to the Lord have a promise: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD" (v. 5). This verse is quoted in Ezekiel 20:11,13,21; Nehemiah 9:29, Romans 10:5; and Galatians 3:12. The ancient Chaldee Versions translate "shall live in them" as "shall have life eternal."

Fifth, there is no private act possible, because the very land around us, the earth, is affected by our morality, and there is no public act, because every act is before God as Lord, not man as lord.

Sixth, in v. 30, "customs," according to C. D. Ginsburg, has reference to legally enacted statutes and religious practices.[29] Man's enactments have no legal standing before God, however.

Thus, how man views himself is irrelevant. He is neither private man nor public man: he is God's creature, and he can never escape the implications of that fact.

15. Guilt and Freedom

One of the ironies of our time is the fact that humanists rail at the Biblical doctrine of sin and guilt, while at the same time ruling by guilt. Nothing is more crippling and enervating than guilt. The more men are made to feel guilty, the more powerless and impotent they become. I recall, during the late 1930s, a brilliant, handsome, athletic, egocentric and brutal young man who treated morality with contempt and women as playthings. He had money and could indulge his sins. He married a beautiful and calculating young woman, who saw him as a ticket to a good life. He could not have desired a more supportive and agreeable wife: she played the role of a saint to the hilt and was totally oblivious or forgiving of all his sins. From being a brutally sadistic man, he became a masochist, and was dead in much less than ten years. She had given him no excuse to pass off his guilt, sadistically, on to her, and it killed him.

Most men and women are haunted by guilt and thus dogged by powerlessness. As a nation, we are ruled by guilt. We are made to feel guilty for our affluence, our homes, our food, everything, so that to be alive is to be guilty. Our schools and universities are training grounds for guilt. A guilty America is a ruled America.

At one university campus, in speaking on American history, I referred to the cannibalism of the earlier American Indians, in North, South, and Central America. The sense of outrage expressed by students and faculty was amazing. One man, on the faculty of a graduate school in the university, said this: "Given the record of white Christians all over the world, it is immoral and untenable for any white man to refer to the faults of any other race." University degrees these days are too often degrees in guilt and impotence; too often degrees are badges of castration.

Real guilt is bad enough. Real guilt has behind it actual sin, a violation of God's law, or, in general, an attempt to be as God, to replace God as the

[29] C. D. Ginsberg, "Leviticus," in C. J. Ellicott: *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1954). p. 421.

determiner of good and evil (Gen. 3:5). Real guilt can be dealt with readily: the atonement is God's remedy for sin and guilt. Moreover, if we, as Christians wrong someone, we know that God's remedy is that we make restitution. Real guilt has behind it actual sin and a very specific remedy.

It is an unquestionable fact for any Christian that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and that "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). But this has reference to our sin against God, to our covenant-breaking lives and natures. It is this sin and guilt which man suppresses in favor of another, *imaginary sin and imaginary guilt.* Are we guilty for any past sins, of other generations, against Indians, Africans, Negroes in America, Orientals, Jews, or anyone else? Are Christians guilty for the sins of twenty centuries? Are we guilty because India, the victim of its own religious faith, is hungry?

There is no way that any man, with a life-time of humanitarianism, can "atone" for twenty centuries, or even one century, of guilt in his short span. Even the sins of our life-time are beyond our atonement because, *first*, we are not redeemers, and, *second*, the guilt is imaginary. I John 3:4 tells us plainly that "sin is the transgression of the law," i.e., God's law. Imaginary guilt is the transgression of man's idea of sin and law.

Especially since World War II, the so-called free world has been ruled by guilt. Guilty men are slaves, and they hate freedom. As a result, being slaves to sin (they are sinners before God, but imagine themselves to be sinners before men), they hate freedom.

To illustrate from a number of situations: a man finds that his wife is adulterous, or a lesbian, in every way ungodly, and her behavior is common knowledge. A woman finds that her husband is adulterous, or a homosexual, incestuous, etc., and his behavior is known to many. (I am thinking of a number of actual people.) Friends and relatives commiserate the shocked spouse, and they express their sympathy and support. In fact, the out pouring of friendship and help is amazing and sometimes overwhelming.

Then, when the innocent husband or wife takes a concrete step towards freedom, a divorce or even a separation, all hell breaks loose. Friends and relatives who were until then very supportive are now outraged and hostile. Why? Being themselves defeated, impotent, and guilt-ridden peoples, they resent anyone who moves into freedom. They are thus at war with the free. This is one major reason for the hostility to and misrepresentation of true Christianity. Guilty men accuse Christians of being in bondage in order to conceal the fact of their own bondage and impotence.

Paul tells us, in Romans 8:1-2:

> 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

First, Paul tells us that all who are in Christ Jesus are freed from the condemnation of sin and guilt. This freedom means that, instead of guilt-ridden lives, they live as free men, with the power of God's Spirit.

Second, those who are freed from condemnation are readily identified: they walk, not after the ways of the fallen humanity of Adam, "but after the Spirit." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is the life of covenant man: the redeemed man walks by faith and in obedience to God's law or righteousness, whereas the fallen man is bound by the law of sin and death.

The practical consequence of the law of sin and death is guilt, real and imagined. In one way or another, fallen man has an affinity for guilt: being guilty before God, but evading that fact, he seeks cover in guilt before men. He will often "prove" his nobility and sensitivity as a man by refining his sense of guilt about humanity. Guilt is thus converted into a hallmark of nobility, sensitivity, and character. These eunuchs make a virtue of their condition!

However, no freedom for man and society is possible outside of Jesus Christ. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). This Christian freedom is destructive of statism, ecclesiasticism, and totalitarianism and is therefore treated as an enemy.

No godly reconstruction is possible as long as men are burdened by sin and guilt, real or imagined guilt. Politicians, preachers, and people around us are busily trying to impose a "guilt trip" on us, a trip to slavery. The calling of man in Christ is to freedom from sin and guilt and into life and righteousness or justice. It is a calling to dominion. Where there is guilt, there can be no freedom, and no dominion.

16. Guilt and the Slave Society

As we have seen, guilt, real or imagined, is crippling and destructive. Guilty men turn on themselves, or on others, in sado-masochistic activities. It is to the advantage of statists and all power-hungry men to cultivate and induce guilt in other men as a means of power.

This inducement of guilt often takes two forms. *First*, imaginary guilt is encouraged by creating all kinds of inescapable sins. Albert Schweitzer exalted life as the ultimate good, but at the same time made all men guilty of the ultimate sin, the destruction of life, every time they ate! Thus, his ultimate good, life, seemed to make him a life-affirming philosopher, whereas he was in reality a death-affirming man, because the destruction of life in the form of plants and animals for food became man's daily lot. The result was a burden of guilt for all who followed Schweitzer's faith.[30] The cultivation of imaginary guilt is a central fact of political life. The consequences of such a

guilt are the increase of political power to the rulers, whose answers to guilt increase the powers of the state, and the further enslavement of the peoples.

Second, whereas imaginary sins are cultivated and stressed, actual sins are denied the status of sin. To illustrate, sexual promiscuity and homosexuality are justified widely by educators and legislators. However, every deviation from God's law produces guilt, however much denied or concealed, and the concomitant of guilt is slavery. Encouragement is thus given to the practice of actual sins, redefined as freedom, in order to produce a guilt-ridden and broken people.

The world of entertainment and literature is important in this effort to give actual sin the status of freedom and virtue, as an exercise of human "rights" to enjoy life. To illustrate, a major review in a conservative newspaper gives a rhapsodic view of prostitutes in a book review of a work of fiction. The reviewer, Leslie Monsour, has this to say about one of the prostitutes: "Her function is sexual in the ultimate fashion: To satisfy men's bodies, to give sensuous repose superior to and beyond the posture of procreating. Maria Valdes is something of a biblical figure; she is an immaculate whore."[31] This is highly religious language as well as amazing romanticism. No like review was given to Jeanne Cordelier's sordid account of her actual life as a prostitute, a life of unrelieved misery and horror.[32]

Similarly, because Vienna is a city given to treating sin very lightly, it has, for a century now, been portrayed as the center of gaiety and music, a place of charm and light. The cold fact is that "The suicide rate in Vienna is among the highest in Europe."[33]

Men thus are encouraged to think of sin as freedom and light, and thereby to sin, to become guilty, and to be enslaved. The opportunity for actual sin is thus maximized in the slave state, while imaginary sins are savagely attacked, and controls introduced to govern a wide range of supposedly dangerous activity, thereby increasing state powers.

To encourage actual sins means covertly to provide opportunity for the commission of such sins. This opportunity can be provided legally (i.e., legalizing prostitution), or illegally. In either case, the power structure encourages actual sin, even if it professes to be against it. This means that the humanistic power state is a secret partner of organized crime. The links of organized crime to civil government are as old as Abraham's day, according

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30. See R. J. Rushdoony: *Politics of Guilt and Pity.* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, (1970) 1978). pp. 73-76, 82, 87-89.

31. Leslie Monsour, "Pleasures of the Flesh," a Review of *The Magic Whorehouse*, by Thomas Tolnay, in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Sunday, September 2, 1979, p. F6.

32. Jeanne Cordelier: *"The Life," Memoirs of a French Hooker.* (New York, N.Y.: Viking Press, 1978).

33. Joseph Wechsberg, "In the Baroque World of Vienna All Are on Stage," in *Smithsonian*, Vol. 10, No. 7, October, 1979. p. 86.

to archeological discoveries. These are very much an omnipresent fact in our day.

Some years ago, a University of Chicago sociologist, Edwin A. Sutherland, documented this fact by citing in particular the case of a professional thief. Because of the link of organized and professional crime with politics, police, and the courts, the conviction of such men is difficult and infrequent. The author quoted one professional thief as saying, "The fix exists in every city, village, hamlet, and township in the country."[34] Two recent works document in detail this kind of relationship whereby organized crime subsidizes politics and police, and vice versa.[35] Williams made clear that, while New York is the most corrupt, similar conditions prevail elsewhere, including enforced and captive prostitution.[36] The participation of the federal government in such corruption is cited by a specific case in Whittemore's work.[37]

None of this is new, although it is more rampant and powerful today. In the post-Civil War era, a prostitute, Nell Kimball, described the system thus:

> The basic business is set up properly if it has official city protection. The city officials and the police have to guarantee that in return for being paid off the house is not harassed or raided. The police alone cannot do this in any American city. They may look the other way and keep their hands out, but unless the city, and often even county and state officials, are part of the payoff, it does not make sense to spend as high as sixty thousand to furnish a house, bring in lively expert whores, set up a wine cellar, get a good cook and train maids; not unless you have that certain understanding with the law...
> But every whore is aware of the underworld outside the law. She knows there is a second government under the one in public view. Crime is often officially directed; boodle and loot are divided with some very respectable sounding people. In Chicago and New York after the Great War, crime and politics were nearly the same thing.[38]

The classic study in this field, of course, is "The System" as uncovered by the San Francisco Graft Prosecution (1915) by Franklin Hichborn, who died at 95 years of age on December 28, 1963. Hichborn analyzed the prosecution of the Ruef-Schmitz regime of the first decade of the 1900s. The System was a union of capital, labor, crime, and politics to rule and exploit the city, all made possible by the silence of virtually every church and churchman. The System, as Hichborn showed, in this and other works, is the standard method

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34. Edwin A. Sutherland: *The Professional Thief.* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1937). p. 109.
35. Robert Doley: *Prince of the City.* (Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin, 1978) and Leonard Shecter: *On the Pad.* (New York, N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973).
36. Robert H. Williams: *Vice Squad.* (New York, N. Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973). pp. 153, 159, 164, 191ff., with reference to New Orleans.
37. L. H. Whittemore: *Peroff, The Man Who Knew Too Much.* (New York, N. Y.: William Morrow, 1975).
38. Stephen Longstreet, editor: *Nell Kimball, Her Life as an American Madam, by Herself.* (New York, N. Y.: Berkeley Medallion Books, (1970) 1971). pp. 83, 106. Nell Kimball's particular contempt was for federal men, p. 316.

of operation. Its cost to the taxpayer is very great, but the taxpayer supports it, because he too has a vested interest in sin, envy, greed, and a desire for subsidies from the "public" treasury.[39] Since Hichborn's day, the System has grown vastly in its power. The world of entertainment is also a part of the System, as is the communications media.[40]

As long as guilt exists, the System will flourish. Men who have a vested interest in sin, as every sinner does, will become the slaves of sin, and therefore of one another. It is a common and ironic fact that sinners may use sin to exploit others but will themselves become the victims of sin. Joseph (The Yellow Kid) Weil, who swindled, according to his recollections, people out of $8 million in forty years of international operations, ended as a poor man. He invested foolishly, and was on one occasion himself swindled.[41]

Our Lord deals with this fact of sin and guilt, and the slave society, very plainly:

> 31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
> 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
> 33. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
> 34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.
> 35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.
> 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.
> 37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed: but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. (John 8:31-37)

First, our Lord here speaks to men who professed to believe Him to be the Messiah (v. 31), but were at heart unregenerate, the slaves of sin (v. 34), and were to become among those who sought to kill Him (v. 37). Thus, to bring the issue into sharp focus and to expose to them their unregenerate state, our Lord speaks very bluntly. They can only be His disciples if they continue or abide in His word.

Second, our Lord calls them servants or slaves of sin. This they denied, not by reference to their present status, but by reference to heredity, being Abraham's seed. They were, however, doubly slaves, slaves to sin and slaves to Rome, their overlord. They were thus denying the obvious political and personal facts of their lives. Israel's freedom had been lost, and Judea's, through sin. Rome had come in to rule Judea because Judea had corrupted its own rule. Its war against Rome had been heroic, but its internal corruption

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39. Franklin Hichborn, *"The System" as uncovered by the San Francisco Graft Prosecution.* (San Francisco, CA: James H. Barry Company, 1915).
40. See William G. Bonelli: *Billion Dollar Blackjack*, for some interesting charges. (Beverly Hills, CA: Civic Research Press, 1954).
41. "The Yellow Kid Returns," in *Newsweek*, December 24, 1956. pp. 20, 22.

sordid. All enemies other than ourselves are always more easily attacked. The appeal of Jesus as Messiah to the Zealots and others was in terms of the hope that He could supernaturally overthrow Rome, just as men today are more ready to pray for help against foreign enemies rather than their own sin. These Jews wanted salvation from Rome, not from their sin, just as people now want to be saved from communism, socialism, or fascism, but not from their own sins.

Third, our Lord's statement must be taken in the most general sense possible, because it is an unrestricted statement: all who are sinners are slaves of sin, personal, political, or any other form of sin and bondage, including economic. No freedom, personal or social, political or economic, marital or non-marital, is possible apart from Jesus Christ. He is the door to freedom in every realm, because He alone, as the last Adam, delivers His new race from the power of sin, guilt, and death. To limit the salvation in Christ and our resulting freedom to a purely spiritual aspect is wrong: it is total salvation and total freedom. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (v. 36). Jesus Christ is Himself the Magna Charta of freedom in every realm.

Orwell, in *1984*, called attention to the redefinition of words in the slave state: slavery is called freedom. This is what we face today: every claim to offer a free world apart from Jesus Christ is an offer of slavery and tyranny. The key to enslavement is sin and guilt, and from sin and guilt there is no salvation except through Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in any realm apart from Him, only guilt and slavery.

17. Man's System

For most people, the story of Saul and Amalek in I Samuel 15 is an unpleasant one. One humanistic seminary professor said of it that Saul looks morally better than God, viewed, of course, from a humanistic perspective.

Saul is commanded by God to destroy Amalek. We are not given any information as to the occasion for God's command. It would appear that Amalek was preparing to move against some other power; Saul neared their capitol, and prepared an ambush in a valley (I Sam. 15:5). It was not some random travellers which the Israelites struck at, but the Amalekite army and king. "All the people" whom Saul destroyed (v. 8) has reference to all the army. The text does not indicate whether or not Amalek was aware of the Israelite army; the Kenites had been ordered by Saul to withdraw from Amalekite territory. As nomads, their movement would not readily create suspicion. The text suggests an *ambush*, so that Amalek was apparently unprepared for an Israelite attack as they moved their army out for an attack on another power. The Amalekites were defeated and were hunted down from southern Judea to the Egyptian border, and their army was "utterly

destroyed," although King Agag was taken alive. That the Amalekite nation did not perish is clearly apparent from I Sam. 30:1. Also, I Sam. 15:33 speaks of Agag's mother as still alive. Thus, Amalek, a predatory nation, was struck down at God's command when apparently about to extend its predatory activity.

Now God's command to Israel was, *first*, to destroy all Amalekites, because all Amalek was under God's death sentence, and, *second*, to destroy all their property and possessions as forfeited to God together with their lives (v. 3). It is this command which sticks in the humanist's craw. It calls for genocide. Had this order come on humanistic grounds, i.e., for Amalek's crimes against humanity, it would have been perhaps tolerable. The Bible gives grounds for such an approach: apparently, Amalek, in its attack on Israel when it left Egypt (Ex. 17:8-16), castrated all prisoners and corpses (Deut. 25:18). God, however, cites such sins by Amalek as part of Amalek's hatred of Himself, His law, and His people. In brief, in the Bible, sins against man have a God-centered, not humanistic, emphasis and focus.

God, however, indicted, sentenced, and set aside Saul for his disobedience. *First*, Israel destroyed all the "vile and refuse" booty and kept the best of everything for themselves. This was a direct insult against God. *Everything* was required to be destroyed as a necessary requirement by God. All things being God's possession, with the *ban* on Amalek, all of Amalek and its possessions were reclaimed by God and ordered destroyed. Israel kept the best booty and destroyed the trifling and worthless, i.e., offered in sacrifice to God that which was worthless, and no more. Such "gifts" to God are common in the history of the church, and always under God's judgment as contemptible and insulting.

Second, King Agag was spared. The LXX translates "delicately" in v. 32, and Agag came unto him (Samuel) delicately, as "trembling," although the word can also mean cheerfully or daintily.[42] Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past" (v. 32), expecting that the peace given him by Saul would not be broken. Instead, Samuel said, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal" (v. 33). Here Samuel gives grounds for a humanistic approval of God's action, but it is not acceptable to humanists, of course, *because God required it.* The Nuremberg Tribunal of War Criminals, and the many post-war trials of Germans as war criminals, are accepted by modern man on the whole, because the focus is *on man entirely*, and on crimes against man. What is the reason behind this?

First, men refuse to believe that a crime against God is as serious as a crime against man. It is very wrong to give a friend or loved one the left-overs of

[42] A. M. Renwick, "I and II Samuel," in F. Davidson, editor: *The New Bible Commentary.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953). p. 171.

our time, money, or interest, as the occasion may require, but it is seen as legitimate to give to God only "the vile and refuse," the left-overs of our lives.

Second, a compromise with fascism, Naziism, or Communism is not acceptable to most men, but a compromise with sin is acceptable and preferred. Saul refused to obey God, deliberately refused. He *revised* God's command, and then charged the people with ordering the revision (v. 24). Why? The clear-cut and uncompromising acceptance of the whole of God's law-word involves no small amount of self-condemnation and necessary change and submission. It requires continuing repentance, i.e., a change of direction in our lives, a dying to ourselves and a living unto God and His law-word. This man does not want. Man wants God without thunder, God without His law and judgment.

Social evils are thus justified as *necessary* evils. *The System*, the criminal alliance of civil government, capital, labor, and the criminal syndicates is man's way of trying to say that the wisest of all possible worlds is one in which law, work, thrift, and morality co-exist and work together with lawlessness, an anti-work mentality, prodigality, and immorality. We have here an implicit Manichaeanism, a belief in the equal ultimacy and value of good and evil, plus a new element absent in Manichaeanism, a belief in their *necessary* co-existence. In other words, before Saul's time, and into our era, all too many men seek a marriage of God and Satan, the union of Jerusalem and Babylon. For many, "sound politics" has come to mean precisely that.

Adam wanted Eden, but he wanted it on the tempter's terms (Gen. 3:1-5), with himself as his own God, determining good and evil for himself, while expecting God to subsidize his efforts.

This is why I Samuel 15, and the whole of Scripture, is so troubling to man, and offensive to the humanist. As one humanist remarked of a like incident in Scripture, "How gauche of God!" Indeed, how dare God set forth His sovereignty so baldly, without regard for man's feelings! The humanist wants meaning to come from man. Scripture refuses ever to pander to that appetite. All meaning is God-centered, as all our lives must be. Man is defined in Scripture in terms of God: he is created in God's image, to serve and obey God. Man is a religious creature. In his sin, he seeks a religion derived from man, so that meaning becomes man-centered, i.e., humanistic.

God is allowed a place in the scheme of things by man the sinner *only* if man can set the meaning. The System is a chronic definition made by man. Man then determines the relative usefulness to himself of both God and Satan, of justice and sin. He wants "the best" of heaven and hell; he wants to eat his cake and have it too.

The System thus manifests man's readiness to believe in humanistic miracles. The miracle demanded is in line with Genesis 3:5, that God and

Satan, good and evil, both serve man and do man's bidding. The name of the game is Russian roulette: its conclusion is death.

Man does not want to choose either God or Satan: he wants to use both as lord, and have both at his beck and call to build the Kingdom of Man. Man the sinner chooses himself.

18. The Culmination of Man's System

Man, in his sin, sought to be as God, to determine good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). All history outside of Christ manifests the development of that goal. Neither man nor history are static. Man the sinner does not stand still: he is driven by the logic of his presupposition to seek total independence of God and man. Even more, he seeks independence from his first ally, the tempter. He seeks to vindicate the tempter's principle and to be his own god. Man refuses to submit to Satan's demand, "fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9), because he himself wants worship. The appeal of occultism and Satanism is the dream of *using* demonic powers, not *submitting* to them; it is the hope of making God and Satan alike the servants of man, if they are to be recognized at all.

Milton's Satan declares from hell.

> Here at least
> We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
> Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
> Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
> To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
> Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
> John Milton: *Paradise Lost*, I, 11. 258-263.

A more absurd statement is difficult to imagine. Envy having moved all of the fallen angels, how could they arrest envy one towards another? Again, since their principle was the universal divinity of all thinking creatures, each was in his own eyes god. There is no reigning at all in hell, only anarchy and envy. Satan is first only historically: his principle precludes all authority while calling for total rule and power for all who hold it. In man's history, the working of Satan's principle (Gen. 3:5) destroys authority and creates anarchy.

The dream of original sin, however, is of a world kingdom and paradise without God, of a man-created world-garden of Eden. The more man advances in this dream, the more he imagines himself as the god-manipulator of other men, using them to enact his dream of a new world.

The Bible describes this world-paradise as Babylon, as Babylon the Great (Rev. 17:1-18). This description is in itself of key importance. Babylon is not the greatest offender, from any humanistic perspective, in ancient history. Many of the ancient empires and states exceeded it by far in ferocity and

inhumanity, as witness Amalek and Assyria. The choice of Babylon is thus important to understand. Certainly, it harks back to the Tower of Babel, and its dream of a humanistic world state to replace God. It also clearly reminds us of the Babylonian Empire, and especially the later Chaldean revival of it.

An important fact about Babylon was its use of debt to enslave men and nations. Economic control and supremacy was Babylon's goal, and the key to its empire was debt. Babylonian merchants, heavily controlled by the state, were encouraged to sell to peoples everywhere on easy credit terms. By this means, the inner strength of one nation after another was eroded by debt, and invasion and conquest made easy (cf. Nahum 3:16). Debt-slavery preceded state-slavery.

The essence of a debt economy, and of a monetary system built on debt, is a belief that man can create value on his own, i.e., legislate what constitutes good and evil. Babylon's system was crude compared to that of the modern state, but it is closely related to it. In the modern state, man seeks to invalidate the distinction between good and evil, and to say that God's distinctions are null and void. Debt has always been regarded as a dangerous thing at best, if not an evil. Even the pagan powers of antiquity regarded interest with hatred as a means of oppression. Modern man believes that the dream of Genesis 3:5 is near realization. Debt now creates money; debt has replaced gold as the foundation of our paper money. The federal government monetizes its debts and creates a paper currency based on debt.[43] Interest is the key to corporate and banking power. Civil governments and banks in union create money out of nothing, so that both credit money and paper currencies represent fiat creation. The greater the debt, the greater the interest income, and the greater the profit. Katz says flatly, "War is of great financial benefit to the bankers," because war increases the national debt and the flow of interest.[44] We can add that war also greatly increases the powers of the state over the people.

Revelation 18 tells us that this Babylonian System, Babylon's dream of a world-paradise without God, proves seductive to all nations. They become drunk with the heady wine of sin, of playing god. Moreover, "the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (Rev. 18:3). The Babylonian dream involves a faith that all consequences are man's fiat creation: "for she hath said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7).

This vast empire of fallen man shall face an economic collapse, according to Rev. 18:11-19. The dream of Gen. 3:5 shall destroy the Babylonian System totally. This prediction has been repeatedly fulfilled in history on nation after nation; it will be fulfilled on the total world system in God's time.

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43. See R. J. Rushdoony: *Politics of Guilt and Pity.* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, (1970) 1978).
44. Howard S. Katz: *The Warmongers.* (New York, N. Y.: Books in Focus, 1979). p. 20.

Today, this dream is more prevalent than ever. Whether or not this is its final form, we cannot say, but what we must hold is that we are required to separate ourselves from Babylon. We are forbidden to go into slavery, or into long-term debt. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another" (Rom. 13:8). "For ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men" (I Cor. 7:23). Modern man loves to speak of freedom, even while he plunges steadily into slavery. Since he is not honest with God nor man, he cannot be honest with himself.

Rev. 18:20-21 make clear that God plans the total destruction and disappearance of this Babylonian dream. Just as a stone cast into the depths of the ocean disappears from sight, so the humanistic dream of a world-paradise made by man shall disappear. Its fiat laws, fiat money, and fiat politics shall disappear from history, to be replaced by God's order.

It is thus impossible to do justice to the doctrine of man without seeing the historical culmination of his sinful dream, nor the hell that awaits him beyond history. Similarly, we cannot do justice to the doctrine of man in Christ without recognizing that it is his calling to live in God's Kingdom in time, and in God's heaven in eternity. The resurrection of the body at Christ's coming again is basic to the doctrine of man: man was created as part of and vicegerent over a physical creation, and, by God's sovereign grace, shall serve Him eternally in the restoration and indefectible life of that renewed creation.

Meanwhile, we have humanism's dream of paradise set forth on all sides, as witness Ernest Callenback's *Ecotopia* (1975). This fictional presentation of a political hope presents 1999 and an ideal state, Ecotopia, as the fulfillment of the dreams of ecology-oriented planners and sexual revolutionists. This ideal world proves to be a sexual free-for-all, with sex as a public and animal act, and the emphasis is not a practical, economic one, geared to reality, but on a pot dream of no responsibility. Lagerfeld comments of the people in this novel, "In a world where all inner restraints have dissolved, character and therefore 'characters' cannot exist."[45] This work, which advertises itself as "politics fiction," is described thus by Lagerfeld:

> The political condition of Ecotopia is no fantasy; it is as comprehensible as a daily newspaper and as inevitable–if not as hideous–as the Gulag. The deepest fiction of the book, in this sense, resides not in its depiction of Ecotopia's political and social life, but of its economics of endless benefits without costs.[46]

Man dreams of playing god, and he cloaks his sin with high-minded idealism. Given the opportunity to enact in reality or on paper his "nobel" plans, he

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[45] Steven Lagerfeld, "Political Fiction?", a review article of Ernest Callenback: *Ecotopia*, in *The Public Interest*, no. 57, Fall, 1979, p. 102.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

produces the slave-labor camps of the U.S.S.R., and the stale erotic nightmares of Ecotopia. Humanism is a faith for death and retreat; it begins by defying God and ends in the nightmare of drugs and escapism. It is hatred disguised as love, and death masquerading as life. It has no future. History's only future is the new man in Jesus Christ, and a new creation, God's Kingdom and realm.

19. Life and Death

In Genesis 2:17, God declares to Adam, that, if Adam sins, death shall follow: "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," i.e., the process of death will begin in your life. James summarizes this fact thus: "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). Together with these verses, we must consider Genesis 3:22, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and live for ever," man must be driven out of Eden.

Man, created and in a state of dependence, had asserted his independence from God. Required to render obedience to God, by declaring himself god (Gen. 3:5), man had demanded that all things yield obedience to him. Autonomy had replaced obedience in his life.[47] From Chrysostom and Augustine to von Rad, many commentators have seen an irony, whether gentle or judgmental, in the Lord's observation. Man, by his sin, placed himself on a par with the Trinity, as a god, although he was still God's creation and totally under God's decree and government. Man plainly wanted all the benefits of autonomy and dependence, i.e., the freedom to be his own god, while enjoying all the privileges of God's Garden of Eden. Such a mentality is basic to the sinner. He insists on seeing the world as he knows and enjoys it as his "given," as the necessary environment of God and man alike. One young student rebel, who insisted on his "right" to defy his parent's faith, keep a girl companion as his sexual revolutionary mate, and use narcotics, was enraged when his parents cut off his allowance. That, he insisted, was "playing dirty" and violating his "rights;" it was a "fascistic" act. His parents, he maintained, had the right to disagree, but not to cut off their support.

This was clearly the attitude of Adam and Eve. Gen. 3:24 says, "So he drove out the man..." Drove, *garash*, means to expel, drive out, divorce. Adam and Eve had no intention of leaving: they were *driven out* of Eden, cast out. They did not leave Eden: they were thrown out.

Thus, God describes man's program in sin. *First*, man declares his independence from God, while insisting on being a god among gods, "one of

47. Gerhard von Rad: *Genesis, A Commentary*. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press., 1961). p. 94.

us." *Second*, man declares that it is his right to determine what constitutes good and evil for himself. No law of God shall bind man: he wills to be a law unto himself. *Third*, it was man's expectation that he would live forever with the freedom to be his own god. Man had no knowledge of death. God's statement concerning death as the penalty for sin was thus remote and academic in man's eyes.

God's judgment on man thus made death a reality in man's life. The knowledge of death is the knowledge of creatureliness. There is thus a particular intensity in man's dreams of conquering death, and a deep sense of unreality in his unwillingness to face up to the fact that he will some day die.

There is a grim contradiction in sinful man: he knows, however much he suppresses the knowledge, that he will die, and yet it is his original and basic sin to believe in autonomy, to will to be his own god. A dying god is a sorry self-contradiction.

However, death forces on man some recognition of his creatureliness. It is thus important to the doctrine of man to face up to the fact of death. Death means that man lives, not only in time, but in limited time. We are all only a heart-beat away from death. Time is not an inexhaustible or recoverable resource for man.

Thus, for sinful man, time is a problem, because death is a problem. He cannot make good use of time, because he is burdened with sin and guilt, and his life in time is warped by sado-masochistic activities. Because he insists on playing god, fallen man wastes time to show his contempt of God's limitations upon him.

The redeemed man, knowing his sin and mortality, and being freed from the burden of guilt, can use time wisely and redemptively. He has confronted his basic problem, sin, and therefore the victory of death is overcome. The fallen man, however, sees death, not sin, as the problem, and hence he is in flight from death, not sin. Dr. Medard Boss has noted,

> Flight from death and flight into death seem to be two diametrically opposed modes of human behavior. Appearances are deceptive, however, for flight from death and flight into death are different ways of fleeing from one and the same thing. In both the full unfolding of human existence is evaded.[48]

The flight from death is a close parallel to the flight into death. A godless era is frantic for life, and prone to suicide. Suicide rates rise with the decline of Christian orthodoxy. The attempted humanistic answers are futile, because, since Rousseau, man has been especially prone to blaming society for

[48] Medard Boss, "Flight from Death–Mere Survival; and Flight into Death–Suicide," in Benjamin B. Wolman and Herbert H. Krauss, editors: *Between Survival and Suicide*. (New York, N. Y.: Gardner Press, 1976). p. 1.

suicides and other problems. According to Krauss, "To reduce the rate of suicide in a society, one must first reform that society."[49]

In a world in which fallen men see themselves as gods, not surprisingly narcissism prevails. People become takers, not givers; exploiters, not producers. Adolescents today are especially narcissistic and at the same time dependent: the world owes every little god a living, and a very good one, at that![50] According to Dr. Stern, the sexual revolution, and its attack on marriage, is an attack on responsibility (a creaturely necessity). He notes,

> We want intimacy without vulnerability; love without commitment or responsibility.....
> For instance, in the service of our need for immediate gratification, we invent therapies whose sole intention is to give instant rebirth without a minimum of effort. Adults crawl into big cribs and scream away their troubles–or so they want to believe.[51]

Life is determined by either a fear of death, or a recognition of responsibility and accountability to God. The fear of death is suicidal, in that it warps, colors, and destroys living. The Christian may be fearful of death, but he is governed, not by that fearfulness, but by his sense of responsibility to God. Death for him is at best an unpleasant episode or fact, whereas the overwhelming reality is God and His law, Jesus Christ and His atoning work, an eternal calling in God's new creation, and the knowledge that we live in a world of total meaning.

Man, a creature made in the image of God, is mortal. This fact colors the life of man. For the unregenerate, death reduces all things to meaninglessness. For the regenerate, it means that God is the Lord, and He, in His providence, has decreed our victory over death and our eternal service to Him (Rev. 22:3). We move in a world of total meaning, in which life and death alike serve God's glorious purposes for us (Rom. 8:28ff.). Paul can thus say joyfully.

> 53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
> 54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
> 55. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
> 56. The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.
> 57. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
> 58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (I Cor. 15:53-58)

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[49] Herbert H. Krauss, "Suicide–A Psychological Phenomenon," in *ibid.*, p. 50.
[50] Aaron Stern, M.D.: *Me: The Narcissistic American.* (New York, N. Y.: Ballantine Books, 1979). pp. 63ff., 194.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Man is not only born to die; in Jesus Christ, he is born again to glorify God, and to serve and enjoy Him forever.

XV

THEOLOGY OF THE LAND

1. Atonement for the Land

A clear instance of the influence of Greek philosophy on the church is the neglect of a theology of the earth. Because for Greek philosophy reality is seen in terms of abstract ideas or forms rather than creation as God's handiwork, all who are influenced by Hellenism will view the world in terms of abstract universals. In modern thought, naturalism has given to physical reality a stress lacking in Greek thought, but even that interest is governed by Hellenic abstractionism. Ecology and environmentally minded people view the world with an abstract idea of nature. Some imaginary pristine purity of the earth must be restored, according to them, as though this imaginary world-order of nature has priority over man. Human considerations must be sacrificed to the welfare of trees and animals, and it is held that an inevitable conflict of interests exists between man and nature, and, in this conflict, man must yield priority to nature. Nature, however, is not an abstract universal but a physical reality which man must *utilize and develop.* The anti-Christianity of modern humanism has led to an hatred of both God and man, and a readiness to sacrifice man to nature. Some zero-population proponents want a reduction in the number of people in order to give more of the earth to animals and trees. The Bible separates man from the rest of creation because man is God's image-bearer and is called to exercise dominion. The environmentalists separate man from nature as the destroyer who must be restrained and suppressed in his dedication to dominion and development.

The Bible gives us a very clear theology of the earth. We are told that "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). It is the Lord's because He made it (Gen. 1). Man is the high point of God's creation, but we cannot be indifferent to the rest of creation. Of the six days of creation, five are devoted to the world other than man. The *time* given to the rest of creation testifies to its importance in God's sight. The appearance of man on the final day witnesses to man's importance as the culmination of the creative purpose. Of all His creation, we are told: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). To despise that physical creation is to despise God. To view creation as God views it is a moral and a religious necessity.

It is necessary, however, to recognize that this creation, while glorious, is also *fallen.* The sin of man has a geophysical effect. The curse and death become a part of the life of man and of the earth (Gen. 3:17-19). There is a necessary connection between the moral and the religious life of man and the world around him, as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 make clear. Man

does not live in a morally neutral environment, and both the intellectual-spiritual and the physical life of man reflect that close relationship and the absence of neutrality. As Deborah declares in her song, the very stars in their courses reflect God's moral law and purpose (Judges 5:20). The universe, though fallen, is still God's creation. Paul tells us in Romans 1:17-24 that all of God's truth is manifest in and to every man, and men "hold," or hold back, that truth in unrighteousness or injustice. Suppression, however, is ineffective. Even our bones witness against us (Ps. 32:3), because God's truth and law are written in every atom of our being.

Man the sinner needs atonement. In no other way than by God's atonement through Jesus Christ can man ever be acceptable to God. All atonement apart from Christ merely compounds and aggravates our sin. Apart from Christ's atonement, man's destiny is death and hell.

However, it is not only man who needs atonement but the land as well. F. F. Bruce has called attention to this in passing, stating that the atonement for the land is a necessity in Old Testament law. "In the Song of Moses God makes atonement for his people's land by avenging the blood of his servants at the hand of his and their enemies" (Deut. 32:43).[1] Several texts set forth this doctrine of the need for making atonement for the land as a requirement of God's law. One important law on this question is Numbers 35:30-34:

> 30. Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.
> 31. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.
> 32. And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.
> 33. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.
> 34. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

First, it should be noted that the land is not only God's creation and possession, but His dwelling place: "for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel." Jesus Christ says the same thing: like the pillar and the cloud in the wilderness journey of Israel, He accompanies His people everywhere: "lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). Because Christ claims the whole earth as His realm, any sin within that realm defiles His land and Kingdom and requires satisfaction.

Second, the word translated "satisfaction" in vv. 31 and 32 is *kopher*, atonement. These verses are concerned about satisfaction or atonement. All

[1] F. F. Bruce, "The Background of the Son of Man Sayings," in Harold H. Rouden, editor: *Christ the Lord*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982). p. 64.

crimes require satisfaction. The atonement for man's sins against God can only be affected by Jesus Christ. This is the God-ward aspect of atonement. However, a man-ward satisfaction is also required, which is restitution. This restitution must be according to God's law (Ex. 22). This means that, in the case of murder, God does not permit any restitution and atonement other than death, the death of the guilty party. Even in cases of accidental deaths, the provisions of God's law cannot be set aside: the man must remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. Today this would mean that he must leave the community.

Third, this means that the land has no atonement apart from the enforcement of God's law. The land is polluted according to the law, as long as unrequited blood remains. God tells Cain, of the blood of murdered Abel, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen. 3:10). "The land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it" (Num. 35:33).

Fourth, plainly, to believe in Christ's atonement means that we uphold God's law. To be atoned by Christ requires us to enforce the consequences of that atonement, or satisfaction. The life of atonement is the life of the law. Christ having made satisfaction for us in relation to God, we make satisfaction according to His law-word in relation to man and to the land. The atonement required by God is thus applied to all His creation. The life of sin is life outside the blood of Christ and under blood-guiltiness. The guilty Dr. Faustus in Christopher Marlowe's play, as he faces the totality of his own blood-guiltiness, sees also the totality of Christ's atonement, and he cries out, "See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament."

Fifth, theologically, lawyers and judges are atonement men whose purpose it is to effect the satisfaction of God's law on the human scene, between man and man, and between men and the earth. Law is thus a profoundly religious vocation, and the secularization of this calling is one of the more deadly evils of our time. Where lawyers and judges are not atonement men, they increase the blood-guiltiness as well as the pollution of the land. The law in our time has been reduced to a technical concern with the letter of the law, humanistic law, and the result is a society without satisfaction or atonement. It has become, as a result, a profoundly dissatisfied society because it has no atonement and no justice.

Sixth, failure to effect satisfaction not only pollutes and defiles the land but also the men in it. Hence, God repeatedly calls men to separate themselves from evil men and societies (Num. 16:21; Ezra 6:21; 9:1; Neh. 9:2; etc.).

We today live in a land and a generation which needs atonement. The alternative to atonement is judgment. Atonement means that judgment has been rendered and satisfaction made. The absence of atonement brings on the direct judgment of God. We cannot thus separate "natural" disasters from

God's judgment. A people at war with God must expect God's creation to be against them. Satisfaction will be made, by Christ as Savior or by Christ as Judge.

2. The Dominion Mandate

Our study of Numbers 35:30-34, atonement for the land, makes clear that our current approach to Scripture is spiritualized to the point of overlooking much that is important. The Bible obviously speaks to matters and areas very much neglected by the modern church. A theology for the earth is thus a necessary emphasis to restore wholeness and balance to the life of faith.

We should remember, after all, that the Bible begins with God's creation of the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1); it concludes with the re-creation of heaven and earth (Rev. 21-22). Its focus is not on man alone but on all creation in relationship to God's covenant purpose. God's joy in His creation is set forth in His own words to Job:

> 4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.
> 5. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it?
> 6. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof;
> 7. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. (Job 38:4-7)

There is nothing ascetic about God's attitude towards the material world; His is the joy of creation. He revels in the peacock and the ostrich (Job 39:13), in the wild goats (Job 39:1-4), the wild ass (Job 39:5), and in all His creatures. Job and his friends view this world in man-centered terms; God expresses His joy in all His creation. Man is the climax of God's creation, not the exclusive feature thereof. A God-centered view of creation will thus regard all of it in terms of God's purposes, not man's concerns. Neither a man-centered nor a "nature"-centered perspective is Biblical; we must be God-centered and covenant oriented.

Man's relationship to "nature" is set forth in the creation or dominion mandate, 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.

These familiar words concerning the creation of man tell us, *first*, that man is created in the image of God. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 10, asks, "How did God create man?", and answers, "God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures" (Gen. 1:27,28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24). The image of God is not a physical one (John 4:24); its essence is in the attributes cited. We should remember that righteousness is simply an older word for justice. Man's creation in God's image places him in an exalted position in relation to all the rest of God's creation (Ps. 8).

Second, thus creation is sexual in nature: we are male and female. This is not an irrelevant nor a minor fact. All attempts to overlook this difference, as well as all efforts to exaggerate and exploit it, deprive man of an important part of his creaturely happiness. As male and female, mankind is commanded to be fruitful and multiply to "replenish" or, literally, *to fill* the earth. Although the Garden of Eden was a limited and enclosed area, to be a pilot project wherein man was to learn the tools and ways of dominion, the whole earth, on creation day six, teemed with vegetation, trees, animals, and more. The text speaks of no limitation on the abundance of non-human creation. Rather, it speaks of the abundance of the animal creation on land and in the waters. Indeed, the creative command is to "fill the waters in the seas" and to be similarly plentiful on land (Gen. 1:20-22). Only with man is there a dramatic difference. At first, we have only Adam (Gen. 2:7), and then, later, Eve (Gen. 2:21-25). The animals may run in herds or packs, but they have no federal head, whereas man does, either Adam (Gen. 5:1-3) or Christ (I Cor. 15:45-49). Man is a covenant creature, and he has a corporate as well as a personal life which in both cases is far beyond anything the rest of the material world can know apart from its corporate involvement in man (Gen. 3:14-19).

Third, man was *created* to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. This is not something peripheral to man's being: it is essential to his nature. Either man will exercise a godly dominion or an evil, humanistic one. The earth was a mature creation. No concept of origins can escape that fact. If we begin with evolution, we must posit all the potentiality of the universe in the original miraculously born spark of being, and hence a remarkably mature original atom, or sub-atomic particle. The trees were created as grown trees; many of the fruit trees obviously had fruit to feed Adam, and Adam was born a mature man *physically*. In the cultural sphere, Adam had no maturity. Naked and without tools, he had to make all the tools of living by and for himself. To subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over it required tools, the development of a technology. Tool-making then and now is an intellectual task, and a necessary one if dominion is to be exercised. No sphere for development was given to the rest of creation; this was a task reserved exclusively for man. If plants and animals were to be bred and developed into

more useful forms, the task was, and still is, man's task and calling. The presence of man thus means a mandatory development, whether for good or evil.

Fourth, this development potential is an aspect of the image of God in man. Development, of course, is sought by the humanist also, but his dream is to control his own evolution and to make himself god. The development program of humanistic man is thus a planned revolution. Covenant man does not seek to undo God's work but to do His bidding. The development he seeks is of a world order which seeks first the Kingdom of God and His justice (Matt. 6:33). He seeks to conform himself to Christ, not to transform himself into a superman or God.

Of Christ we are told that He is "the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10), or, in the words of the Berkeley Version, "the head of all princedom and authority." This means that in Christ we are to claim every domain for Him and as His, and to exercise the authority of His law-word in every sphere. One such sphere is the natural world around us, and the earth beneath our feet. All things must be developed in terms of His dominion mandate. The development of agriculture and of technology, of mining, horticulture, and all related disciplines, is a religious duty. The earth must be utilized to develop God's covenant mandate.

Such a development in Christ is not destructive but constructive, constructive of the covenant society and its social implications. The artisans in the wilderness are described as being filled "with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. 31:3). The same can be said of every man, whether in technology, agriculture, or some other sphere, who advances the development of man's life and service under God.

3. The Curse and the Covenant

Because of Adam's sin, God pronounced a curse upon Adam and upon the earth. According to Genesis 3:17-19,

> 17. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.
> 18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
> 19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it was thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The idea of God's curse on the earth is repugnant to humanistic man because it declares the fact of an ultimate personal cause and causality. Men are ready to believe that men can curse the earth with their pollution, because in their

reasoning man is the only *personal* cause in all creation. To admit another and ultimate personal cause is to dethrone man.

Scripture, however, declares that God is the ultimate and absolute cause. Nothing happens apart from His will. Moreover, God states plainly His way of dealing with man. In Oehler's summary, "if man turns against God, God turns against him."[2] In Leviticus 26:23-24, we are told:

> 23. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me:
> 24. Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

Our concern with the indictment and curse upon Adam is mainly centered on the earth, but, *first*, a fact must be noted. The curse is pronounced "because thou hast hearkened unto thy voice of thy wife." This is a sentence often cited and abused. Adam's sin was not in listening to his wife, as such, but in listening to any voice other than God's insofar as the government of his life was concerned. Adam was thus cursed for giving authority to a human counsel in preference to God's command; this is humanism, and it is a violation of the covenant. The curse progresses when humanism prevails and man's word is given priority over God's word.

Second, man was created out of the earth, and he had a happy working relationship with it. That relationship was now broken; struggle replaced symbiosis. There had been work in the Garden of Eden, but now work "is so threatened by failures and wastes of time and often enough comes to nothing, that its actual result usually has no relation to the effort expanded."[3]

Third, the earth suffers under the curse for man's sake, but the earth also receives man's body. Thus man, created to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth, in the end returns to it as a dead man. The promise of the certainty of death and the fact of death thus govern all man's days. The covenant was a covenant of life; now man has a covenant with death. The word "thou" is plural in the Hebrew; "with sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." The reference is to all men as males. The primary guilt was Adam's because his was the primary authority.

Fourth, because man is an earth-bound creature, the curse of the earth is the curse of "every department of life and the world."[4] Calvin in stressing this fact, said:

> We may add, that, properly speaking, this whole punishment is exacted, not from the earth itself, but from man alone. For the earth does not bear

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[2] Gustave Friedrick Oehler: *Theology of the Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, reprint of the 1883 edition). p. 195.

[3] Gerhard von Rad: *Genesis, A Commentary*. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1961). p. 92.

[4] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of Genesis*. (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1942). p. 175.

> fruit for itself, but in order that food may be supplied to us out of its bowels. The Lord, however, determined that his anger should, like a deluge, overflow all parts of the earth, that wherever man might look, the atrocity of his sin should meet his eyes. Before the fall, the state of the world was a most fair and delightful mirror of the divine favor and paternal indulgence towards man. Now, in all the elements we perceive that we are cursed. And although (as David says) the earth is still full of the mercy of God, (Psalm xxxiii. 5,) yet, at the same time, appear manifest signs of his dreadful alienation from us, by which if we are unmoved, we betray our blindness and insensibility.[5]

Fifth, the curse includes weeds as well as a frustrating battle with the soil. In the providence of God, weeds replenish the soil by putting into it those elements man extracts from it. The totality of God's creation moves in terms of Romans 8:28, whereby all things work together for good to them who love God and are His elect. At the same time, all things work together for evil for the reprobate. Man in his sin, however, creates deserts and wastelands. Man apart from God is suicidal and destructive. (Prov. 8:36).

Sixth, the curse includes the food supply. "The herb of the field" has reference to the grains used to make bread. Only with the sweat of his brow will man eat bread. Man's life is now death-oriented and at the same time tied to the production of food. Prior to the fall, the fertility and unfallen nature of the earth made the production of food no problem at all. To the degree that men are under the curse, food is a major problem. We know that socialism, a form of sin, is destructive to food production. We need to recognize that all sin has social and physical consequences. One area of consequence is the earth. Sin is a religious fact; *therefore* its results are apparent in every area of life and thought. Disease, predation, parasitism and more are now facts of our lives.

Seventh, in the creation week, all things were made; now sin unmakes them in the sense that decay and death mark all things.[6] Degeneration set in with the fall.

With Jesus Christ, however, the curse was broken, and, insofar as men are in Christ, they are in and under God's blessing. This means, *first*, that man now lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). The humanistic word can be spoken by other men or by our own nature; in either case, it expedites the curse in and over us as we are governed by it. To be governed by the word of God is to be governed by His blessing. God's curses and blessings are very strongly earthly. While the eternal judgment and salvation are plainly set forth, the Bible stresses the present and physical

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5. John Calvin: *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948). p. 173.
6. Henry M. Morris: *The Genesis Record*. (San Diego, CA: Creation-Life Publishers, 1976). p. 127.

consequences because our God is not a future God but the very present Lord, Governor, and Creator.

Second, in Oehler's words, "The divine blessing in a single word is Life; Deut. xxx. 15f.; comp. also iv i; viii i; especially frequent in the Proverbs, xii 28, vii:35, and elsewhere."[7] God promises the blessing of children, fertile soil, good weather, victory over enemies, earthly prosperity, and much more as aspects of life. The emphasis is always on the priority of the blessing of His government and grace; as David says, "thy lovingkindness is better than life" (Ps. 63:3).

Third, instead of death, man becomes the heir of eternal life in Christ, and a renewed creation. The earth again becomes a paradise because it is again the dwelling place of covenant man. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 give us a vivid statement of the curses and blessings upon man and the earth. The life of faithfulness is the life of benediction. It is life in the covenant of God, and in the assurance of His providence. David declares, "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot" (Ps. 16:5). As man in Christ becomes faithful to the covenant, the curse recedes from his life. As nations are faithful to God's every word, their land and people are removed from the curse into blessing.

There is thus a causal factor which governs all history whose "name" is God; He is the Creator and therefore the absolute and ultimate cause. To attempt any understanding or dominion in human affairs or with respect to the earth apart from Him is to reject the truth. The universe is God's creation, and also to a degree His house or habitation. God is master over His own house, and totally so. The religious character of weather, soil fertility, and the congeniality of the earth to man is a basic assumption of Scripture. Man's sin created the problem. Man's salvation and man's development of the implications of his salvation will in time alter that problem and will see its conversion into a blessing.

We began by calling attention to the depersonalization of causality from God to meaningless "natural" forces. Our world, its sociology, and reasoning is marked by a lust for depersonalized causality. Sin is then made non-existent. Error alone remains. Error then is merely miscalculation, not a moral evil. Stalin, after "liquidating" thirteen million kulaks and reducing Russia to famine by means of this mass murder, later spoke of the entire matter as simply an error.

If the universe is depersonalized, then man too is depersonalized. The government of all things is in terms of vague and impersonal forces, platonic ideas. These are basic to the evolutionary theory. Man then has no right to stand in the way of *the idea*, the true principle of being. As a result, non-Christian faiths, especially modern humanistic ones, regard man as readily

[7] Oehler, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

expendable. The only men whose preservation is essential are the elite men who are expressive of the idea and hence are needed to shape being in terms of it. By separating himself from God, man is accursed; by developing the premises of that separation man also *becomes* a curse.

4. God and the Land

In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, we have a very clear statement of the relationship between man and the land. When man is faithful to His covenant Lord, the blessings of God come upon him and overcome him, in the city and in the field, and in his coming out and his going in. If, however, man is disobedient to God and His law, he is accursed in every area. As man is blessed, the earth and the weather are blessed; as man is accursed, so too is the earth and the weather.

There is thus an essential relationship between man and the earth, a symbiosis which rests on man's relationship with God. This relationship rests on man's communion with God, or man's lack of communion. Man cannot step out of harmony with God without experiencing disharmony and conflict in all his other relationships.

This relationship of man with the earth has a certain character which makes it especially noteworthy. Man has a memory. His memory enables him to utilize past experiences and learning to command the present and the future. If all men were suddenly to lose all memory of the past, civilization would crumble. Learning would perish; families would disintegrate, and man would have no history. God has total self-consciousness, but He has no history: He does not change. "I am the LORD: I change not" (Mal. 3:6). He is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). Man has no total self-consciousness, but he has self-consciousness, and he has a history. By means of that history, there is the accumulation of knowledge, experience, and wealth. Man's assets owe a great debt to memory. On the other hand, man's memory also proves to be a great detriment. Some would call man's sense of guilt a handicap, but, in God's purpose, it is a means of humbling and breaking sinful man. It must be noted, however, that sin is the root cause of all guilt, and sin, and the guilt it produces, makes a man past-bound and past-oriented. The proper function of memory is to enable man to command the present and plan for the future. A guilt-ridden memory relives the past without learning and turns the present into a replay of the past. As a result, fallen man's memory works both for and against him. Man's history thus becomes a growing replay of his ever-increasing past offenses.

On the other hand, the land has neither self-consciousness nor a true memory. The past is buried. The leaves fall to the ground and rot; the rains and snows turn the past into a fine mould. The past is plowed under or buried. The land is present oriented, and, because of the cycle of the seasons, future

oriented also. The ground bears weeds, grains, fruits, and seeds, so that all its present movement is towards future growth. The land pays a price for man's past and present sins, but it has only a present life with a future growth. Memory is man's blessing and curse, but the land has no such life. The dead flower or blade of grass means nothing; the dead chick is forgotten by the hen, and the dead fish floats out of the life of the school.

It is not only sin that makes man past-oriented, but fearfulness, in itself a weakness at best and often a sin, concerning the present and the future. Another specific form of sin which binds man falsely to the past is idolatry, an idolatry of, or, at best, a nostalgia for, the past. Such an idolatry is common the world over. Old China was especially past-bound, as is India today. Old England and New England are virtually museums; too much pride is in the past, and the relics of the past, which is a way of confessing to present impotence. The champions of the Old South are similarly past-bound.

All such regions, nations, and cultures are in effect declaring themselves to be "The Great I Was." Some who are overly proud of their family heritage, which in itself can be godly, fall prey to the same idolatry.

God, however, identifies Himself as "The Great I Am," He Who Is, the God who is *eternal* and yet totally *present* in all His Being. As man becomes past-bound, he loses touch with God, with the present and the future, and with the land. The environmentalists often lose touch with the land because they see it in terms of an idealized past which is gone instead of a future *under God and man*. They omit God and man from the land's future and thus abandon reality.

All sin is at heart idolatry, and original sin, as Genesis 3:5 reveals, is man's desire to be his own god and law. This sin Leviticus 26:1-2 proscribes. We are then told, *first*, that for faithfulness to God's law, man will be blessed in the weather, the land, and in its harvests (Lev. 26:3-5). *Second*, there shall be peace, i.e., no danger from enemies external and internal. This peace goes hand in hand with victory (Lev. 26:6-8). *Third*, there will be fruitfulness, i.e., many children, because God's covenant peace is with them. They will also have fruitful harvests and an abundance of food Lev. 26:9-10). *Fourth*, God shall dwell among His people to keep them in safety (Lev. 26:11-13). *Fifth*, if they are disobedient or faithless, God will curse them. Terror, plagues, enemies, and more will pursue them, and they will see depopulation (Lev. 26:14-26). Famine will take its toll. *Sixth*, in their continued apostasy, they will be pushed into cannibalism and more. The Lord will destroy their cities, and their land will be made a desolation. They will be taken into captivity also. All this will enable the land to enjoy its sabbaths as they go into captivity (Lev. 26:27-43). *Seventh*, in all of this, God will seek their restoration. His judgments will be covenant judgments, seeking their return to the law and the covenant (Lev. 26:44-46).

The future of the land is its re-creation by God (Rev. 21-22). While the land has no consciousness, it has a goal and an entelechy given by God. Paul tells us:

> 22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.
> 23. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:22-23)

The whole creation groans like a woman in labor, waiting for the rebirth as a new creation. Only those of mankind who are redeemed share in that anticipation of a cosmic renewal. All other men are governed by the love of death (Prov. 8:36); because they are fallen, sin and death govern their being and their future. They lack a true future and are past and death bound. The cultures of such men reflect that orientation, as do their approaches to the land, other men, politics, economics, and art.

Paul, however, declares plainly that the ground beneath our feet is governed by a movement towards the great re-creation of all things. We live in a future-oriented creation, and, to the degree that we grow in the Holy Spirit, we share in that future-orientation. We are weaned from the idolatry of the past into the joyful anticipation of the future under God. "We are *more* than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). The Song of Deborah tells us, "They fought from heaven: the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20). God and His creation are too much for the forces of evil.

What we have been viewing is *time*. God is beyond time and the creator thereof. Man lives within time, and he can be oriented to the past, which is dangerous and even suicidal, or to the present, and live only for today, heedless of all consequences. Too many environmentalists are past-bound, trying to create an imaginary past. Other men are exploitive and present-bound. They forget that the world was not empty when they came into it, and they have a duty under God to leave it richer before their time ends. The godly man is future oriented, while respectful of the past and mindful of present needs and duties. It is obvious that time never stands still, and neither can anything within creation. For man to seek a timeless and utopian social order and a static natural order is to attempt the impossible and to sin. Change and growth are God-ordained aspects of the temporal order and inevitable for man.

5. The Law of Diverse Kinds

In several texts, Scripture sets forth laws with respect to the mingling of diverse *kinds*, the word *kinds* here is that of Genesis 1:11,12,24,25, and it means a *portion* or *species*. The main texts are:

> Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woolen come upon thee. (Lev. 19:19)
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> 9. Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled.
> 10. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.
> 11. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together. (Deut. 22:9-11)
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> 14. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
> 15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?
> 16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
> 17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
> 18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (II Cor. 6:14-18)

Paul's words make a general application of these laws to human relations; they do *not* thereby eliminate the agriculture and daily dress code application of the texts but rather extend their relevance.

Moses Maimonides, in his study of agricultural laws in the Bible, discussed in detail the five kinds of commandments set forth in Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:9-11. These are as follows:

> 1. Not to sow diverse kinds of seeds, as it is said *Thou shalt not sow thy field with divers seed.* (Lev. 19:19);
> 2. Not to sow grain or vegetables in a vineyard, as it is said: *Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds.* (Deut. 22:9);
> 3. Not to crossbreed cattle one species with another, as it is said: *Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a divers kind.* (Lev. 19:19);
> 4. Not to do work with beasts of two species joined together, as it is said: *Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.* (Deut. 22:10);
> 5. Not to wear garments of wool and linen mixed, such as idolatrous priests wear, as it is said: *Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts.* (Deut. 22:11).[8]

It is an ironic fact that these verses, neglected by Christians, have in very recent years gained the notice of non-Christians. Mingled materials, as in the new synthetics, commonly start and cause allergic reactions. One writer has said that, in the years ahead, synthetic materials may be labelled, "Warning: This garment may be hazardous to your health." Sowing vegetable or other like seeds in a vineyard can damage the vines, and planting various grains or

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[8] Isaac Klein, translator: *The Code of Maimonides, Book 7, The Book of Agriculture.* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1979). p. 4.

vegetables too close together can be harmful to at least the production of good seed. To crossbreed cattle and other animals to a diverse kind *can* produce, when the kinds are somewhat close, some results, but sterile ones. Thus, the cross between a horse and a donkey can produce a jackass or a jenny, but both are sterile. In other cases, progeny is impossible. In any case, it is a forbidden activity. To work differing animals of a different form together is to play god, not to be a creaturely man and a researcher of truth within the God-established limits.

We live in a day when homosexuality and abortion are seen as human rights, as legitimate options for all mankind. Behind this position lies a long development of anti-Biblical thought. Much earlier, men began to limit moral concerns to the world of the mind, to spiritual concerns. The material world was seen as value-free, and the realm of the spirit was thus rendered a limited one. In such a perspective, Biblical law was hardly relevant: it was too materialistic. Matter was seen as the realm of physical causality alone, and the role of spirit was also neglected and limited. As the "spiritual" realm in this dualistic scheme of things was gradually eliminated as mythical, law and morality were also eliminated as objective and eternally valid concerns. All things were seen as simply physical, and the physical, in terms of Greek thought, was regarded as amoral and outside the realm of values.

In recent years, *value* has returned to the physical realm in a humanistic sense. The physical realm is a value only in the existential sense. Our bodies and our sexuality, for example have value *only* if they are governed by the physical impulses of the moment. To deny those urges is immoral, because it means the imposition of an external standard on the sovereign physical realm. In the sexual world, this means no tampering with one's sexual urges. In the natural world, it means re-establishing and maintaining a natural primitivism by removing all the uses and developments of civilization and its technology. The value is nature per se, nature with man and his culture removed. Where man is concerned, he attains value by abandoning his culture, i.e., his religion and its standards.

However, because God created all things, the life-framework of all things is God's law. This is true of man and of the world around him. Men, however, are unwilling to concede this fact. To illustrate, soon after World War II, when farm incomes rose, some farmers sought to improve their income by planting, for example, tomatoes between the rows of young grapevines, also newly planted. This was abandoned soon as harmful to the vines, although some contested that opinion and conclusion. Not even those who concluded that a young vineyard could not be planted with tomatoes and the like were ready to see it as related to Deuteronomy 22:9. Ironically, Maimonides himself saw the validity of these laws as limited to the land of Israel and to Syria, as though God's law did not operate outside of Palestine![9] On the other hand, Maimonides saw the law of diverse kinds as opposed to the grafting of

trees.[10] The greater hardiness and resistance of seedlings to grafted fruit trees is well known. The subject deserves careful study. Maimonides, and others apparently, held to the requirement that those who grafted, whether in the land of Israel or outside of it, should be flogged.[11]

The vulnerability of hybrids to blights is well known. The potential for radical crop destruction, enough to create serious shortages, is well known. In the 1970s, the corn crop in the United States was for a time seriously endangered. It should be added that the use of the word "hybrid" is often misleading, because it includes legitimate plant developments with the production of some sterile varieties.

The whole subject is one which deserves careful study, because it is basic to life. Maimonides was ignorant about some elementary facts of life concerning animals and seeds, but he took the law seriously. We now need farming experts who take the law as God-given to study these laws.

Paul uses these laws to show their application to the realm of human relations. He makes clear that mixed marriages between believers and unbelievers are forbidden. It is unequal yoking. For Paul, the meaning of mixed marriages is religious. Men have often opposed marriages which bridge class barriers, i.e., the nobility and commoners, or upper classes with lower classes. Again, the mixed marriages problem is viewed racially. Paul concerns himself with neither; these he leaves to the realm of personal or historical considerations. It is the religiously mixed marriage of believers with unbelievers which is forbidden as an unequal yoking. "The unclean thing" is a yoking with an unbeliever where it is done by an ostensible believer. Paul's comments in I Corinthians 7 deal with the marriages of couples who were originally both unbelievers and subsequently one becomes a Christian. In such cases, the believer is not to break the bond, but, if the unbelieving partner departs, the believer is free.

Paul's use of the law is not a "spiritualization." It simply reveals the full scope of the law. God's principle of order is valid for men, plants, animals, and the earth, because all are His. He made them, and His word governs them all. God's blessings can only be gained by obedience to the totality of God's law.

Unequal yoking is commonplace in our time. We are told that homosexuality and abortion can live at peace with godly families and a Christian community, and that "freedom" necessitates a toleration of crime. Unequal yoking means the oppression of one by the other, because good and evil cannot coexist in any peaceful detente. Warfare is explicit and implicit in the nature of both, and unequal yoking becomes an excuse for enslavement.

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9. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
11. *Idem.*

A final word: some scientists regard the word "kinds" as vague and meaningless; the fact is that much more vagueness and uncertainty attaches to the word "species." Given the Biblical principles of order, it can be held that a more exact classification could be made in terms of the Biblical premises implicit in the word "kinds."

6. The Redemption of the Land

We are accustomed to thinking of land ownership as either "private," i.e., individually owned, or state owned, i.e., socialism. A variation of non-statist ownership is corporate possession. The Bible gives us a different standard. Land in the Bible was allotted to *families*. It was community property. The individual head of a family was thus regarded as a trustee whose duty it was to preserve what he had inherited from the past, improve it, and pass it on to the future. The land was thus given to families at the time of the conquest of Canaan (Num. 33:54; Josh. 13:7-33). After the exile, Ezekiel stipulated that the returning people again divide the land by families (Ezek. 45:1-8; 47). Ezekiel also warned against a repetition of the seizure of lands by the princes (Ezek. 45:8; 46:16-18).

It is important to note also that special lands were set aside for the Levites, the instructors of Israel (Deut. 33:10), and these were not minor areas (Num. 35:1-6). Joshua saw to it that this was done (Josh. 21:1-42). The Levitical lands were *religious* lands, not owned by the Levitical families as such but set aside for their use as the servants of God (Deut. 18:1-2). In terms of God's law, there can be no tax on the land, because the earth is the Lord's, not man's (Ps. 24:1). We have no record of any resistance by the Hebrews to a land tax or a property tax by foreign powers ruling over them, but we do know that they fought against the taxation of any lands or persons involved in the Lord's ministry. Artaxerxes of Persia conceded to them these immunities in the remarkable decree recorded in Ezra 7. In Ezra 7:24, we see that this immunity from taxation included not only the Temple but the very porters and servants thereof. Even the modernist scholar Myers recognizes that historicity of the rescript of Artaxerxes, noting that in the main it reads "almost like the Persepolis Treasury Tablets, notably Nos. 4-8." Moreover, "The document was written for the king by someone familiar with Jewish affairs."[12] The premises of Ezra 7 governed later Jewish demands on Rome, and the church's subsequent stand as well. They were in conformity with the law. For God's servants to pay taxes on His churches or embassies on the earth He created is an arrogant and intolerable claim. Because the earth is the Lord's, His law forbids sales in perpetuity: "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me" (Lev. 25:23). Even as

[12] Jacob Myers: *Ezra-Nehemiah*. The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1975). p. 61.

Israelites were aliens in Egypt, they were aliens in Palestine. It is God's appointed area for His covenant people. Adam and Eve had been given a privileged place, Eden, as a place of testing. They were there to learn how to exercise dominion with knowledge, holiness, and righteousness or justice. Israel was now given a substitute area where they too were to be tested, and they too were to exercise dominion (Josh. 1:1-9). What they did in Palestine was to have repercussions all over the world. This was clear in Solomon's dedication prayer for the Temple (I Kings 8). The whole land was thus an embassy of the Lord God for the conquest of the earth. This role was later given to the church.

If the poor of Israel had to sell their land, the law specified conditions for its redemption. The redemption of the whole earth is God's goal; in the interim of the Old Testament, the alienation of land from God's people was to be prevented. The task now is the redemption of all the earth, its return to the dominion of God and His law. The Christian now has the duty of helping the poor brother from losing his possessions. This involves also the positive duty for us of helping all such to gain land. The Mormon application of this has been to buy up lands for sale and to make them available to their membership; we can recognize here, what ever our opinions of Mormonism, a sound application of this requirement of the land. The *redemption* of the land is a Biblical mandate.

Because the earth is the Lord's, it use is conditional upon God's terms. This involves the enforced rest of the land every seventh year (Ex. 23:10,11; Lev. 25:1-7, 11-12, 20-22). We have, in recent years, had a dawning awareness of the values in allowing the land to lie fallow periodically; among other things, its over-all fertility is increased.

It should be noted that these and other laws pertaining to the land are called *holiness laws*. Harrison has called attention to this implication of the law:

> A closer study of Leviticus, however, provides the reader with remarkable insights into the character and will of God, particularly in the matter of holiness. Amongst the pagan Near Eastern nations, holiness was a state of consecration to the service of a deity, and often involved the practice of immoral rites. For the Hebrews, to be holy as God is holy required a close relationship of obedience and faith, and a manifestation in daily life of the high moral and spiritual qualities characteristic of God's nature as revealed in the Law. This same kind of holiness is demanded also of every believer in Jesus Christ.[13]

Thus holiness in the Bible is inseparable from our conduct in the physical and material aspects of our lives.

At the same time, the premise of God's tax, the tithe, is His ownership of the earth *and of ourselves* (Ps. 24:1). His laws therefore govern money, loans,

[13] R. K. Harrison: *Leviticus, An Introduction and Commentary*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980). p. 9.

interest, and every aspect of our lives. God can tax us where the state cannot *legitimately* do so, because God, not the state, is the sovereign.

With this in mind, let us examine afresh the matter of land sales in Israel. Such transactions are both made conditional and are also permitted. An example of such a purchase by Jeremiah is to be found in Jeremiah 32:9-14, as his expression of confidence that, after a time of captivity, there would be a restoration. Israelites could sell their land and move out, sometimes permanently. Elimelech and his sons Mahlon and Chilion moved into Moab, expecting apparently to settle there permanently, because both sons married Moabite women (Ruth 1:1-5). Naomi's subsequent return to Bethlehem caused some surprise, as did the later redemption of the family land (Ruth 1:19-22; 4:3-11). To sell the land with no plan or desire to redeem it was to abandon the covenant and the God of the covenant. It was a tacit indifference to the hope of Israel. The opportunity for restoration was given, but the abandonment was no less real. It meant the substitution of an immediate economic gain for the religious and covenanted calling.

The significance of this is very great for Christian reconstruction. The "sale" of our stake in the covenant redemption now has broader references. It means that men live without any sense of the dominion mandate. Instead of seeing a need for the redemption of the land and its use for the glory of God, man view their life, the land, and their various vocations economically or personally. They divorce their material existence from God's covenant requirements, and they reduce holiness to pagan dimensions, i.e., a vague emotional "consecration" rather than the radical obedience of faith. The redemption of men and the earth is our calling and commission (Josh. 1:1-9; Matt. 28:18-20). The Great Commission does not ask for a work-less affirmation of faith, nor an emotional consecration. Rather, it commands that we disciple all nations, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:20). Every extension of God's Kingdom by our vocational service, and our dominion over a sphere of life, thought, or land, is an aspect of the redemption of the whole earth.

One other point with respect to the Sabbath of the land. This is still observed by the Amish, and some Mennonites, with excellent results. Since the Sabbath of the land is also a Sabbatical year for man, it means a rest for man also. The Amish handcrafts, their ornamental paintings of barns (*not* hex signs, but simply ornamentation), and much more are products of the Sabbath year. According to one elderly Amish leader, as reported by a friend, the use of the Sabbath year to develop their skills as artisans, weavers, and so on, all for the furthering of rest and God's glory, came in part from a comment of Calvin's centuries ago. Apparently Calvin, who opposed the Anabaptists, may at this point have influenced them. Whether or not this is true is a question worthy of investigation.

However, the most important aspect of the Sabbath of the land, and the concomitant Sabbath from work, was the economic implication. To work six years and rest on the seventh meant the necessary habits of providence by all men. Men are currently adjusted to working five or six days with no work or income on the seventh. The extension of this sabbatical principle of rest means a radical change in a man's life. It requires foresight, providence, and planning.

It also requires, because Biblical law makes it basic to rest, the elimination of long-term debt, since debts cannot, in terms of Scripture, go beyond six years. At one time, within my life-time, bank loans were limited to five years. Since World War II, both long-term debt and inflation, for the two go together, have been very much with us. The Biblical law concerning debt applies to all the aspects of man's life, including institutional. To limit national debt to six years would make inflation very difficult, and, with the Biblical requirement of hard money, i.e., gold and silver, it would render inflation impossible.

God's law thus makes possible a stable, godly, and prosperous society. For men to claim God's salvation while despising His laws for the life of salvation is certainly an untenable position.

7. The Land and the Poor

Because the earth is the Lord's, He is the lawgiver thereof. Laws are therefore given, not only to govern the use of the land, but to govern the use of its harvests. The poor are thus to be cared for by those who have the means to do so. The major laws in this respect are the following:

> 9. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of the field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.
> 10. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God. (Lev. 19:9-10)

> And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee: then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. (Lev. 25:35)

> 17. For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:
> 18. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.
> 19. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Deut. 10:17-19)

> 28. At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:

> 29. And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest. (Deut. 14:28-29)

> 7. If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:
> 8. But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.
> 9. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.
> 10. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.
> 11. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in the land. (Deut. 15:7-11)

> 19. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in thy field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.
> 20. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.
> 21. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.
> 22. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing. (Deut. 24:19-22)

These laws give us various case law examples of the necessary care and concern for the poor. The implication is clear that failure to observe these laws is robbing the poor. At no point does the law say that the poor are *entitled* to our gleaning but at no point does the law allow us to assume that we are *entitled* to our harvest or our production. We are God's servants, living in or on God's land, and He therefore is *entitled* to tell us how to use our harvest.

Another point is of note. The poor are not simply the believing poor. They include strangers and sojourners, aliens either residing in their midst or simply passing through. The terms thus include all such men, irrespective of their faith.

On the other hand, the poor cannot walk in and take what they will.There was no license given to anyone to live off of successful neighbors. These are the needy and deserving poor whom God has in mind, and widows and orphans are specifically named, to indicate the kind of need which gleaning should meet. Gleaners went into a field by permission, and by permission only. Maimonides commented:

> Laborers are forbidden to harvest the entire field, and must leave the proper amount of corner crop at the end of it. The poor people, however, have no title to the corner crop until the owner, of his own will, explicitly sets it apart as such. Therefore, a poor man who sees corner crop at the end of a field is forbidden to touch it on pain of being charged with robbery, until it becomes known to him that it is such by the will of the owner.[14]

The meaning of these laws is set forth by Paul in his statement, "for we are members one of another." This means that our membership in one another is required by God. This is a membership in a double sense. Paul in this statement refers to our "neighbor" (Eph. 4:25). He uses the word in the sense of Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It cannot be limited to our fellow believer. Thus, in the *first* sense, we are all members one of another as the seed of Adam. *Second*, we have another membership, as fellow members in Christ. We are to meet human needs in terms of both memberships.

Statist charity is divisive, because it stresses membership or citizenship in an impersonal entity, the state. There is no sense of obligation or gratitude with respect to an impersonal relationship. I am grateful to my wife for her constant helpfulness, but I do not express thanks to my bed: it is an impersonal fact and object which is there to meet my needs. Impersonal charity engenders no thankfulness, on the whole, and it does tend to foster a sense of expectation, of a right to be provided for, not a sharing by a member person. Statist charity is productive of social disaster. Godly charity leads to a unifying and healing in society, a growth in communion. It is, moreover, to be personal. It includes communion with them (Deut. 14:29), because we are to be one people in the Lord. Most of all, it furthers our communion with God, who tells us plainly that He will bless us.

From New Testament times, the church cares for the poor. Jesus and His disciples provided for the poor with the gifts they received. Judas was the treasurer (John 13:29), and he was also a thief (John 12:4-6). The early church had collections for the needy saints (I Cor. 16:1; Rom. 15:26; Acts 11:29). The office of deacon had been created to meet such needs within the church (Acts 6:1-6).

To provide order, very early the pastor, and later the bishop, supervised this ministry, and money and properties were accumulated to make it possible. The origins of charitable trusts and foundations thus go back to the early church. The reason for so ordering the relief to the poor was to prevent anyone from exploiting the matter by applying to several members for help and gaining more than his share. The scriptural justification for giving the pastor or bishop control of charity was found in Titus 1:8; the presbyter or bishop

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[14] Maimonides: *Book of Agriculture*. (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1979). p. 55.

must be a man who is a "lover of hospitality," ever ready to care for those who need attention. He was thus to lead in the care of the needy.

In 579 A.D., St. Augustine of Canterbury wrote to Pope Gregory to ask about the proper use of the tithes and offerings of the faithful. The Venerable Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, gives us Gregory's answer:

> Holy Writ, which no doubt you are well versed in, testifies, and particularly St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, wherein he endeavors to instruct him how he should behave himself in the House of God; but it is the custom of the apostolic see to prescribe rules to bishops newly ordained, that all emoluments which accrue, are to be divided into four portions;–one for the bishop and his family, because of hospitality and entertainments; another for the clergy; a third for the poor; and the fourth for the repair of churches.[15]

Thus, very early the poor were cared for in a very considerable manner. This had deep roots in the early church. Canon 80 of the First Council of Nicea, 325 A.D., called for a procurator of the poor in every town. He could be either a layman or a clergyman. It was his duty to care for the sick and for those in prison. If any were unjustly in prison, it was his duty to work for their liberation. Thus, he provided food, clothing and legal defense. Later, relief for prisoners of war was added to his duties.[16]

The care of the poor was so seriously regarded that St. Cyril of Jerusalem actually sold church treasures to provide for poor relief. Like incidents occurred over the centuries, as well as personal concern and hospitality to the needy.

The development of hospitals was an aspect of this ministry. As soon as the persecution of the early church ended, the building of hospitals began. Housing for travellers was also maintained and later became an adjunct of churches and monasteries. Both rich and poor were welcomed, and both received a Christian witness before continuing their journey. The church from the days of Basil the Great called for tax exemption for such facilities. Houses for lepers were also established.

It is a significant fact that again and again statist tyranny has struck first at such ministries of the church. Precisely because the care of the poor and needy has served to establish communion and community of a very extensive and strong character, such ministries have been attacked before the church

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[15] Veda D. Scudder, editor: *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, by the Venerable Bede, B. I, Ch. XXVII.* (London, England: J. M. Dent (1913) 1939). p. 38.

[16] Henry Thomas Armfield, "Poor, Care Of," in William Smith and Samuel Cheatham, editors: *The Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, Vol. II. (London, England: John Murray, 1880). p. 160f. Henry R. Percival, editor: *The Seven Ecumenical Councils. (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. XIV. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956). p. 50.

itself. *Before* the time of either Luther or Henry VIII, the states of Europe were often seizing such institutions in order to further their own purposes.

The destruction of such ministries undercut the life of communion and community. It rendered both the Lord's Table and the service of worship rootless in the life of the people. Faith without works is dead (Matt. 7:15-20; Rom. 3:31; James 2:14-26).

The goal of the modern humanistic state is, of course, to succeed the church as the community of man.

8. Communion and Community

God's plan for the earth and the universe is its recreation. All things shall be made new, and, in the glory of the new heaven and earth, perfect communion shall prevail between God and man (Rev. 21-22). "The earnest expectation" of all creatures, and of all creation, is this total liberation from sin and death into the fullness of communion and community with and under the triune God (Rom. 8:19-23). It should not surprise us, therefore, that God's laws are designed to further that goal.

This is as true of the laws concerning the earth and its harvests as all things else. Some of the laws concerning the tithe, and the laws of the heave offering, make this *very* clear:

> 29. Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.
> 30. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me. (Ex. 22:29-30)

> 10. There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing.
> 12. If the priest's daughter also be married unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.
> 13. But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof. (Lev. 22:10,12-13)

> Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe. (Num. 18:26)

> 28. At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:
> 29. And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest. (Deut. 14:28-29)

> 3. And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.
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> 4. The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.
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> 5. For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever. (Deut. 18:3-5)

In these verses, we see that, apart from the tithe, the priests were to receive the heave offering, primarily a shoulder of every cow or lamb killed, the first-fruits of vegetable, grain, and fruit harvests, as well as the first-fruits of the wine vintage. These gifts were strictly limited to the household of faith, to the family living under the government and authority of the priest. At the same time, as the poor tithe, there was to be, every third and sixth year, a sharing with the Levites (whether or not they were poor), and with the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

Certain premises of these laws need to be cited briefly. *First*, in their eating and in their celebration of God's bounty to them, men are to remember others, and to share with them. *Second*, in some form, all the people who are in the covenant, as well as the strangers, are to share in this bounty. *Third*, the presbyter or bishop must exercise leadership in this. By being given to and "a lover of hospitality" (Titus 1:8), he sets the pattern for this communion in the faith.

There is, however, a more essential matter at stake here. These laws require a double movement within the community. *First*, there is the upward movement. The priests and the Levites are to receive something from *all* the people. The poor are not excluded from this necessity. In Numbers 18:21-28, we see that the tithe, God's tax, was paid to the Levites, who in turn then tithed a tenth to the priests. The Levites were the instructors of Israel (Deut. 33:10). Whereas the priestly work was limited to the sanctuary, *the tithe was not*. The Levites had broad functions with respect to health and education; they therefore received the major part of the tithe. The ministry of Christ today is levitical: it is inclusive of pastors, evangelists, Christian School teachers, Christian ministries apart from worship, and so on.

But this is not all. In any era of faithfulness, tithing would indeed make the Levites very prosperous. Paul declares that the presbyters who rule well must "be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (I Tim. 5:17); this means double pay.

One of the chronic problems of various societies is the gulf and the hostility between the rulers and the ruled. On both sides, there is contempt, and a desire to widen the gap between them. Marxism protests against this gap, only to create more radical ones.

God's law militates against this gap and replaces it with communion and community. Our Lord says:

> 42. Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.
>
> 43. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister:
>
> 44. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all.
>
> 45. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:42-45)

Rule and authority must be a *ministry*; hence, in God's sight, all rulers must regard themselves as God's ministers, not as lords or sovereigns (Rom. 13:1-7).

The upward movement on the part of all persons in authority requires them to render due service unto God. The upward movement of the people is to render to all such whatever God requires: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:7). The upward movement means respect, tithes, obedience, the heave offering, and more. (It is of note that, early in the 1970s, when speaking to country pastors in a Southern state, I found that many of them received heave offerings, and first-fruits).

This means that we have a religious duty to render the due upward movement to all leaders in society, i.e., in a Christian society, pastors, thinkers, scientists, artists, musicians, writers, inventors, and so on. The health of a society requires this upward movement. One of the disasters of the modern age is the widening gulf between peoples. A democratic society without faith creates conflicts, not communion.

Second, there is to be *a downward movement* also. We have seen that, in terms of Romans 13:7, as well as the laws of the heave-offering and the first-fruits, all, including the poor, must give something to those in authority. At the same time, the poor tithe and more requires this downward movement of tithes, helpfulness, loving-kindness, and more. The goal is community and communion.

The religious ground for this downward movement is the law of God, and the grace of God. God's grace moves down to man in mercy. Grace remakes and re-orders man, and man must, in that same grace and by God's law and Spirit, re-order the world around and below him. The reconstruction of all things thus becomes his duty, but this cannot be done without grace and love. Hence, the flow of grace and blessing from God must continue in the flow of grace and blessing through us to others. This is the meaning of the heave-offerings, the first-fruits, and the tithes.

9. The Sabbath of the Land and Man

We have already noted the sabbath of the land. The first reference to it in the law is Exodus 23:10,11:

> 10. And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof:
> 11. But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still: that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive yard.

Other texts on this matter are Leviticus 25:1-7,10-11,20-22. From these it is apparent that pruning is included in the ban, and harvesting as well. Planting is also forbidden. According to Maimonides, watering an irrigated field or orchard during a sabbatical year was permitted.[17] The purpose of the sabbath is restoration and rest, not death, and hence irrigation was to be continued. The land could not be leased or rented for use by unbelievers, since this would be an evasion of the law. Works of necessity, such as milking, grazing cattle, and the like are permitted (Ex. 23:4,5; Deut. 22:4; Matt. 12:11; Luke 13:15).

The rabbis permitted a man to clear stones and other obstructions from a neighbor's field as an act of charity. It was not permitted to be an exchange of services, i.e., the man who helped a needy neighbor improve his field could not expect help in return, nor could the man thus helped work in his own field.[18] The charity had to be charity, and no work to advance one's own assets was permitted.

The works of necessity could include digging a needed cistern, according to Maimonides.[19] Produce could be picked for family use, but not for harvesting and sale. The poor could enter the field with permission for immediate consumption, not to harvest the crop.

Thus, certain things are clear with respect to the sabbath year. *First*, the land must rest. As has been noted, fallowing the land restores its fertility. *Second*, debts are to be canceled on the seventh year (Deut. 15:2), so that here is a rest for man from the burden of debt, and also release from slavery. *Third*, there can be no cessation of concern for the poor. The poor must still be provided for. *Fourth*, living seven years on six years income and without long-term debt fosters providence and foresight.

There is, however, another factor of very great importance. The sabbath requires *rest*. The word *sabbath* means cessation or intermission. We can understand the meaning of the sabbath rest by glancing at a Hebrew word for *rest, manoach*, as in Ruth 3:1, when Naomi says to Ruth, "My daughter, shall I not seek *rest* for thee, that it may be well with thee?" Marriage then and now

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17. Maimonides: *Book of Agriculture*. (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1979). p. 351.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 353.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

has not meant "no work," but Naomi spoke of marriage as a *rest*. The meaning is that, in a godly marriage, she would be, however active, under the protection of a man of God, in this case Boaz. The heart of the Sabbath rest is to rest from our cares and concerns under the protection of the triune God. Without faith, there can be no sabbath for man. It requires taking hands off our lives and committing them to Almighty God, Who "hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

A true rest is thus a break with the processes of a working world. This is why it requires the cessation of work and of debt. At the same time, there is no cessation of responsibility, since the care for the poor continues. The sabbath year requires responsibility, because it rests on our ability to be provident the other six years, but it does not permit us to play god, because we are required to trust in Him and to rest in Him.

All this, however, does not exhaust the meaning of the sabbath. It begins with the sabbath of the land. The sabbath or fallowing of the land *restores* the fertility of the soil and is more effective than manuring or fertilizing in any other way.

The weekly sabbath has a like restorative function. To rest or to nap during the weekly sabbath has a revitalizing function. Man without sleep becomes disoriented as well as exhausted. Sleeplessness is a painful condition, and those suffering from it pay a continuing and accumulating price. The sabbath rest can be compared to sleep. It has a necessary restorational function in our lives. Such a emphasis goes against the grain with many churchmen: They want a "spiritual" conception of the sabbath. Man, however, is a unity. The *rest* he needs is a trust in God's care and providence. This trust enables him to sleep nightly in peace. David's psalm says it beautifully:

> 5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness (or, justice), and put your trust in the LORD.
> 6. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
> 7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.
> 8. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety. (Ps. 4:5-8)

The sacrifice or offering of justice is a precondition of rest, together with a thorough trust in the Lord. The result is the ability to sleep in peace and in the safety of faith.

The weekly sabbath rest is thus good for our total health, physically and spiritually. The land is strengthened and restored by its rest, and so too is man. The recognition of this fact is important for our future.

The same is true of the sabbatical year. Virtually its only survival in our world today is in the academic community. Professors get a paid sabbatical

year. From my observations as a student, the professors returned no better, and sometimes in some cases a bit worse for a year's dissipation! The students at least gained a rest from the professor's version of humanism. Apart from God, man cannot rest.

> "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22).
>
> 20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
> 21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. (Isa. 57:20-21)

It is absurd to admit that a rest for the land can be restorative, but not a rest for man! Man is a part of creation, and God's sabbath blessings begin with the soil and reach their climax in man. Therefore *rest in the Lord*!

10. Debt and the Future

The Bible speaks of a necessary debt required of every man: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8). We are plainly told that the norm is, financially, a debt-free life. Where debt must be incurred, the time limit is six years; the seventh year is the year of release (Deut. 15:1-11). The continuing debt towards all men is love, which is the fulfilling, or putting into force, of the law. To love our neighbor means to keep God's commandments in relationship to him.

God's sabbath requires a sabbath of the land and of man, from work, and from debt. The social implications of this are far-reaching.

Otto J. Scott has called attention to the fact that the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris was built when Paris had a population of only 150,000.[20] It was built in the heart of Paris, and the first stone was laid in 1163. The work on that cathedral as well as others involved an attention to details and an intricacy lacking in modern church construction. This fact is very much related to the question of sabbaths and debt.

Debt, statist and personal, is inflationary and destructive. Solomon said, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant (or, slave) to the lender" (Prov. 22:7). Debt is bondage, and a premise of ungodly rule. A non-Christian society will be debt-ridden and inflationary. Debt and inflation involve a consumption of the future and a burden on the present. A few years ago, the tax burden on every man, woman, and child in the United States was assumed to be 45% of their income; by 1983, some placed the figure at 59%. This means, if true, that a man must work more than half a year *simply to pay his taxes*. To pay a *double* tithe to God annually would require working five days a week for two months, roughly.

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[20] Otto J. Scott, "The American Intellectual Lobotomy," in the *Chalcedon Report*, no. 214, May, 1983, p. 2.

There are many of us who pay our taxes faithfully and whose tithes and offerings add up to 20% of our income. (This does not mean reckoning in terms of the tax laws' definitions of a tithe, but God's.) For all such, eight months in the year are possibly given to statist taxes and to God, and four towards our own support.

The point is that the amount of income required to support ourselves *and* to give a double tithe to the Lord amounts to less than six months in a year. Our statist debt economy consumes better than half a year's income. Add to that the burden of private debt, and a man's financial situation becomes very difficult indeed.

On the other hand, if the civil tax is reduced to its Biblical proportion (Ex. 30:11-16), then men have in hand a considerable sum to capitalize God's work, create Christian charitable institutions, hospitals, schools, and the like, and to capitalize their family's future.

The modern state is thus the great roadblock to justice and to the future. It fosters debt and inflation, the consumption of the future, and the demoralization of the present.

The sabbath thus has far-reaching economic implications. It requires a provident and inflation-free society, and a debt-free one. Biblical law not only regards debt-living as abnormal and a form of slavery, but it requires that debts incurred by believers be canceled in the seventh year if still unpaid. Debt-living is on the one hand discouraged, and, on the other, the debtor is treated mercifully.

Roman law was very harsh toward debtors. According to Ferrero, the small landowners were destroyed by "debt-slavery."[21] The question of debt became a critical problem, and debt-slavery created revolutionary mobs. The answer of some demagogues was to reduce or to cancel debt, *not* to foster provident living nor to reduce the burden of taxation. Land speculation was fostered by inflation and ready loans. Rome enslaved foreigners through wars, and its own people by its economic policies. Rome was a slave-state because it chose policies which furthered slavery. Its economics ensured production by debt and by slavery, and the two are closely tied together. Given the parallels between Rome and today, more recent historians are less ready to write about Rome's dependence on debt.

Gregory the Great (590-603 A.D.) spoke out against the continuing influence of the Roman premise. In his day, the *burdationis* was a kind of land tax, which, among other things, was payable before a harvest could be converted into money. In a letter (Epistle XLIV) to Peter, Subdeacon of Sicily, Gregory declared:

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[21] Guglielmo Ferrero: *The Greatness and Decline of Rome*, Vol. I. (New York, N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), pp. 5, 41f., 103f., 201f., 248f., 271, 353f.

> Further, we have ascertained that the first charge of *burdatio* exceedingly cripples our peasants, in that before they can sell the produce of their labor they are compelled to pay taxes; and, not having of their own to pay with, they borrow from public pawnbrokers, and pay a heavy consideration for the accommodation; whence it results that they are crippled by heavy expenses. Wherefore we enjoin by this present admonition that thy Experience advance to them from the public fund all that they might have borrowed from strangers, and that it be repaid by the peasants of the Church by degrees as they may have wherewith to pay, lest, while for a time in narrow circumstances, they should sell at too cheap a rate what might afterwards have sufficed for the payment of the due, and even so not have enough.[22]

The medieval church's prohibitions against usury were also designed to further God's law and to protect the people. Civil rulers, however, followed, as far as they were able, the Roman model, although the modern state far surpasses medieval rulers in the sophistication of its exactions.

The modern view of debt is dramatically at odds with the biblical perspective. In the Bible, debt is seen as "an exceptional misfortune" (Ex. 22:25); "it was never accepted as natural and legitimate." Borrowing is seen as sometimes a necessity, but never as an advantage.[23]

Loans and interest have long been a means for enslaving peoples. This was true in ancient Egypt, and also in old Babylon. The merchants, or *tamkaru*, brought countries into bondage by means of commercial credit, as did Assyria later on (Nahum 3:16). These merchants served as the advance guard of empires, going before to sap the strength of a nation by means of easy credit and debt.

In the modern world, the ability to borrow is treated as a privilege, and, as a result, especially since World War II, borrowing and debt have skyrocketed. At the same time, the inescapable loss of hope in the future has set in, because the future of debt is slavery.

In this situation, many churches which profess to be sabbatarian, have been deeply in debt, and have actually promoted debt as an act of faith. In several instances in the 1970s, church members, who have since been proven right, were criticized as "lacking faith" because they opposed a massive assumption of debt. In other instances, churchmen have actually derided the necessity for payment of debt, declaring that the Lord's imminent return would make repayment unnecessary!

A debt-ridden economy tends to foster an exploitive kind of farming, because the burden of debt requires an ever-increasing yield and income to

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22. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series. Vol. XII. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956). p. 89f.
23. W. H. Bennett, "Debt," in James Hastings, editor: *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1898). p. 579f.

keep pace with the oppressive payments of principle and interest. Debt thus means here also the consumption of the future to pay for the past.

The modern state encourages debt. Tax advantages are granted for interest payments, but none for those who avoid debt. For this reason, the building of cathedrals like Notre Dame are impossible today. The monuments of our time are statist buildings and usurers' constructions.

11. The Covenant and Land

An obvious but neglected fact of Scripture is that God's covenant with man is land-based. The creation of and the covenant with man is a covenant in terms of man's stewardship over the Garden of Eden as a pilot project for dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7-17). The covenant, renewed with Noah, again involves the earth and has as its token or sign a natural fact, the rainbow (Gen. 9:1-17). The covenant with Abraham is in terms of a specific area of land, with the whole earth as its future arena (Gen. 15:1-21; 17:1-27; etc.). The covenant with Moses and Israel speaks of the promised land, Canaan (Ex. 3:1-15); this promise is renewed to Joshua (Josh. 1:1-18), the little commission. For the Great Commission, Christ expands it to all the earth and all nations (Matt. 28:18-20), so that all lands and all peoples and their societies are to be brought under God's covenant in Christ.

The church thus entered the world as a covenant people with a covenant law. On this premise, St. Thomas Aquinas attacked antinomianism and affirmed the law of God. Since many modern antinomians invoke the name of Luther and his "grace only" position to justify their heresy, it is well to examine briefly Luther's words here. Luther was the author of a tract, "Against the Antinomians." Addressed to Dr. Jaspar Guttel, Luther wrote, "I assume that you received some time ago a copy of the disputations against the new spirits who have dared to expel the law of God or the Ten Commandments from the church and to assign them to city hall. I never expected that such false spirituality would occur to the mind of man, much less that anyone would support it."[24] Luther said that he had merely separated works of law from justification, not sanctification, and "This doctrine is not mine, but St. Bernard's (of Clairvaux, c. 1091-1153). What am I saying? St. Bernard's? It is the message of all of Christendom of all the prophets and apostles."[25] Said Luther, "does anyone imagine that there can be sin where there is not law? Whoever abolishes the law must simultaneously abolish sin. If he permits sin to stand, he must most certainly permit the law to stand; for according to Romans 5:13, where there is no law there is no sin. And if there is no sin, then Christ is nothing."[26] Whatever the devil does to further

[24] Martin Luther, "Against the Antinomians," in *Luther's Works*, Vol. 47, *The Christian Society*, Vol. 4. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971). p. 107.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

antinomianism, the law remains in man's heart. The antinomians seek what Luther called a "sweet security" apart from obedience in terms of which "they sink helplessly into hell."[27] "Therefore the law must be preached wherever Christ is to be preached."[28] To preach grace first and then mention God's wrath later, and to omit the law entirely, Luther said, is contrary to Scripture.[29] He expressed his confidence that false doctrines would always be separated from the church, which existed a thousand years before his birth and had survived, not because of men, but Christ, "who obviously preserves both the church and us."[30]

Antinomianism was rootless then and whenever the church has been mindful of the place of the land in God's covenant. Thus, the early New England towns were *covenanted communities*. The covenant was a formal statement to which all had to give assent in order to be a part of that community. Such documents in some instances governed communities from the settling of New England to as late as the 1860s. The documents bound the signers to a "promise in love to watch over one another, and by all means in our power to promote the honor of Christ, and the peace and happiness of the whole Church."[31]

As this doctrine of the covenant declined, a more humanistic concept replaced it, the idea of *the common good*. The realization of this goal was progressively seen as political in nature, so that a shift of emphasis occurred from theological to political and statist concerns. Salvation thus was visualized in terms of a political order. The modern era was born with a rash of Utopian books, all of which set forth non-Christian visions of the perfect society. The need for man's salvation from sin and his regeneration was *not* a part of these dreams.

In time, the political dream took on strongly economic overtones, so that the good society had as its highest good a model economic order. Marxism is the most militant form of this hope, but virtually every culture today sees man's hope in politico-economic terms. The Bible sets forth the doctrine that the regeneration of all things begins with man's salvation in Christ, and then the development of the meaning of that redemption in the external world, in society. The world fell because man fell, and the world is restored as man is restored. The humanist's hope is that, by a politico-economic re-arrangement of the world, man will be also changed.

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26. *Idem.*
27. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
31. John Oliver Wilson: *After Affluence, Economics to Meet Human Needs.* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1980). p. 210.

The path to restoration must begin with a recognition that we are a covenant people. The assets we have, whether in land, house, or any other form, are to be used to further our covenant life and calling. Our Lord says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). This means that man cannot live without bread or food, but that he at the same time cannot live by bread alone. "Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" must govern the totality of his life and possessions.

This is the heart of both the commissions. The lesser but longer commission to Joshua is summarized in the Great Commission. It requires *first*, a radical faithfulness to the law of God as the life of faith (Josh. 1:7-8). Man's prospering depends upon his faithfulness to God's every word.

Second, given this faithfulness, we shall be conquerors. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you" (Josh. 1:3). The Lord declares, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved: in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). The "returning" is to God's covenant of grace and its law. The "rest" means a settling. As men settle themselves on and rest in God's covenant, and are faithful to it, they are saved. This requires taking hands off our lives and living by God's every word. The strength of living in quietness and in confidence comes from returning to and settling ourselves in God's covenant. It is only so that we are established in God's earth with peace and security. To despise God's covenant means to move into dispossession and conflict, into judgment and destruction.

A very sad footnote to the subject of *covenanted communities* is one aspect of their 20th century history. Their Christian character disappeared, but various groups used the concept to establish racially restrictive covenants to limit an area to whites, "Protestants," meaning northern Europeans, in one case I know, to Jews, and so on. These have since been outlawed by the courts. Thus, a false doctrine of the covenant has had unhappy legal consequences for the concept of covenanted communities.

12. Sacred Land

We have become so infected with humanistic statism that the doctrine of a sacred area of land is now alien to most people. At one time, the legal standing of such lands was a fact obvious to all. Such property was known as the *patrimonium*, or *peculium ecclesiae*. All such lands were in Roman law withdrawn from trade and were *extra commercium*. In Roman law, however, the state established the approved religions, licensed them, controlled them, and reserved all rights of sovereignty over them. The existence thus of any religion, and its title to land and to any exempt status, was thus an act of grace on the part of the Roman state.

Civil governments in the medieval, renaissance, and modern eras have fought to maintain the Roman position. In England, Cromwell worked against it, and the U.S. Federal Constitution sought to limit federal title to lands in an echo of this position. The Constitution, an express powers document in intention, excluded the federal government from all but a very limited possession of lands. John Saunders (Quade) has often called attention to Article I, Section 8, the last paragraph of which limits the federal ownership of land in these terms:

> To exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over all places purchased by the consent of the Legislature of the state in which the same shall be, for the erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, Dock-Yards, and other needful buildings.

In the *Federalist Papers*, no. 72, Alexander Hamilton spoke of this in paragraph 2 as a basic aspect of the Constitution. Madison, in *Federalist Papers*, no. 43, expounded this point at length. Although it is recognized that this article "does not cover lands acquired for forests, parks, ranges, wild life sanctuaries or flood control," the U.S. Supreme Court has justified the acquisition of state lands for all these reasons and more.[32] The constitutional limitation on federal ownership of land, combined with the First Amendment, gave to the church a freedom now under attack.

The Biblical view of land can be briefly summed up in a few verses. *First*, Genesis 1:1ff. declares God to be the Creator of heaven and earth, and therefore the lawmaker and governor over all things. This is the premise of Biblical law. *Second*, the premise of God's judgment on Egypt, and over all things, is that "the earth is the LORD'S" (Ex. 9:29; cf. Ps. 24:1; 50:12; I Cor. 10:26). God tells Job, "whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine" (Job 41:11).

Third, the laws concerning God's sanctuary not only barred it to all but the priests, but the priests were strictly regulated in their use, presence, and activity. When King Uzziah violated the holy place by entering it lawlessly, he was stricken with leprosy (II Chron. 26:16-23). When Artaxerxes sought to rebuild Jerusalem and Judea, perhaps as a buffer state, he tried zealously to meet all the requirements of God's law concerning the land, persons, and things pertaining to the sanctuary (Ezra 7:10-28). Because this decree of Artaxerxes sums up the law and served as the pattern for future dealings with states by both Judea and the church, it is of central importance in any

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[32] Lester S. Jayson and others, editors: *The Constitution of the United States, Analysis and Interpretation, Annotation of Cases Decided by the Supreme Court of the United States to June 29, 1972.* (Washington, D. C.: United States Gov't Printing Office, 1972). p. 356f. *The 1980 Supplement* to the above gives no changes.

discussion of sacred land. (The date of Ezra 7 according to some scholars is c. 458 B.C.)

The rescript of Artaxerxes has far-reaching implications, because it recognized the validity of the claims of Biblical faith, for whatever reason. *First*, not only is the sacred land of the Temple placed out of bounds for all civil authorities, but all the Temple personnel also. How far-reaching this immunity was is evident in Ezra 7:24:

> Also we certify you, that, touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinim, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.

Any interference with the humblest person connected with the Temple was thus illegal. This was a position the church early fought for, and the legal "benefit of clergy" doctrine is one aspect of it. In the modern era, both Protestants and Catholics have compromised this doctrine, very plainly set forth in Ezra 7:24.

Second, the doctrine of sacred land begins with the premise that all the earth is the Lord's, and thus all the earth must be under God's law. The sacred or sanctuary soil is thus the area from whence the governing word of God goes forth for all the land. In terms of this, the civil order of Judea was to be under the law of God, as Ezra 7:25-26 makes clear:

> 25. And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.
> 26. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

It would appear that Artaxerxes, gave Judea over to virtual inner freedom to rule by God's law, provided royal law prevailed in foreign affairs. Within Judea, the appointment of magistrates and judges was a responsibility of Ezra, and these civil rulers were to be governed by and to govern with the law of God. God's ownership of the earth requires that his law govern all things.

Third, this same doctrine requires godly education: "teach ye them that know not." *Education is a central aspect of government.* If government is humanistic and statist, education will be also, and the humanistic state will control education. The rise of modern humanistic statism and the state control of education have gone hand in hand. The same is true of law. As Chadwick has noted, "Society is impossible without law."[33] The faith of a society determines its laws. Modern man being humanistic, his laws are humanistic also. Moreover, because modern man looks to the state for solutions to

[33] Owen Chadwick: *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, (1975) 1977). p. 31.

problems and for salvation, modern man's god is the state. Not prayer, the Holy Spirit, communion, and the word of God, but the state is man's sorry means of grace.

Fourth, the death penalty was placed in the hands of Ezra, to be enforced in terms of "the law of thy God" (Ezra 7:26). The same also applied to "the law of the king," but authority in both areas was left to Ezra and the theocratic civil government.

It can be said that this Persian respect for religion and "immunity from taxes" was practiced elsewhere than in Judea, and rightly so.[34] The virtues of the Persian Empire are too seldom noted, and its weaknesses stressed. The fact remains that the rescript of Artaxerxes in this instance conformed to Biblical law and set the pattern for future history outside of Judea.

In brief, the sacred land is not a small corner in an otherwise secular society but the central point in the life of a covenanted society. Because the New England towns were covenanted communities, the church had the central position in the town and was the locale of many activities, including town meetings. This was also true of many areas of Christendom in the earlier medieval era. The central state is now the new god, the center increasingly of all government, and also the locale of immunity. Federal installations in cities and states are tax-exempt and have a variety of immunities. Sacred soil has now become statist. The "sacred soil" of statism now constitutes 42% of the United States, and, like the powers of the new god, is growing.

13. The Holy Spirit and the Tithe

One of the chronic and very serious problems which has plagued Biblical faith from ancient Israel to the present has been *over-prescription*. Men have taken God's simple laws and converted them into an unbearable yoke. Peter declared, of the Pharisees' conversion of the law into a means of salvation, that it was "a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). Peter was not speaking of God's law *per se*; he was referring to the Pharisees use of it and called it *tempting God*, i.e., testing or challenging God by misusing God's own law.

Let us glance at examples of this. Maimonides, usually very discerning, turned dispensational when discussing the laws of heave offering and tithes. He limited their validity to the land of Israel, and to certain adjacent areas.[35] He held that a heave offering set aside by a thief was valid, but not if the rightful owner were in hot pursuit.[36] In discussing the right of a woman of a

[34] Jacob Myers: *Ezra-Nehemiah*. The Anchor Bible. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975). p. 63.
[35] Maimonides: *Book of Agriculture*. (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1979). p. 98.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

priestly family to eat of the heave offering, Maimonides held that she could eat after having had sexual intercourse only if she avoided "violent motions during intercourse."[37] Pages are given by him to such discussions and *over-prescription.*

Lest we regard this as an error common to the rabbis, it must be added that often Catholic and Protestant casuistry has been no less detailed and specific, and no less repulsive. This evil is not limited to formally religious circles. Contemporary psychotherapy is even more addicted to the dissection of every possible impulse, so that spontaneous and free thought and action are now rare commodities *except* in the forms of a lawless rebellion. One can say that anthroponomianism (i.e., man-made law) leads readily to antinomianism. Theonomy is radically different from both.

To understand the problem, let us look at Martin Bucer's *De Regno Christi,* On the Kingdom of Christ, one of the Reformation classics. Bucer, the Strassburg reformer, was greatly respected by Calvin, Luther, and others. He was also always open to negotiations with Roman Catholic churchmen towards a meeting of minds and re-union. He wrote *de Regno Christi* for King Edward VI of England, the country where Bucer spent his later years at Cambridge.

Bucer shared an opinion in common with other Reformers as well as Roman Catholic thinkers. Before discussing that opinion, let us glance at his views of church and state. In passing, we can note that Bucer had an equivocal view of God's law, so that he left the door open for statist law. Bucer saw the function of church and state as essentially the same, the religious care of the people, the ordering of their families and lives, the care of the poor, and so on. He believed firmly as did most of the Reformers that the Kingdom of Christ is to be established here on earth.[38] Melanchthon's views were substantially the same.

In this view, Bucer was in line with most Protestant, medieval, and Jewish thought. The Kingdom of God is established from the top down. The work as well as the life of the Kingdom is essentially institutional and is a product of church and state working together. Sound doctrine and morality are basic to the life of both church and state, of course, but the emphasis was on the creation of the Kingdom from the top down.

In this respect, they were in line with ancient pagan philosophies. Bucer was aware of the parallel and declared:

> Further, those who think that what I have presented is too different from present ways of doing things and the thinking of modern men, a matter of wishful thinking rather than practicality, and that I want to design

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37. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

38. William Pauck, editor: *Melanchthon and Bucer.* (Philadelphia, PA: The Library of Christian Classics, 1959). p. 168f.

> some so-called Platonic republic, I earnestly ask, for the sake of the Kingdom and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation all of us have in common, that they would judge and estimate what I have proffered and suggested not only on the basis of the judgment of men of this or an earlier age, but by the eternal and immutable Word of God.[39]

Bucer was right: the word of God must be the Judge, if by this we mean Christ our King and His enscriptured law-word. While we can differ at points with Bucer, his presentation has much to commend it for its clarity and its beautiful concern for Christ's flock and realm.

The problem is this: Melanchthon in his *Loci communes rerum theologicarum* (*Fundamental Theological Themes*), and Bucer in his work *On the Kingdom of Christ*, alike neglected the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He is not more than barely mentioned by Melanchthon and gets only passing references in Bucer. Neither mentions the tithe. Where the Holy Spirit is not given His due place in the life of the faithful, church and state take His place, and over-prescription becomes the rule. Where the Holy Spirit and God's law-word have their rightful place, social power moves from church and state to the Christian man. The simple fact is that neither church nor state have ever effected a reform or change in history. Godly men have alone done so, occasionally using church or state, but more often in spite of the hostilities of both. This was true in Israel, in the middle ages, in the Reformation, and today.

Bucer's institutional approach, despite his personal kindliness, was a prescription for tyranny. He wanted Christian philosopher-kings and hoped that Edward VI would be one. Modern man pins his hope on democracy, which is no less productive of tyranny.

The Bible, however, calls for God's tax, the tithe (Num. 18:21-28), to be the basic instrument of government. It is paid to the Levites, to all whose work is to further God's requirement of instruction (Deut. 33:10) and the ministry of compassion. The purpose of God's tax is to make possible God's government. Instead of over-prescription from institutions above us, we establish the ministries with God's tax. In the middle ages, various reforming orders arose on this basis. Chaining the tithe to the parish hindered reform and required a break, the Reformation. The same chaining of God's tax is in process today in Protestant circles.

In II Kings 4:42 we see that Elisha's non-establishment school of the prophets was supported by the tithes of the faithful, and, at a critical point, a farmer from Baal-shalisha brought his firstfruits.

The Holy Spirit and God's enscriptured word possess a wisdom far surpassing man's wisdom. If we pay God's tax, the tithe, we can create God's government: churches, schools, hospitals, relief agencies for the poor, and

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 385.

more. We can provide for godly arts, and we can create Christian arbitration courts, and so on. This was done once, and it can be done again.

God's government spells freedom. At this point, Melanchthon was right in declaring something he failed to develop. He said, "Christianity is freedom." Those without the Holy Spirit cannot obey the law; those in the Spirit now find the law to be their way of life. "The Holy Spirit is nothing else than the living will of God and its being in action." We who are in the Spirit obey the law as our new nature. "The law is not laid down for the just" according to Paul (I Tim. 1:9), because the law is "the activity of the life-giving Spirit."[40]

This was the note the Reformers failed to develop. It is necessary for us now to do so. It is man whom God regenerates; it is man through whom the Spirit brings faith and obedience.

Over-prescription pins the hope of a good society on an abundance of rules and regulations. It is the essence of a humanistic society. To trust in God means to rely on His form of government and His law.

The earth is the Lord's, and so too is man (Ps. 24:1). Out of the increase of the earth God's government is to be financed. To by-pass the Spirit and the tithe is to depend on a humanistic state for God's Kingdom, a fallacy.

14. Freedom and the Land

In any study of a theology of the land, a central consideration must be the fact that there is *no tax on the land in the Bible.* Because "the earth is the Lord's" (Ps. 24:1), only God can tax the land. In fact, God allows only a very limited head tax, for the covering or protection of men, to the state (Ex. 30:1-16).

God's tax, moreover, is on the "increase" (Deut. 14:22). The implications of this are too seldom appreciated. Civil taxes today are on the land, or real property, on personal property, on income, on inheritance, on sales, and much, much more. They are confiscatory. This is true when some countries raise taxes on the wealthy to 120% to force their estates into liquidation while they are still living, and then to dismantle what is left at their death. Whether or not crops are destroyed by drought, floods, or other disasters, civil taxes on a farm or ranch, or a home, continue. Land and property taxes are never based on production or "increase," but they are rather a tax on capital, as most civil taxes are. They are therefore very destructive of families and economies.

A land tax is destructive of family continuity in businesses, ranches, and farms, but it does ensure the continuity and growth of a totalitarian state. Civil taxes are almost uniformly parasitic and destructive, and this is emphatically true of land and property taxes.

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Basic to social power are *freedom* and *continuity*. This the Biblical restriction of a civil tax to a limited head or poll tax ensures. The great vision of peace involves freedom from war and security in one's own possessions:

> 3. 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.
> 4. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. (Micah 4:3, 4)

This freedom means, Micah says, that the quality of life is made rich and happy. Fear is replaced by the blessings of God's rule. There is also continuity; the promise of posterity, of a continuity of possession and security therein, and, with these things, peace and prosperity, is a consequence of freedom and continuity under the Lord.

The modern tax structure is designed to ensure the freedom and continuity of the state, not the people. The people are sacrificed to the state, the great Baal or Molech.

Since the land or earth, in its production of foods, (vegetables and meats), and in its mineral and other resources, including wood or timber, is not taxed in Biblical law, this means that the sources of wealth are not taxed. A tax on the sources of wealth is an anti-wealth and pro-poverty tax. Moreover, while the modern welfare state claims to be concerned about the poor, it favors the rich, because power allies itself with power to gain its ends. Rome converted the common man into a welfare recipient and a slave of Rome and so too does the modern state.

God's tax, the tithe, is only on the "increase." If here is no increase due to natural disasters, there is no tithe. The owner of the land thus works to further the productivity of his people. If they are faithful to His law, the land gives a rich increase; if they are faithless, they are cursed and barren of increase (Deut. 28). The law of the Lord thus enables us to increase productivity and wealth by our obedience, and then to further God's government by the tithe or tax on our increase. According to Deuteronomy 15:4-6,

> 4. Howbeit there shall be no poor with thee: (For Jehovah will surely bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it;)
> 5. If only thou diligently hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all this commandment which I command thee this day.
> 6. For Jehovah thy God will bless thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over thee. (R.V.)

Freedom, and continuity work to abolish poverty, according to this, and to ensure power and victory for a people.

Debt and taxes work to strangle an economy. Lawrence Rout called attention to the continuing decline of world trade due to the global debt crisis. World-wide, the debt crisis has disrupted economic growth and financial stability. One consequence, according to Mexico's finance minister, will be a "deterioration in the standard of living for most of the people of the country." This will affect all countries, because the inability to buy will harm the producers who want to sell. According to Rout, "The way out isn't clear."[41] As long as humanistic economics prevail, we can add, it is impossible.

As we have seen, the land is not taxed by any human agency in Biblical law. For the state to tax the land is to claim that the land belongs, not to God, but to the state. It is a claim to *sovereignty* or *lordship*. The tribute both church and state are required to render to God is to be faithful in their ministries. The state is a ministry of justice, and the church of grace. The tribute they give or give back to the Lord is one of service. The Psalmist says,

> 12. What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?
> 13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
> 14. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. (Ps. 116:12-14)

The Psalmist recognizes that he must return to God some service as his response to God's salvation and blessings. This means taking "the cup of salvation," literally, i.e., "I will accept the portion God allots me." This means to "pay my vows," to do the work God has called me to as my thanksgiving.[42]

Tithing is *personal*; services are both *personal* and *institutional*. Hence, church and state are not required to tithe, but they are required to serve the Lord. This is the tribute which God requires.

When the state replaces God, it not only taxes the land and its increase but it also progressively limits freedom and economic growth. It creates taxes which are taxes on capital, on land and more; rather than taxes which free men, the state's taxes penalize men and enslave them. God's tax, the tithe, protects the family in its land and other possessions and creates social stability as well as decentralizing vast areas of government into tithe agencies. Capital accumulation is then possible to the poor, and to families of limited means.

The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Standards begins with the great sentence: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." The Lord can only be glorified and enjoyed in faithfulness to His every word (Matt. 4:4).

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41. Lawrence Rout, "What Harm is Global Debt Crisis Doing?" in *The Wall Street Journal*, Monday August 1, 1983. p. 18.
42. Joseph Addison Alexander: *The Psalms*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, reprint of the 1874 edition). p. 474.

15. Salvation and the Land

A very important fact of Biblical theology which is often neglected is that *salvation* is spoken of by a variety of terms. The word *salvation* itself appears only four times in the Gospels. By means of these other words, we are shown, if we will but see it, the breadth of the meaning of salvation. As Bivin and Blizzard have pointed out,

> In Hebrew, there are many synonyms for "salvation." The word "salvation" itself is little used. Other words express this concept more powerfully. "Righteousness" is one of the synonyms for "salvation." Zion is called "the city of *righteousness*" (Isaiah 1:10). The branch of David is called "The Lord is our *righteousness*" (Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16).[43]

Our salvation is made possible by God's grace and righteousness. God in His grace in and through Jesus Christ, our vicarious substitute, imputes Christ's righteousness or justice to us. We thereby stand acquitted and justified before God's court. Salvation requires the satisfaction of God's justice or righteousness and is thus simultaneously an act of grace on God's part, and the rendering of due justice or righteousness through Christ's atonement.

The word translated commonly as *righteousness* is *tsedaqah*, meaning justice, victory, prosperity, virtue, and salvation. In terms of this, let us look at Isaiah 45:8-10:

> 8. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.
>
> 9. Woe unto him that striveth with his maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?
>
> 10. Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

"Righteousness" in v. 8 means the work of God which brings about salvation and the triumph of justice in all creation. Both heaven and earth are declared to have a responsive part in God's great work of re-creation. God the Lord pours out his righteousness from heaven. This is a surprising choice of words; we would expect it to read, "let the skies pour down" grace or mercy, but instead we are told that justice or righteousness is rained down upon earth. This, however, is inseparable from redemption. Judgment and justice precede and accompany redemption. Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden; the world was judged and destroyed by the Flood; Israel had to wander 40 years in the wilderness, and so on. When it rains justice, salvation is also forthcoming.

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[43] David Bivin and Roy B. Blizzard: *Understanding the Difficult Works of Jesus*. (Arcadia, CA: Makor Foundation, 1983). p. 86.

The supreme act of judgment and justice is the cross of Christ, which is also the supreme act of salvation.

When God sends justice or righteousness down upon the earth like rain, the earth, to continue the imagery of the text, becomes fertile and sprouts salvation and justice. The word for salvation is here *yesha*, liberty, deliverance, prosperity, safety, or salvation. The result of salvation is salvation; the result of justice is justice. If the earth has received salvation and justice, it will bring them forth.

We have here a statement which our Lord affirms in the Sermon on the Mount:

> 16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
> 17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
> 18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
> 19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
> 20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matt. 7:16-20)

Just as a good tree brings forth good fruit, so too a saved and righteous person brings forth salvation and justice, and the earth he possesses does also. Because salvation is total and embraces all creation, heaven and earth respond in joy to the universal freedom under God from the bondage to sin and death.

In Isaiah 45:9-10, Isaiah speaks of the insanity of rebellion against God. Can the earthen vessel argue with the potter? Even more absurd is the idea of man arguing with his Creator. The pot cannot say to the potter, Make me with handles; no more can man indite God's work of creation. The unborn or born child cannot tell his parents how he should have been born and endowed; much less can man contend with his Maker.

The whole creation must respond to God's salvation. As Young summarized it, "The entirety of nature must together bring forth the blessings commanded. If the earth does not open her bosom to receive the rain, then heaven and earth have not been successful in bringing forth salvation."[44] Men, however, choose to argue with God their Maker, and they insist that His word must be taken poetically and figuratively. In Young's words, "to strive with God is to contend with Him in argument with the purpose of showing that what He has promised will not come to pass."[45] This is an insane and absurd position, as all sin is. It is absurd for God's creation to tell God what God is able to do, and what God cannot or should not do! This is the absurdity which marks man in his doubts and unbelief.

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[44] Edward Joseph Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. III. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972). p. 202.
[45] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 203.

Salvation thus is not something which is received and kept but something, which, when received, causes the very earth to burst forth into bloom. Isaiah's language is exuberant, because the truth exceeds the capacities of language.

We find it easy today to believe in judgment and disaster. The scenarios of the future, as plotted by Christians and unbelievers, or by conservatives and radicals, are sometimes vivid intimations of hell on earth. These forecasts are believable, because we believe in man's capacity to make earth into a hell. Forecasts about the future glory of the earth tend to be unbelievable to most men, because they doubt the power of God, and the transforming power of salvation and righteousness in the life of man.

Let us look again at the Hebrew word *righteousness*, *tsedaqah*, a form of *tsadak*. Girdlestone's comment is very telling:

> It is unfortunate that the English language should have grafted the Latin word *justice*, which is used in somewhat of a forensic sense, into the vocabulary which was already possessed of the good word *righteousness*, as it tends to create a distinction which has no existence in Scripture. This quality may be viewed, according to Scripture, in two lights. In its relative aspect it implies conformity with the line or rule of God's law; in its absolute aspect it is the exhibition of love to God and to one's neighbor, because love is the fulfilling of the law; but in neither of these senses does the word convey what we usually mean by justice. No distinction between the claims of justice and the claims of love is recognized in Scripture; to act in opposition to the principles of love to God and one's neighbor is to commit an injustice, because it is a departure from the course marked out by God in His law.[46]

A critical problem in *definition* in our era is our philosophical bias and presupposition. Basic to the thinking of the modern era is evolutionary thinking and the conflict of interest. Chance and conflict govern all the universe, and there is held to be no underlying unity. Hence, it is held to be impossible for love, law, grace, mercy, justice, judgment, and loving-kindness to be essentially inter-related. Rather, they are said to be in conflict one with another, or at the least in serious tension. Similarly, "matter" and "spirit" are held to be in tension also, if not conflict. Given this premise, man's salvation has a limited effectiveness; it affects the soul of the saved man, it is held, but not his body, and certainly not the earth!

However, given God's sovereignty and creation, the harmony of interests then prevails. Isaiah 45:8-10 is thus not poetry but fact. As salvation pours down, so too its consequences spring forth; they burst forth in men and in the earth itself. All things are progressively made new (Rev. 21:5).

Certainly the early church believed this to be true. In an ancient liturgy, the Kontakia, we find these words:

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[46] Robert Baker Girdlestone: *Synonyms of the Old Testament.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1897) 1976). p. 101.

> As the joy of all things, Christ the truth, the light, the life, the resurrection of the world, is manifested to those on earth, in his goodness, and is become a type of the Resurrection, to all granting divine forgiveness.
>
> On a throne in heaven, on a foal upon earth, borne, O Christ the God, thou didst accept the praise of the Angels, and the hymn of the Children crying out to thee: Blessed is he that cometh to recall Adam.[47]

Christ has come to "recall Adam," i.e., to reestablish man in the covenant of God, to make man again God's covenant-keeper. Christ is thus "the resurrection of the world," the Restorer of all things to their original purpose at the creation. As such, He is the "type of the Resurrection," the great resurrection at the end.

Thus, we must say that Isaiah 45:8-10, and all Scripture, teaches us that salvation is not a dead-end road. It does not come to us and stop with us, with no results other than pious gush. Salvation changes us, and through us affects the earth we live on, our neighbors, our enemies, and all things we do. It breaks forth in righteousness or justice, and it transforms the world we live in.

Girdlestone referred to the common limitation on the word *justice* as a forensic sense, i.e., limiting it to a court of justice or to public disputations. Biblical justice or righteousness is rather a way of life in conformity to the nature of the triune God. It is a life lived which is expressive of the renewed image of God in us, of a faithfulness to God's covenant, and of Christ in us as our Head and King, as our way, truth, and life (John 14:6).

16. The Land and Holiness

W.D. Davies, in discussing the Biblical premise that the land belongs to God, cites some of the ways this ownership is expressed and acknowledged. *First*, the earth is the Lord's, and therefore He gives it to whom He will. Israel received Canaan to be divided by lot (Num. 26:55), and the fall of the lot was his division. *Second*, God's ownership of the land is acknowledged by means of the tithe, the firstfruits, the gleaning law, the offering of the firstlings and firstborn, and more (Ex. 13:12-13; Lev. 27:30; Deut. 14:22; 26:9-15). Because the earth belongs to the Lord and is used by us subject to His grace, mercy, and law, all the produce of the earth is rightfully His. We must therefore return to Him or to those whom He designates the required portion of that produce. *Third*, God's ownership and sovereignty over the earth is acknowledged in the Sabbath law: the land as well as man must keep a Sabbath to the Lord (Lev. 25:1-4). Because all things are God's creation, all things, and certainly the earth, must keep God's Sabbaths. *Fourth*, because

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47. J.N.W.B. Robertson: *The Divine Liturgies of John Chrysotom and Basil the Great*, etc., p. 459.

God is holy, all His creation must be holy. This is repeatedly set forth, as witness Numbers 35:30-34:

> 30. Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.
> 31. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.
> 32. And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.
> 33. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.
> 34. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

Davis' comment is to the point: "note that the term 'holy,' which suggests that the land itself was inherently 'holy' seldom occurs in the Old Testament; that is, the holiness of the land is entirely derivative."[48]

In our current outlook, holiness is a personal attribute of man. It is a spiritual attainment men are counselled to seek. A popular hymn, which has much to commend it, tells us to "Take Time to be Holy." It is most certainly true that holiness or sanctification requires man's active obedience to God and His law word, but we must first of all see holiness as an attribute of the triune God. Having said this, we must then recognize that all the works of the Holy One are also Holy. The song of the seraphim declares, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3).

Alexander translated Isaiah 6:3, in its last clause, thus: *Jehovah of hosts, the fullness of the whole earth*, that which fills the whole earth, *is his glory*!'' Alexander, in terms of Isaiah 8:8 saw this as a prediction of the future. E.J. Young translated it almost identically: "the fullness of all the earth is his glory." For Young, the glory is present and eternal: "the entirety of creation, not merely the whole earth, is His glory. The reference is to the declarative glory of God" rather than His essential glory. This glory is displayed in all creation.[49] The glory of God is the revelation of His power, majesty, dominion, and attributes. In the blindness of sin, men do not see God's glory now, but, in due time, "the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:5).

This means that God made all things good (Gen. 1:31) and therefore holy. Man's sin defiles God's creation, man and the earth, but man's sin cannot

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[48] W. D. Davis: *The Gospel and the Land, early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine.* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974). p. 29.

[49] Joseph Addison Alexander: *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953 reprint). p. 148. Edward Joseph Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). p. 245.

alienate and secularize any aspect of creation. Even in sin, man and the earth are God's creation. The whole point of judgment is to purge out the defilement of God's possessions in order to restore the essential goodness and holiness. *To be holy* means two things: to be separated from certain things, and to be dedicated to God. The earth can be defiled, but it cannot be separated from God, whose purpose is to remake the earth in terms of its eternal perfection in His plan (Rev. 21:1-5).

The land is holy, not in and of itself, but because it is God's creation, possession, and also His habitation together with heaven and all creation. The holiness of the land in this sense is set forth in Leviticus 20:22-26:

> 22. Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spew you not out.
>
> 23. And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.
>
> 24. But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.
>
> 25. Ye shall therefore put difference between clean and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.
>
> 26. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

The land was holy *before* Israel conquered it, because it was God's creation. In Leviticus 18:24-30, God declares that the Canaanites were cast out by God Himself; it was God alone who was essentially responsible for the victories of Israel. God possesses and dwells upon the earth: "the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3). Therefore, those who defile God's land are in due time cast out. Hence, "defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel" (Num. 35:34).

Note this fact: again and again we are told that, if we defile the land, *the land* spews us out. Because the earth is the Lord's, His creation, it serves his sovereign purposes. Blessings and curses proceed from the land to the faithful and to the faithless peoples. Because the earth is holy unto the Lord, it can *be defiled*; because the earth is holy it *spews out* in time all the ungodly nations.

This raises a very important and intensely interesting point. Man can go, and some men most certainly shall go, to hell. Anyone who reads Scripture with minimal intelligence must agree to this. Hell is the habitation of reprobate persons. The earth, the land, however, is not a part of hell: it is made new, recreated into perfection by God (Rev. 21:1-5). True, it is so altered that it is beyond our present capacity to grasp: heaven and earth become somehow

one in the renewed creation. The physical world becomes a transformed but essential part of the eternal Kingdom of God.

It would appear that the only material aspects of hell are the resurrected bodies of the reprobate. The resurrection of the unjust is cited in Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; and Revelation 20:13-15. When God's holy creation, holy because He sets it apart for His glory and purpose, casts out the reprobate into hell, all creation then resounds with His praise and holiness.

The *spewing out* of the ungodly is thus both a process in time and event at the end. The very nature of the earth, and our nature as well, demands holiness. In Augustine's words, echoing Psalm 139, "Our hearts are restless, till they rest in Thee." There is thus an eschatology of the land. God's purpose concerning all things is present in the physical universe, in the ground beneath our feet. Francis Thompson, echoing both Psalm 139 and Augustine's *Confessions*, wrote of his own experience in his great poem, *The Hound of Heaven*, "All things betray thee, who betrayest Me." There is an eschatology in the earth: it is God's creation, and it serves Him.

17. The Land Defiled

Baal worship is spoken of by the Old Testament prophets as a very great evil in all its forms. The word *Baal* is common to many Semitic languages of the era and means master (or, lord), possessor, or husband. Molech, a form of Baalism, was the worship of the king or state as god on earth. Baal worship was commonly nature and fertility cult worship. The term *Baal* could be and sometimes was applied to the God of Scripture, but it came to be used exclusively of the false gods or Baalism.

One of the great appeals of Baalism was the fact that it placed divinity in the natural order and within the potential control of men. A religion which gives man a god or power amenable to man's influence, power, or control has always been popular. This is true even within the realm of Christendom; the unpopularity of Calvinism is due to the fact that it places God totally beyond man's control, and it sees man as totally under God. This too is the offence of predestination.

There is a further fact here of central importance. To control the god of any system is to control the men within it. The long battle of church and state has this fact at its roots. Orthodox Christianity gives us a God who is beyond the control of church and state alike. Hence, the God of Scripture has been resented by civil governments, and attempts to subvert orthodox Christianity and its churches have been legion. The church too has often been restless under so sovereign a God: churchmen too prefer a god who can be put into man's pocket!

Baal worship thus is more than a bit of ancient history. In principle, it is very much with us still, in newer forms. Many of our current environmentalist and their ecological concerns are manifestations of Baalism.

The Wall Street Journal (Wednesday, October 5, 1983) carried a front-page story about a new endangered 'animal,' in this case an insect, the pygmy hog sucking louse. In fact, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources lists 247 species of ants, mayflies, bees, crabs, worms, beetles, shellfish, coral, spiders, butterflies and other spineless creatures as endangered. As Sterba comments:

> Even the pygmy hog sucking louse is potentially valuable, says the IUCN. Its bacteria produces B Vitamins that some scientists think might be useful in genetic engineering.
>
> To save the pygmy hog sucking louse, however, scientists must save the pygmy hog. It, too, is on the list of species in danger of extinction, threatened by the destruction of its habitat of thatch-scrub savanna. And, as if that were not irony enough, the pygmy hog is threatened by infections transmitted by one of its parasites: the pygmy hog sucking louse.[50]

Note that the value of this louse is only a potential one depending on more than one hypothetical element, and even then useful "in genetic engineering," a somewhat questionable activity. It hardly needs saying that such a concern for a louse by peoples who favor the murder of millions of unborn babies is hardly a moral concern.

It is, however, Baal worship: it places ultimacy in the natural order and in the men who control it. At the same time, it is a very destructive faith. Albert Schweitzer developed a religion of reverence for life. Life in all its forms was to be equally respected, the mosquito and the earthworm together with man. Morality for Schweitzer meant the protection and the preservation of the life around man. The problem of bacteria and disease, Schweitzer never faced squarely.[51] Albright rightly termed Schweitzer's faith "pantheistic" and stated rightly, "In no sense can Schweitzer be labeled as a Christian thinker."[52]

Seemingly, such a view is a supremely loving, thoughtful one, but, in reality, it leads to hypocrisy and evil. Schweitzer professed great concern for even earthworms crawling on walks after a rainstorm. He held that all life should be revered, saying, "he important thing is that man should be humane to all living things. He should never take the smallest life, say a fly on this table, without regret and compassion." According to McKnight, Schweitzer

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50. James P. Sterba, "Before You Squash that Bug, Be Sure It Isn't One We Need," in *The Wall Street Journal*, Wednesday October 5, 1983, Vol. CIX, No. 67., p. 1, 22.

51. Albert Schweitzer: *Civilization and Ethics, Part II: The Philosophy of Civilization.* (London, England: A & C Black (1923) 1929).

52. W. F. Albright, "Schweitzer and Civilization," *The Hopkins Review*, Winter, 1950; Vol. III., No. 2., p. 46.

was ostentatious in parading his reverence for life. He would call attention to an ant on his sleeve and call it his "pet ant." He had small, hinged hatches in his screens in order to release gently any mosquito caught under a tumbler. He spoke of pity for the bacilli of sleeping sickness when a new drug was discovered capable of destroying the disease. On the other hand, those who knew him well reported that Schweitzer would knock the brains out of litters of kittens and puppies to keep the hospital from being over-run with them. There were limits to his reverence for life.[53] These limits were of Schweitzer's making; instead of God's law governing him, Schweitzer's own opinions ruled. His scientific and other associates were constantly "reminded by the Doctor that the life of an ant or a cockroach is as precious as their own."[54] For Schweitzer, life, not Christ, was divine.

This "reverence for life" actually devalued man, because, if a cockroach or a louse is as valuable as a man, then we have prepared the way for monstrous evils. If lice or cockroaches become too abundant, we eliminate them out of an ostensible reverence for other life forms. If we believe that there is a human over-population, then we practice abortion and euthanasia to rid ourselves of some of the surplus. Advocates of abortion are insistent that they regard life highly; they advocate abortion to maintain *the quality* of life, we are told. Hitler felt that the quality of life would be improved in a world without Jews and Christians; Stalin wanted to improve the quality of life by eliminating Jews, Christians, capitalists, and all opponents and critics. In terms of humanism, the quality of life is a highly subjective term, and it can be used to justify anyone we dislike.

Baal or nature worship in its every form destroys a transcendental frame of reference. Good and evil then become categories of human definition. When men make themselves to be the source of definition for law, for good and evil, and of the quality of life, they defile the land, and judgment becomes their portion. In Jeremiah 16:16-21, God declares His judgment on all such:

> 16. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.
> 17. For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.
> 18. And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.
> 19. O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.

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[53] Gerald McKnight: *Verdict on Schweitzer.* (New York, N.Y.: John Day, 1964). p. 56.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

> 20. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?
> 21. Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is THE LORD.

God declares (v.16) that He will cleanse the land of all men who defile it by bringing radical judgment upon the nation. Nothing can remain hidden from His eyes or immune to His judgment. The heart of the defilement is that "they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things." God calls all false religion, Baalism with its nature worship and state worship, a detestable and abominable carcass. False religion is thus compared to a dead and rotting body. A house with a rotting corpse, or a land filled with decaying bodies lying on the ground, gives us a vivid image of defilement. Such a situation calls for a radical solution: a cleansing of the house and land, and the elimination of the people responsible for it.

Where men give the priority to pygmy hog sucking lice and to cockroaches, the land is defiled. We have Baalism, the imposition of naturalistic and humanistic standards on the land.

The Lord then does two things. *First*, He judges the guilty people and cleanses the land. *Second*, He prepares the way for the inheritance of the earth by the blessed meek (Matt. 5:5). In Jeremiah 16:19-21, we have a vision of the land possessed by a new people, who disown the false faith of their fathers and declare themselves to be the Lord's. In the words of Theodore Laetsch's translation of Jeremiah 16:20, "Shall a man make gods for himself? Such gods are not gods!"[55] We live in a day of false gods. The earth is defiled by their corruption. If we do not cleanse our land of this defilement, God's judgments will do so.

18. Man Defiled

When man fell, his sin led to the oppressive fact of death, and death is a defiling and corrupting fact. In the laws regulating the priests, it is forbidden to a priest, who represents Christ and atonement, and hence *life*, to have any contact with the dead "among his people." Only for his very nearest kin was the defilement of contact with the dead permitted (Lev. 21:1-4). Sin and death defile man. God's covenant separates a chosen people unto God and hence provides the laws of sanctification or anti-defilement. The fallen and defiled earth is to be made holy unto the Lord by man's faithfulness to the covenant law, which is the means of both dominion and sanctification.

However, in spite of God's grace in giving to fallen man a renewed covenant and the covenant law, men often persist in their sin. This compounds the evil of the fall, and it leads to the judgment Paul cites

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55. Theo. Laetsch: *Jeremiah*. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1952). p. 160.

concerning all who, on entering the renewed covenant, trample it under foot in their sin:

> 26. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,
> 27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
> 28. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
> 29. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?
> 30. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.
> 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Heb. 10:26-31)

We are plainly told that this is the judgment God reserves for those who despise His renewed covenant. The original covenant was with Adam *before* the fall. The covenant was renewed with Adam and a succession of men after the fall, with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and the fullness of that renewal came with Jesus Christ.

The judgment God pronounces in Hebrews 10:26-31 against those who defile the renewed covenant is pronounced more than once in the Old Testament. The most notable instance is Ezekiel 4:9-17:

> 9. Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.
> 10. And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it.
> 11. Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink.
> 12. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight.
> 13. And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.
> 14. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.
> 15. Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.
> 16. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shalt eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment:
> 17. That they may want bread and water, and be astonied one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

Commentators tend to regard this very grim account as somehow not literal. As a result, too little attention is paid to the meaning. This prophetic account comes four years prior to King Zedekiah's revolt against Babylon. It is, however, a vivid account of siege and captivity. It describes the conditions of an enforced famine. If one faced east towards Babylon, one's left side would be to the north, towards Israel, and the right towards Judah. Bitter confinement, paralysis, and captivity was the lot of both. Ezekiel was commanded also to shave his beard, which he did with a sword, symbolizing judgment and death. He was also to shave his head, forbidden in the law (Lev. 19:27f.; 21:5; Deut. 14:1), although some practiced it as a sign of mourning (Isa. 3:24; 22:12; Micah 1:17; Jer. 16:6; etc.). This was an act therefore of *self-defilement*. Judea had defiled itself by its sins, as had Israel, and Ezekiel, in his symbolic action, called attention to that fact.

Then we come to the critical point. On *aesthetic* grounds, many find it repulsive, although it is also *morally* banned. The dietary laws are clear as to what is clean. We should remember that for Scripture the ethical and the aesthetic are not separable; there is a distinction but not a separation.

The food to which Ezekiel was limited was about 12 ounces of "bread," and his drink was about 1 3/4 pints of water a day, a grim picture of siege and captivity conditions. The bread was the real horror, and the reason why this text is avoided: it was made of the remainders of grains baked in human dung or excrement. It is necessary to explain this requirement carefully. In many parts of the earth, dry dung *is* used as a fuel, cow "chips," buffalo "chips," and many other varieties. Such a fuel simply provides fire and heat where a shortage of wood exists, as on the American plains a century ago. Over such a fire, a pan was placed and food cooked. This is not what is here required. Rather, it has reference to a practice still common to woodsmen, i.e., baking something in hot ashes. To bake the cake or loaf of mixed meal in such ashes meant that the ashes and their odor clung to the meal. It is a picture of extreme conditions, of people reduced to eating bread with "a loathsome smell and taste,"[56] Ezekiel protested that he had never so much as touched unclean foods previously, and the Lord altered the recipe to replace human excrement with cow's dung.

We have here predictions of extreme rationing, a water shortage, and more. We know that during the siege of Jerusalem which followed, mothers ate their own children (Lam. 2:20). As for human excrement. no nation in antiquity or until recent time has sanitation laws comparable to those required in the law (Deut. 22:12-14). Hosea 9:3 predicted that Israel would eat unclean things in Assyria; Ezekiel makes clear how far this would go in Jerusalem.

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[56] Carl Friedrich Keil: *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, reprint, n.d.) p. 81.

The shaving of the head indicated *self-defilement*, enforced by God's judgment upon them. There are thus two aspects to this episode. *First*, we have the fact of *self-defilement*. Whenever men despise and disobey God's covenant law, they defile themselves. We live in an era of world-wide self-defilement. Homosexuality (Rom. 1:26-32) and abortion are extreme forms of self-defilement, but every sin is an act of self-defilement. The Lord brings judgment upon an age, nation, and persons who defile themselves and God's earth with their sins. Judah and Israel were indicted repeatedly for defiling God's land.

Second, upon all such, God brings the defilement of His judgment. Men choose to see their sins as pleasure and profit, whether theft, adultery, homosexuality, false witness, or any other sin. They reject God's judgment that sin defiles them and the land in favor of what they regard as the advantages of sin. Instead of seeing God's law as holy and good, they see it as a burden. God speaks of giving the law and the sabbath to man as a blessing and as evidence of His covenant grace and love:

> 10. Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness.
>
> 11. And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.
>
> 12. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. (Ezek. 20:10-12)

To call God's law, given to be a blessing to man and as the way to live, a burden and even an evil, is to invoke God's wrath and judgment. Such men do not see their sin as a defilement. They see their adulteries, abortions, homosexuality, and more as marks of freedom and enlightenment rather than as a defiling evil. God therefore brings in His judgment, and it comes in grim and horrifying forms to bring home defilement to all such men. To be driven by hunger to eat the meager remains of grain mixed with clinging dung ashes, to resort to eating rats (as has commonly been done), and to turn to cannibalism brings defilement home to every sinner. Men who defile themselves by their sins and who refuse to repent are then defiled by God with His judgments. If men will not cleanse the land of evil and iniquity (Deut. 21:21), God then brings greater evils upon them, to destroy them, and to cleanse the land.

19. Disinheritance

In Ezekiel 8, we have one of the most telling visions of a very remarkable prophet. Ezekiel 8:1-11:25 describes Jerusalem's sin and judgment. Its judgment is abandonment by God.

Ezekiel was among the leaders of Judea who were first taken into captivity. He and others of Judah's elite were removed in order to render the nation more submissive; they were also hostages who were free to live in their new homes but not to return to Judea. Their concern with the homeland was great.

In this particular instance, Ezekiel was in his home, "and the elders of Judah sat before me." This is not a casual phrase: it refers to what was later called the Sanhedrin. We meet with them first in Exodus 24:1, where seventy elders met with Moses. We are not told whether or not all of the captive elders were there present with Ezekiel, but it is clear that in some sense it was an official meeting. Ezekiel sat in their midst as another Moses or an high priest. As God's prophet, he was surrounded by the elders, who waited for God's word through Ezekiel. That word came as a vision of the Temple in Jerusalem; in the vision, Ezekiel is transported by God's power, but unceremoniously and abruptly. Carried by God in the spirit to the Temple area, Ezekiel sees some remarkable things. *First*, he sees "the image of jealousy," i.e., an image which arouses God's jealous anger. Earlier, Manasseh had for a time set up such an image in the Temple. Jeremiah, who was in Jerusalem at this time, gives no account of any such idol in the Temple area. Why the differing accounts?

Second, Ezekiel looks through a hole in the wall, i.e., sees, inspired by God, an opening into the Temple, and, behind a door, the worship of "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about" (Ezek. 8:10). Here was creature worship with a vengeance. Here too were the seventy elders of Israel, the rulers of Judea with the king and high priest, glorifying with their censers and incense these false gods.

Third, God shows to Ezekiel women at the door of the Temple "weeping for Tammuz" (Ezek. 8:14), i.e., taking part in a fertility cult worship.

Fourth, Ezekiel then sees twenty five men worshipping the rising sun (Ezek. 8:16). They were located where only priests could walk. These represented the twenty four classes of priests, with the high priest at their head.

We thus see the civil rulers (the seventy elders), the Temple rulers (the twenty five priests), and the women of Judea all involved in what God calls acts of abomination. At the same time, Jeremiah gives no evidence of any such events. It is clear that the "events" described are *not* historical. The time of mourning for Tammuz was the fourth month, Spring. At that time, the mourning and the rejoicing over the death and renewal of vegetation was celebrated with a variety of sexual practices. The date of this vision was the sixth month (Ezek. 8:1).

Jeremiah gives us the grim account of the actual events in Jerusalem at this time. Ezekiel in his vision sees under the surface. Under the facade of outward

conformity to the God of Israel, Judah was in radical hypocrisy and apostasy. Their ostensible Jehovah-worship was at heart paganism and will worship. This, says God through Ezekiel, is the truth about the Temple and its supposedly faithful worship. In comparable terms, God, looking under the surface of pastors and people today, can uncover too often a like apostasy.

God then shows Ezekiel the heart of the apostasy:

> Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the LORD seeth us not: the LORD hath forsaken the earth. (Ezek. 8:12)

This is, *first*, a vision of the heart of the people, of the chambers of their imagery we are told, or their secret chambers, their inner life. God who sees all compels Ezekiel to see the truth about his people. The people were formally godly. They felt a security in being to some degree a people morally superior to other nations. This sense of security was enhanced by the fact that God's only valid Temple was in Jerusalem. Their standard was not God's law but a relative fact, a comparison with other peoples. This same relative standard prevailed in our Lord's day, and it prevails now. We are radically defective in the sight of God, but we gain a virtuous glow by comparing ourselves with other nations. God through Jeremiah indicted this attitude:

> 3. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.
> 4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.
> 5. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor;
> 6. If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:
> 7. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.
> 8. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.
> 9. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;
> 10. And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?
> 11. Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD. (Jer. 7:3-11)

Jeremiah 7:11 was cited by our Lord when He cleansed the Temple (Matt. 21:13). Judea's trust on both occasions was in the presence of the Temple as a symbol of their moral superiority. In fact, in terms of God's law, they were guilty of injustice, the oppression of helpless peoples, and more. At heart, they were exactly what Ezekiel's vision showed them to be. Our world today is little different: it is tolerant of abortion, homosexuality, and the persecution of Christianity, so that it excels most in its contempt for God's law.

Second, despite their professions of faith, the Lord describes their true profession of faith, the working religion of their hearts, in these words: "The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth" (Ezek. 8:12). The first clause expresses a practical atheism; God is dead and thus cannot see men. The second clause declares that the Lord is not mindful of the problems of man and the earth. The implication is that, if God exists, He is unconcerned with man's behavior.

Thus, the reality men have to contend with is other men, or natural forces only. Ezekiel's temple vision is one of naturalistic cults. The people were saying in effect, under a facade of true worship, The Lord may be God, but in man and nature we trust, and in practical politics. For them, God's law did not govern human affairs, nor the natural world. Creation had attained an independent and better existence. God might be great and good, but the universe was run by more practical and mundane considerations than His law.

Because they said, God does not see us, and the Lord has forsaken the earth or is indifferent to it, God forsook them. Their belief in the remoteness of God led to the remoteness of God's grace to them. As a result, as Ezekiel 11:22-25 tells us, the glory of the Lord left the Temple, Jerusalem, and Judea, for the men in captivity in Chaldea. The Lord leaves the land that leaves Him.

To leave the Lord, according to Ezekiel's vision, is an inner fact. The outward nominal adherence can be very pronounced, but, when man in his heart relies moment by moment on himself and views life naturalistically, he has deserted the faith. According to Ezekiel 8:18, God's reaction is one of "fury;" He tells us plainly that He is a Person, not a vague force. In Psalm 33:12, we are told, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." This means clearly that the nation whose God is not the Lord is cursed and disinherited from the earth. Their destiny is to inherit judgment.

20. Judgment

The word *earth*, which appears with great frequency in the Bible, has some interesting connotations. The name of Adam is derived from one of the Hebrew words for earth. *Earth* often refers to a locality, such as Palestine, in Luke 23:44, "and there was darkness over all the *earth* until the ninth hour." In Matthew 27:45, we read, "and there was darkness over all the *land* unto the ninth hour." *Earth* can refer in the Bible to the whole planet, or to a specific territory of the globe.

Because the earth is the Lord's (Ps. 24:1), the fertility of the earth responds to man's relationship to God. This is clearly stated in many passages, as we have seen, including Deuteronomy 11:13-17:

> 13. And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,
>
> 14. That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.
>
> 15. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.
>
> 16. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;
>
> 17. And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

The earth is God's earth, and hence the tithe to the Lord as the creator, owner, and the quickener of all things. As man brings the earth under dominion, he glorifies God and makes the earth a part of the Kingdom of God in the sense that there God's law-word rules and is the principle of the use, development, and conservation of God's resources. However, where man's sin prevails, not only does God's judgment devastate that land, but it also becomes the locale of wild beasts. Thus, Isaiah predicts the fall of Babylon, and he compares it to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. That rich and fertile land, and its great city, shall be full, not of people, but of wild animals, including the destructive wild goat ("satyr" in the King James); a like prediction is made concerning Judea, together with a prophecy of restoration (Isa. 13:1-22; 32:9-20).

Not only is the earth polluted by sin and injustice, but also by bloodshed (Gen. 4:11-12; Num. 35:33-34). The polluted earth is bereft of rainfall (Deut. 28:23-24 cf. II Sam. 1:21), and it will be full of diseases (Deut. 28:21-22). It is called *defiled* in the moral sense, as in adultery, in Isaiah 24:5, where the word *defiled* is the same in Hebrew as the word translated as *polluted*, referring to a sexual offense, in Jeremiah 3:1. Joel 1:1-20 speaks of the consequences of a polluted land.

True faith thus has great consequences. *Judges* gives us a grim account of the results of faithlessness. Its key text tells us, "In those days there was no king in Israel (i.e., the Lord was not acknowledged and served as king); every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). As Hillers noted,

> "Every man did what was right in his own eyes" had as a corollary: "These words which I command you today, shall be before your eyes, and you shall teach them diligently to your sons" (Deuteronomy 6:6).[57]

[57] Delbert R. Hillers: *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea.* (Baltimore, M.D.: The John Hopkins Press, 1869). p. 81.

Israel in particular had an unusual relationship to the land. Its possession in Canaan had been "hand-picked" by God Himself, who had led Israel miraculously to their chosen place. In the covenant with Israel, God not only gave Israel the covenant law, but also specific and particular allotments of land. Thus, as Hillers pointed out, "Land was held as a direct fief from Yahweh and was inalienable, that is, it was an act of impiety against Yahweh and one's ancestors to sell or trade one's inheritance."[58] To sell the land for monetary gain was thus to break that covenant, and hence Naboth's religious horror at Ahab's offer to purchase his land. While urban properties could be sold, rural properties are instruments of production and dominion, and hence necessary to the covenant.

With the renewed covenant in Christ, the promised land becomes the whole earth (Matt. 28:18-20). The possession of all things is a covenant duty. There is no specific covenantal allotment as in Joshua's day, but there is the same covenantal obligation to "occupy" (Luke 19:13), and to exercise dominion (Matt. 28:18-20; Gen. 1:26-28). For Christians, the possession of the earth is thus a moral obligation. The Mormons, or "Latter Day Saints," have been one of the few religious groups to attempt such a possession, although their premises are at best heresy. The Hutterites and various Amish and Mennonite groups have come closer to such a covenantal theology of land ownership.

The covenantal view of land possession is related to the meaning of the Hebrew verb "to know," *yada*. The word appears several times in Genesis 3, in vv. 5,7, and 22. It has reference to knowledge in the two uses in v. 5; in v. 7, and Genesis 4:1, it means sexual awareness and union; in Gen. 3:22, the usage is similar to v. 5.

An important usage of the word in the Bible as in ancient Near Eastern treaties appears in such verses as Amos 3:1-2:

> 1. Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,
> 2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

There had been a special relationship between God and Israel, the covenant. God had *known* only Israel, i.e., had recognized them as His own and passed over all the other families of the earth.

> They were His by right of choice and redemption; He had redeemed them from bondage. Because of this relationship and their sins He must punish them; He could not be true to Himself should He let them go uncorrected. The greater the measure of grace, the greater the responsibility incurred; therefore, the greater the punishment for misuse or contempt of that grace.[59]

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

To know the Lord means to use the earth, God's domain, in the Lord's service and to His glory. Wealth is a legitimate goal only towards establishing and furthering God's covenant and its dominion mandate. This is very clearly stated in Deuteronomy 8:18: "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day." It is a sin to believe, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deut. 8:17). God's covenant *requires* the godly use by all of their land, wealth, and abilities. Jeremiah declares God's severe judgment upon those who see wealth and power as personal advantages rather than covenant facts and blessings:

> 13. Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;
> 14. That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.
> 15. Shall thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?
> 16. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD.
> 17. But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. (Jeremiah 22:13-17)

To know God, Jeremiah's prophecy makes clear, is to do justice, to obey God's covenant law. When men disobey God, He has a "controversy," or, literally, a *lawsuit* against them, and the land participates in the judgment:

> 1. Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.
> 2. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.
> 3. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. (Hosea 4:1-3)

The covenant requires justice, and the covenant lawsuit cites in this indictment the offenses of the guilty people. In Hosea 4, as well as in Micah 6:1-16 (and elsewhere; see also Isaiah 1), the covenant requirement for *dwelling in the land* are cited.

First, knowledge, *godly knowledge* is required, knowledge of God and His law-word. The Lord declares, "My people are destroyed for lack of

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[59] Homer Hailey: *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972). p. 99.

knowledge" (Hosea 4:6-19). Their approach to God is for security only, for fire and life insurance, not for covenantal knowledge and action.

Second, God requires *justice* of the covenant land and people (Micah 6:8-16), and He punishes the people and the land who despise God's law. In the Berkeley Version's rendering of Micah 6:14, "You will eat; but you will not be satisfied; inside you there will still be hunger. You will put away, but you will not save, and what you do save I will give to the sword."

Third, the Lord requires us to "walk humbly" with Him (Micah 6:8), which means full and ready submission to God's every word as our law. Religious worship, however splendid and impressive, is meaningless without obedience (Isa. 1:10-15). God declares, "Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isa. 1:16-17).

Fifth, we must forsake inflation, which means false weights and false measures (Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 25:14, etc.). For a country's silver to become dross (Isa. 1:22) is an abandonment of God's law.

Sixth, we must forsake the fear of men, and pleasing men, and rather seek to please God (Isa. 1:23). For a nation to be humanistic is to be ungodly and at war with God and His covenant law.

Until then, the judgment of the Lord is upon a people and their land.One of the first facts set forth in Scripture is that man was formed out of "the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2:7), and Adam's name reflects the fact that man, apart from God's purposes, is dust: "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). Man is earth-bound, however much the "space age" propaganda seeks to forget that fact.

There are many implications in man's origin, but for the present, let us consider two: *First*, man was created by God for His covenant purposes. Just as a potter creates a vessel for his purposes, not for any independent purpose on the part of the pot, so too God created man for His own use. The blueprint of that use is God's law. We can here cite Gilman, although with a purpose alien to his intention, because his comment has a validity for our own purposes: "The Law is what is, what truly exists and happens, what cannot be reduced to our opinions, our 'slants'...Pedagogy is the practice of creating screens to mask the Law from our sight in formal ways, through language, through terminology."[60] This is not because the Law has any independent existence but because the Law manifests the justice, power, and nature of the triune God. The Law is the appointed way of life for man's existence.

Second, as R.E. McMaster, Jr., has so clearly stated, land is the only form of wealth which can replenish itself in the production of food. Wealth in all

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[60.] Richard Gilman: *Decadence*. (New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, (1975) 1980). p. 179f.

its forms is to some degree land-based, but food, which is necessary for life, is a renewable resource. Not only is it renewable, but it can be improved and enriched. Despite popular myths, the American Great Plains are far more productive, and the soil richer, than in the days of the Indians and the buffalo. Throughout history, man's work has repeatedly developed and improved the soil and its fertility, and also very often severely damaged it. Areas of desert or marshy lands have been reclaimed, and the sea pushed back, as in the Netherlands, to build rich new farm-lands. At the same time, other areas have been lost or damaged through man-created flooding.

The key to all this is work, covenant-directed forms of work. For this reason, we must next consider *a theology of work.*

XVI

THEOLOGY OF WORK

1. Vocation and Work

The word *vocation* comes from the Latin and means in origin a bidding or a calling; to a remarkable degree, the word has retained its original meaning. Words, like other things, commonly erode or alter their meanings. The Christian doctrine of every man's vocation or calling came into its own with the Reformation, although not without some preparation for it in the medieval era.

The doctrine of vocation or calling gained currency as men began to take *time and history* seriously. If the goal of the Christian life is a neoplatonic flight from this world, then pietism has effectively undermined the doctrine of non-ecclesiastical callings. To speak of having a *calling* is usually to speak of the clergy and clerical office.

However, some non-Christian cultures have sought to take time and history seriously, as witness humanism today, without having any sense of a calling. The missing factor is taking God even more seriously. Without the sovereignty of God to undergird and ensure the validity and efficacy of a calling, man works in a void, a vast, meaningless emptiness. He floats aimlessly in inner space. Where men believe in the triune God and take time and history seriously as the arena of God's Kingdom work, they can then both *work and rest* with confidence and peace. Where God is man's Lord and man's ultimate and essential environment, then man is responsible and effective in his actions. Where, however, man is without God, his environment becomes a hostile and determinative force, and man is stripped of responsibility. For the godly man, because God is the Lord and the determiner, man is not under the control of his physical environment, and time becomes the partner and aide to eternity. Man then knows he is not alone in what he does, and more is involved in his actions than himself. At a critical point, man then rests and works in God in the confidence of God's efficacious actions (Rom. 8:28). Luther once said:

> Give men time. I took three years of constant study, reflection, and discussion to arrive where I now am, and can the common man, untutored in such matters, be expected to move the same distance in three months? Do not suppose that abuses are eliminated by destroying the object which is abused. Men can go wrong with wine and women. Shall we then prohibit wine and abolish women? The sun, the moon, and stars have been worshiped. Shall we then pluck them out of the sky? Such haste and violence betray a lack of confidence in God. See how much he has been able to accomplish through me, though I did no more than pray and preach. The Word did it all. Had I wished I might have

> started a conflagration at Worms. But while I sat still and drank beer with Philip and Amsdorf, God dealt the papacy a mighty blow.[1]

Note Luther's comment: "Do not suppose that abuses are eliminated by destroying the object which is abused. Men can go wrong with wine and women. Shall we then prohibit wine and abolish women?" The answer is that, in a godless universe, the total conflict of interests prevails, not a harmony of interests. In such a conflict cosmos, the goal becomes total war against the supposed source of trouble. Hence, class warfare, racial conflict, and generational tensions become commonplace. A man's vocation then becomes the obliteration or the eradication of supposed sources of trouble. This means total war against the capitalists or the communists, or against some particular race. Evil then becomes a metaphysical principle, some segment of being, rather than a moral fact, what men do with themselves. The consequences for work are very great.

We have seen that a vocation is a *calling*. The Reformation stressed work under God as a calling or vocation. Since then, however, the meaning of calling or vocation has tended to be restricted. Men think of a *vocation* as something professional and a *calling* as religious and ecclesiastical. On the other hand, *work* has a different kind of origin. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *worc*, and it refers to the exertion of strength to do something. *Work* is akin to the Greek *ergon*, work; to *erdein*, to do, sacrifice; and to *orgia*, secret rites. As a result, because *work* has reference to physical labor, *work* has become separated from vocation or calling, a very unbiblical consequence. It must be stressed, therefore, that for us work must be a vocation or calling under God.

Not only work but life apart from God is meaningless. Work then becomes a question of survival economics, gaining enough food and shelter to live. For all too many people in history, work has had this connotation. Its goal has been survival, and hence it has had a sad and burdensome aura. Escape from work is then a much desired goal.

However, in the Bible work is eschatological in meaning. It has a goal, the Kingdom of God. Work can be drudgery, a necessary means of survival, or work can be a means of dominion and subduing the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). *Work can be a means of maintaining life and no more*, or work can be *the means of creating the future*. Work thus can be done simply to maintain the status quo, or it can be the means of determining our tomorrows. Where work is eschatologically governed by the dominion mandate, it is constructive of things present and future. The modern era has seen the flourishing and decline of the idea of progress, but *progress* is simply the secular face of Biblical eschatology. The doctrine of progress sees "history" moving onward and

[1] Roland Bainton: *Here I Stand, A Life of Martin Luther*. (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950). p. 213.

upward, and its tenets are secularized versions of the post-millennial faith. Without a faith in God, the idea of progress soon withers; all activity in a void ends up a void.

Solomon tells us, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccl. 11:1). Again, in Psalm 126:5-6, we read:

> 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, bring his sheaves with him.

Both passages use a common farming fact symbolically. Solomon's sentence has reference to 'sowing' rice; the rice is in effect thrown upon the waters, thrown away. Necessary food is thus cast upon the waters, but only so can it produce more food in due time.

Psalm 126:5-6 refers to famine conditions. To take from the remaining store of grain what may be necessary for survival, and to go forth and sow it, means to trust that the orderly processes of God's creation will *multiply* that grain into a rich harvest.

Both texts make symbolic and eschatological use of the fact of sowing. They tell us that, in God's creation, such work is *productive* and it leads to a *multiplication* of our resources. *Work* thus is the key to increase, godly work done in the faith that the Lord of the harvest will give us rejoicing and many sheaves. This multiplication is a necessary aspect of *dominion*. The commandment to Noah was, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1). The Biblical references to work are eschatological; they have in view the determination of the future.

For many, however, work should be primarily to preserve the status quo. We have some who idealize the old village life, whether of Europe, Africa, or Asia, because of its "stability." They seem to believe that progress should be limited to the elite. Others seek a return to and maintenance of some past order, as though the end of history occurred somewhere in the middle. (To appreciate the attainments of a previous era is commendable only if we see them as a foundation for the future.)

Work only comes into its own when it is eschatological. To build a house, plant a tree, and till a garden has a future orientation. The world was not empty when we came into it, and it must not be more empty for our coming. We work to establish God's ordained future, His Kingdom. Where work is systematically eschatological, it is also blessed. Work must always have a purpose greater than ourselves.

2. Work and the Curse

Work was commanded by God in the dominion mandate at the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:26-28). Work before the fall was responsible and

successful dominion work and blessed of God. The labors of Adam in caring for a garden without tools, and with the necessity of making tools, and in classifying and naming the animal creation, was heavy manual work and also intellectual work, but it was still blessed. It was Adam's opportunity to realize and develop the potential and the implications of the image of God in man. There was also harmony between Adam and Eve, and between them and the physical and animal realms.

With the fall, however, this peace was shattered. In Genesis 3:14-19, we learn of the consequences. *First*, there is now enmity between the animal world and man. The curse infects all of creation, men and animals alike. *Second*, the curse infects the relationship between man and the earth, which now can no longer give forth with the same fertility. "Thorns and thistles" signifies that the harvest from the ground is often very frustrating. *Third*, the relationship between male and female, between women, and also between men, is warped and infected by sin. As a result, work in a fallen world is marked by problems, frustration, and troubles. To expect otherwise is foolish.

Our problem today is that men fail to see the ramifications of the curse and its effect on work. A practical illustration may be of help. In Williston, North Dakota, Ray Pierce lost his home in November, 1983. It was the house he had grown up in on the edge of town, a modest home. Until recently, it was paid for. The city put in various improvements, such as sewer lines, street improvements, storm sewers, curbs, gutters, paving, and the new water storage facility. The total assessments now exceed $21,881.65. There was also a further assessment for street lighting. To pay for these assessments, in 1978 Pierce took out a $20,000 mortgage on the house, now down to $17,600. However, the payments on the mortgage plus the payments on assessments and interest were greater than he could pay, especially with time lost in a hospital after an accident. Then too the sewer line was placed too high for the Pierce house to be able to use it; at the same time, septic tanks have been banned. In consequence, the saving and loan bank repossessed his home.

> Since the first of the year in Williston, over 120 homeowners have either turned back their deed or were subjected to foreclosure proceedings, and officials say that number continues to climb. In most cases, however, it was a combination of higher taxes, higher interest rates and less income.[2]

Pierce found that a city commissioner with property in the same area is not listed on the assessment rolls.

This case is not unusual. It represents the kind of evil which is commonplace when civil government is godless. It tells us, moreover, of the problems which beset work in a fallen society. The Pierce home represented two generations of work and capitalization. In a very short time, all this was

[2] Williston, S.D. *Hotline*, pp. 1, 4. Vol. 6, No. 22, November 3, 1983.

negated and destroyed. We have today a humanistic social order which penalizes work, wealth, and thrift. A godless social order is not only under God's curse, but it also *becomes* a curse to itself and to others.

Let us return to the fact of the curse in Genesis in order to see its significance for us. Prior to man's fall, all his work was under God and in terms of God's directions, God's law-word. At the same time, all his relationships were mediated through God. Adam's relationship to Eve, to the animals, and to the earth, was not a *direct* one: it was always governed by God's covenant and hence a mediated and governed relationship. In submitting to the temptation to be his own god (Gen. 3:5), Adam chose instead to have a *direct* relationship with all things, an *unmediated* relationship governed only by his own will and word.

However, since all things were made by God, and without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3), nothing has or can have any existence or being apart from the Lord. Hence, nothing can be apprehended or known without knowing God. Every attempt at an unmediated knowledge leads finally to a pessimism concerning the possibility of knowledge. Similarly, every effort at a direct contact and use leads to a like frustration and ultimate defeat. The world of men is not our creation, nor are animals and the earth. To approach any of them as a god, with our own creative word, is to move in terms of an insanely evil delusion and assured defeat. In hell, there are no mediated relationships between men and men, and hence no communication.

The more mediated our relationships are in Christ, the more productive is our life and work, because the mediated relationship is the governed and directed one. The total providence and power of God are then linked to our lives and activities. We are then in the covenant word of God, of which the Lord says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). God's word and work are infallibly successful and efficacious.

At the same time, Paul tells us, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Our work can never be futile when we are in Christ. This is a magnificent affirmation, and it rests on God's absolute sovereignty, predestination, and providence.

This means that, when we work in and for the Lord, we move out from under the curse into blessings to the degree of our faithfulness. The two realms, of curses and of blessings, both exist simultaneously. With our conversion, we begin our departure from the world of the curse. We are now members of the new humanity of the last Adam, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:45-

47). In Christ, we are born rich, and we can, by faithfulness to Him and His law-word, lay hold of our inheritance. His law sets forth the premises of blessings as well as of curses (Deut. 28).

This means that the problems of our time are at root theological problems. We experience a world under the curse, because the nations seek an unmediated world. They declare their own independent law-word, and, in so doing, move more and more into the curse and in the process become a curse.

Civil government should be a terror to evil-doers (Rom. 13:3), but it has become instead a terror to the law-abiding. Godly children are an inheritance from the Lord and a blessing (Ps. 127:3), but the ungodly children are a curse. Marriage is intended to be a crowning joy (Ps. 19:5), but it is with the ungodly commonly a disaster and a curse. Work should be man's life, and wonderfully productive, but for the ungodly, it is under a curse.

Our task as Christians is to move ourselves and our society from the realm of curses to the realm of blessings.

3. Government as a Monopoly, or, The Politics of Death

In Genesis 11:1-4, we have the account of the building plan for the Tower of Babel, man's great early effort at a total one world state. The Tower was to be the world's governmental center. They were determined to make a *name* (*Shem*) for themselves, an expression for acquiring fame or a reputation ever since. This is the meaning "making a name" for oneself has acquired *from* this account. It did not have that meaning then, given the unity and proximity of men one to another. To make a name or a *Shem* for themselves was their goal as against God. God rightly saw their effort as directed against Himself. This world governmental center represented a rebellion against God and God's judgment. Two great facts of judgment were in the minds of all. *First*, there was the Fall and the curse. *Second*, there was the Flood.

To rebel against God means to wage war against His law or rule, *and* against all the judgments based upon that law and government. The Tower thus was, as Leupold said, "the symbol of defiance of God."[3] It was man's attempt to veto God's judgment. By means of a humanistic scheme of government, law, and science, men would attempt to subvert the efficacy of God's law and judgment. The Tower represented a scientific mastery of building and engineering problems. As a stepped pyramid, it was a symbol of man's ascent, step by step, into power and divinity. Thus, to make a name for themselves meant to supplant God as the governing power.

The fact of government is an important one. God alone is Lord or Sovereign, the governing power over all things. In terms of His law-word, government on the human scene is decentralized. The seven key areas of

[3] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of Genesis*. (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1942). p. 387.

government under God are: the self-government of the Christian man, the family, the church, the school, our vocation, our society, and civil government (which is one government among many). Each of these areas are further decentralized. The family is a good example. The Bible makes clear that the husband is the head of his wife and household, *not* the sole governor (Eph. 5:23). The model wife is Sarah (I Peter 3:6), who issued an ultimatum to her husband Abram concerning Hagar, and later ordered Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael. God vindicated Sarah and commanded Hagar to obey Sarah. "in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice" (Gen. 16:1-16; 21:1-21). (Most churches today would have insisted on putting Sarah on trial as a rebellious wife.) The wife thus clearly has governing powers. The children also have various duties and hence powers delegated to them.

There is a very important fact here. Work under God is a form of government. To have a responsible child capable of governing in his or her sphere, it is essential that work become a part of their training. This is not to say that work is *identical* with government and dominion, but rather that it is *inseparable*. Any society which separates the three is in serious trouble. It creates thereby *the politics of death.*

The politics of death seeks dominion by means of government and without work. It seeks a monopoly on government and works to control every sphere of life: persons, families, churches, vocations, society at large, schools, the arts and sciences, and whatever else there is, in order to play god and create the good society.

The Soviet Union and Red China are very clear examples of this, but, in varying degrees, every modern state gives us an example of the politics of death. It stultifies and penalizes work and therefore responsibility.

The image of God in man requires work, responsibility, and self-government under God. *It is man, not the state, who is created in the image of God.* For the state to usurp the governing functions beyond its appointed place is to attempt to play god. In every instance of such a usurpation, there is either resentment or rebellion against the state. The state is not a person, nor a responsible, conscious entity; it is an institution. When it seeks to supplant men, it cuts itself off from men and from humanity and becomes inhuman, an ironic conclusion for the humanistic state.

Then, instead of godly work as the means to dominion, coercion takes its place. Coercion leads to a repression of freedom and responsibility, and finally to death. Hence we must call statism the politics of death. The Bible requires, for offenses against certain aspects of *God's justice*, the penalty of death. The humanistic state requires the death penalty, not for violations of God's justice, but the *state's laws*. a vast difference. Death then becomes the final solution to problems, the first step being statist coercion.

In 1971, testifying before a U. S. Senate Committee, a criminal mob defector, Michael Raymond, said: "You cannot exist in a society where the ultimate solution to everything is to kill somebody, which is the answer of organized crime to any problem."[4] This, however, is increasingly the solution to all problems confronting the modern state. In some form or other, coercion and repression are the solution, or, finally, death. Death in the humanistic society replaces work as the means of dominion and government.

Not surprisingly, the most repressive societies have problems producing food and material goods. A repressive and death oriented society is not productive.

God's judgment on the Tower of Babel was thus a blessing for mankind, in that it restored the polity of work as against the politics of death by breaking up the planned monopoly on government.

We have today, in court decisions, federal and state legislatures and administrations, and in the thinking of many humanistic voters, a great trust in the politics of death and a readiness to grant a monopoly on government to the state. Behind this trend is man's sin; man's sin in Eden was to play god, to attempt to become his own source of ultimacy and law, to determine good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5). Adam and Eve had grown weary of the responsibility of work. In their sin, they forsook work under God and in faithfulness to God's law in favor of a direct and unmediated seizure of power. The Kingdom in all its potentiality could thereby be realized by them. God's fiat word can create anything; why not utilize man's fiat word to create a new heaven and a new earth?

The Tower of Babel renewed this quest, as has the modern humanistic state. In the process, work has been relegated to slaves. The Soviet Union is economically dependent on the slave labor camps; only there are men to any degree productive. The production of slaves, however, is not dominion-oriented but survival governed, and the state which depends on it has no good future.

In every age, God confounds all Towers of Babel.

4. Work and Confusion

The judgment on the Tower of Babel builders should concern us all, because it is a continuing judgment on all their imitators. The Tower represented a one-world governmental center in defiance of God. Its purpose was to undo God's judgment and to restore paradise by man's ostensibly sovereign acts.

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[4] David E. Sheim: *Contract on America, the Mafia Murders of John and Robert Kennedy*. (Silver Springs, MD: Argyle Press, 1983). p. 28.

God's judgment on Babel was preceded by His commentary on that endeavor. *First*, God noted their unity in sin: "the people is one, and they have all one language" (Gen. 11:6). They were at work in unity to defy God. In Sumerian, the Tower is called *Etemenanki*, "House of the foundation of heaven and earth." Man hoped to bind all historical determination to himself, to assume control in effect of heaven and earth.[5]

Second, God said, "this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Gen. 11:6). Their plan is the control of the world by man, man as lord over man in a unified one-world order. Such an order would rivet man into slavery to man, God's purpose is the shaking of men and nations (Heb. 12:18-29). The world is therefore founded upon the seas and established upon the floods to prevent us from gaining a security in our sin (Ps. 24:2).

Third, we are told that "the LORD came down to see the city and the tower", and God declares, "Go to, let us go down" (Gen. 11:5,7). These idioms have reference to judicial action: God "comes down" as judge to render a decision. We speak of a parent "coming down" on a child in punishment. The usage here is similar: it has reference to taking action.

Fourth, God's judgment was confusion. Man's work and language were confounded and confused; men were scattered over the face of the earth by the internal dissension God's judgment created. The word *confound* is in the Hebrew *balal*, to mix or mingle. God confounded man in his sin, and God continues to do so. In Babylonian, *Babel* means the "gate of god", but in Hebrew it came to mean confusion.

Fifth, the purpose of the confounding or confusion was and is to prevent men from attaining success in their defiance of God. It was preventive action to check the power of man's sin and to enable the godly to realize their calling. After the confounding of Babel, we are given a genealogy which leads us directly to God's covenant man, Abraham.

Let us look again at the *work* involved in building the Tower of Babel. It was a major task and involved no small amount of labor. Before the Flood, cities were commonplace, but Babel was different in that it represented no normal urban development but a planned operation to create a world center. It was thus not *productive* work. It produced neither food, house, nor manufactured goods. Its purpose was to defy God by preventive planning against God's judgment and law, and it would also supplant God's government of man and the earth by man's government and law.

The Tower of Babel was destroyed by God's judgment, but the motivation of its builders still remains and is as active as ever. An obvious evidence of

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[5] Umberto Cassuto: *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, II. (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, n.d.). p. 242.

this is modern statism, as is also the United Nations. There are, however, many more illustrations of this.

Thirty years ago, as the new pastor of a church, I ended the every-member canvassing of members to finance the church. I did so because I believed that the motivation for giving should be a willing heart, and I quietly worked towards stressing tithing. The result was that the giving increased substantially. At the same time, denominational opposition to this was marked, as well as the outright hostility of some of the elders. The important thing, it was held by these men, was not so much the results, i.e., the income or giving, but the method. Indeed, some insisted on believing that the Spirit worked best with the method.

The reasons were obvious. Those churchmen involved in the every-member visitation work were of two kinds. Some found it difficult or embarrassing to pressure members to give more. Others *enjoyed* doing so. It gave them an opportunity to badger people sanctimoniously, give them feelings of guilt and inadequacy, and to do so with a self-righteous glow. It was the exercise of power which appealed to them.

To me, the whole system was a trust in man's way rather than in God's law and the work of the Holy Spirit. There was in all the promotional work of the every-member canvas a large amount of useless and ungodly work.

The two are essentially the same. Ungodly work is useless work, and vice versa. Consider the very considerable internecine conflict in many organizations, institutions, and corporations. Such conflict is productive of nothing except more conflict. It represents a power play, a Tower of Babel syndrome, seeking a top which "may reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11:4), or, as Cassuto rendered it, "with its top in the heavens."[6] At the very least, this means the Tower was built to glorify man, to create an imposing and impressive center. Davidson's comment is to the point: "Man unites in the anthem 'Glory to man in the highest' and the outcome is division and confusion." However, even as man glorifies himself, he is fearful of God. "In the fear which prompts this action *or we shall be dispersed all over the earth* (verse 4) there is symbolized man's feverish search for security apart from God, a search doomed to failure."[7]

The production which marked Babel was useless; it had no place in God's purposes and was thus given over to confounding and confusion. All work apart from God is similarly judged.

The Tower was a *fiat* effort. It was an attempt by man to play god, and all activity outside of God's dominion. We are then attempting to evade the world of God's law. The politics, economics, religions, and sciences of our

6. Cassuto, *op.cit.*, p. 242.
7. Robert Davidson: *Genesis 1-11.* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1973). p. 105f.

time are dedicated to man's fiat will. They are all thus examples of the Babel mentality. The work Babel created led only to *disaster.* The work created by contemporary politico-economic activities is similarly doomed. The loans to the many incompetent regimes to continue their incompetence, the world-wide fiat money inflation, and the increasingly controlled work in every sector of life are all disaster-bound. Revelation 13:17 tells us of the goal of this humanistic effort: "that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." For predestination by God, the new Babel, Babylon the Great (Rev. 17:5), substitutes predestination by the humanistic state. Whereas under God's predestination, our "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58), in the state's predestination it is always vain.

Obadiah 1:15 declares, "For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head", a fact stressed also in Lamentations 1:22 and Jeremiah 50:29. Confusion is the destiny of godless work. All that it amasses will in the end serve God's Kingdom and peoples. In Isaiah's vision,

> 1. Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.
> 2. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.
> 3. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.
> 4. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side...
> 9. Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. (Isa. 60:1-4, 9)

The whole world shall serve Christ's Kingdom and His people, because only their work has the foundation which endures. In the parable of the two foundations (Matt. 7:24-29), our Lord makes clear that no life nor work can endure apart from Himself as the foundation.

5. Bramble Men

When Abimelech seized power in Israel, he murdered all the other sons of Gideon, save one, Jotham. Abimelech, whose mother was a Shechemite, appealed to his mother's relatives for aid and made himself king over Israel, reigning in Shechem.

During the coronation ceremony, young Jotham, from a safe position on a mountain cliff nearby, disturbed the proceedings with a brief and telling parable. Jotham's words from the promontory on Mount Gerizim were these:

7....Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.
8. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.
9. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?
10. And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us.
11. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?
12. Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us.
13. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?
14. Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us.
15. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.
16. Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerub-baal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands:
17. (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian:
18. And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother;)
19. If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerub-baal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you:
20. But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech. (Judges 9:7-20)

We have here a powerful parable against statism. The Bible is an anti-statist book, because God as Lord or Sovereign refuses to share His glory with any other (Isaiah 42:8). Men have, since Babel, sought to gain sovereignty by means of the state. In this parable, we have Jotham's inspired commentary on that attempt. It is the idea of the state as represented in Abimelech, the theology of the anti-god state, which is here set forth.

The parable tells us that the trees decided on a king. In so doing, they rejected God as King. The central point of *Judges* is that men reject God as King and make themselves their own law and god whenever and wherever they are in sin and apostasy. There is no attack here on godly rulers; the parable cites the rule of Gideon as a standard. Thus, the *first* aspect of this parable to be noted is that the trees, the people, sought government and authority apart from and in rebellion against God. Every attempt to live apart from God's law constitutes a like rebellion by men and nations.

Second, the productive men refuse to become a part of an ungodly order and resist it. The olive tree, the fig tree, the vine, and Jotham each in turn stood apart from this godless state. We can safely assume that Abimelech sought the assistance and courted for his staff some of the able men of that area. Each refused to become party to a state that began with the mass murder of all the other heirs of Gideon, except for Jotham, who escaped. The productive men saw no place for themselves in an unproductive state.

Third, the godless power wants all things to be under its authority and below itself in rank. David, even in his sin, acknowledged the freedom and word of the prophet Nathan. The bramble men, base and inferior, command the state and demand that all men be subservient to them. Jotham has Abimelech, the bramble king, say "come and put your trust in my shadow." If they refused, he would destroy even "the cedars of Lebanon," i.e., the greatest men of the realm. When men play god, they seek to imitate God the Lord. As absolute Lord, God declares that life and death are in His hands, and total judgment as well:

> 39. See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.
> 40. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever.
> 41. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. (Deut. 32:39-41)

When God so speaks, He does so as absolute, total, and perfect justice. When the state assumes powers independently of God and His law, it acts in terms of power, injustice, and evil.

Fourth, Jotham contrasts the productivity of the trees or men who are outside this apostasy with the non-productivity of the power elite of the state. Bramble men are unproductive, but they seek power over men greater than themselves. The idea of an olive tree, a fig tree, or a grape vine resting under the shadow of a bramble bush is ludicrous. So too is the idea of the humanistic state, both ludicrous and enormously evil. As bramble men take over a society and a civil government, productivity in that nation diminishes, because the goal of bramble men is to destroy their betters. Likewise, if bramble men take over the church, corporations, schools, and the arts and sciences, the same result ensues. Production gives way to destruction and to power plays.

The world of bramble men is a world of bramble concerns. Diogenes was able to see the arrogance of Plato, but not his own, nor that his was a life essentially of negation. Diogenes trampled on Plato's robes and announced, "Thus I tread on Plato's pride." Plato answered, "With greater pride of your own." Both were right.

Joseph Parker saw clearly the heart of the matter. When the good trees or men were offered the kingship, they refused, recognizing the falsity of the

position and its power. In Parker's works, "All the men worth having to reign over us are already enthroned."[8] They were reigning as God's vicegerents, each in his own productive calling.

Moreover, Parker noted, "Jotham comprehended the great philosophy that water cannot rise above its level: men cannot rise above the honour that is in them. Little men cannot be great; ungrateful men cannot be just; mean souls can never be majestic."[9] The state can never rise above its moral level. If it rules by man-made law, promotes abortion, homosexuality, and humanism, the level it seeks will be steadily lower *unless* Christians reverse that trend. The present disintegration is clear evidence of this fact. As our Lord states it, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16). Bramble men produce brambles.

Parker raised the question, "Is Abimelech dead? Has he reappeared in our days?"[10] More than in Parker's day (1830-1902), this is true of our time: the bramble men are very much with us. The modern state is a masterpiece of anti-productivity because its essential goal is power.

George Orwell, in *1984*, called attention to this fact. O'Brien, in discussing the rationale of the socialist state, declared, "We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship."[11] Since man's original and abiding sin is to be his own god and himself the source of law and morality, man's major work in his fallen estate is to gain power over others. Fallen men are bramble men; their expression of the will to power varies only in terms of their courage and opportunities. Fallen man thus become more unproductive as he becomes more powerful in his rule over others.

Orwell, in writing *1984*, expressed his evaluation of world socialism based on his own experiences. In Red China, Lin Piao confirmed Orwell's insight, declaring in 1966, "Political power is an instrument by which one class oppresses another. It is exactly the same with revolution and with counter-revolution. As I see it, *political power is the power to oppress others.*"[12]

Such a conclusion is a logical end to Plato's *Republic*, power in the hands of a powerful elite in order for them to exert power. Plato, in writing about his philosopher-kings in his ideal republic, made no room for law. The fiat improvisations of the philosopher-kings would provide the word of power

8. Joseph Parker: *The Peoples Bible*, Vol. VI. (New York, N. Y.: Funk and Wagnalls, n.d.). p. 55.
9. *Ibid.*, VI., p. 56.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
11. George Orwell: *1984. (New York, N.Y.: Signet Books, (1950) 1951). p. 200.*
12. Paul Johnson: *Modern Times, The World from the Twenties to the Eighties.* (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1983). p. 556.

and hence wisdom. Only when Plato and his fellow tyrants lost all hopes of gaining their power state did Plato, late in life, write his *Laws*.

Bramble men see the future as power, *their* power. Hence, their essential direction is always "Back to Babel."

6. The Babel State

The goal of bramble men is "Back to Babel." With this in mind, let us look again at Genesis 11:1-9. We are told, "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." The word *one* used there and in verse 6, differs from that used in vv. 3 and 7 in the Hebrew original. It is *'echad*, meaning *united*. The whole earth was united in a common anti-god purpose. Hence, Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz translated the sentence, "The whole earth was of one language and of common purpose."[13]

Again, the word *language*, in verses 1, 6, 7, 9 is the Hebrew *saphah*, lip, which may be from *caphah*, to scrape together, i.e., to accumulate or to increase. As a result, another reading is possible. "One language, and of one speech" is a common form of Hebrew stress by repetition. On the other hand, it can mean a reference to common possessions as well as a common language. Abarbanel (or, Isaac Ben Judah Abarbanel, 1477-1508) saw this as a reference to the absence of private property. There was thus both a common language and a common ownership of all things.[14]

While there can be no certainty on this point, there is some reason to agree with Abarbanel. The goal of Babel was a radical unity against God and a unified social order. It was a first example of what Plato set forth in his *Republic*, the socialist state. The goal was total community without God. The Garden of Eden had fixed borders; Cain very early built a city, again a bordered and protected area. Cain feeling his guilt, felt the need for protection. The text of Genesis 4:17 tells us literally, "he became a city-builder." Attention is thereby called to his personality rather than to his work.[15] By his city-building, Cain was in effect engaged in warfare against God and man. He had settled in the land of Nod, which means *wandering*, perpetually wandering through it without rest.[16] The hostility manifest in Cain appears also in his descendant, Lamech (Gen. 4:19-24), whose creed was vengeance and death. James 4:1-4 makes plain that the origin of warfare and troubles is in sin. Man's hostility to man has its roots in his rebellion against God and his insistence that, as his own god, his will must be done. As a result, the godly live in a warring world in which they are at times caught

[13] Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz and Rabbi Nosson Scherman: *Bereishis, Genesis*, Vol. I. (Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, (1977) 1980). p. 337f.
[14] *Ibid.*, I, p. 334.
[15] *Ibid*, I. p. 159.
[16] *Ibid.*, I, p. 158.

up in the warring actions of evil men. As David said, "I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war" (Ps. 120:7).

The goal of fallen man is unity after the model of Babel, a substitute for Eden. At the same time, man's sin isolates him from other men, each man being his own god. To be helped by another as a friend is resented by such men. When a California Christian School began to distribute food to needy families recently, some refused to accept the gifts on learning that it was not a statist grant. Their premise was that state or federal relief is a *right*, whereas Christian giving is charity and hence "degrading." Schoeck summed up this attitude in a telling quotation: "Whoever helps me is my enemy."[17] Such an attitude is all too prevalent today. To take by fraud is acceptable, because it is seen as a demonstration of superiority, but charity reveals humanity in the donor and recipient, a recognition of a creaturely condition.

As Schoeck noted, "the envious man is, by definition, the negation of the basis of any society."[18] Thus, where bramble men are in power, when men are both envious and self righteous about their envy, and when a society begins to use its powers politically, i.e., to aggrandize power, rather than economically, to produce, develop, and expand, the new Babels arise to bring in fresh confusion and destruction. Envy then becomes the basis for both politics and law, so that the state created by bramble men deserts justice for social justice, which is another term for power and envy legitimated. This Babel state then seeks controls rather than justice, because controls become the means of exercising its envy and power.

We have been describing the modern state, a Babel state. Its destiny is confusion. John Lukacs, in analyzing our modern 20th century world, says, "the greatest States, having accumulated unequaled powers, suddenly have found that they are becoming powerless."[19] No tyrant states of the past had powers as great as are routine for modern states. Lukacs sees the world in "a contradictory phase: integration contradicted by disintegration."[20] In the name of justice, truth is being by-passed and undermined.[21] Lukacs calls attention to the very different perspective of the American Puritans who saw science and intellect as instruments to further man's dominion under God. Cotton Mather, in 1723, called for the cultivation of science and inventions to put "the World in much better circumstances than it is in. We try for Machines to render the Wind as well as the Water Serviceable to us, and extend our Empire into all the Elements."[22] Such a goal rested on man under God

17. Helmut Schoeck: *Envy, A Theory of Social Behavior.* (New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace and World, (1966) 1969). p. 51.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
19. John Lukacs: *The Passing of the Modern Age.* (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1970). p. 44.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

exercising the implications of God's image in man in terms of the dominion mandate. The Babel state seeks instead to control, not to advance; it seeks a false and ungodly dominion grounded in power, not work, science, and inventions. The result is the pursuit of power in politics and economics, of ugliness in the arts, and of emptiness in everyday life. This ungodly dominion is one of negation, of hostility to God. As Camus said, "Since God claims all that is good in man, it is necessary to deride what is good and choose what is evil."[23]

In terms of this inversion, power replaced work as the driving force in the Babel state; bramble men regard work as the task of slaves. The philosopher-kings exercise power; the slaves work. The production demanded by the Babel state is directed towards its self-exaltation towards the conquest of other states, other peoples, and its own people. Production in the Soviet Union and Red China only marginally at best works to the advancement of the people; the welfare of the state and its rulers is the primary goal.

We saw earlier that a possible and perhaps likely meaning of Genesis 11:1 is that the whole earth had a common language and a common ownership of all things, i.e., that Babel was a communist society.

There is another interesting aspect to this narrative. In Genesis 11:4, the men of Babel say, "let us build us a city, and a tower." In verse 8, we are told that they stopped building work well before its completion. On the other hand, in verse 5, God speaks of the city and tower in the *past* tense, saying, let us "see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded," or, "which the sons of men built." God viewed the work at Babel, although far from complete, as *in effect completed*, because it was an evil intention in process of realization.

At Babel, men resumed the task in process before the Flood. At Sodom and Gomorrah, Assyria, Babylon, Rome, and in the modern states, men continue that task. The results are still the same, God's destroying judgment on man's Babylonian heart and works. The things which are, God subjects to His shaking, His destroying judgments, so that only those things which cannot be shaken may remain. (Heb. 12:18-29)

Man's attempt to unify man in his sin and revolt against God, and to take over ownership and control over all possessions from their true owner, God, is smashed. All possessions are a trust from the Lord; the status of civil government is that of a minister (Rom. 13:4), i.e., a deacon or steward, under God, and the same is true of all men.

This being the case, our work too is a stewardship and a trusteeship and is to be governed accordingly. When God created Adam, and set him in the Garden of Eden, He *first* commanded Adam to till or work the Garden, and to keep or guard it (Gen. 2:15). Only *after* that commandment to work is Adam

[23] Albert Camus: *The Rebel*. (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1956). p. 21.

told what he is permitted to eat (Gen. 2:16-17). Before the permission to eat of the fruits and produce came the necessity of being committed to work for the upkeep of the Garden.[24] There were boundaries placed on Adam's area, i.e., the limits of the Garden, on his diet, and on his activities or work, because the earth and Adam were alike God's creation and hence totally subject to His law-word.

In Babel, this order was reversed. The city, its tower, and both work and possessions therein were the property of Babel. Stewardship and responsibility were to the state, and work also. In the modern state, we are totally circumscribed by man's law, not God's. The boundaries of our life and work, as well as the uses of our money, are regulated by the state. This is the nature of every Tower of Babel, past and present. The future of all Babels is described by the angel of Revelation 14:8, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

The church at its worst has never equalled the modern state in its tyranny. It is a mark of the self-willed blindness of our time that men profess to fear a return to Christian rule rather than the statist tyranny which prevails.

A final note: why has Abarbanel's rendering of the text not received more consideration? It is a *textual* question, but can other considerations lead to other interpretations? Plato is, after all, a much honored man among scholars, and academicians have always been prone to give weight to the idols of the academy.

To illustrate the foibles of the academy, many scholars "cringe when they hear or read the term Biblical Archeology."[25] One scholar, in reviewing Lucas H. Grollenberg's *Atlas of the Bible* (1959) complains of Grollenberg's occasional theological viewpoint. He cites as an example of a statement "that many readers will find offensive", and calls it "a highly questionable historical statement", that Grollenberg should comment: "But for the Christians (the destruction of the Temple) was a material confirmation of a spiritual certainty. For them, the glory of Yahweh no longer dwelt in the Temple in Jerusalem, but in the glorified body of Jesus...The building destroyed by the Roman legions had lost all meaning and purpose with the glorification of Jesus."[26]

Another example: Eric V. Gritsch, in *Born Againism: Perspectives on a Movement* (published by Fortress, a religious press, in 1982), "confesses at the outset to some perplexity about what is meant by 'born-againism', but decides that it amounts to something like the fusion of millennialist and

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[24] Zlotowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

[25] Letter by Professor R. Thomas Schaub, in *Biblical Archeological Review*, Vol. IX, No. 6, p. 76, November-December, 1983.

[26] James Fleming, "Putting the Bible on the Map," in *ibid.*, p. 41.

perfectionist strains of American Protestantism."[27] Reviewer Balmer sees Gritsch's book as "competent, if uninspiring."

How competent can a book be which cannot identify what it writes, especially something so clearly stated in Scripture and in theological and popular writings?

Of the absurdities and pomposities of academic "scholarship," there is no end.

7. The Work of Christ

The Trinity is one in all its being and works, but, in the economy of the Godhead, one Person or another is the main agent of action. Thus, God the Father is most active in creation, God the Son in atonement and regeneration, and God the Spirit in regeneration (or, recreation) and sanctification.

The Gospel of John cites our Lord again and again concerning His work. The word used in the Greek text is *ergon*, work, task, deed, or business.

Christ in His incarnation was the work of the triune God, entering the world in flesh in order to redeem the world and to make it a new creation. Christ in His life spoke often of His work. In John 4:34, we have a particularly important statement concerning His work: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Part of Christ's work is to send forth His disciples, and those who come after them, to reap a human harvest (John 4:35-38). Harvests, says our Lord, are a question of timing. There is a time of sowing, a time for nurturing, and a time for reaping. The time for reaping in Judea had arrived. After that harvest, the field of Judea would be broken up for a re-sowing later.

In a parable of the Kingdom of God, our Lord speaks of the time factor in work: "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28). The failure of much work to be truly productive is that the full harvest is expected at the time of sowing. New farm and business ventures fail for lack of capitalization, i.e., the failure to realize that returns are usually a few years ahead and some after much work. In John 4:34 our Lord sees His earthly work in terms of the time factor: He has come to finish His part of a work in process in history.

The word *works* appears again in John 5:20 and 36. Our Lord uses the word to include all His activities, natural and supernatural. In Westcott's words, "All alike are wrought in fulfillment of one plan and by one power."[28] The works are to create in us a wonder, to make us marvel and to admire the power

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[27] Randall H. Balmer, "Fundamentalism Redux", in *The Reformed Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 6, June 1983, p. 27.

[28] B. F. Westcott: *The Gospel According to St. John.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1881) 1954). p. 90.

and grace of God. We are to be filled with awe and confidence because of Christ's work.

In terms of this, we are to work for the food which does not perish but endures unto everlasting life, according to our Lord in John 6:27. We are to forsake the humanistic return on work to work for the Lord and to receive a gift in return. The disciples asked, how do we do the works of God (John 6:28)? "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29; *ergon* is used in vv. 28, 29). Before any work, there is a faith, a premise for action; this foundation out of which godly work issues is faith. In Westcott's words, "This simple formula contains the complete solution of the relation of faith and works. Faith is the life of works; works are the necessity of faith."[29] For this reason, the works of an evil and unbelieving world are inescapably evil (John 7:7). Even Christ's work is viewed by the ungodly as evil (John 7:20-21), because the faith behind their thinking and doing is unregenerate and evil. All such men are incapable of Abraham's work, lacking Abraham's faith (John 8:39).

God's work in Christ is the work of redemptive love (John 9:3). When the night of judgment comes, no man can then work in the same historical sense (John 9:4). Christ's work is in the Father's Name, i.e., in His person and power (John 10:25). However good these works, they were offensive to the ungodly, who were ready to stone Him (John 10:32). Christ, however, speaks of the identity between Himself, His works, and God the Father: they are one (John 10:37,38). A tree is known by its fruits (Matt. 7:15-20). This unity of life, faith, and works is repeatedly stressed by our Lord, as witness John 14:10-12. Indeed, He cites His word *and* works as evidence of His unity with the Father. Any division between faith and works, or between the heart and the mind, is a Hellenic confusion of reality and anti-Biblical. In John 14:12, we are told, "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." The "greater works", as Westcott pointed out, are greater in that they will have wider spiritual affects unto all men and nations in terms of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The whole world shall be conquered because of what Christ did in Judea.

Christ's work was finished or perfected with His atonement and resurrection, and, as He gave Himself to that task, He spoke, praying to the Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). The word used, "finished", is *teleioo*, here *eteleoma*, completed, perfected. In John 19:30, on the cross, our Lord says, "It is finished" (*tetelestai*), it is perfected. His work of redemption was brought to its conclusion in history. A new world had been inaugurated, and Christ Himself is the firstfruit of that new creation (I Cor. 15:20).

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

What Christ's incarnation, life, work, death, and resurrection mean for us is spelled out by St. Paul, who declares:

> 9. For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.
> 10. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. (Col. 2:9-10)

While very man of very man, Christ is also very God of very God. He is the head of all principality, or every area of rule, and also of all power or authority. We are *complete* (*pleroo*), made full and complete only in Him. Paul says, moreover, that Christ, in whom we have redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14),

> 15....is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:
> 16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
> 17. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (Col. 1:15-17)

Since "all things were made by Him" (John 1:3), all things are under His government and are ordained to fulfil His purpose. The reconciliation of heaven and earth and of all things therein is an outcome of the exaltation of Christ (Col. 1:20).

Meeks suggests that the baptismal cry of the newly baptized believer was the Aramaic word, *Abba* Father, and he sees evidence of this in Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15f.[30] As Paul expresses it in Romans 8:15-16,

> 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.

Believers thus saw themselves as heirs of creation, with a mandate to occupy and possess all things for Christ. As against this, Roman tombstone epigraphs commonly repeated a grim joke about death: "I was not, I am not, I care not." This became so common that it was abbreviated to its initials in the Latin: "n.f.n.s.n.c."[31]

The believer in Christ has a work to do. The work of creation and atonement is completed by God; the work of regeneration and sanctification is in process. Our work is to bring all things under the dominion of Christ our King. His coming was the promise of our victory. J. M. Neale's (1818-1866) Christmas carol speaks of that triumph:

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[30] Wayne A. Meeks: *The First Urban Christians, The Social World of the Apostle Paul.* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983). p. 152.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Earth today rejoices,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya,
Death can hurt no more;
And celestial voices,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya,
Tell that sin is o'er.
David's sling destroys the foe:
Samson lays the temple low:
War and strife are done:
God and man are one.

Reconciliation,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya,
Peace that lasts for ay,
Gladness and salvation,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya,
Came on Christmas Day.
Gideon's fleece is wet with dew:
Solomon is crowned anew:
War and strife are done:
God and man are one.

Though the cold grows stronger,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya,
Though the world loves night;
Yet the days grow longer,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya,
Christ is born our Light.
Now the dial's type is learnt:
Burns the bush that is not burnt:
War and strife are done;
God and man are one.[32]

"The dial's type is learnt", i.e., Christ's birth unfolds the meaning of time, life, and work. At His coming, we are told, "Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12). The wrath of the enemy is a result of a knowledge of the forthcoming defeat.

On the other hand, our work is assured of certain triumph, because it is under the power and authority of our God, of Christ our King. He is the Creator and Redeemer, the head of every rule and authority, and the Lord whose exaltation brings about the reconciliation and re-creation of heaven and earth.

8. Work Versus Theft

One of the problems in discussions of work is that they are usually set in a false frame of reference. A false picture is possible with accurate but limited

[32] Percy Dearmer, R. Vaughan Williams, Martin Shaw, editors: *The Oxford Book of Carols*. (London, England: Oxford University Press, (1928) 1929). p. 285.

data. Thus, man can be defined in terms of his sexuality, or his race, without a single mis-statement of fact, and yet with a radical perversion of the truth. A man is more than his race or his gender.

Where *work* is concerned, the false frameworks are many. The subject can be approached in terms of the relationship of the employer and the employed, or the class status of the work, or the state regulations governing work, and so on. Such an approach reduced work not only to economics, but, unhappily, to politically controlled or union controlled economics. *Work* is a subject inclusive of both "capital", "labor", and much more.

Work is also a moral fact, a moral statement. St. Paul calls attention to this moral *and* theological aspect of work in Ephesians 4:28: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Again, in II Thessalonians 3:10, St. Paul says, "For even when we were with you, this we *commanded* you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Men now seriously limit the meaning of Paul's words to have *theft* mean merely the act of a criminal who robs others. The law and the prophets are clear that the meaning is far more inclusive. The old English divine, Paul Bayne (d. 1617), saw clearly what theft means. "First he that by any injustice getteth from his neighbors, he stealeth before God; as if by unlawful means I get anything, or by abuse of lawful means." Bayne included many bankruptcies; gamesters; false weights, measures and false wares; lies with intent to defraud, and much more.

Next, said Bayne, "The *second* way of stealth is by withholding that our neighbor should have, as to withhold dues from the commonwealth, from the church, from the poor; to withhold wages from the servant, if it be but the least space of time to his loss; Lev. xix. 13, 'The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.'"

Third, Bayne said, very tellingly:

> If we endamage by giving heedlessly occasion of our neighbor's hurt, or by not preventing his hurt, when we are able, it is against the commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*, as those laws of kindling fire, of not helping our neighbor's beast under his burden, do testify. Now we partake with others when by counsel, concealment, sharing with them, gaining wittingly by their stealth, as brokers that buy this or that for nought which a thief hath stolen, are thieves at the second-hand receiving.
>
> Now, then, this thus opened, how many Christians continue stealing! how many overreach in bargaining! use deceit in weights! how many by lying, false reckoning, by wicked borrowing! how many thievish Nabals! how many careless what scare they do another! We that are Christians must take heed we get not anything unrighteously. Naboth's vineyard did eat out all that wretched king's possessions. A little got by stealth may waste great substance. Men think it is a little thing, but be

> the gain never so small, it excuseth not theft. Be a man naught with a woman, rich or poor, noble or base, fair or foul, his uncleanness is not excused. Again, he that for a little will sin, will mend his service if the devil will mend his wages. Above all overreach not poor ones, it be but a penny matter, it may be that penny is like the widow's mite, all they have. God is an avenger of all these things, I Thess. iv. 6.[33]

I cite Bayne, from almost 400 years ago, to make clear how the church once viewed Paul's text. Some commentators now say that the church in Ephesus apparently had some converted thieves, and hence Paul's comment. There is no evidence for this. What we do know is that the Roman Empire had a welfare economy; the kind of theft described by Bayne was then commonplace. We have the same situation today. Industrial and other corporations, farmers, workers, nonworkers and others all want to live by legalized theft, by subsidies, welfare grants, protective tariffs, and much, much more. Paul lived in a time when highly respectable and unrespectable men alike exploited the Roman Empire and its treasury. We must see Paul's meaning to profit by his words.

Among modern commentators, Markus Barth has seen this also. In the Greek text, the word *thief* is not used, but rather "the stealing one." Paul calls for honest work. The stealing ones made money without working, exploited slaves and employees, took advantage of those in need, robbed God as did Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and others, such as non-tithers. In Barth's words, "Their way of making a living is according to the apostle's message no less opposed to the order of God's people than is a successful career in burglary, larceny, embezzlement or bank-robbery. In either case thievery may be or become a profession."[34]

All are to labor, doing that which is *good*, i.e., lawful, profitable, and godly. As Solomon says, "Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honored" (Prov. 27:18). In other words, a tree bears fruit when labor is expended upon it; a good master, whether it be man or God, rewards one who serves faithfully.

We are given a moral antithesis between stealing and work. This moral antitheses rests on a theological one; it is a statement concerning reality. Those who love death and hate God (Prov. 8:36) will live by theft and will get their wages, death (Rom. 6:23). The Lord's people will choose life and God's law and will be blessed with His care and with eternal life.

Paul laid emphasis on manual labor in his own life as well as in his teaching. To "work with one's own hands" may have been an idiom for gainful work. This was an ancient Biblical and Hebraic emphasis, and one the

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[33] Paul Bayne: *An Exposition on Ephesians*. (Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1959). pp. 376-378.

[34] Markus Barth: *Ephesians*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974). p. 515.

Greco-Roman world needed badly. It is interesting to see what Paul says in Romans 2:21-23:

> 21. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?
> 22. Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?
> 23. Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

He identifies as hypocrisy, and as breaking God's law, three sins which he links closely: theft (as has been already described), adultery, and sacrilege. The indirect, legalized theft, and a covert sin like adultery, performed in secrecy, are compared to sacrilege.

The stealing ones gain things from others legally but immorally. Socialism is the essence of such a way of life. Paul lived in such a world. The opposite of theft is work, but, more accurately, work to have something to share with the needy. It is *commanded* that those who *refuse* to work be not fed; charity to such is a sin. They are not needy but sinful. Thus, Paul *commands* honest work in I Thessalonians 4:10-11 (cf. I Cor. 4:12). Those who will not work, Paul says, become busybodies, disorderly people bent on managing others (II Thess. 3:10-12).

As against statist welfare, a Christian concern for one another is required. Thus, we work in terms of God's dominion mandate, to create a godly society (Gen. 1:26-28). We work to provide for our own household, for, as Paul, says, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). This sentence requires the care of our own families and our Christian family, Christ's people.

Psalm 112:9 says of those who are faithful in obedience to God's command to relieve the needy: "He (the good man) hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour."

Turning again to Bayne, for a telling comment, we are told:

> If we will perform this duty acceptably, we must look to three things:
> (1.) To the ground of our alms.
> (2.) To the end.
> (3.) The manner.
> (1.) The ground of it must be, a loving and merciful heart; this is the soul of an alms deed. If we should give all we have without love, it were nothing.
> (2.) We must do it, only eyeing God's glory and our neighbor's need, not for ostentation. "He that distributeth must do it in simplicity," Rom. xii. 8. Many will sound trumpets, and blaze abroad deeds of this nature.
> (3.) For the manner of it, it must be *readily*, 'Be ready to distribute.' I

> Tim. vi. 18, *Cheerfully; 'God loveth a cheerful giver.' Liberally*; 'He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly.'[35]

It should be noted that Bayne used the old word *alms*, a word now in disrepute. The socialist movement heaped scorn, from its earliest days, on "almsgiving" as though it manifested some kind of social disease. There was a reason for this attitude. They wanted to replace alms-giving with socialism and theft. We need to restore the Biblical perspective, work, tithing, and giving to the needy.

Until we do so, we shall have a civilization whose premise is advancement through theft. The politics of theft insists that it represents brotherly love in action, but it divides men by feeding envy and class conflict. A critique of the politics of theft will not in and of itself alter men and nations. Only regenerate men who take work, tithing, and giving to the needy as a mandate from the Lord can restructure society.

9. Work and Dominion

The Biblical doctrine of work can be briefly summarized in two key verses:

> 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. (Gen. 1:28)
> For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. (II Thess. 3:10)

In Genesis 1:28, we have, *first*, the *commandment* to work. To exercise dominion and to subdue the earth requires work. This commandment to work is not a curse, and it precedes the Fall, so that work is clearly a part of the state of innocence. It is emphatically not a product of sin.

Second, the English translation, replenish, has sometimes created problems. The meaning here is to *fill* the earth, to colonize it and to bring every area under man's dominion. The modern environmentalist's attitude, based commonly on a hatred of God and man, is hostile to filling the earth, as though this is of necessity a destructive calling. This is a myth. Man the sinner can be and commonly is destructive, but the calling of the redeemed man is to work for a subduing and a dominion which develops the resources and potentialities of the earth for God's Kingdom.

Third, the goal of work should be godly dominion. Work is not an end in itself, nor is the monetary income it produces the goal. The laborer is emphatically worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7; I Tim. 5:18); work and pay cannot be separated, but neither can they be equated as though there is nothing more to work than its monetary return. In other words, work *is* an

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[35] Bayne, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

economic fact, but it *must be* more than an economic fact. In any society where work is seen as simply an economic necessity and fact, there will be a decline in productivity towards the subsistence level. If men only work to eat (or to play), the meaning and the goal of work soon fades away. As we have seen, work is a moral fact, to be contrasted with theft. There is another contrast: work, true, godly work is productive, not destructive. If work is reduced to economics, then destructive forces are unleashed. Marxism in particular is guilty of this. Work is an economic fact and little more; value is also an economic fact. As a result, Marxist societies are retrogressive. A man when free from the corruption of modern humanism, will work in terms of God's calling, and, under God, for his family, for his personal realization of his abilities, and more. These are essentially non-economic motives. Economies self-destruct when their motivating forces become essentially economic. God's commandment ties true work to dominion in terms of His covenant and Kingdom. This is why work is a commandment, and implicit in God's law. The Ten Commandments declare, "Six days shalt thou labour" (Ex. 20:9); the six days can mean work at our place of employment or at our home in household duties. The Fourth Commandment thus commands rest on the seventh day, *and* work on the other six days of the week.

Fourth, God, in giving the commandment to work and to exercise dominion, thereby *blessed* man. After the Fall, man's total life, thus including his work (Gen. 3:9-19), was placed under the curse, but the curse was not work but God's judgment on man in all his being and work. By blessing work and dominion, God pronounced it *happy*, good, and fulfilling for man. As we give ourselves to godly work, we place ourselves under God's blessing, whereas work apart from God moves under His curse.

Fifth, the dominion mandate (Gen. 1:26-28) separates work from necessity. This is a very important fact. In much of the world, work is an economic fact and necessity, and, as such, a manifestation of the curse. In this perspective, work becomes drudgery. In the perspective of fallen man, deliverance from work is seen as a blessing and privilege. Thus, it is said with envy of some men, "He doesn't have to work." A society with such an ideal, and such a goal, is in serious trouble. Its life-purpose has become non-productivity, which is another way of saying death. When the elite becomes a leisure class, we have a society or culture in its decline. A leisure class is parasitic; where it is viewed as an elite, the goal of that society is a parasitic one. Only those segments which reject that ideal, and are free to reject it, can then maintain and advance social order. Their destruction is the destruction of the culture. The rise of a leisure class, an elite, means also the rise of statism, because priority is given to money and power over faith and work. The elite in fiction and film today is, behind the variety of facades, a leisure class of self-styled elite peoples. Not surprisingly, the businessman is presented as a villain, because he is a producer. Such film and fiction tales may seemingly idolize

the worker, but what these writers mean by worker is actually *a revolutionist*, not a producer, which a true working man is. To reduce work to a necessity is to view it as an evil, perhaps a necessary evil, but an evil all the same. Let us remember that some of the student movements of the 1960s called for a work-free world, one in which total automation would produce, supposedly, all food, goods, and machines. Men would then be "free" for drugs and fornication. The role of modern art and the media in propagating a false view of work, and the idea of total leisure as a worthy goal, has been very great. Not surprisingly, at the same time work and self-discipline have been abandoned by the arts and by many people as well. It is interesting to note that film scores have at times given us better music simply because the discipline of the form commands better resources in the musician or composer.

Elitism is anti-work because its goal is a superior status, power and money. The role of elitism in history has been a deadly one. It very early had a classic statement in Plato's *Republic*. In this country also it has had an ugly history. Thus, basic to the Southern defense of slavery was an elitism and, for the reigning white males, a leisure class concept. This was the first deadly force to inflict itself on the South. The second was the imposition of a coercive order by the North after 1864. However, what the North condemned in the South it hypocritically adopted, and the Northern way of life became elitist also.

Elitism is a form of abdication of responsibility in favor of control and power. A man can control his family without any sense of responsibility. By means of controls, he seeks power and self-exaltation. Elitism seeks exclusiveness, because it has no legitimate grounds for claiming superiority. If the elitist travels, he wants "unspoiled" places, i.e., where no one from his country except his own circle can be or have been, because he cannot stand being compared to his "lesser" fellow countrymen.

The goal of elitism is power, control, and money, to gain social status. The elitist will give lip service to equality while undercutting it by his controls. What he hates is a legitimate hierarchy, because the essence of a true hierarchy is *responsibility*. The word *hierarch* comes from two Greek words, *sacred*, and *to rule*. Hierarchy means to establish leadership, authority, and rule on holy premises, on God's word and order. An elite order is man-made; men determine who shall lead, and, usually, the elite claims that power on its own authority. Modern political orders, democracies, Marxist and fascist societies, dictatorships, and the like are all elitist because man-ordained. Where a hierarchy is concerned, we can differ as to the structure of that hierarchy, but we cannot Biblically differ from the premise that God *requires* a hierarchy, i.e., godly rule and authority in a society.

Both elitism and hierarchy have to do with *dominion*. It should be apparent by now that godly dominion, in whatever field, agricultural, commercial,

scientific, ecclesiastical, or any other, must begin with work and end in service to God and man.

The implication, moreover, of Proverbs 8:36 is not simply that the hatred of God and His law-word is death, but that the love and service of God and His law-word and order is life.

10. Work and Just Measures

Just weights and balances are commanded by God's law and referred to repeatedly:

> 35. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure.
> 36. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. (Lev. 19:35-36)

> 13. Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small.
> 14. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.
> 15. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and a just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
> 16. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God. (Deut. 25:13-16)

> A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight. (Prov. 11:1)

> A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work. (Prov. 16:11)

> 10. Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.
> 23. Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good. (Prov. 20:10,23)

> Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. (Ezek. 45:10)

> Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? (Micah 6:10)

These are major references to the subject. False weights, monetary and commercial, are, *first*, called injustice, and an abomination in the sight of God and hateful to Him. *Second*, a nation with just measures has the promise of a long life, whereas the implication is that God's judgment is on those who falsify weights and measures in any and every area. *Third*, God calls "a just weight...his delight." It is an indication of justice in a society, just as a false monetary measure such as fiat money is an indication of planned injustice. *Fourth*, false measures are called "the treasures of wickedness," the essential means of falsifying the life of a society.

It is important to note that the rabbinic commentaries held that Ezekiel 45:10 is a part of a Messianic passage. The teaching of the Sages in *Toras Kohanim* to Leviticus 19:35 held:

> For he who measures (for the purpose of a sale) is like a judge and if he is deceitful...he causes five things: He defiles the Land, desecrates God's Name; causes the *Shechinah* to depart; causes Israel to fall by the sword; and causes them to be exiled from their land. Foremost in Yechezkel's mind is the need to safeguard the community from such abuses which bring these five results in their wake.[36]

Note this important fact: every man, as he deals with measures, is compared to a judge, meting out either justice or injustice. Injustice in this matter has as its consequence abandonment by God of the unjust people to judgment.

Thus, the requirement of just weights and just measures is the requirement of justice: it requires work as the basic source of wealth. Falsity in weights and measures makes *injustice and theft* basic to a society and is productive of a parasitic economy and finally death. Work must be behind economic activity in order to have true productivity, and work must be behind money in order to have a just economic and social order.

Let us look again at the Biblical statements. Proverbs 16:11 says, "A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work." We are told that there is a fundamental God-given order in creation; material things are measurable because they have an essential character by virtue of their creation. It is the order basic to creation which makes science possible. The constancy of things is His handiwork. Thus, whether we use the Biblical weights and measures, or the Anglo Saxon, we are measuring with an assurance of a stable and constant realm. Hence, in the realm of money, gold and silver were once used in terms of weights; the shekel of Scripture is a weight of gold and silver. The U.S. coinage of gold was also once in terms of weight and a stable, established measurement. This dependency on the objective weight of things is what Proverbs 16:11 means in declaring that "all the weights...are his (God's) work."

Fiat money, on the other hand, means a constantly changing standard of measurement; the whole economy is thereby falsified and rendered unjust. The same is true of fiat laws, whether in church, state, or any other realm. Fiat or man-made laws simply enact injustice and codify it into the life of a society. Man-made laws are false measures. Fiat money and laws make all of a society's operations move steadily from justice to injustice. All laws legalizing abortion and homosexuality, thus, represent false measures and injustice.

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[36] Rabbi Moshe Eisemann, translation and commentary: *The Book of Ezekiel*, Vol. III. (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Mesorah Publishers, 1980). p. 711.

Every attempt to create an economy and a monetary system on man's fiats is thus an attempt by man to play god and to by-pass work as the means of productivity. The result is eventually disaster.

One consequence of such politico-economic policies is a return to slavery. The more socialist a country, i.e., the more rigorously it is dedicated to fiat laws and money, the more marked the return to slavery. Slavery violates the fundamental premise of dominion work, responsibility. In slavery, an elite group orders work done. Personal motivation and purpose is replaced by social plans and goals. The elite assume more and more responsibility and freedom from control while placing all others under the slavery of a radically regulated and controlled society.

Work and the tithe are the marks of responsible men and societies, whereas the income tax is a product of and a stimulus to irresponsibility. Let us remember the ancient rabbinic comment that the law of just weights and just measures makes every man a judge. Preceding the rise of the income tax there was a marked decline in the integrity and responsibility of individual men. Having abdicated as honest judges, they were creating a society of fiat laws, weights, and measures which reflected their own disposition. Before the Federal Reserve System was created, a growing number of Americans saw a just monetary weight as a "cross of gold."

Ecclesiastical antinomianism supplanted God's established and eternal law, God's justice or righteousness, with pietistic emotions, good feelings, and inspirational yearnings. In the politico-economic sphere, subjective intentions and good will replaced classical economics and Biblical law. The humanistic will to do good became the new messiah, which came to focus clearly in Woodrow Wilson's "order." What this means was that society was now man-centered and governed by man's fiat will. Wilson succeeded in one respect: he made the world safe for democracy *but not for man.* People's regimes have proliferated since then, as fascist, marxist socialist, democratic, and dictator-run states, all claiming to fulfil the will of "the people." In the process, the individual man has suffered greatly.

Work has been replaced by the politics of the people. Productivity has suffered accordingly.

Basic to any unjust society is a humanistic measure for morality, money, and all things else. These constitute, in Micah's words, "the treasures of wickedness." Every capitol in our world today prizes these false measures, which, according to Scripture, can only shorten the lives of nations and bring judgment.

There must be a restoration of the just weight and measure which is God's delight. The starting point is dominion work, tithing, and giving to the needy. The work of Christian reconstruction begins here; this is alone essentially constructive, and every other starting point is fallacious.

A final note: the word "abomination" is regularly applied to false measures. It is a translation of a Hebrew word meaning loathsome, or disgusting, something repulsive and offensive. Any social order which embraces fiat measures in law, money, morality or any other sphere has embraced something of radical repulsiveness to God. The failure of men to see how repulsive their false measurements are is due to the fact that they themselves have become loathsome in God's sight. The consequence is judgment.

11. The Eschatology of Work

As has been noted, there is a difference between a hierarchy and an elite. The one is work oriented, the other privilege and leisure oriented. For a people to accept the fact of hierarchy means to accept a given variation of responsibilities in society. Paul speaks of this in I Corinthians 12:3-31; he speaks of the body as one with many members or parts, all sharing a common life and purpose in Christ. The unregenerate lack such a oneness except in sin. The redeemed are still given to the divisiveness of sin because of their imperfect sanctification, but they also have the Holy Spirit and His call to unity. Their being thus moves to this unity in Christ, and a recognition of the hierarchy of callings and functions in Him.

When we recognize the one body, and a hierarchy of functions therein, we accept our calling and responsibility within it, and we respect the status of others, both "above" and "below" us. Such a hierarchical society does not preclude change nor rise and fall in status, because responsibilities govern place, not elitist principles of position. The idea of a hierarchy presupposes, among other things, two facts. *First*, position depends upon God's authority and order, not man's. There is a given, sacred order in all creation. Man's order must seek to follow and be governed by God's order as set forth in His law word. Humanistic concepts of order are thus negated. *Second*, the Biblical doctrine of mankind has certain necessary implications. Man was created a covenantal creature, so that, whether in sin or in grace, he is governed by that fact, judged or blessed by it, and surrounded by God's covenant and law as the condition of his life. The air man breathes is covenantal air. The requirement of the covenant is that humanity become one body in Christ. The functioning body, Paul reminds us, moves as it is directed by the Head, Jesus Christ. Its unity benefits all equally. The joy and victory of the Head is at the same time the joy and victory of all its members.

Life in the hierarchy of the body militates against envy, and, in perfection, precludes it. It should not surprise us that Helmut Schoeck, in his study of *Envy* (1966), found Christianity alone successful in combating the socially destructive force of envy. Envy grasps at privilege, because it equates life with it. It seeks privilege for itself while resenting privilege in others.

There is another aspect of importance here. To accept our place and responsibility in life and society means to be free of envy and the guilt created by envy. The envious are easily conned into guilt; they are made to feel guilty about the starving people of India, the lot of the American Indians, and much, much more. It should be noted, however, that guilt is a paralyzing force. Those conned into guilt are not moved to action. Missions to Hindus and to American Indians are almost exclusively by Christians, not by guilt-mongers and guilt bearers. Elitism and envy are productive of guilt and inaction. They are also destructive of work, because their essence is inaction, and they are non-productive social forces.

Godly work is purposive and thus is governed by an eschatology. Basic to an eschatology is a faith. George Orwell, in an essay of March 3, 1944, spoke of the decline of belief in life after death, a disbelief he shared. Western culture has been built on a faith in God and life after death, heaven and hell. Orwell felt that civilization could not be salvaged unless man could "evolve a system of good and evil which is independent of heaven and hell." The psychological difference which disbelief makes for man Orwell felt is too great to be overlooked.[37] To hold that the individual at death perishes forever means that the only "immortality" is the limited one which collective groups have, most notably the state. As a result, the scientific state, as the agency which some believe will conquer death and human ills, becomes the de facto god and the sole vehicle of on-going life. The state's triumph over sin and death becomes man's sole hope of escaping the crushing forces of sin and death. Hence, more power to the state. In the eschatology of unbelief, man has a choice between personal oblivion and the possible conquest of sin and death by the scientific socialist state. In such a perspective, no prospect pleases, because every prospect is vile!

We began our study of work with a verse which we can now return to from another perspective, Psalm 126:6:

> He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

The premise of the verse is a famine situation; the sower takes the "precious seed", much of the family's survival food, to sow his fields, trusting that neither storm nor drought will destroy his crops. In time, his act of faith is blessed, and he reaps a rich harvest. The implication is that godly faith works with a faith in God's future. A fallen world, sickened by the curse, creates crises such as famine. In such a situation, the godly will work under God with a faith in God's future, and they shall return, bringing their sheaves with them.

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[37] Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, editors: *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: As I Please, 1943-1945*, Vol. III. (New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanich, 1968). p. 103.

Because the world is God's creation, it accomplishes God's purpose. This is true also of the curse. The curse saves God's eschatological movements in history by destroying man's efforts to play god and by forcing men to a dependence on Him.

At the Tower of Babel, an elitist conception of society was brought to confusion by God. Babel was not ruled by a productive goal under God but by a conception of elitist order. Some of the documents of Freemasonry claim a descent for that fraternity from the builders of Babel. The goal of Babel was the unification of mankind outside of God; its created order had as its goal power and status, not godly work. Its imitators in Freemasonry come together with no production goal but a dream of rule, set forth by Albert Pike in *Morals and Dogma*. Pike declared, "Masonry is the apotheosis of WORK."[38] However, what is meant by work is *Masonry*, and its goals. Hence, "When the Brethren meet together, they are at *labor.*"[39] The *works* moreover are to be aimed at social change in line with Masonic goals; they will in time "cleanse" the "Augean Stables of the World" and "the accumulated uncleanness and misery of centuries."[40]

Too often, the church has a like goal. True work is seen as institutional, i.e., in terms of the institution of the church rather than as unto the Lord. The scope of the eschatology of work is thus reduced to an institutional level.

When work is God-centered, it moves in terms of the premise of Psalm 126:6, namely, that the God given order of creation, as well as the providence of God, works to further all efforts in His name and for His glory. These efforts and work are more than ecclesiastical. At least two to four times a month, I hear from very able and superior people who, with a deepening faith, feel impelled to enter some form of "full-time Christian service." Every honest calling is, however, an area of full-time Christian service. To limit God's service to a particular sphere is to have a non-Biblical conception of the sacred and secular, and to limit godly work to a single sphere. This false division has been a significant part of our present cultural crisis. The world has been secularized by making all non-ecclesiastical work outside of or peripheral to the realm of the sacred. Because God made the world, He made all things good (Gen. 1:31), and all things holy, set apart for Him. Things are profane when men and their motives are profane. The clergy can be and often have been profane, and the same is true of every profession, calling, or variety of work. Work becomes holy when it is governed by God's law word and eschatology.

In our time, because of the prevalence of profane thinking, false notions proliferate. One has reference to hierarchy and work. The fact of a hierarchy

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38. Albert Pike: *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*. (Washington, D. C.: (1871) 1950). p. 340.
39. *Idem.*
40. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

of functions does not mean a hierarchy of importance in the purposes of God. In I Corinthians 12:3-31, when Paul speaks of the body, he stresses the unity of the body. Every member is a necessary part of the living organism. The liver may be never seen, but its function is life-sustaining, and, without it, the body perishes.

Elitism wants a world of people made in its own image, and it cannot tolerate what is the essence of the body, unity in diversity. Paul asks, "If the whole body were an eye" (I Cor. 12:17), how could there be any functioning, or how could there be a body? The illness of one member or part of the body is the illness of all, of the total body (I Cor. 12:26).

Some would limit Paul's metaphor of the body to the church. Rather, because the word used is *ecclesia*, the meaning of which is congregation, assembly, or realm, the reference is to the Kingdom of God. It was then mainly limited to some small congregations, but it was God's realm which Paul has in mind.

The word *ecclesia* comes from the Greek origin of *ek-kaleo*, to summon an army to assemble, from *kaleo*, to call. It was in origin a religious-political assembly. The LXX uses *ecclesia* to translate *qabal*, the Hebrew word which in its earliest use meant to summon to war all the men capable of bearing arms (Gen. 4:26; Num. 22:5, etc.). In Ephesians and Colossians, *ecclesia* has a cosmic scope. Paul at times speaks of the *ecclesia* as a building in process, a metaphor he merges with the idea of a body. The *ecclesia* can be a small group meeting in a home, and it is also a cosmic power. It is also a family, and the members are brothers and sisters and a kingdom under Christ the Lord.

All the members have a function, a local function within the house congregation, and a function in the world, wherein they manifest the works of Christ in and through them. The body does not exist for the institution's sake, but for Christ and His world-wide Kingdom. If the church has a false eschatology, its work will have a false focus. If a church is not governed by the dominion mandate and a call to victory, it will be governed by defeatism.

Meanwhile, the elite will work for an elitist society in which they are everything, and the people are nothing. The "scientific" interest in cloning is elitist. The dream from Plato's day has been to command cow-like masses who will serve the purposes of the elite. The dream of cloning is a hope to stamp out docile creatures who will serve the elite as their social slaves. This is a profane eschatology, and a dream of a man-made hell.

12. Holy Offices

We come now to a critical aspect of the meaning of work. It comes to focus in the English word *office*, as it appears in the King James Bible and elsewhere. In Romans 12:4, we read, in the KJV, "all members have not the same *office.*" The word *office* appears in the English in Romans 11:13, but

the Greek word is *diakonian*, meaning service, so the reference is not to a status but to a work. In I Timothy 3:1, the word *office* is a rendering of *ergon*, work, and in Hebrews 7:5, it refers to *hierateia*, priesthood.

We have seen that *hierarchy*, sacred rule, is a Biblical premise. The word *office* would seem to confirm the belief that, in a hierarchy, there are *persons* whose *office* makes them stand before others. In other words, the popular notion of a hierarchy seems to be confirmed.

At this point, a glance at Confraternity-Douay version of the Bible is of interest. Romans 12:4 reads, "yet all the members have not the same *function,*" i.e., *function*, not *office* as in the KJV. We have the same translation, "not all these parts have the same *function*" in the translation by R. A. Knox, a notable Roman Catholic version. This is an ironic fact. The Catholic versions have a more "Protestant" reading than the key Protestant version!

The fact is that these Catholic versions are right. The word translated is *praxis*, a deed, doing, or function. This word places a different meaning on the fact of hierarchy. Hierarchy means that all authority comes from the Triune God and His word. On the various levels of a hierarchy all positions or offices are derivative. They are functions, deeds, or works ordained by God, and they are legitimate only insofar as they are faithful to God. Thus, for an ecclesiastical "authority" to use the dignity of his function to advocate abortion, disarmament, or homosexuality means that he has denied his function by doing so.

In other words, what we call the "office" of a presbyter, bishop, or pastor, or the "office" of a civil magistrate, is not a condition of man, but a function under God. The power is not given to a man but to a function under God and His word, the Word made flesh and His written word. Men are the ministers thereof.

At this point, it can be noted parenthetically that, in the medieval era, some theologians held that a tyrannical ruler had forfeited his function and could therefore be slain. Without agreeing at all with that conclusion, we can agree with the premise. The hierarchy of powers is not in terms of man's birth or election, but in terms of God's word and government. Submission to the powers that be is premised on the fact that they are ordained to be a "terror" to the evil, not to the good (Rom. 13:1-4).

Calvin dealt with this fact in discussing the jurisdiction of the church. He saw authority and "office" as a ministration or a function, not as an immanent power which is an aspect of a human order rather than a function under God. He wrote:

> On the other hand, also, it was necessary that the most unequivocal testimony should be given to their hearers, that the doctrine of the gospel was not the word of the apostles, but of God himself; not a voice issuing

> from the earth, but descended from heaven. For these things, the remission of sins, the promise of eternal life, and the message of salvation, cannot be in the power of man. Therefore Christ has testified that, in the preaching of the gospel, nothing belonged to the apostles, except the ministration of it; that it was he himself who spoke and promised every thing by the instrumentality of their mouths; and, consequently, that the remission of sins which they preached was the true promise of God, and that the condemnation which they denounced was the certain judgment of God. Now, this testification has been given to all ages, and remains unaltered, to certify and assure us all, that the word of the gospel, by whomsoever it may happen to be preached, is the very sentence of God himself, promulgated from his heavenly tribunal, recorded in the book of life, ratified, confirmed, and fixed in heaven. Thus we see, that the power of the keys, in these passages, is no other than the preaching of the gospel, and that, considered with regard to men, it is not so much authoritative as ministerial; for, strictly speaking, Christ has not given this power to men, but to his word, of which he has appointed men to be the ministers.[41]

Paul, in I Corinthians 7:20, declares, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." Knox rendered it, "Everyone has his own vocation, in which he was called; let him keep to it." Paul has reference to some who were slaves; he made clear that freedom was better, but freedom was not to come from anarchy or revolution. The Christian recourse is very different. The world is to be transformed by regeneration, not revolution. While Calvin recognized that civil conflict was sometimes necessary, he felt it had to be on legal grounds, not in terms of a personal decision by any rebellious person.

At this point, those who opposed and those who allowed for armed resistance were in agreement. An "office" is a legal fact; it is a function which by the law of God or of man, or both, has a de facto legal existence. However, the law, in any Biblical sense, is not of man, nor is its end man, but the Lord. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1), whether as a means to bless us, or to be a just curse unto us. The law which governs all of history is God's, and the "office" also. Where the "office" or function becomes faithless and evil, as in the current church and state conflicts, there must be resistance.

Thus, we must begin with the fact that, according to Scripture, all "offices", positions, and human authorities are functions, deeds, or works. Whatever they may be in practice, they are in reality hierarchical functions. They are thus functions of a sacred or holy rule or government.

The response to all such functions must also be a function, a work, deed, or doing. The work or function in a hierarchical society is not limited to the "office" holder; every man has a work or function. In terms of this, it is necessary for men to say at times, as did St. Peter, "We ought to obey God

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41. John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. IV, Chapter XI, Vol. II. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). p. 485f.

rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Failure to do so is a sin, as is abuse of "office." It constitutes another form of the abuse of "office" or function.

The word "office" has in the dictionary ten meanings. Four of these refer to a building or a portion of a building, and a fifth to a statist position, such as a governor, president, or bureaucrat. It is thus important to remember, against this growing usage of the word *office*, an earlier meaning which is closer to Scripture, and which is reflected in the King James usage. This earlier meaning continues in liturgical churches which speak of the stated services of daily prayer and worship as "the divine office." Very early, the church recited psalms, sang hymns, and prayed regularly, continuing the form of service used in the synagogue. The terms "divine service" and "divine office" have both been used; both refer to a function of the church. Our concern here is not the variety of liturgies used but the fact that the central aspect of the life of the church, common prayer, public worship, or the divine offices, whatever the term used, has reference to a function, a work, deed, or doing. The positions or "office" within the church as well as its worship constitute functions. These are sacred or holy functions.

In the early church, one of the "office" was that of door-keepers, or ostiarii. They were comparable to sextons in the modern church; their function was only to open and shut the doors. In times of persecution, this was often a very responsible function. All the same, despite its limited function, the door-keepers were regarded as an *order* of the church.[42] They were thus a part of the hierarchy of the church. This was in faithfulness to Ezra 7:24, which sets apart everyone connected with worship as a part of the sacred rule of God's House and hence exempt from taxation.

In every realm, however, sacred rule, the government of God and His law, must prevail. In terms of Scripture, all honest callings are functions or works of God's people, in God's Kingdom, and as an aspect of the holiness of dominion work.

13. Hierarchical Work

In Exodus 20:24-26, we have a law with respect to the priestly office which has some interesting implications:

> 24. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.
>
> 25. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

[42] Joseph Bingham: *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Vol. I. (London, England: Reeves and Turner, 1878). p. 115f.

> 26. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

With respect to the garb of the priests, we are told, "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach" (Ex. 28:42).

The significance of this is that God prescribes every approach by man to Himself. Man cannot formulate his own way to God nor establish his own righteousness or justice. In God's world, only God's way is legitimate. The world is not man's creation, and therefore man cannot impose his own concepts of truth and order on God's realm.

This was set forth tellingly in the construction of the altar. Elsewhere in the sanctuary, man's abilities as an artisan had a controlled freedom to work. The altar setting forth God's atonement, had to be made of unhewn stone, and, in the tabernacle, according to God's strict pattern. Man makes no contribution towards the work of his salvation; it is entirely the work of God.

To signify that he contributed nothing, the priest approached the altar with a prescribed garment. To this day, clerical garb has this rational, to cover the man to indicate that the work he does is God's work, not his own.

The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is an ancient one. In Exodus 19:6, the Lord declares to Israel, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." This is restated in I Peter 2:9. The doctrine of vocation or calling is closely related to this. Because the whole world is God's creation, every legitimate calling has the responsibility to make every realm holy unto the Lord. The vision of Zechariah 14:20-21 is that all things will in time become "Holiness unto the LORD."

The priestly garb was designed in particular to cover the pudenda, in order to emphasize the separation of Biblical faith from the fertility religions. The fertility cults stressed man's potency in relationship to the gods and the universe. Ritual paganism, the *ritus paganus*, presupposed "the potency of one's own body...to ward off evil powers and awaken fruitful ones."[43] Witches used nakedness to enhance their power.[44] In such thinking, man is the source of creative power; he is the self-conscious catalyst of creation.

The Biblical doctrine is the antithesis of this. The triple office of Christ as our federal head is priest, prophet, and king. As kings in Him, we exercise dominion and rule the earth; as prophets, we declare God's word and develop its implications in every sphere of life and thought; as priests, we dedicate all things to our God and intercede with Him for one another and our work. The pagan perspective sees man as a magician who, by his creative act, transforms all things to suit his purposes.

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[43] Gerardus Van Der Leeuw: *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*. (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan and Company, 1938). p. 340f.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

In the politics of magic, man by-passes God, regeneration, and God's law to seek the transformation of this world, time, and history on his own terms. All that is required is human "good will." This was the Renaissance hope. As Ralph pointed out, "Together with other thinkers of the age, Erasmus, More, and Machiavelli shared a conviction that, without any change in human nature or any drastic altering of institutions, the political order could be made to serve desirable human ends."[45] This is magical thinking. The key principle of magic is the ancient magical formula, "As my will is, so shall it be." This is also the basic premise of original sin, of Genesis 3:5, every man as his own god. Magical politics, or the politics of magic, governs our world today, and we have the same faith in the sciences, in economics, education, art, and religion.

Man's naked will is the magical force. We see this in the ancient witches, in modern politics, and also in the "flasher" or exhibitionist who haunts the city streets to bare his nakedness.

The man who serves God is *covered*. The source of his power is not in himself but in the Lord. It is the salvation of God which is his power and strength, so that, in his life, he sees the truth of Paul's words, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).

With this in mind, let us look briefly at the ancient Greek hatred of work. For them, work belonged to slaves, not free men. In White's summary, "any free man who dirties his hands with it, even in the most casual way, demeaned himself." Two friends of Plato who had constructed an apparatus to help solve a geometrical problem were told by that philosopher that they were contaminating thought. According to Plutarch, Archimedes was ashamed of the machinery he had built. Seneca observed that inventions were the works of slaves. Medicine was in low esteem, because physicians and especially surgeons had to do manual work. Beginning with St. Benedict, a new premise was slowly established, "to labor is to pray." Later "under the Puritans, labor in one's 'calling' became not only the prime moral necessity, but also the chief means of serving and praising God."[46]

The modern university is largely infected by the Greek ideal. Practical vocational training is often regarded as unworthy of the academic community by many scholars.

We saw earlier the perspective of witches on power. It is worthy of note that White cites the fact that witches organized into covens "to deal in drugs, potions, and poisons, and to extort what 'protection' money they could from

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45. Philip Lee Ralph: *The Renaissance in Perspective.* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1973). p. 75f.
46. Lynn White, Jr.: *Dynamo and Virgin Reconsidered.* (Cambridge, Mass: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, (1968) 1976). pp. 64, 104.

the surrounding population. That witches were deluded does not alter the fact that they were vicious."[47] It should be noted that the Biblical word for *witch* means a poisoner.

Let us recall now the distinction between a hierarchy and an elite. Witches of old, politicians of a humanistic persuasion in every era, and man the sinner in all his days seeks to be an elite, separate and above other men. A hierarchy rules under God and only in terms of His law-word. A clergyman can be an elitist if his ministry calls attention to and glorifies himself. Whatever a man's calling, he can seek to be an elitist within the limits of his work. In a silver mine of some years ago, certain types of workers refused to associate with others except on a patronizing basis because they saw themselves as an elite group.

Those who like the Old Testament priest work under God and in terms of a faithfulness to Him and His kingdom represent a hierarchy, a sacred or godly rule in their domain. They work under God and therefore to Him.

Among some tribes, such as the American Indians, medicine men were commonplace. As Van Der Leeuw noted, "here the term 'medicine' is to be understood as power-stuff in general."[48] The medicine man's art is a private and secret world of knowledge; it is shared only with certain chosen ones. The true doctor uses a body of knowledge common to all who will undergo the discipline to acquire it. The medicine man is an elitist. The godly doctor is a hierarchical man whose position in society is in terms of Biblical premises of service to God and to man. Where the doctors depart from this, they suffer a decline in their authority.

Work under God is sacred rule; it is hierarchical.

14. The Work Ethic

Well before the 20th century began, it was obvious that the Biblical doctrine of work had receded. Even before the Enlightenment, it was obvious also that St. Benedict's view, "to labor is to pray", was little more than a monkish doctrine. St. Benedict required work as a means of avoiding the sin of idleness, but the work had to be necessary work, work which contributed to the welfare of the Christian community.[49]

Historians often forget, in studying the views of the early and medieval church, that men were governed by the recognition that God had ordained work, both before and after the fall. As St. Bernard observed in the medieval era, "When we read that Adam was put into the paradise of pleasure to till and keep it (cf. Gen. 2:15), who would reasonably maintain that his children have

47. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
48. Van Der Leeuw: *op.cit.*, p. 217.
49. Christopher Brooke: *The Monastic World.* (New York, N. Y.: Random House, 1974). pp. 40ff., 60ff.

been put in this place of trial to rest from work?"[50] Centuries earlier, St. John Chrysostom had made the same point. Again, St. Basil the Great declared that work and prayer should be linked; we should pray "that the work of our hands may be directed to its goal, *the good pleasure of God.*"[51] Work was thus seen as God-centered.

I Thessalonians 4:11 was a favorite text of the fathers of the early church and for centuries thereafter: "study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." A work-oriented community and a peaceful one were thus equated. John Cassian, in commenting on this text, cited the saying of the desert monks, that "a monk who works is attacked by but one devil; but an idler by countless evil spirits."[52] According to St. Jerome,

> In Egypt the monasteries make it a rule to receive none who are not willing to work; for they regard labor as necessary not only for the support of the body but also for the salvation of the soul, lest the mind stray into harmful thoughts.[53]

St. Bernard cited work, separation from the world, and voluntary poverty as "the insignia of the monks."[54] From the days of the early church on, the fact that our Lord began as a carpenter's son and helper was greatly stressed to set forth work as basic to the life of righteousness.[55]

What is now called the Puritan work ethic had its origin in the early church, which gained it from the Old and New Testaments. The Benedictine monasteries in particular developed it. The goal of work was "the good pleasure of God", to preserve us from idleness and sin, to contribute to the welfare of the Christian Community, and much more. Historians commonly underrate St. Benedict's contribution by looking only at the discipline he required. They forget that St. Benedict assumed what Scripture and the early church fathers had taught concerning work. The words of all of us are only the tip of the iceberg of the world of our beliefs and heritage.The monks began the building of the dikes of the Netherlands. They drained swamps, levelled land, and turned waste places into fertile lands. This fact is important for us to recognize. The United States was established to a great extent as a Protestant feudal or federal society at its inception. It is in some respects the most medieval of all countries in its planned decentralization. Not only so, but Puritanism revived the monastic work ethic and made it the calling of every believer. The medieval character of much of evangelical Protestantism is too

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50. Maurus Wolter, O.S.B.: *The Principles of Monasticism.* (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1962). p. 398.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 501.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 504.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 505.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 512.
55. *Idem*, cf. St. Justin Martyr.

seldom recognized. For example, behind General William Booth's Salvation Army and its street preaching is a long history which has its prominent aspect in the medieval friars. The Puritan work ethic was a reactionary medieval impulse given new focus by Calvinistic theology.

The only other work ethic of any notable character in history has been the current Japanese work ethic. As Taylor has said, "the single most important ingredient in Japanese success is the Japanese attitude toward work."[56] The foundation of this moral impetus is the group, not God; it is humanistic and not theological. It is likely to wane with Westernization.

It is by now apparent why both monasticism and Puritanism have been the objects of such great hostility. Bernard A. Sause, O.S.B., has called attention to the fact that, before 1789, Central and Western Europe had approximately a thousand monasteries of Benedictine men, and about five hundred for nuns. Fifty years later, after the French Revolution and other upheavals, *only five percent* of that number remained. The remaining houses were greatly reduced in size and had been robbed of their libraries and other possessions.[57]

During those same years, Puritanism's last significant stronghold was the United States. In this country, Unitarianism launched an all-out war against Puritanism, so that, by the 20th century, both monasticism and Puritanism were seen as ancient evils the world was well rid of.

Quite logically, man's view of work changed as his faith changed from Christianity to humanism. A landmark work of humanistic scholarship, James Hastings, editor, The *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (1912), lists under "Labour: See Employment, Economics." The article on "Employment" by J. Mavor begins with primitive slavery. It discusses serfdom, unemployment, the state and unemployment, the right to work, and more. It refers us also to the articles on Economics and Socialism. However, it does not discuss work in a theological perspective.

The Encyclopaedia Judaica (1971) does have an article on "Labor" which states that the Bible regards work as "man's" destiny and an aspect of the cosmic order. Attention is called to the fact that Proverbs stresses the religious and moral character of work. "He who is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys (Prov. 18:9, Berkeley Version)."[58]

The full force of Proverbs 18:9 appears only when we recognize its implicit reference. God is set forth as the great worker and Creator; the devil is the

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[56] Jared Taylor: *Shadows of the Rising Sun, A Critical View of the "Japanese Miracle."* (New York, N.Y.: William Morrow, 1983). pp. 22, 272f., 148, 176f.

[57] Bernard A. Sause, O. S. B., "Translator's Foreword," in M. Wolter, *op. cit.*, p.v. According to another source, out of almost 1500 Benedictine monasteries in existence before the Revolution, only about 30 remained in 1814; see Jean Decarreaux, "An Historical Outline of Benedictine Monasticism," in Don Pieter Batselier, editor: *St. Benedictine: Father of Western Civilization.* (New York, N.Y.: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1981). p. 353.

[58] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 10, "Labor." (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1971). pp. 1319-1321.

destroyer. Hence, the godly worker is under God, the slack men is related to the devil.

This is in line with the monastic and Puritan views of idleness as akin to the devil. The proverbs of the Western world are in particular given to ridiculing the man given to idleness; he is associated with mischief.

Proverbs in Scripture speaks of the sluggard as a sad and also comical figure. He is spoken of as being *hinged* to his bed: "As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed" (Prov. 26:14). He will use any excuse, however absurd, to avoid work and responsibility: "The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets" (Prov. 26:13). The lazy man is unwilling to make a start:

> 9. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard: when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
> 10. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:
> 11. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man. (Prov. 6:9-11)

The sluggard is too lazy to cook the food he gets from hunting and thus often wastes what he has: "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious" (Prov. 12:27). He is wasteful of food because of his laziness (Prov. 19:24; 26:15). He becomes his own victim; he begins to believe there is a lion in the street (Prov. 26:13), and thus "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (Prov. 26:16). Therefore "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in the harvest, and have nothing" (Prov. 20:4). His character is marked by an essential perversity: "The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain" (Prov. 15:19). The sluggard is a restless man, and a malcontent: "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Prov. 13:4). His "contribution" to society is greed and envy:

> 25. The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.
> 26. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not. (Prov. 21:25-26)

The sluggard is socially useless (Prov. 18:9) and unpleasant (Prov. 10:26). He is a drain on society, not an asset. He is, like the devil, a destroyer, not a creator.

When the sluggard is only an occasional member of the social group, he is a foolish and a comic figure. Where his numbers increase, we have a deadly and destructive force at work in society. In Revelation 9:11, Satan is called *Apollyon*, meaning *destroyer* (in the Hebrew, *Abaddon*). As against God, the Creator and worker, Satan is a destroyer and incapable of true work. He is a *liar* and a *murderer* (John 8:44). Thus, any society in which the work ethic declines becomes progressively demonic in character; it has a preference for

lies and for death. The current legality and prevalence of abortion, indolence, the preference for leisure, suicides, drugs, and more should not surprise us. They are the natural concomitants of a society dedicated to the ethics of leisure. There is then an evasion of life and its responsibilities and a love of death (Prov. 8:36) and the culture of death.

To expect the good society without a work ethic is a contradiction and an absurdity. The Kingdom of God cometh not by votes nor by appropriations.

Man's calling is work, not leisure. The destructive force of a leisure-oriented society is not recognized today, but its deadliness is not diminished by ignorance.

15. Work, Rest, and Leisure

The distinction between a Sabbath rest and leisure is a very important one.[59] Leisure is an act of autonomy from legal and moral obligations. It is "time off" from time and history. The world of time is a realm of responsibility, and leisure activity seeks to escape from obligations. Escapism is thus basic to leisure activity. When men lack a godly calling, leisure has a growing appeal as an opportunity to evade the real world of moral duties, the responsibilities of work, and the realm of accountability. This escapism is stressed heavily by vacation advertising which appeals to the leisure-oriented person. We are told, "Escape to a tropical paradise," meaning a humanistic Garden of Eden without work, moral responsibility, or law. "Go now, and pay later," it is said.

A Sabbath rest, whether weekly or in the form of a "vacation," a poor word and related to vacate, is a cessation of our work in time because of a trust in God and eternity. In such resting, we are confident that the government is not upon our shoulders, but the Lord's (Isa. 9:6), and we can therefore rest because we know our work is governed, guided, and made to prosper in terms of God's providence. There is a triumphant certainty in Paul's words, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Thus to rest in the Lord is not to step or attempt to step outside of time and responsibility but to strengthen our trust that the Lord God makes all things work together for good to them who love Him, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). Godly rest is an act of *trust*. This is strongly set forth by David in Psalm 40:1-8:

> 1. I waited patiently for the LORD: and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
> 2. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

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[59] See R. J. Rushdoony: *Institutes of Biblical Law*, Vol. II, *Law and Society*. (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982) pp. 555-558.

3. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.
4. Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
5. Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.
6. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering has thou not required.
7. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,
8. I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

According to Leupold, this psalm fits most logically in the earlier life of David, when he was fleeing for his life and was hunted by Saul.[60] David has had deliverance, but he is still in peril; hence, he waits patiently for the Lord while thanking Him for His deliverance and care. David then speaks against externalism in worship. Those who go through the forms of Sabbath observances have no rest; it is not mere externals which God requires but the life which must govern the forms. To wait on the Lord and to trust in Him means to delight to do the will of God, and to have God's law written in our hearts.

Thus, resting, trusting, and waiting on God, true worship, in brief, is tied to work, doing God's will with delight. This is another way of saying what James declares, "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17).

Therefore, it follows that Scripture sees rest as an act of faith. It is a trust in God's providential work, and it is work done in that faith and trust. It is important now to understand the implications of this for ourselves and our time.

One of the great illusions of our time is the idea that leisure is a source of productivity. On every side, we find men dreaming of what they could accomplish, given the "time off," or leisure. The world is full of frustrated people who are sure that they can produce some important works if they could get the subsidized leisure to do so. There are men with inventions in mind who keep talking about the need for leisure to develop their new device. Would be writers are full of dreams of works they can produce, given the subsidy and the leisure, and potential artists in various media are constantly in search of the good angel to underwrite their hopes. From time to time, letters come in to Chalcedon which express such a hope for subsidies from us, under the illusion that we have the money and the desire to help such people.

The simple fact is that this dream of subsidies and leisure to be "creative" is an illusion. It is not leisure which is productive but work and rest. The best inventions are produced in the context of work and need, and the good writers

60. H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of the Psalms*. (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1959). p. 321.

and artists are those who are productive no matter what the circumstances. Saint-Saens said that he produced music like a pear tree produces pears.

Where subsidies and leisure operate, the results are commonly mediocre and meager. One of the reasons why the world of literature and art is today so unrelated to reality is the fact of foundation subsidies for leisure to "create." The result is a divorce from faith and life. Inventiveness still flourishes simply because it is related to industrial research and development. In the arts and media, subsidies and leisure have replaced work and the Sabbath rest. The result is elitist art. There are no hierarchs in much of the world of art, i.e., men dedicated to sacred rule.

Because leisure means a break with work and reality, it is a break with productivity, and the result is sterility. An orientation to leisure is an orientation to dreams. It produces a *fretfulness* which is non-productive and self-destructive. One of the more telling changes in my life-time is from man's delight in life to boredom. Some years ago, the primary meaning of *boring* was to drill a hole; to make weary was a minor use and not too common. Today, even children speak of being bored. The world of leisure has created boredom, because it seeks escape from meaning, faith and work.

Not surprisingly, the concept of boredom has revived in civilization as a consequence of the revival of ancient Greek thought. The Greek separation of manual labor from ideas, and of thought from matter, meant that for them creativity was associated with an abstraction from the world. Ivory-tower education is one consequence.

Some years ago, a scholar, a gracious and kindly man, told me that my writings had much to commend them but rested on a very faulty premise. I write for the general reader; he felt that I should write for academicians who are specialists in a given field in order to establish a dialogue of critiques! In other words, scholars should exchange ideas in abstraction from the world and men. This is the Hellenic perspective; it is Platonism in modern dress.

Biblical rest has a renewing and revitalizing force. Isaiah 40:28-31 speaks of this:

> 28. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.
> 29. He giveth power to the faint: and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.
> 30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:
> 31. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

The reference in v. 30 is to young men who are in military service, according to Alexander.[61] Thus, it is precisely those who are most in the battles of life who shall renew their strength.

Thus, it is work and godly rest which are most productive, and which renew our lives. The quest for leisure produces instead a fretfulness, boredom, and a mental depression which is born of emptiness. The products of leisure are notable for their sterility.

God calls men to work and to rest in Him. He does not call them to leisure; a leisure oriented society replaces work and meaning with play, and, in time, it loses all interest in either play or life.

A familiar saying has it that, to get something done, give it to a busy man. Here, in folk wisdom, we have an awareness of the place of work and godly rest in God's plan. Elitism, by exalting the Greek abstractionist from the world of work, and by seeing leisure as the seedbed of "creativity," has undermined society and ensured its own destruction. The infection of all too many Christian groups by this same Hellenic ideal is an unhappy by-product.

Productivity is born out of the context of life, out of godly work and rest, and those whose being is in that context shall flourish. The hatred of work and the lust for leisure lead to emptiness, boredom and death.

16. The Clean Society

A very interesting devotional manual of the medieval era is the *Book of Hours* of Catherine of Cleves, Duchess of Guelders. The date of this collection of miniatures is about 1440; the *Book of Hours* has eight parts, one for each "hour" of the liturgical day.

Our concern being *work*, our approach to the *Book of Hours* will be in terms of this interest. The subject matter of the miniature paintings in the book, rich in gold, silver, and other colors, is often and commonly described as "plebeian." At the same time, there is an obvious "delight in luxury." According to John Plummer, "these everyday things (i.e., workmen, mussels, fish, fields, etc.) are transformed into objects of luxury by the way in which they are painted." The artist transforms "the ordinary into the precious."[62]

The piety promoted by the *Book of Hours* is a very practical one. Plate 57 shows Catherine of Cleves giving alms to three beggars. The text is Luke 11:41, which, in the King James version, reads, "Give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you," a verse rarely taught in our times. The first half of this sentence stresses giving from the heart: Geldenhuys rendered it, "give for alms those things which are within," i.e., giving must have behind it a giving heart. Then, according to Geldenhuys, "When a man's inner life is so purified that he acts in this manner, He will be

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61. Joseph Addison Alexander: *Commentaries on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, Vol. II. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (1846) 1953). p. 116. See also Edward J. Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. III. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972). p. 68.

62. John Plummer, "Introduction," in John Plummer, editor: *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*. (New York, N.Y.: George Braziller, (1966) 1975). p. 15f.

'clean', together with everything he possesses–he will stand in the right relationship to God without all kinds of ceremonial purification."[63] The same plate (no.57) shows a woman giving a dish of food or water to Christ in prison.

Plate no. 70 shows Solomon distributing bread to the needy. The scene is based on Proverbs 9:5, in which Wisdom invites everyone to share her bread and wine. The banderole above Solomon's head cites Genesis 47:13. "And there was no bread in all the land." Another text is John 6:9, on the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and another is I Corinthians 10:16, identifying the communion bread with the body of Christ.

Very clearly, the artist knew the Bible. It is the work of faith and wisdom to minister to others in Christ's name. The Lord will bless such charity; even as He multiplied the loaves and fishes, He will multiply our works of faith. To give to the needs of others is to share with them the communion which is ours in Christ.

How faithful Catherine of Cleves and others were, we cannot specifically say, but what is clear is that a high standard of *Christian responsibility* was taught. We can go further. It can be said that, as long as a concept of hierarchy, or sacred rule, prevailed among Catholics and Protestants, there was a strong adherence to a godly work ethic and a godly charity or sharing with others.

On the other hand, elitism undermines responsibility, authority, and community. With elitism, charity ceases and welfarism begins. One consequence is a gap between classes, and a decline in community.

With this in mind, we can look at the entire incident from which our Lord's comment on alms is drawn, Luke 11:37-44:

> 37. And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down at meat.
> 38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.
> 39. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter: but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.
> 40. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?
> 41. But rather give alms of such things as ye have: and, behold, all things are clean unto you.
> 42. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.
> 43. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

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63. Norval Geldenhuys: *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951). p. 342f.

> 44. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Our Lord makes certain very plain statements about the Pharisees and others. *First*, although it is their calling to be religious leaders, they are not a hierarchy, i.e., they do not exercise sacred rule. Rather, they are an elite. As an elite, their goal is *supremacy, not service*; they love the chief seats, places of prominence, not alms giving from the heart, or service to God and man with all their being.

Second, those who are an elite are worse than useless: they are the living dead. They are like unseen tombs of men long dead and forgotten; men "walk over them and are not aware of them." An elite thus belongs to the past and is dead. The living, on the contrary give alms; they work unto the Lord, and they share their bounty with men.

Third, there is a contrast throughout our Lord's words between the living and the clean, and the dead and corrupt. Charity goes out from the living, nothing from the dead except death.

In our day, there is much talk about social responsibility as a good thing, perhaps because there is so little of it. We see instead a growing lack of family and personal responsibility in the world around us. In a world in which elitist ideals prevail, responsibility is replaced by egoism and self-promotion.

Our Lord equates elitism with death. Let us consider the implications of elitism. Proverbs 8:36 declares that those who sin against God do violence to their own soul and, in hating God, love death. The culture of death is hostile to responsibility and to work. It prefers instead *theft and debt*. We can expect, therefore, that theft and debt will become increasingly prevalent in humanistic societies as social policies.

In our world today, theft and debt are not social by-products. They are central aspects of humanistic social policy. Not surprisingly, such a society becomes increasingly anxious, disorderly, and evil. If social policy relies on theft and debt to create a new world, it will create instead hell on earth. Elitism is a divisive concept, if men at the top see themselves as an elite, separate and above men, the prevailing temper in all society will be anti-work and anti-community. All will seek to "do their own thing."

This is not to say that humanism is indifferent to the need for community. On the contrary, studies of the concept have been common for more than two centuries. The humanistic version of community is usually coercive, i.e., imposed from above by the state. Such a perspective is the antithesis of community; statism is not community.

Moreover, coercion by the state is hostile to the growth of community because it replaces work and charity with theft and debt, and theft and debt are divisive and destructive to society.

For example, Proverbs 14:23 tells us, "In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury." The latter half of this verse is rendered by the Berkeley Version as, "mere talk leads only to want." The society of theft and debt works to hinder the profit of work, and to slander it.

Proverbs 13:11 says, "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase." The Berkeley Version of Proverbs 16:26 tells us a blunt fact about man: "A worker's appetite works for him, for his mouth urges him on." The elitist denies the realities of God's world and thus creates a welfare state; he uses theft and debt to try to counteract the unhappy fact of need, and only aggravates the problem.

The difference between the two perspectives, hierarchical and elitist, can be seen in the current views of architecture. It was once held that architecture was an expression of the life and faith of a people. In recent years, it has been held that, "by altering a society's architecture one can alter its whole character and outlook."[64] Where God's rule prevails, man's faith is at work to exercise dominion in every sphere of life and thought. Where elitism prevails, elitist man seeks to impose a new creation from above to replace God's handiwork. The Lord God is content to allow man to work towards an understanding of God's plan and then its development in history. Only in terms of God's way can man prosper and flourish. Then, in our Lord's words, "and, behold, all things are clean unto you."

The word *clean* is in the Greek *katharos*, as in the English *catharsis*. It means free from impurities, spotless, and without blemish. A clean society cannot be built on theft and debt. It requires faith, the clean heart, with the work and charity of faith, to cleanse the man and society and to heal the divisions of man. The clean society is the work of God through man's life and work.

17. Work and Rest

It should by now be apparent that work and the Sabbath have an essential relationship. The Ten Commandments have only one reference to work, and this is in the Sabbath law:

> 8. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
> 9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
> 10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
> 11. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Ex. 20:8-11)

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[64] Norris Kelly Smith: *Frank Lloyd Wright, A Study in Architectural Content.* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966). p. 3.

According to Cassuto, this law has as its "primary purpose...to recognize and attest that the Lord is the Creator of the world."[65] In v. 11, the creation foundation is set forth: God governs the use of our time because He is the Creator of time and the universe.

In terms of this fact, two commandments are united into one, a positive commandment, "Six days shalt thou labour," and a negative commandment, on the sabbath "thou shalt not do any work." Only in two of the Ten Commandments is their a positive fact: in this, and in the requirement to honor one's father and mother. The positive note is thus associated with the Sabbath and the family.

We are also commanded to "hallow" the Sabbath, to keep it sacred. What God's covenant people must do is to do what God has already done: He has worked and rested. God created the universe in six days. Man has a duty to work six days weekly in order to establish God's dominion over all things. His weekly rest is a forerunner of the eternal rest in the new creation (Heb. 4). Moreover, as Childs notes, "The command to hallow it (the Sabbath) is not identified simply with not working or resting, but over and above both of these is the positive action of making it holy."[66] The Sabbath is tied to creation, to God's work, and therefore to our work. In Deuteronomy 5:12-15, it is also tied to God's work of redemption. The work of the redeemed is sanctifying to man and the universe. Thus, the Sabbath rest presupposes work in terms of the Lord's purposes, and the rest acknowledges that our work and time are under God our Savior.

The rest is total trust, because God is the total Creator: "in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." We are specifically told that God made all things "in six days." There is no question that the Bible sees all God's creating work as accomplished in six calendar days of 24 hours. The text cannot be honestly read in any other way. Moreover, creation is a work *in time*. God could have brought all creation into being in a second, but He chose to do it in six days, in time. We are temporal creatures, as is all creation. Because man listened to the tempter's program of self-created divinity for man (Gen. 3:1-5), he began also to despise time and to seek eternity. Even the humanistic scholars who deny God and eternity in favor of time and history all the same seek to arrest time and history in favor of a man-made eternal order, the Great Society or Community, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and so on. God, however, created in time and then doubly honors time and history with the incarnation of God the Son.

It is a serious error thus to separate the days of work from the day of rest: making the Sabbath holy requires work under God on the preceding days.

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65. U. Cassuto: *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*. (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, (1967) 1974). p. 244.
66. Brevard S. Childs: *The Book of Exodus*. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974). p. 416.

This means that a leisure society has no Sabbath, because work under God is the foundation of rest in the Lord. Rest is inseparable from the dominion mandate, as Craigie noted:

> To rest on the sabbath day was to remember that man, as a part of God's created order, was totally dependent on the Creator; man's divinely appointed task to have dominion over the created order (Gen. 1:26) carried with it also the privilege of sharing in God's rest. The Exodus, too, was a type of *creation* and thus forms an analogy to the creation account in Genesis.[67]

The Exodus was the creation of a new people, and thus Deuteronomy 5:12-15 cites the deliverance from Egypt, Israel's redemption, as a form of creation. The day of resurrection is the Christian's day of creation, the beginning of a new creation in Christ (I Cor. 15:20).

We who are born again, who are made a new creation in Christ (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), are, like the original man, commanded to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over it (Gen. 1:26-28). *The Sabbath rest thus presupposes dominion work.* Where there is no dominion work, there is no Sabbath rest.

It is in this context that we must understand our Lord's words in Mark 2:27-28:

> 27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:
> 28. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

This is in answer to the Pharisees, who criticized the disciples' conduct on the Sabbath. Our Lord cites the example of David, who ate the shewbread normally reserved for priests. In Alexander's words,

> The meaning of the sentence therefore must be, that the Sabbath having been ordained for man, not for any individual, but for the whole race, it must needs be subject to the Son of Man, who is its head and representative, its sovereign and redeemer.[68]

By declaring Himself to be the true Lord of the Sabbath, our Lord makes clear that it is the redeemed, covenant-keeping man for whom the Sabbath is made. It is the day in which dominion man rests and rejoices in his work. There is no rest nor peace for men outside of Christ. Isaiah declares of the ungodly,

> 20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
> 21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. (Isa. 57:20-21)

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67. P. C. Craigie: *The Book of Deuteronomy*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976). p. 157.
68. J. A. Alexander: *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, reprint of 1864 edition). p. 55.

In a world today where all too many lack a calling to work, because they lack faith, there is no rest. Instead, alcoholism and drugs are pursued in order to find a pseudo-rest from life. These are methods of escape from God and His reality. On one occasion, after I spoke to a group and in passing cited the basic choice man faces as between the sovereign God of Scripture and man as god (Gen. 3:5), one listener protested bitterly after the meeting. He insisted on multiple choices, including other religious, the life of reason, humanitarianism, and more. When he left angrily, a bystander remarked, "You should have asked him where his children are." Apparently his children had followed the antithesis to its logical conclusion and disaster.

However, many people, whose religious background and training gives them a stability which, without faith, they cannot communicate to their children, belong to what Grayce Flanagan and Dorothy Rushdoony, in our table talk, call *the triviality culture*. They occupy their days and years with trivia, because they have no desire to come face to face with God's reality. Some even become experts in trivia. At the same time, because the security of faith is not theirs, they replace the peace of faith with continually changing fads, enthusiasms, and styles. They turn their lives and houses into showroom displays.

It is worthy of note that the Sabbath commandment commands rest and specifies seven groups. *First*, "thou," speaking to the heads of families, i.e., husband and wife. The law was given to "the elders of the people" in Exodus, and to "the people" (Ex. 19:7,25). It was given to *families*, and hence all seven categories have reference to the family. *Second*, it is for "thy son," so that, while delivered to those who rule families, it is for those who shall rule also in the future. *Third*, it is also for "thy daughter," who shall also be a ruler under God as a wife and mother. *Fourth*, it is for "thy manservant," and, *fifth*, for "thy maidservant." The command to work and to rest is for all. Thus, we have a responsibility for those under our authority, and they have a responsibility to the Lord as well as to us, to work and to rest in the Lord. *Sixth*, it applies to "cattle," to farm or household animals. The work and rest law is for all the earth, and we are also told elsewhere that it is for the land as well (Ex. 23:1-11; Lev. 25:1-7, 20-22). *Seventh*, "the stranger that is within thy gates" is also included. The alien may not be a believer, but the covenant requirement of rest and work is a witness to him about the covenant God. The fact that "thou" includes the wife is apparent in the inclusion of "maidservant." The "primary attachment" of a maidservant was to the mistress of the house, as is clear from Psalm 123:2, Isaiah 24:2, and Proverbs 30:23.[69] This needs noting because one commentator has stated that the wife is excluded from rest on the Sabbath!

[69] A.D.H. Mayes: *Deuteronomy*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979). p. 227.

Covenant work and covenant rest go together and are inseparable. In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, covenant faithfulness means fertility and productivity with rest in the Lord, whereas the departure from covenant obligations means radical judgment. Finally, if men will not work and rest in the covenant of God, the land will be given a rest by God, and man destroyed or carried away. "The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them" (Lev. 26:43).

18. The Prophetic Nature of Work

Our view of prophesy is too often exotic and lawless. Men want to know about a future which makes itself and is not an outcome of historical forces. In the providence of God, history shows us the consequences of human action. Because the universe is God's law order, ideas and actions have consequences. We cannot, however, say with the humanists that "man makes history."Man and the universe are God's creation, and God rules and overrules in all events. The logic of history is God's, not man's. All our thoughts and actions go into the making of today and morrow. At the same time, however, God the Lord is the determiner of all events. We can say that our lives and histories are totally natural and totally supernatural; there is a perfect coincidence and determination in the totality of our lives and histories between human action and God's government and providence. This being true of us, it is also true of our work.

This appears in Scripture, as witness these two verses:

> Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase. (Prov. 13:11)
>
> In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury. (Prov. 14:23)

Such verses seem trite and empty to modern man, because he is so hostile to the work ethic. In the eyes of all such men, deriding work has more wisdom than calling attention to its character. This does not alter the truth of these proverbs; it only illustrates the blindness and folly of modern man. In Proverbs 13:11, "by vanity" is rendered by Moffatt, after the Septuagint and the Vulgate, as "in haste," which means that wealth gotten by quick means, i.e., such as gambling, or "luck" in speculation, will just as quickly be diminished, whereas honest wealth, based on work, increases. In Proverbs 14:23, we are told of the weakness of words, and its inadequacy as a substitute for work. Words cannot work; they cannot alter facts (Prov. 26:23-28; 24:12); they cannot compel a response (Prov. 29:19; 2:3-4; 17:4,10); words are efficacious only when linked to God's truth (Prov. 16:13; 24-26; 25:12; 27:5,6; 28:23).[70]

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[70] Derek Kidner: *Proverbs*. (Chicago, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964). p. 3.

Our concern, however, is more specifically with the prophetic nature of work. If I plant seeds, I am involved in predictive work: I am trusting in the order of God's universe to produce some kind of return on my seeds and work. If I plant in the right time and place, my work has a prophetic character: it speaks for God; it is a witness to His orderly creation.

Very briefly, work is future oriented, whereas leisure is present oriented. Rest is also future oriented, because it is a form of trust in and preparation for the future. Work fulfills a predictive plan; whether it is planting seeds or repairing plumbing, it works to further order and to strengthen dominion over the present and the future. A leisure society is present oriented in a radical sense; if it thinks at all of a tomorrow, it is in terms of disconnection. No better title for a study of the future from the perspective of a leisure society exists than Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*, a book very much in tune with the 1970s. A society which is leisure oriented will see the future as only a shock, because it seeks to live in an eternal present. By contrast, John Naisbitt's *Megatrends* (1982) bases its comments about our future on the working trends of the present. This is something very different. The leisure world produces fads; the working world produces trends.

True work is prophetic because it is non-political and is productive. Elitism and leisure go together. The elitist separates himself from the world of work. This was especially marked in 19th century Europe. In England, for example, the man who made a fortune by trade was thereby "tainted." By richly endowing his daughters, he could marry them into the aristocracy of the non-working, but he was barred from entrance into that elite circle. The rich worker, envying the aristocracy, made the world of leisure the goal for his children.

At the same time, the meaning of *spirit* began to change. Before the Enlightenment, the word meant primarily the Holy Spirit, the third person of the godhead. Afterwards, it came to have a humanistic reference, such as in *esprit de corps*, referring to the common loyalty and zeal of a group of men. Voltaire defined "spirit" in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique* as "ingenious reason." "It meant, too, the subtle pleasures of society people who implied more than they said and preferred to leave as much as they could to the imagination."[71] The motivating and governing force of *spirit* now belonged to man, not to God, in popular thought. We can thus speak now of "the spirit of leisure," and its role in a society.

It is significant, in terms of this, that the modern era regards the religious nature of the medieval era with distaste; it is ignorant of the scientific and agricultural advances of that era. Where it does exercise its interest and

[71] Charles Moraze: *The Triumph of the Middle Classes*. (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, (1957) 1966). p. 3.

sympathies is with respect to the non-working aspects of the era. As Parkes noted:

> The world of chivalry, so sordid and destructive in many of its manifestations, has continued to be favorably regarded in popular speech. Words especially associated with feudal society have mostly retained favorable connotations. A crusade, for example, is generally viewed as a noble enterprise, to such an extent that political movements often present themselves to the electorate as crusades. As a weapon customarily used by medieval warriors, a sword generally has eulogistic connotations and is often referred to by political speakers as a weapon for the defense of right. Thus pro-feudal propaganda continues to be reflected in popular speech, with astonishing success.[72]

Much more can be added to Parkes' comment. We speak, for example, of "a knight in shining armor" as an ideal figure. While the medieval knight sometimes served a useful protective military purpose, his proneness to rape and to sacking cities made him anything but a desired addition to one's fellowship! By contrast, the monk, who changed Europe for the good, and who was an intelligent worker, does not have any such favorable an image. Because the modern age is elitist, it idealizes the elitists or seeming elitists of the past.

The elitist plans for the future *politically*, i.e., by substituting words and haste for work. The wealth of society is to be gained by vanity or in haste; the result is a diminishing, whereas a working culture increases wealth. Our inflationary political order underscores the truth of Proverbs 13:11 and 14:23. It seeks for a political fiat to replace work as the determining force for good.

Godly work is hierarchical, i.e., under God. It is a plan in action; it is a form of trust in God's predestination. It is a baffling fact to outsiders that Calvinism, with its predestinarianism, has produced the hard-working future-oriented men as against the humanists. But to work against the void is debilitating, and humanism readily loses its fervor and replaces it with terror and coercion. When we work in the context of the certainty of God's victory, we work with confidence and power. Instead of *esprit de corps*, or ingenious reason, we work under and in the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 14:23 tells us that "the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury" or want. The plans of the elitists fall into this category, whether in the Soviet Union or here. The profit is in godly labor.

19. Faith and Work

The relationship of faith and *works* has been long discussed in the church; this concern is soteriological, i.e., concerned with the doctrine of salvation.

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[72] Henry Bamford Parkes: *The Divine Order, Western Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. (New York, N.Y.: Knopf, 1969). p. 138.

Too little has been said of faith and *work*, work not in the sense of obedience to the law of God but as man's vocation or calling under God. Both faith and *works* and faith and *work* are properly a concern of sanctification.

An important statement concerning faith and work is Ecclesiastes 11:4-6:

> 4. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.
> 5. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.
> 6. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

People who have had only ease and prosperity in life are prone to call Ecclesiastes a pessimist book, simply because a realistic view of life is painful for them. The result is that an important part of Scripture is neglected.

We are told plainly that the weather does not depend on our knowledge of it. The wind blows irrespective of us. "So the trends and the currents of events go their way and are well directed by the Higher Power in spite of our ignorance."[73] Similarly, a child grows in its mother's womb whether or not we understand the processes thereof. Our life does not depend upon our knowledge of the development and structure of natural processes but upon our faith in the trustworthiness of God and His creation. God brings things to pass both in spite of as well as with our human efforts. The child is born, seeds flourish, and the world continues, not because we understand it but because God so ordains it. We must therefore act and work in this faith. Ecclesiastes is skeptical about man's trust in himself and his reasoning, not about God. Rather, we are told to fear God and to keep His commandments: this is "the conclusion of the matter" and "the whole duty of man" (Eccles. 12:13). If we judge events by our expectations, we will be discouraged, but we are told not to rest in our hopes, i.e., to "withhold not thine hand," but to work unceasingly in the confidence that God will order all things in terms of His wisdom. Ecclesiastes is in its own way an affirmation of Romans 8:28. It is a summons to unremitting faith.

At this point, some aspects of faith need to be discussed, and at the same time, of prayer, because *prayer is an act of faith.* A prayer empty of faith is a prayer lacking in any trust or dependence upon God. Praise, thanksgiving, the confession of sins, and more are necessary aspects of prayer, but so too is asking. If we are unwilling to ask anyone who loves us for the simplest things, we make clear that we have little trust or confidence in them. Similarly, if we pray and ask God to give us what *we* can do, or what *we* for ourselves can get, we have a very faulty approach to prayer. If our simple efforts and work can

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[73] H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of Ecclesiastes.* (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1952). p. 263.

give us what we want, we must then work, and ask God to bless our efforts. To pray for two cents is to show contempt for prayer. If we cannot find someone to give us two cents, we are surely in a sorry plight. When we truly pray, we pray for miracles, and we expect that, whatever the Lord gives us, will in His providence be to our eternal benefit in Him.

Work without faith and prayer is work without hope. To say that "He that observeth the wind shall not sow" does not mean that we cast seeds into a hurricane, but that our governing premise in our work is the faithfulness of God and His providential order.

At this point, we need to glance briefly at Ecclesiastes 1:1, which tells us of this book that it is "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem." No *name* is given. The logical reference is to Solomon, although it is possible for it to mean a descendant of David; our Lord was called the Son of David, as in Matthew 9:27. The fact that the author does not name himself is perhaps to call attention to the word *Preacher, Koheleth.* The *preacher* in Hebrew means the *assembler.* The royal fact is pushed into the background, and the term "preacher" is used in Ecclesiastes 1:1, 2, 12, and in 12:8, 9, 10. The emphasis of the book is on teaching. It is also of interest that, while *hope* from knowledge is decried, it is knowledge which the preacher teaches, a godly knowledge which begins with faith. According to Ecclesiastes 12:9, "And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs." The book has a preaching purpose, and it teaches faith and the knowledge born of faith.

The Preacher battles against "the temptation to despairing inactivity." Despair flourishes to the extent that faith wanes; it is more a product of unbelief than of adversity. Hengstenberg commented:

> Under all circumstances, we should do our duty and let God care for us. Sowing and reaping are employed here after the example of Psalm cxxvi. 5, to designate *activity.* To the wind, which may easily blow away the seed, and to the clouds which threaten to injure the harvests, correspond the unfavorable circumstances of the time.[74]

Our Lord refers to these words of the Preacher in John 3:8, "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 every one that is born of the Spirit."

It is here that the connection between faith and work becomes so strongly clear. As Hart said of John 3:8, "Notice that it is not the Spirit but the man born of the Spirit who has the wind's mysterious character."[75] The man who

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[74.] Ernest A. Hengstenberg: *A Commentary on Ecclesiastes.* (Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1960 reprint). p. 128.

[75.] J. Stephen Hart: *A Companion to St. John's Gospel.* (Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1952). p. 64.

works and prays in faith becomes a part of God's providential and supernatural work. The choices we make are from the perspective of those outside the faith foolish and irrational. We are to them impractical and unwise, and yet at the same time baffling. Our motivating power is unknown and unseen to all such men, but it is the governing reality for us.

We are ignorant, says the Preacher, of "how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." With those who look forward to the birth of a child, the time of pregnancy can be an especial joy and anticipation. Even so, we are told, is our work in the Lord. He is bringing forth the results, and He does it in terms of His sovereign purpose.

To work in the Lord is to step into a world of unseen determination and government. It means working in terms of a purpose and consequences which far transcend us but also include us. We work, and we pray for miracles, but we realize at the same time that our lives are now miracles of providential grace and government. We are a part of the unseen power which governs history, and hence our labor is never in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58).

XVII

TIME

1. The Moral Question

From the days of Parmenides, who held that change and becoming are irrational illusions, *time* has been a problem to metaphysics and also, in recent centuries, to scientific thought. This is not surprising. From the moment *time* became a metaphysical question, even the elementary problem of definition created major handicaps. Definition is a process of limitation, and there can be no definition without limitation. On the other hand, in an inter-related universe, and especially a universe with a transcendental framework of reference, definition often eludes limitation. We know we are alive, but to define life is rather difficult. We live in time, but the definition of time creates serious problems and raises more questions than it answers.

Moreover, another more basic question confronts us: is the issue with respect to time a metaphysical or an ethical question? For the orthodox Christian who believes that God is the creator of all things, *time* is an ethical, not a metaphysical, problem. It can also be argued that the metaphysical question is usually an evasion of the moral issue. Where God is denied, it follows that time and history become serious moral problems for man, who is then unable to provide a meaning for his existence and can affirm almost nothing. Where God is dead, the mind of man recedes to the moment and then cannot affirm even the moment because it too is meaningless.

This problem was well stated in a beautiful sonnet by a humanistic poet, who, holding that God is dead, had to affirm logically the death of meaning in time. Trumbull Stickney (1874-1904) tried to make it a source of existential joy, declaring:

> Live blindly and upon the hour. The Lord,
> Who was the Future, died full long ago.
> Knowledge which is the Past is folly. Go,
> Poor child, and be not to thyself abhorred.
> Around thine earth sun-winged winds do blow
> And planets roll; a meteor draws his sword;
> The rainbow breaks his seven-colored chord
> And the long strips of river-silver flow:
> Awake! Give thyself to the lovely hours.
> Drinking their lips, catch thou the dream in flight
> About their fragile hairs' aerial gold.
> Thou art divine, thou livest,–as of old
> Apollo springing naked to the light,
> And all his island shivered into flowers.

In Synge's greatest play, *Riders to the Sea*, the loss of the future that is God is expressed less lyrically than by Stickney, and, as a result, the melancholy resignation shows clearly as Maurya concludes the drama with the grief-stricken comment:

> Michael had a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.[1]

Death, a good coffin, and a deep grave: "What more can we want than that?" But men do want more. Stickney summons us to "live blindly and upon the hour," but the existentialists of today, who stress most the existential moment, still concern themselves about ecology and the war.

Stickney equated God and "the Future," declaring, "The Lord, Who was the Future, died full long ago." Moreover, "Knowledge which is the Past is folly." Since no sovereign decree and purpose exists, according to Stickney, there is no future: there is no meaning and consequence in time and history to make the future a valid concept. The same emptiness of meaning makes the past, which we know as knowledge, "folly." All that remains is the moment, but the moment is then haunted by its meaningless nature, and, as a result, it cannot give the pleasure Stickney hopes for.

How valid was Stickney's hope that the existential moment could replace God? Not at all, Stent would say. Gunther Stent, a professor of molecular biology at the University of California at Berkeley, sees the loss of meaning leading to the death of man, time, and history. The end of progress is already in view, because the concept of progress presupposes meaning and an approximation to a purposeful goal. Stent foresees the end of the arts and sciences and the appearance already of an antiquarian kind of scientist, i.e., a man who does his work, not because it has any meaning, but simply because he happens to enjoy doing it. In discussing, for example, the composer of experimental music, Stent observes that he "not only does not add to the accumulated capital of meaningful statements about the world, but nothing could be farther from his mind than intending to do so."[2]

> But the final stages of this evolutionary process have been reached with the experimental music of such composers as John Cage. For here almost all rules that would allow communication to the listener of a musical structure have been abandoned. In one type of such experimental music the temporal-tonal sequence is purposely generated by pure chance, either by the composer in writing or by the performer in reading the score, so that the form is intentionally random. In another

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[1] J. M. Synge: *The Shadow of the Glen, and Riders to the Sea.* (London, England: Elkin Mathews, 1911). p. 63.

[2] Gunther Stent: *The Coming of the Golden Age: A View of the End of Progress.* (Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press, 1969). p. 105.

> type, the composer writes intuitively without consciously attempting to develop any particular idea or to reach any ultimate goal. Thus the listener is left to his own devices to make of the music what he will. The structure he perceives in the piece, if any, is entirely dependent on his own personality, much as his interpretation of an inkblot in the Rorschach test also depends on his personality. Thus with this development, music as an art which endeavors to discover and communicate truths about the world *has* reached the end of the line.[3]

Without a concept of past and future, science is impossible. Van Til's assertion that science must presuppose the eternal decree of a predestinating, sovereign God is unwittingly confirmed by Stent, who observes.

> The scientist thinks he recognizes some common denominator, structure, in an ensemble of events, infers these events to be related, and then attempts to derive a "law" explaining the cause of their relation. An event that is unique, or at least that aspect of an event which makes it unique, cannot therefore be the subject of scientific investigation. For an ensemble of unique events *has* no common denominator, and there is nothing in it to explain; such events are *random*, and the observer perceives them as noise.[4]

To surrender a concept of time which binds past, present, and future in terms of a related meaning is to surrender "the reality principle" for "the pleasure principle."[5] The golden age of existentialism will thus be the end of progress and the eventual death of man, because the unique moment is an intellectual, scientific, and moral impossibility.

By renouncing the past and the future for the existential moment modern man has demanded an apocalyptic moment, instant paradise without any history or future. Karl Marx never swerved from this hope. In *The German Ideology*, Marx declared,

> ...in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.[6]

In Marx's society, "where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity, but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes," no man prepares to be a scientist, concert violinist, or flyer; every man has instant realization of his every vocational whim. Time and history are surpassed, and potentiality

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-138.
6. Cited by Gary North: *Marx's Religion of Revolution.* (Nutley, N.J.: The Craig Press, 1968). p. 60. North makes clear that Marx never swerved from this belief, although some critics have claimed that he did so, but without evidence.

and actuality are one in Marx's apocalyptic moment. This dream of the apocalyptic moment was basic to the beatnik movement, and then to the hippy movement. It is at the heart of all revolutionary movements from the French Revolution on.

To deny time and history is to deny maturation. After Marx, we are what we will to be immediately. Inevitably, this denial of time leads to the affirmation of magic, the first principle of which is, "As my will is, so mote it be." In other words, after Hegel, what my mind conceives as necessary and rational must therefore be, because "The rational is the real."

Time as a moral issue means time as the area of maturation and testing: it means time as history, the working out of God's purpose for man.

Time in this sense is not a problem but an opportunity for the Christian. His purpose, as Scripture requires it, is to redeem the time (Col. 4:5, Eph. 5:15,16). Time, *kairos*, is a quality or a season of meaning, and *redeem* means to buy up the opportunity. Arthur Way thus rendered Ephesians 5:16 as "Grasp at each opportunity (like merchants who eagerly buy up a scarce commodity)."

Time, moreover, is not a unique or a random thing, an endless sequence of unique, existential moments, but rather an aspect of God's grand design and is thus totally meaningful. We live thus in a world of inescapable and total meaning, and every moment of time, and every act of history, furthers the development and explication of that meaning.

Stent required a common denominator in events and moments in order to preserve science, but he by-passed God in his hope for meaning. As a result, his melancholy conclusion is the death of progress and of man in a vast, universal ensemble of unique events.

Time did not move for Parmenides, and was, in fact, for him a illusion. For Marx, time was to stand still in the apocalyptic moment of the communist order. Their common flight from God led them to find either nothing at all in the existential moment of time, or to expect of it an apocalyptic delivery of all things.

The Christian must *redeem* the time, *because the days are evil* (Eph. 5:16). Progress is a mandate; evil must be overcome, and the Kingdom of God set forth in all its claims and power. In terms of this calling, time is a wealth and an opportunity, and it is to be utilized to the full to bring all things into captivity to and under the dominion of God. Instead of a flight from time, the orthodox Christian stands in time as in wealth with a world to conquer with that wealth.

2. Eternity and Time

James Daane, in his attack on Van Til's philosophy, was especially critical of Van Til's view of time. Because Van Til so clearly emphasizes the priority and ultimacy of the sovereign and triune God over time, Daane held that time and history had no real place in Van Til's thought. He maintained that "Van Til's thought reveals that characteristic disregard for chronological time which appears in all absolutistic systems of thought."[7] Implicit in Daane's entire position is the requirement that time and history have priority; unless Adam's every act was itself ultimate rather than an aspect of God's creation and decree, Adam for him is denied reality. He thus held that "Van Til's theology denies Adam's individual reality. Van Til must reduce Adam to a mere generality in order to avert the collapse of his whole system. Van Til's common grace theology has no room for Adam. A careful search ends in the cry: Adam, where art thou?"[8]

The tables, of course, can be very easily turned on Daane. If ultimacy means reality, then, Daane having made Adam real has made God unreal, so that we can ask of Daane's god, where art thou? Priority and ultimacy having been given to Adam and time, are denied to God and eternity.

Daane, however is not ready to go quite that far. Instead, he wants to give priority to the revelation of Jesus Christ in history. In fact, Daane himself begins to downgrade calendar time, saying that the "Bible has only secondary interest in time as computed by days and years." Moreover,

> Neither the clock nor the calendar can truly divide time. In consequence neither can discriminate between times and tell us what time it is. Christ alone can truly divide the time. He alone can separate the present from the past and the future, in such a manner that the past is truly past, the present decisive and the future sure...It is He, not the clock or calendar, that introduces the Great Divide, the real distinction between this age and the former age, between 'his hour' and 'the hour of the prince of darkness'.[9]

Daane has denied ultimacy to the ontological trinity; on the other hand, while bringing ultimacy down to earth, he has avoided giving it to time as such; instead, he gives it to the Christ Event, an historical moment. As Van Til has analyzed Daane's philosophy:

> To have Christ as the true divider of time we must not think of him as working according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. We must not have back of him the eternal counsel of God according to which all things come to pass. For, in that case, the coming of Christ would be no more revelatory of God and his purposes than a victory of the White Sox would be. A truly Christological approach

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7. James Daane: *A Theology of Grace.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954). p. 114.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
9. James Daane, "What Time is It?" in *Reformed Journal*, October, 1951.

> must, therefore, be one which would truly replace the "central principle" of sovereignty as such and must therefore, according to Daane, exclude the all controlling providence of God, and, at the same time, ascribe secondary significance to the clock and the calendar.[10]

Daane gives ultimacy to the Christ Event, an historical moment, *not* to the Christ who reigns eternally in heaven, as the second person of the Trinity. To do so would be to give priority to eternity, which he refuses to do. Since he does not want to give priority to time and history as such, and thus to man, because it would be open humanism, Daane gives it to a Christ Event which is detached from the eternally sovereign and reigning second person of the Trinity. A formal Christianity is retained, but the sovereignty of God has been in effect denied.

For the orthodox Christian the triune God is ultimate, and the whole of creation is His handiwork and thus derivative. It does not undercut the reality of the creation, and thus of time, to say that it is created: rather, it simply identifies the kind of reality it is. The issue of the relation of the eternal to the temporal is put into proper perspective by Van Til:

> Again, if we are asked, What do you think of the relation of the eternal to the temporal?, we reply that the eternal for us does not exist as a principle but as a person, and that as an absolute person. Accordingly, we do not use the eternal as a correlative to the temporal; we use the notion of the eternal God as the personal creator of the temporal universe.
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> Once more, if men ask us as to which is first, *becoming* or *being*, we reply by saying first of all that the term becoming cannot be applied to God. God's being is not subject to becoming. He is eternal being. And as for created being, it is in the process of becoming by virtue of the plan of God. God's being, is therefore "before" the becoming of the created universe. The eternal One-and-Many are "prior to" in quotation marks. It will readily be seen that if our theory of reality is true, we cannot simply say that God is prior to the universe, meaning by "prior to" temporal priority. Inasmuch as God is not subject to time, we cannot enclose him in the calendar. God is the creator of time itself as a form of created being. On the other hand, if we say that God is "prior to" the created universe we do not simply mean what is usually meant by logical priority. God is, to be sure, logically "prior to" the created universe but he is logically prior by virtue of the fact that he has actually created the universe with its temporal form out of or into nothing. Without the notion of temporal creation, the notion of logical dependence cannot be maintained.[11]

The attempts at ascribing ultimacy to the Christ Event rather than to God, the ontological trinity, or to man directly, come to focus in Karl Barth. Barth

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[10] Cornelius Van Til: *The Theology of James Daane.* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Com, 1959). p. 29f.

[11] Cornelius Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith.* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955). p. 46f.

saw the impotence of humanism clearly: time loses meaning where time becomes ultimate. Barth's spiritual crisis, however, was not a disillusionment with man and time as such but with their impotence where given ultimacy. Barth wanted man and time to have the centrality humanism gives them but with the potency Christianity gave them. As a result, by turning to the incarnation, the Christ Event, Barth saw this event as God becoming man in time and temporal man participating in the eternal God. Of God beyond that Event, Barth wanted to know nothing. God had done His duty by providing the Christ Event whereby the inescapable potentiality of every man was revealed. As Van Til pointed out,

> According to Barth, the whole question of the relation of eternity to time is identical with the question of the relation of God to man in Jesus Christ. We are not to discuss the question of how eternity can become time or how time can participate in eternity and after that to ask to what extent Christ is both eternal and temporal. We are rather to begin with the great principle earlier discussed, namely, that Jesus Christ as the fact and act of God's presence with man, and as the act of man's participation in the being of God, is the source of all possibility. It is Jesus Christ as *Geschichte* who is both the ground of being and of knowledge for man in all things.[12]

To put it brutally but still accurately, the purpose of the god of Barth's system is to act as the stud in order to provide man with the potentiality for meaning and life, he requires and, after that, Barth's god must disappear and refuse to speak or to be known. For sterile theologies, Barth's system offered false hope, and a false pregnancy.

Barth's failure is not surprising. As Szasz has observed, in another context,

> In language and logic we are the prisoners of our premises, just as in politics and law we are the prisoners of our rulers. Hence we had better pick them well.[13]

Every premise which includes the ultimacy of time is doomed to collapse into meaninglessness and self-negation. The Hebrew word for time is derived from the changes of the seasons. Time is change, but change without meaning is an oppressive fact. Philosophies which have as their premise the ultimacy of time end in a world and life negation and a desire to escape from life into a nirvana of nothingness.

If time is only an endless cycle of change, then history is nothing more than a meaningless repetition. When Carlyle's faith was reduced to its essence, all he held, as he observed in *The French Revolution*, was that "There is nothing

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[12] Cornelius Van Til: *Christianity and Barthianism*. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962). p. 92.

[13] Thomas S. Szacz, "The Ethics of Suicide," *Intellectual Digest*, October 1971. Reprinted from *The Antioch Review*. p. 55.

else but revolution or mutation." Great men might briefly hold the center of the stage, but change alone continues, and it has no meaning.

Where no transcendental meaning exists (and the only truly transcendental meaning comes from the sovereign and triune God and the fact that He is maker of heaven and earth), man's recourse then is to create a private meaning and read it onto and into the world and events. This is simply superstition, which is an irrational feeling or belief which is projected on to reality. Superstition becomes the recourse of men who reject the ontological trinity, and the more pronounced their rejection, the more pronounced their superstition. Thus, when Nietzsche rejected the God of Scripture and affirmed a belief in time and history as cyclical, he was then a prey to superstition. Bentley has commented on one aspect of this:

> Throughout the year 1881, as we learn from Nietzsche's letters to Peter Gast, Nietzsche was haunted by a fear that this year might be fatal to him, because all events recur and he had attained the age at which his father died. It is evident that Nietzsche's belief was no mere doctrine of cyclical epochs but a superstitious obsession, an illusion, which in the manner of a paranoiac he built into a system.[14]

As against Bentley, we must point out that it was Nietzsche's rejection of God which led to his superstition and paranoia.

Freud also was a prey to superstition. He believed that his time of death was set, in terms of superstitious ideas, and that he would die in February, 1918, and he often referred to this date in resignation. He was given to numerological ideas; when February 1918, passed without his death, instead of blaming himself, Freud commented, "That shows how little trust one can place in the supernatural,"[15] He kept his 73rd birthday quiet, because of the numbers involved. He held that "There is an inner connection between urinating and writing." The third date he set for his death was "eighty and a half, the age at which both his father and his brother Emmanuel had died." He resorted to magical actions to avoid disasters, breaking precious objects to avert them, or to compel actions in others.[16] We have some evidence as to how these superstitions developed. Thus, we know how he decided he would die at 62:

> It appears that in the autumn of 1899 two events had coincided, one highly important, the other banal. The former was the publication of his great work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, when he was forty-three years old; (the publication date of 1900 is incorrect). The other was his being given a new telephone number 14362. Some months later at the time of the break with his numerological friend Fliess the numbers suddenly

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[14] Eric Bentley: *A Century of Hero-Worship*. (Second, revised edition. Boston, MASS: Beacon Press, 1944). p. 104.
[15] Ernest Jones: *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. II. (New York, N.Y.: Basic Books, (1955) 1960). pp. 184, 196, 392.
[16] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 145, 213, 236, 382.

> came together and acquired significance; 43 being common to both, there was left 61 and 62. Freud equated the superstitious belief with the thought that with *The Interpretation of Dreams* his life's work was done, so that nothing more need be expected of him and he could die in peace.[17]

These are examples of crude superstitions, and they abound in the lives of the prominent humanists. But superstitions need not be crude to be unreal. Superstitions are, as we have seen, irrational feelings or beliefs which are projected on to reality. They can be highly sophisticated and philosophical, but such feelings and beliefs are still superstitious. Bentley, as we have seen, traced Nietzsche's philosophy of time and history to superstition. We need not limit the application to Nietzsche. Wherever men in philosophy have departed from the ontological trinity and His infallible word as their starting point, they have fallen into superstition. Having denied ultimacy to God, and having then ascribed it to man and time, they must then project, as a new law of being, as a new eternal decree, the conclusions of man's mind on to the universe and read time as a pattern of man's ideas. This superstitious effort, which is also magic, was summed up in Hegel's conclusion that the rational is the real. Mind incarnates itself in time to realize its decree.

But time does not move to man's ideas, nor to his heart-beat, so that man must then turn bitterly against his hope, time, and, like Trumbull Stickney, reject past and future for a forlorn and futile hope in the present. In Sartre, the existential moment is everything, and man must therefore become his own god in a world without God and without meaning. The attempt is a futile one, and Sartre himself concluded that "Man is a useless passion."[18] If there be no God, then, ultimately there is no man; if there be not eternity, then time too collapses into meaninglessness. The ultimacy of God and eternity, or, more accurately, of the eternal God, is the guarantee of the reality and meaning of time, man, and history.

3. Time and History

Clark's study of *Historiography* shows an interesting ambivalence in the attitude of humanism through the centuries towards history. The Greeks on the whole took little interest in history, whereas the Egyptians "had a keen sense of time." The Enlightenment despised the past and "was so superior to antiquity that history had nothing to teach." Voltaire held that "No secure historical knowledge could be obtained for events prior to 1600," according to Clark, The 19th century, on the other hand, saw an intense interest in history return, and this interest is widely present in the 20th century.[19]

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[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 390.

[18] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Being and Nothingness, An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology.* (New York, N. Y.: Philosophical Library, 1956). p. 615.

The extremes of opinion concerning time and history have been especially prominent in the 20th century, and their presuppositions have been more readily apparent. The humanistic problem has been the chronic disease of all immanentistic faiths, an *all or nothing* expectation of time and history. The transcendental, absolute, and sovereign God of Scripture having been denied, time and history become the only valid arena of meaning. The result has been this ambivalence between a pessimistic rejection of time and history as meaningless, and an insistence that total meaning is something to be derived from them. The secular doctrine of progress was one version of this humanistic faith. The secular doctrine of progress was a secularization of the Biblical doctrine of providence, and of Biblical eschatology.

Spencer, in his *Social Statistics*, held that progress "is not an accident but a necessity. As surely as a blacksmith's arm grows large and the skin of a laborer's hands become thick,...so surely must the things we call evil and immorality disappear, so surely must man become perfect." As Clark points out, "Negatively, progress is the denial of divine providence." Positively, it is held to be a law of nature, and, therefore, "necessary and inevitable."[20]

Progress, however, is an idea which humanism must renounce as it departs progressively from a Biblical faith. To affirm itself, humanism feels the need of affirming progress. However, as it affirms man, humanism is less and less tolerant of affirming even nature as in any sense governing man, so that, instead of progress and evolution making man, the newer faith becomes "man makes himself," and *man* makes history and progress, not nature.

The doubts of the older humanism concerning progress came clearly to the surface in Tennyson, who tried to blend a form of Christianity with the substance of humanism and progress. In his poem, "The Play," the tension reveals itself: he wants a governing God, but his god is remote, and his hopes in him are problematical:

> Act first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe
> You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.
> And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show
> In some fifth Act what this wild Drama means.

In other words, there is no meaning now, although a possible fifth act might reveal one. *In Memoriam (CXXXI)* gives us Tennyson's hope concerning God and the fifth act:

> The God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

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[19] Gordon H. Clark: *Historiography, Secular and Religious*. (Nutley, N.J.: Craig Press, 1971). pp. 1-27.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

"One element" hints of pantheism. In any case, the possibility of hope is entirely future. The reality of time and history is perpetual flux, as *In Memorian (CXXIII)* reveals:

> The hills are shadows, and they flow
> From form to form, and nothing stands;
> They melt like mist, the solid lands,
> Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

This is an evolutionary picture of a shifting, changing world with an endless history of change. The escape from an unending history of perpetual flux becomes that "one far-off divine event," the possible "fifth Act" of history. Tennyson's perspective makes clear why apocalyptic thinking revived as the ancient pagan doctrine of evolution revived. The escape from perpetual flux, from the endless cycle of history, is sought in an apocalyptic *destruction* of history. Biblical eschatology is not apocalyptic in this sense. It sees, not the destruction of history, but its fulfillment in time and then at the end of time. The end is not a violation of time but its culmination.

The humanistic *all or nothing* views of history thus rest on a faith which denies a sovereign God and replaces Him with sovereign man. The resultant view of history is an act of faith, and what constitutes a fact is determined by faith. Citing Clark again,

> Or, to go back to the first example of disagreement between historians: why did the nineteenth century deny the existence of the Hittite nation? Certainly it was not because of any new evidence previously unknown. The explanation is simply that the earlier centuries by and large accepted the Old Testament account as correct, whereas the nineteenth century assumed that the Old Testament must be adjudged mistaken unless proved innocent by independent evidence. Then, since there was not such evidence, it followed that the Hittites never lived.
>
> In the face of such factual disagreement one is forced to examine the processes of historical scholarship. These are clearly not infallible, and accordingly one must consider how an historian goes about his business. What are his methods? How does he try to avoid error? Where do the difficulties lie? And can the historian avoid theological or other presuppositions?[21]

No historian or scholar in any area can avoid presuppositions, as the work of Cornelius Van Til clearly demonstrate. With respect to history, not only are certain presuppositions implicit in all historiography, but those presuppositions include certain *expectations*. People who study the past are those who are interested in the future. They seek a pattern, meaning, and direction in time and history by examining what has gone before. The historian records a pattern which he sees in terms of a faith. That pattern helps

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

him make predictions concerning the future, and is a possible instrument by means of which he can control that future.

The humanist, McHale, while abandoning a belief in the inevitability of progress is interested in the future because he wants man to control it.

> Our view of the future is no longer that of a great evolutionary onrush, largely independent of man's intervention, tinged variously with doom or elation. We realize, for example, that man does not, in the end, master nature in the nineteenth century sense but collaborates within the natural world; his very existence depends upon an intricate balance of forces within which he is also an active agent.[22]

In this sense, "man's future may be literally what he chooses to make it."[23] Moreover,

> The outcome of the future chosen will depend in turn on our ability to conceptualize them in humanly desirable terms and our willingness to engage with prediction.
>
> There is, in this sense, no future other than as we will it to be. If we conceive of a future state as desirable, we tend to orient ourselves toward it and to initiate the courses of action necessary to its attainment. Of course, willing a future connotes more than wishful thinking; it involves an action-oriented commitment to the future in ways that transcend past constraints and present obstacles.[24]

McHale further states, "The future of the future is therefore what we determine it to be, both individually and collectively."[25] The future is a world problem; "there are no local problems any more," and it means "that the resources of the planet can no longer be possessed by individuals, corporations, or national groups any more than these can possess the air we breathe."[26] As a result, the old moralities are now devastating immoralities.[27]

> The future is compounded of past and present. The past is constantly re-created in the future. Past, present and future commingle in any one conscious instant.[28]
>
> Most of our social institutions and processes are designed not only to regulate the present, but also to transmit past values and useful experiences into future forms.[29]
>
> Each institution has it own miniature utopia.[30]

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22. John McHale: *The Future of the Future*. (New York, N.Y. Ballantine Books, (1969) 1971). p. 5.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

For McHale, Christianity has been a religious and social movement, profoundly altering history. Since the Renaissance, and especially since the French Revolution, which McHale views favorably, history has had a different impetus and perspective.[31] Thus, very clearly, McHale's view of the past is not the view of the past of Christian orthodoxy, and thus his views of the present and the future are radically different. As a result, while we can agree with him to a degree that man makes the future, we must add that this is only true in a secondary sense, under God and His decree. It is emphatically true that every institution and every idea is a plan for the future. A home, a book, a school, an interest in and study of history, all these things and more have as their purpose the prediction and control of the future. When Christian parents and schools train their children in Biblical faith, they do so because they predicate the sovereign God and affirm that the future is determined by His will; man must therefore conform himself to God and be reformed by Him in order to have an enduring stake in the future. Non-theistic education, government, and science assume the contrary: man's future depends on an abandonment of restraining moral and religious premises which supposedly hamper man's progress. If there is no law or God beyond man, this faith is likely to prosper. If not, its course is in collision with God's purpose and faces inescapable disaster.

Man can make the future under God, as a secondary cause, and his every act has implicit in it a faith about and a plan for the future. Man cannot be interested in the future unless he has such a hope, nor can he then be interested in the present, because his entire life is meaningless.

Let us illustrate the difference between McHale's (and other humanists') past, and the past as seen by Biblical faith. Modern textbooks in world history begin with evolutionary presuppositions. They discuss prehistoric times, and sometimes the life and mind of prehistoric man (with no visible evidence); they speak of prehistoric man and the animals, long epochs of development, and are sometimes quite specific about unknown things. Thus, an older and more conservative textbook of this kind stated,

> Again, with respect to man's economic progress, his methods of getting a living, we may divide his career into five stages: (1) the Hunting and Fishing state; (2) the Pastoral or Shepherd stage; (3) the Agricultural state; (4) the Handicraft state; and (5) the Industrial state.[32]

This, of course, is simply an evolutionary faith read back into history; no evidence exists for any such "development."

On the contrary, some of the earliest known cultures give evidences of very great advances, including modern plumbing.[33] Ancient maps reveal

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[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-44.

[32] Henry W. Elson: *Modern Times and the Living Past.* (New York, N.Y.: American Book Company, (1921) 1928). p. 4.

seamanship only recently re-discovered, and a knowledge of geography presupposing world-wide exploration.[34] Man appears on the scene of history fully man, and with an awareness of things which diminishes instead of increases in later centuries.

We have chosen a routine example of the humanistic view of history in Elson; Let us examine a similarly ordinary example from the Christian perspective, Haskel's chronological survey of history, designed, like Elson's work, for school use, and published in 1847. The first entry in Haskel reads:

> B.C.
> 4004 - The world created near the autumnal equinox, on Sunday, October 23. (According to Archbishop Usher's Annals of the Old and New Test.)
> 5872 - according to the Septuagint.
> 4700 - according to the Samaritan text.
> Adam and Eve created on Friday, Oct. 28 - The Chronology here followed is that of the Hebrew Scriptures, which is generally regarded as the most correct. The difference between this and the Samaritan text, and that of the Septuagint, relates only to the different lengths assigned to the lives of some of the patriarchs, and is productive of no change in regard to other events.[35]

The fact that some scholars of the Hebrew text have differed with Usher's date by a few years is irrelevant to our purpose here. What is important is that a history whose past includes and is grounded on God's creation has a radically different view of the present and future than does Elson.

Moreover, such a view of history presupposes the Bible as the first and only infallible book of history. It is also history which gives us the direction and framework of all history. Creation is followed by the fall of man, and history then reveals both the outworkings of the fall and the development of redemption. The flood destroys the original world, and brings a reduced life and world to man. The covenant people are given God's law as the way of sanctification, and the sacrificial system, pointing to Christ, as their salvation. The various political systems of the covenant bring both good and evil, making clear that man's hope is not in man, nor in politics, but in the Lord. History is declared to be a continual shaking, so that the things which cannot be shaken may alone remain (Heb. 12:25-29). The goal is the Kingdom of God, and, finally, the fullness of the new creation.

Between these two views of history there can be no legitimate reconciliation. Both clearly indicate that our view of the past and present is

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33. See R. W. Hutchinson: *Prehistoric Crete.* (Hermondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books (1962) 1968). Friedrich Matz: *The Art of Crete and Early Greece.* (New York, N.Y.: Crown Publishers, 1962).
34. See Charles H. Hapgood: *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings.* (Philadelphia, PA: Chilton, 1966).
35. Daniel Haskel: *A Chronological View of the World.* (New York, N.Y.: J. H. Colton, 1847). p. 7.

important, not only in establishing our view of the future, but in bringing about that future, whether as judgment or blessing (Deut. 28).

4. Time, History, and Meaning

The court historian, Samuel Eliot Morison, has well expressed the modern denial of meaning to history in a statement which is almost holy writ to many moderns. According to Morison,

> America was discovered accidentally by a great seaman who was looking for something else; when discovered it was not wanted; and most of the exploration for the next fifty years was done in the hope of getting through or around it. America was named after a man who discovered no part of the New World. History is like that, very chancy.[36]

This childish statement collects a few superficial facts to make a very far-reaching conclusion. America was discovered at least several times before Columbus, "accidentally" and purposefully, but none of these earlier ventures had a lasting significance. Columbus and his followers were governed by theological and economic motives which made discovery and development inevitable, so that we can with full justice declare that the discovery of America was both inevitable and overdue.

There is, of course, a reason for Morison's silly statement. It effectively denies that any meaning exists in history *other than the self-conscious motives of men.* The only tenable meaning to history is man-made meaning. God is denied, and therefore rationality is absent from the universe and from history. Man possesses "a thin edge of rationality," to cite a noted scholar in a personal comment, but even man is so heavily governed by his unconscious being that most of his personal and social history is also irrational and generally meaningless.

It is almost unnecessary to add that this is the justification for "scientific socialism." Reason and meaning are necessary in history, and it is held to be the duty of the elite planners to provide the plan of predestination for man by elite man.

In terms of this, God and Christ can only be tolerated if they are emptied of their ultimacy and become props for the ultimacy of man, whereby man can affirm that meaning has been created by man in history, this is so that we can say, in effect, history has begotten history, and man has begotten man. This kind of thinking has been well satirized by the parody of Scripture which reads,

> Jesus said unto them, "Whom do ye say that I am?"

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[36] Samuel Eliot Morison, quoted in Margaret Koch: *Santa Cruz County Parade of the Past.* (Fresno, CA: California Valley Publications, 1973). p. vii.

> And they replied, "You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the kerygma in which we find the ultimate meaning of our interpersonal relationships."
> And Jesus said, "WHAT?"

Such thinking well illustrates the problem which always confronts humanistic man, the problem of definition. To define anything is a major problem, because the most commonplace fact becomes elusive when attempts are made to define. Everyone knows what time is, but defining time is a major problem to science and philosophy. Is time succession, or an appearance of succession? Is it an aspect of a space-time continuum, or is it broader still in its nature? A man can and does know far more than he can comprehend. I know my wife, for example, and I know her intimately and happily, but I cannot comprehend her. There is more to her than I am able to comprehend. If this is true of people, it is much more true of time, history, the universe, and, supremely, God. Humanism thus has a chronic problem with definition. For me, the absolute and total comprehension of all things, my wife, the universe, time, history and space, is in God, and I accept His creation as *given* and totally rational and comprehensible in Him. For the humanist, the only rationality is in himself, in man, and, if he cannot comprehend the totality of things by the imposition of his rationality onto events, then he is left with a surd, with irrationality. As a result, *definition* is essential to humanistic philosophy, but the more humanism concentrates on definition, the more elusive definition becomes. The direction of modern philosophy has thus been a progressive descent into an impossible philology, the definition of things in a context where definition is impossible. The result is a paralysis of philosophy, and of all theology which follows in this train. It is not surprising that Max Black begins his definition of *meaning* with the words, "A highly ambiguous term."[37] On the other hand, Edward Erwin tries to salvage some meaning for the concept of meaninglessness.[38]

To his credit, Karl Marx recognized this problem. He saw that philosophy was becoming bogged down in definition as it becomes more openly humanistic. As result, he attempted to issue a call to action as a replacement to interpretation and definition, an essentially evangelical summons to commitment. In his "Theses on Feuerbach," he insisted, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."[39] This Marxism has tried to do, and the result has been vitality in a humanistic world paralyzed by its own ideas. However, action is a consequence of meaning, a product of faith, and, with time, the poverty and

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[37] Max Black, "Meaning" in Dagobert D. Runes: *Dictionary of Philosophy*. (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1960). p. 193.
[38] Edward Erwin: *The Concept of Meaningless*. (Baltimore, M.D.: The John Hopkins Press, 1970).
[39] Marx, "Thesis on Feuerbach," in K. Marx and F. Engels: *On Religion*. (Moscow, Russia: Foreign Languages Publishing House). p. 72.

irrationality of Marxism has taken hold of its followers. As a result, in the Soviet Union, where Marxism has the longest history, there is a progressive bureaucratization of action with a consequent paralysis. Marxist philosophy is faced with the problem of meaning, and it has no adequate answer. As a result, its command of history is endangered.

If philosophy does not begin with a given meaning, then it has none, because the logic of its presuppositions will exclude meaning. To exclude meaning is to abdicate from history and to deny validity to the course of time. Cultures which deny meaning become as a consequence cultural drop-outs. A culture which denies meaning to time will soon be on the side-lines of history, or else trampled under-foot. Marx's call to *change* the world was thus a thunder-clap of meaning in the void of humanism, but its continuation has been marked by a progressive erosion of its borrowed meaning and an attrition on its humanistic doctrine of predestination. The revival of Biblical theology will quickly puncture the rudderless balloon of Marxist philosophy.

There are attempts to answer this bankruptcy of humanism by harking back to the ostensible humanism of "primitive" man. Eternity and God have been de-sacralized by humanism, and, as a result, time is sacralized. "Sacred time" is the time of man before the God of Scripture, time when Spring brings salvation and Winter withdraws it. Nature provides man with the god's epiphany in Spring, and holy history in every natural event.

In this naturalistic sacred time, man is the working god. He stands amid time and by his act, through a festival, accepts a segment of time and makes it sacred, or he reprobates a day and denies its given nature. Man thus creates the calendar of events and becomes supposedly lord of time, which moves to his calendar. Calendar creation was indeed important to many pagan cultures, both in Asia and in the Americas (Aztec, Mayan, etc.). The sacred festivals arrest time by giving it to man for a day or a week to control by means of various rites which will either fix and determine history or else enable man to probe its forthcoming events by means of omens and thereby prepare to cope with them.

What was done in the older paganism by means of the festival the new pagans or humanists plan to do by scientific planning, human engineering, and behavioral controls. Time and history will be sacralized and redeemed from the darkness of non-meaning. The light of meaning will be raised against the universe of non-meaning and irrationality by means of modern man's control of time.

But this plan has a fallacy. *The control is not over time but man.* The meaning of history is reduced to the imposition of a self-generated meaning by elitist planners on the vast bulk of mankind. The masses are reduced to the level of the ant-hill in the name of the new meaning. The "thin edge of rationality" becomes thinner then mankind: it becomes a very small segment

thereof. There is no history in an ant-hill or a beehive. Post-historical man has no meaning nor history.

God's time gives total meaning to all reality. The sacred time of the new pagans reduces meaning to the insanities of a small circle of planning men.

5. The Infallibility of Time

Infallibility is an inescapable concept: denied to God and His word, it does not disappear but rather accrues to some aspect of the created order.

At one time or another, a great variety of persons, institutions, and things have had infallibility ascribed to them. *Time* has had ascribed to it a wide variety of powers, because time is so long and comprehensive, that, for the humanist, it becomes the repository of all possibilities and powers. As a result, where such a faith in time exists, we have it popularly expressed in various proverbs. "Time heals all wounds," we are told, a piece of radical nonsense. Its presupposition is Sophocles' statement, "Time is a god who makes rough ways smooth."[40] For Sophocles, the determination of all things is within history, and hence time is a god, because potentiality resides in time. Montaigne held, "Time is the sovereign physician of our passions," and a Greek proverb holds that "Time is the great teacher." The proverbs of time are many, and they bespeak a religious faith in time as against God.

On one occasion, in attempting to convince a devout evolutionist that his faith contradicted a number of scientific premises he affirmed, such as the second law of thermodynamics, and the impossibility of spontaneous generation, he answered with emphasis, "Given enough time, all things are possible." This struck me as a most religious statement, similar to our Lord's declaration, "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Did he mean that time is *omnipotent and infallible*? He objected to my wording, but in essence affirmed my point: given enough time, all possibilities and all potentialities were realizable in time. Moreover, there is nothing, he held, beyond time to judge time nor to hold its workings in error.

This is, of course, the constant problem of humanism. If there is no law, there is no crime. If there is no judge beyond history, then history is its own judge. If there is nothing beyond time, then all potentiality resides in time. Then too we live and move and have our being, not in God, but in time.

The evolutionist is right: if his view of time be held, all things are possible in time, but, because time has no predetermined character for him, that total possibility is meaningless, senseless, and purposeless. It can mean devolution as well as evolution.

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[40] Sir Richard C. Jebb, translator: *The Tragedies of Sophocles*. "Electra" 179. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936). p. 230.

The infallibility of God's ways and word is tied to the absolute self-consciousness of the triune God: God is true to Himself, "For I am the LORD; I change not" (Mal. 3:6). God is infallible, because he is totally self-consistent as well as omnipotent: there are no contradictions in His being. His word and His works are perfect.

The denial of God and His infallible word enthrones time and its processes with infallibility, because there is now no law or standard whereby the events of time can be judged. All things are now equal, and all things are manifestations of the same process. To affirm the primacy of time means to affirm the worthlessness of time, because it is governed by no meaning or value, as Marcus Aurelius saw:

> Often think of the rapidity with which things pass by and disappear, both the things which are and the things which are produced. For substance is like a river in a continual flow, and the activities of things are in constant change, and the causes work in infinite varieties; and there is hardly anything which stands still. And consider this which is near to thee, this boundless abyss of the past and of the future in which all things disappear. How then is he not a fool who is puffed up with such things or plagued about them and makes himself miserable? for they vex him only for a time, and a short time.[41]

We thus have the sorry spectacle of an emperor of a great realm denying the meaning of time. The anti-theist thus affirms time only to find that there is now nothing left to affirm, because he has no valid principle of affirmation. The result is a retreat from time and history.

On the other hand, to save history, science, and man, it becomes necessary, as in Kant, to re-establish time, not to deny it. As Kant saw of time, "In it alone is all reality of phenomena possible."[42] What Kant is saying is that time is like God, and in time we live and move and have our being. But Kant is trying to rescue the possibility of knowledge by autonomous man; he is trying to make possible valid knowledge in a meaningless world of brute factuality. He needs time in order to establish the framework for man's knowledge. As a result, however much he seems at first to exalt time, it is only in order to exalt autonomous man in his independence from God. Thus, Kant declares,

> (a) Time is not something which exists of itself, or which inheres in things as an objective determination, and it does not, therefore, remain when abstraction is made of all subjective conditions of its intuition. Were it self-subsistent, it would be something which would be actual and yet not an actual object. Were it a determination or order inhering in things themselves, it could not precede the objects as their condition, and be known and intuited *a priori* by means of synthetic propositions. But this last is quite possible if time is nothing but the subjective

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41. Marcus Aurelias: *Meditations*, Book V., p. 23.

42. Norman Kemp Smith, editor, translator: *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, Sect. II, 4, 2. (London, England: Macmillan, 1934). p. 48.

> condition under which alone intuition can take place in us. For that being so, this form of inner intuition can be represented prior to the objects, and therefore *a priori*.
>
> (b) Time is nothing but the form of inner sense, that is, of the intuition of ourselves and of our inner state. It cannot be a determination of outer appearances; it has to do neither with shape nor position, but with the relation of representations in our inner state...
>
> (c) Time is the formal *a priori* condition of all appearances whatsoever. It is the immediate condition of inner appearances (of our souls) and thereby the mediate condition of outer appearances. Just as I can say *a priori* that all outer appearances are in space, and are determined *a priori* in conformity with the relations of space, I can also say, from the principle of inner sense, that all appearances whatsoever, that is, all objects of the sense, are in time, and necessarily stand in time-relations.[43]

It now appears that space and time live and move and have their being in the consciousness of autonomous man. Since the presupposition of a philosophy or faith governs the total world and reality thereof, nothing can exist outside of the presupposition or given. Thus, in Christian faith it necessarily follows, given the God of Scripture, that "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Humanism has not yet been able to say fully that all things were made by man, but it does say that all things exist as aspects of man's autonomous mind, and nothing has any existence which is not an aspect of Man's autonomous mind or an experience thereof. This is the implication of Kantian thought. The fundamental premise of Kant's philosophy is plainly stated by Kant in the "Preface to Second Edition," in April 1787, in these words:

> Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge.[44]

Thus, when the determination of all things and infallibility are transferred from God and His eternity to time, the goal of this transfer is to have them reside in man. Thus, when Sophocles says that "Time is a god who makes rough ways smooth," the implication of these words is that man will ultimately settle all problems. When time ceases to be an aspect or condition of God's creation, it becomes an aspect of man's autonomous mind and experience. Man's confidence in time becomes a confidence in himself.

Jean-Paul Sartre is thus logical in denying the Freudian doctrine of the unconscious. His sovereign, existential man must be fully in control of

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43. *Ibid.*, p. 49f., II, 6.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

himself and fully conscious of time in order to realize his passion to be god, fully self-determined, creating his own essence, and infallible, because nothing outside of himself has any valid judgment to make concerning him or over him.

If eternity does not govern and judge time, then time is its own standard and law and is infallible. When time is made an aspect of man's experience and it is the autonomous mind of man which is ultimate, then it is man who is beyond judgment, beyond good and evil, and infallible.

6. Time and Apostolic Succession

If in any sense we depart from the absolute priority of and predestination by the triune God, to that degree we begin to assert the priority of time and determination from within time. Our doctrine of justification will be similarly altered. We will then assert historical rather than theological justification. All things will be brought then to the bar of history. Either time becomes the final judge of all events, or else some values located within time are used to assess events within time.

Legitimacy is therefore derived not from beyond history, from God, but from within history, from time. The result in some fashion is a doctrine of *apostolic succession.*

It should not surprise us that the early church did develop such a doctrine. The Greco-Roman culture into which Christianity moved stressed the primacy of time and history. Legitimacy was derived from the continuity of time and history, not from beyond time. In fact, the legitimacy of the gods, who were divinized heroes, came from within time. The heroes of Greece became gods after their death, and the emperors of Rome could be divinized after death by the Roman Senate. Before death, they manifested the incarnate divinity of the Roman Empire in their office. The surprising fact about the doctrine of apostolic succession was that it was relatively slow in developing, as Bruce Shelley has shown.[45]

Very simply stated, a humanistic apostolic succession holds that the validity of the office of bishop, or any other office, depends on an historical transmission rather than the faith held. As J. Wilhelm defined it,

> The principle underlying the Roman claim is contained in the idea of succession. "To succeed" is to be the successor of, or to occupy an official position just after, as Victoria succeeded William IV. Now the Roman Pontiffs come immediately after, occupy the position, and perform the functions of St. Peter; they are, therefore, his successors.[46]

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[45] Bruce Shelley: *By What Authority?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). pp. 334f., 39f., 42, 70, 104, 106, 108ff.

[46] J. Wilhelm, "Apostolic Succession," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. I. (New York, N.Y.: The Encyclopedia Press, (1907) 1913). p. 641.

The question therefore for those who affirm this succession is to find it in history. For Roman Catholic conservatives who hold to that succession, this means that to break with the pope is to break with the faith, since it resides in that apostolic succession and the authority thereof.

Such a faith is a logical outcome of the Hellenic and Roman views of authority, and those who criticize Rome are often most eloquent in developing and defending a like concept of authority with respect to the state. Hitler was thus the legitimate head of the German state and to be obeyed. The British "constitution" is the criterion of legitimacy, and the U.S. Constitution must be used by liberals and conservatives alike as the basis of all legitimate action.

It is important therefore to understand the relationship of time to value, of time to standards, in order to assess judgments within history. There are, in the main, three ways in which we can assess the relationship of values to time and history. Our idea of apostolic succession will be determined thereby.

First, we can affirm the reality of time only and deny God and eternity. All value is derived then from history, and legality and validity depend on purely temporal factors. Thus, a well-to-do liberal became very angry with me and refused to speak further with me when I undercut his argument with respect to American Indians. They had been "robbed" of the American continent, he held, and restitution should be made to them. I suggested that he begin by making his own private restitution, if he believed this were the case. Also, besides the "technical" Indians on reservations and Federal rolls, there were millions of "white" Americans with Indian blood, because more Indians had been absorbed into American life than there remained on reservations. How were these to be located, and restitution made to them? Moreover, existing Indians were not those who had been "robbed." Why restitution to them by men (other citizens) who did no "robbing"? Also, the American Indians replaced and killed off earlier inhabitants. Nevada Indians remember in their stories, and the evidence confirms, that the earlier natives were a pygmy people whom the Indians massacred and eliminated from existence. How shall we require the Indians to make restitution to these earlier peoples? And what if these earlier peoples replaced some still earlier?

In brief, justification from within history leads to absurdity. The claims of no people can stand, and no man's property, nor any country's realm, is then valid. The Franks replaced the Gaels in France; the Visigoths took over Spain; the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, England, and so on and on. Attempts to derive legitimacy from history are futile. True, the Arabs had Palestine for centuries before the modern Israeli, but they themselves were not the original people. Moreover, the Arabs in Egypt are invaders who seized the land from the real Egyptians, or Copts, a Christian people whom they still oppress. Shall Israel vacate Palestine, the Arabs Egypt, North Africa, and other areas? Attempts at

historical justification lead to nonsense. Values are not derived from history nor from "apostolic" or historical succession.

Historical succession is, however, basic to modern thought. It is, in fact, essential to Charles Darwin's argument. First, Darwin arranged all living things in a lower to higher order and posited a time sequence, i.e., that the lower preceded the higher in time. This was an arbitrary decision, a philosophical premise, not verifiable science. Second, because by definition this apostolic succession of evolution had never been broken, the future of evolution was secure and would see progress towards perfection. In Darwin's own words, in the next to last paragraph of *The Origin of Species*,

> We can so far take a prophetic glance into futurity as to foretell that it will be the common and widely spread species, belonging to the larger and dominant groups within each class, which will ultimately prevail and procreate new and dominant species. As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived long before the Cambrian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection.[47]

Without accepting the Roman Catholic doctrine, we must admit that it does give us fragmentary evidence, whereas Darwin gives us none. Darwin simply offers a blind faith that what he affirms is true, because his doctrine of time makes it possible; potentiality and value for Darwin reside within time.

The fallacy of this position is that every effort to find value and justification from within time lead to disillusionment. With the case of the Indians, we can have endless regress and come up with nothing as a value, and the same is true of other cases. Something more than time must provide the value.

The *second* answer thus, still denies the sovereign and ontological Trinity but divides time into two areas, the material realm of history, and the realm of ideas, where the Soul of history "exists." From Plotinus to Karl Barth, we have then a realm of supra-history which provides a limiting concept to prevent history from concluding into anarchy.

Thus, for Barth the Biblical miracles and revelation are very important in order to establish the validity of knowledge and of values, but they are not history in the temporal sense. Barth wrote:

> At the beginning of the life of Jesus stands the miraculous token of His *Virgin Birth*. At the end of His life stands the miraculous token of the *Empty Tomb*. It is precisely to these two miracles that we have to give particular attention. We may, if we will, call the Biblical reports of them

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[47] Charles Darwin: *The Origin of Species, and, the Descent of Man*. (Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica, (1952) 1955). p. 243.

> 'legends'. But let us at least see and understand their meaning as *tokens*! Then we shall no longer discard them as 'legends', nor shall we be offended by their character as unequivocally miraculous stories, because we shall realize that no stories that were not miraculous could suffice to indicate that to which they point.[48]

Barth's purpose is to rescue time and history, not to glorify and know God. The facts of history, where that history is God's revelation, are not important to Barth; in fact, they are merely tokens of the meaning of the non-theological history he is trying to validate. Because the autonomous self must be wholly free from God, and because, after Kant, history and time are taken into the consciousness of autonomous man, "revealed history" cannot be historical, because it would then deny the autonomy of man and his time.

Thus, in speaking of the entombment and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Barth is indifferent to its historicity in any traditional sense. He wrote:

> This tomb may prove to be a definitely closed *or* open tomb; it is really a matter of indifference. What avails the tomb, proved to be this or that, at Jerusalem in the year A.D. 30? Time and place are a matter of perfect indifference. Of what these eyes see it can really be equally said that it was, is, and will be, never and nowhere, as that it was, is, and will be, always everywhere possible.[49]

Van Til has pin-pointed the implication of Barth's view very tellingly:

> Indeed a fact of history is, according to Barth, not genuinely such unless it is everywhere and always possible. It is this sort of fact that is everywhere and always happening. That is to say, the resurrection of Christ stands, in his case, for the idea of the general progress of the human race toward ideal perfection.[50]

For Barth, Christ has a very real place in faith, but not in history. Christ "lives" in the realm of faith as a guarantor of the value of time. Myths are a necessity in this perspective as the means of insuring the reality and value of time.

Of course, man does not live long by illusion, and the world of Karl Barth is a world of increasingly empty churches, cynical and pessimistic men, and increasingly amoral social and historical action. Men are religiously bankrupt, and time has no meaning for them. The comment of one young university drop-out and "struggling artist" is symptomatic: "The meaning is death." Time devoid of meaning means life devoid of meaning.

These two approaches to time both find it difficult to find meaning in time, just as in the area of epistemology, problems also overwhelm them.

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[48] Karl Barth, Essay II in John Baillie, editor: *Revelation, A Symposium.* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1937). p. 65.

[49] Karl Barth: *The Resurrection of the Dead.* Translated by H. J. Stenning. (New York, N.Y.: Fleming H. Revell, 1933). p. 135.

[50] Cornelius Van Til: *The New Modernism.* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1946). p. 339.

Knowledge and meaning, as well as values, escape all who seek an answer out of the context of time. Their various versions of apostolic succession become empty and rotting staircases, leading from nowhere to nowhere.

For the *third* approach, time, meaning, history, knowledge, and values are not problems at all. The given, the presupposition, being the ontological and triune God of Scripture, all things are comprehended within God's decree and creation. The problem then is not time, meaning, knowledge, nor values but sin. Man's problem is that, as sinner, he tries to conceal his problem, his rebellion against God and His covenant. Man seeks freedom from God by declaring himself to be his own god, autonomous, and independent from God. Instead, man creates a world of total problems. Wherever man turns, he faces insoluble problems, and death itself, as his only alternative to the problem of sin. Meanwhile, of course, man's problem of sin does not disappear simply because man chooses to deny it, any more than the world vanishes whenever we shut our eyes to it. Man remains a sinner, guilty before God.

Redeemed man, however, being restored to the creation mandate to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:26-28), finds time to be an area of total meaning and value because he believes in the totally sovereign God. Not one atom of the universe exists apart from God and His purpose. The universe and time are realms of total meaning, because "Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together" (Zech. 10:4). As St. Paul summarizes it, "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" (Rom. 8:28).

Philosophies and faiths which have problems with time, meaning, and knowledge are by that fact confessing their moral rebellion and failure. They are engaged in what criminal law knows as plea bargaining; they are pleading in terms of a lesser offense in order to avoid the real charges against them.

I cited earlier an argument with a man over "justice" to the American Indians. I have had, in recent years, numerous similar arguments, in person and by mail. A passing reference to "Indian rights" in a Chalcedon Report brought me a flood of angry mail, almost all of it from people not on the mailing list but readers of other people's copies. Such people are ready to bleed for any and every cause as a means of establishing their self-righteousness. They have no interest in Indians in the flesh. In all these cases, when I cite the doctrine of historical succession to them, and ask whom shall we regard as the offended party, they are irate.

It does not occur to them to raise the question of historical legitimacy, so let us raise it here and now. If any form of apostolic succession, historical validity or justification is to be ruled out, then have we not established a doctrine of the legitimacy of revolution? Specifically, if the legal succession of federal presidents and congresses does not establish in itself the validity of

the United States Government, then have we not made revolution clearly and plainly legitimate? If we rule out the idea of "apostolic" succession in some form, do we not ensure anarchy and revolution?

The answer is emphatically no. By denying justification to history and historical succession, we do not invalidate time but rather establish it under God's decree and law. We cannot absolutize time and history, nor can we establish their meaning and value from within their own context. God is the source of all meaning, and His word is the law of all creation. Legitimacy is not removed from the world but rather established therein.

To be specific, the legitimacy of the United States, Great Britain, or any other civil order is not in its apostolic succession of legal heads, parliaments, or congresses, but in its conformity to the law of God. However, the illegitimacy of any civil order in relation to the law of God does not justify revolution, and obedience is rather commanded (Rom. 13:1-10; I Peter 2:13-14). To assert revolution as the means to legitimacy is to declare that it is man's word and act that constitute the ground of legitimacy. Rather, it is the regenerating power of God and man's obedience to the law of God which establish meaning and legitimacy in history. Where that regeneration and the obedience of faith are operative, there too legitimacy exists, and the historical succession becomes confirmed and blessed. Thus, the Davidic dynasty in Judea did not prevent God from condemning and destroying the monarchy as apostate, immoral, and illegitimate in His sight. The criterion he required was the "succession" of faith, not simply historical but supernatural and hence historical. The historical succession as such is meaningless, because history and time do not determine meaning but are the arena in which God manifests His meaning. Attempts therefore to derive an historical or "apostolic" succession as the means to historical justification are thus invalid. They do not establish historical meaning but rather undercut it, in that they seek justification and value from history rather than the word of God. This is the key: is justification sought simply in an historical succession? History does not establish validity.

7. Dreams and the Determination of Time

Man seeks, by his rebellion against God, the freedom to be his own god (Gen. 3:5). Man seeks, as against God's decree of predestination and God's time, to establish his own decree and plan and to make time his own realm and wealth. The melancholy consequence of all this appears in that notable humanist Sigmund Freud.

Freud is a spiritual child of Immanuel Kant. For him, after Kant, the real world is the inner world of man's mind, and time is inner time. But something more happens to time in Freud's thought: it recedes from the conscious mind

of man to the unconscious, and to man's dreams. The concluding paragraph of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* is most revealing;

> And what of the value of dreams in regard to our knowledge of the future? That, of course, is quite out of the question. One would like to substitute the words: "in regard to our knowledge of the past." For in every sense a dream has its origin in the past. The ancient belief that dreams reveal the future is not indeed entirely devoid of truth. By representing a wish as fulfilled the dream certainly leads us into the future; but this future, which the dreamer accepts as his present, has been shaped in the likeness of the past by the indestructible wish.[51]

This is an ironic conclusion for humanism. Having rejected the crucified Christ, humanism in Freud crucifies itself on its own past, a past going back to primordial man.

What Freud tells us, *first*, with respect to man and time is that they are both hopelessly past-bound. God's decree of predestination declares that God is the first and personal cause of all things, but it does clearly make man a secondary cause and person. In the humanistic "freedom" of Freud, man has no such place. He is a prisoner of the past and is caught as the helpless victim of two basic and Manichean aspects of his being, the will to live, and the will to death. There is no escape from that conflict; it is a metaphysical, not a moral conflict. Man thus has no freedom, and all time witnesses to his bondage to the past and to his own being. The past writes an iron decree of predestination in man, and there is no escape.

Second, Freud's man has a future, but it is not God's plan, nor is it man's plan, but man's past repeated. The past, thus, is not only remembered in man's unconscious and in his dreams but also repeated in man's future. Instead of being a god, man is his own victim.

In the Biblical perspective, while man experiences time from past to present to future, because God's decree covers all of time, the future determines the past and present. The goal of history determines the course of history. Man therefore is motivated by his faith in that goal, and the knowledge of faith that the goal has been pre-determined and cannot fail. This makes man future-oriented, whereas Freud's man is past-oriented.

Third, there is in a very real sense no future for Freudian man, only the endless, repetitive development of the outworkings of the past. The past becomes more than prologue to the future: it is also the future itself. It is in this sense, Freud holds that dreams "predict" the future.

It is understandable why the Marxists have rejected Freud. If Freud is right, every revolutionary regime will repeat the past *because it must*, out of a metaphysical necessity. Revolutions are then futile and senseless, because

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[51] Sigmund Freud: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in A. A. Brill, translator, editor: *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*. (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1938). p. 549.

they accomplish nothing. Time future is simply time past repeated. Because of this, Marxists have been active in denying the validity of the Freudian system.

The Marxist critique of Freudianism begins with the environmentalist presupposition. "Environment, rather than innate constitution, is viewed as the decisive factor in both mental health and mental illness."[52] Neuroses are the products of conflicts in the environment, and, in particular, a contradictory society, *i.e.*, any non-Marxist society. Alter the environment, and you alter man.

This means conditioning. On the personal scale, it means the kind of conditioning Pavlov accomplished with his salivating dogs; on the social scale, all society is re-conditioned.

Perhaps nothing in all my education was more often cited, repeated, and commented on than Pavlov's experiments with dogs. In one university department of study after another, Pavlov was cited, usually with some measure of acceptance. Verbal commentaries were far less guarded than written ones. For humanistic intellectuals, it offered hope: they were all would-be Pavlovs, and the rest of us the dogs. The world of B.F. Skinner is an appealing world to those who dream of playing god over other men.[53]

It is, however, the death of humanism, not its apotheosis. It says in effect that humanism's hope concerning man is futile, and, therefore, by turning most men into slaves, some kind of human order can be salvaged against the threat of total darkness. Its implication is that humanism sees the slavery of man to man as far better than man's freedom and dominion under God.

The Marxists thus do not vindicate revolution; all their critiques of Freud accomplishes is to justify their particular persons as revolutionists. They sacrifice man to their own elite person, and the ancient doctrine of the divine right of kings is replaced by the even more arbitrary doctrine of the divine right of all revolutionists to be the Pavlovian or Skinnerian elite.

The humanistic "summing up" of the meaning of time becomes therefore a pathetic and empty thing. Thus, W. Somerset Maugham, in writing of his life, finds little to say other than to vent his petty malice and to conclude,

> There is no reason for life, and life has no meaning. We are here, inhabitants for a little while of a small planet, revolving round a minor star which in its turn is a member of one of unnumbered galaxies. It may be that this planet alone can support life, or it may be that in other parts of the universe other planets have had the possibility of forming a suitable environment to that substance from which, we suppose, along the vast course of time the men we are have been gradually created. And

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52. Harry K. Wells: *Sigmund Freud, A Pavlovian Critique*. (New York, N.Y.: International Publishers, 1960). p. 220.

53. See B. F. Skinner: *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. (New York, N.Y. Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

> if the astronomer tells us truth this planet will eventually reach a condition when living things can no longer exist upon it and at long last the universe will attain that final stage of equilibrium when nothing more can happen. Aeons and aeons before this man will have disappeared. Is it possible to suppose that it will matter then that he ever existed? He will have been a chapter in the history of the universe as pointless as the chapter in which is written the life stories of the strange monsters that inhabited the primaeval earth.[54]

By dissolving time and the universe into nothingness, Maugham seeks to dilute his own sin into nothingness also. By chronicling the evils and weaknesses of better men than himself, Maugham seeks to trivialize judgment and to reduce good and evil to empty words.

Time, Freud held, is a bad dream worked out into destiny. Time for others became only the prelude to death and nothingness. Biblical time looks ahead to the jubilee freedom, and the jubilee appears in miniature every seventh day and seventh year. The meaning of time in Scripture cannot be understood apart from the meaning of the Sabbath. Where the Sabbath has no meaning, time loses its meaning before long.

If man is lord over time, man's nature will determine time. If man is the product of an evolutionary past, that past will determine man and therefore time. Granted the evolutionary faith, Freud's conclusions are logical. The mind of man determines time, but man's mind is not his own product but the product of his primitive past.

If God created man, then it follows that man is determined by God, and time also. The meaning of time is then pre-determined. Man either accepts or rejects that meaning, and his decision is moral, not intellectual. Time is thus a moral question.

8. The Philosophy of Time and the Sabbath

The idea of the Sabbath in the modern world is largely emptied of its Biblical and eschatological meaning. For church members, it means a day for worship, and, for others, a day of reprieve from work.

The Sabbath is at best a *church* day rather than a *holy* day; it is geared to an institution rather than to the Lord and to the meaning of time. Holy days have given way to holidays which are nationalistic and humanistic in nature.

This humanistic world gives us on the one hand Freud's world, in which the future repeats the past, and, on the other, a man-planned world which is to use Rosenstock-Huessy's phrase "a pre-arranged world without a future."[55]

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[54] W. Somerset Maugham: *The Summing Up*. (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, (1938) 1946). p. 195f.

[55] Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy: *The Multiformity of Man*. (Norwich, VT: Beachhead (1936) 1949). p. 22.

> 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.[56]

Humanism can require men to work, but it cannot give them a sense of vocation nor a calling. It can require men to live and work in time, planned by man for man's own decree, but it cannot thereby give any enduring meaning to time.

In such a world, holidays give a respite and relief from work, and then work gives an escape from this pseudo-rest. Neither work nor rest have meaning, and both are empty of essential content.

The Sabbath, on the other hand, is not an escape from work but a celebration thereof. The Sabbath celebrates, *first* of all, God's work. All things have meaning, because basic to all things is God's handiwork and His decree of total predestination. In a world of total meaning and total government by the triune God, man can rest in the confidence that God is on the throne, and He shall prevail. God declares,

> 9....I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me,
> 10. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. (Isa. 46:9-10)

> 10. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;
> 11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isa. 55:10-11)

Second, the Sabbath has as its culmination the jubilee. We are given, not only the weekly cycle of Sabbaths, and other holy days or Sabbaths as well, but a Sabbath of years as well, a Sabbath every seventh year, and the jubilee after the seven times seven years, *i.e.*, the fiftieth year. Modern vacations are poor substitutes and secularizations of the Sabbath year concept. The Sabbath witnesses to God's final victory (Heb. 4:1-11). It declares that the gates of hell cannot prevail against, *i.e.*, cannot withstand the assault of Christ's *ecclesia*, assembly, or Kingdom. The jubilee means restoration and liberty, and the jubilee proclamation gives us the heart of the Sabbath and its meaning:

> And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you:

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[56] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

> and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. (Lev. 25:10)

To reduce the meaning of the Sabbath to church service, *necessary as they are*, is to miss the point of both the Sabbath and the services of worship.

Third, the Sabbath and Jubilee witness to the meaning of time under God. As against the pagan view of cyclical time, the endless repetition of meaningless events, we have linear time, time going from beginning to end in terms of God's sovereign decree and purpose. The Bible does not allow us to see the pattern of weekly and seven-year Sabbaths as a cycle: they do not repeat themselves. They are way-stations to victory. The man with a calling celebrates his progress in that calling weekly, and rejoices that his salvation is the work of God, and his calling is in God's service. The Sabbath years celebrate his prosperity and capitalization under God. Because his debts are short-term, for six years, he comes into the Sabbath year debt-free and better capitalized to glorify God. Because he has no debts, he is not enslaved thereby and can rest in peace and joy. Faith in the God of the Sabbath and in His Sabbath mean prosperity and fertility to the righteous nation and people (Lev. 25:18-22).

Fourth, the Sabbath celebrates our salvation as entirely the work of God, so that we rest, we do not work to save ourselves, since it is God's doing entirely. The Psalmist praises God, "who is the health of my countenance, and my God" (Ps. 42:11;43:5). He is our health and our salvation, so that we stand at the weekly beginning of time rejoicing in our beginning and ending in the Lord. We celebrate our salvation and our progress towards God's appointed purposes for time and history.

The Sabbath is a Biblical doctrine. It has no real counterpart in pagan societies, although there are some superficial resemblances. Thus, in the ancient Near East, there were occasionally royal releases from certain kinds of debts and services. Similar releases exist in the modern world. Thus, in the 1970s in the United States, in times of recession, the federal government remitted a small portion of the taxes it claimed. Furthermore, the compulsory draft was also dropped for a time. Neither constitutes a sabbath. Such releases are forms of disaster relief, or else political ploys to curry popular favor. *They tell us nothing about the meaning of time.* Both in ancient and modern form, these releases are totally alien to the meaning of the Sabbath. Scholars who see a relationship between them are merely governed by a faith which dictates that all things Biblical must have an historical rather than a revealed source. Such efforts obscure rather than illumine the meaning of the Sabbath. There is no salvation in these pagan releases and hence no Sabbath. They speak rather of bondage; they are a witness to enslavement.

Fifth, the Sabbath is not only for man but also for his animals and fields. It is a time of rest and redemptive reconstitution.[57] Because the earth itself is

comprehended within God's plan and purpose, the earth must rest and be strengthened for its glorious future.

Sixth, because the Sabbath is an aspect of covenant law and a celebration of the Covenant, it witnesses to the fact that history and time are stages for the development and fulfillment of that Covenant. God by His grace covenants with man and gives him a place and calling in God's purpose and plan. Time thus is never without meaning: every hour, minute, and second thereof is covenant time, and man in the covenant enters into that world of meaning.

A philosophy of time which has no Sabbath is thus left with only a meaningless succession of events. It tries to give meaning to that succession of moments and events by decreeing its own idea of the sabbath at the end. This can be the communist utopia, the anarchist's ideal autocracy, or any other such humanistic goal, but it is an arbitrary and man-made choice. It offers a hope of meaning, not meaning itself, and it gives no rest. The Great Community is a possible future meaning, but the present, being void of that *ersatz* or synthetic sabbath, has no meaning. The *hope* of meaning soon turns into a despair of meaning. A rejoinder to the proverb, "Time heals all wounds," sums it up: "In time, we are all dead."

In a deeper sense, if men have nothing beyond time, then indeed men are all dead in time. However, where time is under God's government and decree, time has meaning, and it is the 'place' of both work and the Sabbath.

9. Time and the Idea

In a very interesting article, Walter Laqueur observes,

> A recent visitor to a Scandinavian university, after a heated debate with a group of students who had complained bitterly about the lack of freedom in their own country and in the West in general, asked which country in the world they most admired. The answer was Albania. None of the students was familiar with conditions in Albania, none had been there or had the faintest wish to go, but Albania was nevertheless the name of their utopia.[58]

Laqueur goes on to cite recent examples of the same fantasies, the Soviet Union as the earthly paradise for many from World War I on and Red China, North Korea, and Cuba in more recent years. All are held in turn to be "the place where not only a new social order but a new species of mankind was said to have been brought forth, free of selfishness and depravity, free of crime and even neurosis, perfect in every respect, lacking only the gift of immortality."[59] Such fantasies have been held with passion and intensity, and

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[57] Neils-Erick A. Andreasen: *The Old Testament Sabbaths*. (The Society of Biblical Literature. Missoula, Montana: University of Montana, 1972). pp.148-150.

[58] Walter Laqueur, "Third World Fantasies," in *Commentary*, Vol. 63, No. 2, February, 1977, p. 43.

[59] *Idem.*

especially by intellectuals. The more deeply imbued a man is with the intellectual currents of the Western world, the more prone he is to such illusions. Students are thus in particular subject to these fantasies.

The reason lies deep in the history of the West. Its origin is in the Greek dualism of form and matter. Form, the world of ideas or patterns, gives shape to and determines the nature of the world of matter. Plato's *Republic* is an attempt to set forth the *idea* which must be imposed upon the otherwise meaningless world of matter.

Plato's *Republic* and Plato's philosophy spawned the thirty tyrants of Greece. Throughout history, the influence of this platonic *idea* has been a pernicious one, as men have sought to impose the strait-jacket of the *idea* onto man and history. These failures, however, are irrelevant to intellectual history: it is *the idea* which counts.[60] The idea is the reality, so that, wherever a group of intellectual-revolutionary men seek to impose the idea on history, there the idea exists.

In Hegel, of course, this faith came into its own with the principle, "The rational is the real." If it is the Soviet Union, or Albania, which is seen as the *rational* order, then it is the *real* order. Albania qualifies better than the Soviet Union, because Albania has so "primitive" a background that it provides an ideal setting for the imposition of the idea upon the matter of history.

Where is time in all of this? Newton had viewed time in terms of an older world view as something independent from the world of matter. For Newton, time was like God an independent entity and absolute. The trend of philosophy, however, was hostile to anything alien to the autonomy of man's mind, and an autonomous time was simply a substitute for an autonomous and sovereign God. Instead, modern man found a more congenial concept in the space-time idea. There is a four-dimensional continuum, of which three are spatial (length, width, and height), and one is temporal. Space and time are a unity.

By unifying space and time, the world of matter now includes both and leaves man's idea as the principle of freedom which acts on space-time and brings forth its world. In terms of this, the genesis account of modern man would read, "And the space-time continuum was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the idea of Man moved upon the face of the waters."

This is, of course, at the heart of Marxism. Marx opposed any and all concessions to such external factors as supply and demand, Gresham's law, the price mechanism, and the like. Only *the idea* could be regarded as necessary. He declared,

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[60] For a study of Plato with reference to this, see Warner Fite: *The Platonic Legend.* (New York, N.Y.: Scribners, 1934).

> Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of individuals united.[61]

How can we reconcile this with Marx's known hostility to the supremacy of thought, and, especially, Hegelianism? Marx, after, stated in his "Preface" to *The German Ideology* that it was his purpose to overthrow philosophy, to liberate men from ideas:

> Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have gained mastery over them. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creatures. Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away. Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts....
> ...The first volume of this present publication has the aim...to discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality.[62]

Marx is not eliminating *the idea*, only other men's ideas, which, for him, are discarnate, whereas for him *the idea* is as real as it ever was for Hegel. The difference, however, is that Hegel's *idea* is Spirit or Mind: Marx's *idea* is the dialectical process, the conflict of idea and matter as they struggle for resolution within history. Marx materializes his idea, but it is no less an idea, a pattern, derived from autonomous man and forced onto space and time.

The goal is to arrest space and time, to create the ideal and unchanging perfect order. The goal is to overcome poverty, disease, aging and death, and to make man's idea fully incarnate. The space-time continuum then becomes the idea, the flesh is made into the word, and man reigns over time and space.

Ostensibly, time will be "arrested." But such a goal rests on an illusion. Assuming for a moment what can never be, *i.e.*, man's realization of his goal of the perfect and unchanging order, will it not rather be man who is arrested? What man assumes to be the flow of time is more accurately his own maturation, development, growth, regress, and history. When men thus wages war on time, he usually wages war on himself. In this life at the least, unchanging men are dead men, and timeless man is an impossibility.

10. Calendar Time

One of the most obvious facts about time, which escapes the notice of philosophers, is that it is divisible, and that we have a calendar. One of the

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[61] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *The German Ideology*, Parts I & II, from "Feuerbach." (New York, N.Y.: International Publishers (1947) 1960). p. 70.
[62] Marx: *Ibid.*, "Preface," p. 1f.

handicaps of humanistic philosophy is its abstractness. Because it believes that reality is ultimately non-personal, "the truth" about all things is held to be of necessity abstract and impersonal.

The Biblical faith, however, holds that all things are personal and concrete facts, because they are the creation of the personal God. The idea of abstraction is alien and Hellenic. Consider the definition, by Ledger Wood, of "Abstract" in the *Dictionary of Philosophy*:

> Abstract: (Lat. ab, from plus trahere, to draw). A designation applied to a partial aspect of quality considered in isolation from a total object, which is, in contrast, designated concrete. L.W.[63]

In terms of Greek thought, it is possible to view man abstractly: man is a being of two substances, one being form, mind, or spirit, and the other body or matter. Meaning is derived from form, not matter, and thus the key to understanding man is to abstract the form of humanity from the material aspect. In terms of this Hellenic faith, our philosophical and scientific traditions of humanism have continuously given us a view of man which begins by eliminating man in the concrete.

From the Biblical perspective, however, this is false. Man is not a being of two alien substances but a unified creation of God. Man in the abstract does not exist. For the Greek mind, however, if there is no abstraction, then there is no understanding. Thus, as Van Til has pointed out, for Philo, in terms of Greek thought, law is an aspect of form. Formless matter received the imprint of form and thus derives meaning and order from that form.[64] Nominalism, however, is not Biblical either: it simply limits reality by accepting the Hellenic dialecticism and then denying one aspect of the dialectic, or by reducing its significance. Universalism and Nominalism thus both rest on Greek premises; they simply disagree as to the value and place of the abstractions.

Now when thinkers in this tradition approach the philosophy of time, they are very literally, in the Greek sense, concerned with *the idea* of time, with the abstraction. As a result, they are not concerned with actual time, and thus not prone to see the calendar as relevant.

But there is a calendar of time. Let us cite it briefly and become thereby familiar with the reality of calendar time to serious thought. We have as basic to the calendar *the year*, an astronomical or solar division which has 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45 seconds. All calendars have been geared, with sometimes amazing accuracy, to that solar fact, a concrete aspect of the universe. The Hebrew calendar marked the passing of time with festivals,

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63. Dagobert D. Runes, editor: *Dictionary of Philosophy*. (New York, N. Y.: Philosophical Library, 1960). p. 2.

64. Cornelius Van Til: *Christ and the Jews*. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968). p. 13.

because it saw (and still sees) time as a blessing from God and to be used in Him, according to His law.

Month has reference to a lunar cycle, whereas the *week* has in mind the creation days, six days of God's creative work culminating in the seventh, the day of rest, the Sabbath. The *day* refers to the solar fact, and was in Israel calculated from sundown to sundown, and is still so observed by many. The *hour* divides the day, and the minute does the hour, and the seconds, the minute.

Time and the calendar are aspects of God's creation, according to Genesis 1, which tells us of the divisions of night and light, and the formation of the day and the week. Time thus has a theological meaning, but neither time nor the physical universe can be divinized nor made the sources of meaning. The "observer of times," *i.e.*, the enchanter or soothsayer, is condemned in Deut. 18:10,14, Lev. 19:26, II Kings 21:6, and II Chron. 33:6. The meaning of time is not to be derived from time but from the triune God and His word.

Let us examine a few of the Biblical references with respect to time:

> But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. (Ps. 69:13)
>
> (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) (II Cor. 6:2)
>
> Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God? (Job 27:10)
>
> His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight. (Ps. 10:5)
>
> And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. (Dan. 8:19)
>
> 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. (Rom. 8:28)
>
> Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. (Acts 15:18)
>
> 11. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.
> 12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.
> 13. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, nor in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (Rom. 13:11-13)

Many, many more can be cited, but these will suffice. They declare emphatically, *first*, that time moves totally under the predestination and according to the purpose of the sovereign God. The only time there is

anywhere is God's time, and it is totally His creation. Philosophical arguments concerning the nature of time begin with man's experience of time. The questions then raised reflect this man-centered and experience-centered perspective: is time an illusion, or is time a continuous stream, and so on? The Bible does not present time as a problem but as an opportunity, and we are to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), for, having been ourselves redeemed by Jesus Christ, the world and time are to be redeemed by us as God's covenant people in Christ.

This means, *second*, that time is not a problem but an opportunity. Time moves towards God's glorious, appointed purpose. It is our privilege to have a part in that unfolding of God's purpose, and the establishment of His Kingdom, and time is the means and area of that privilege.

Third, since God decrees the time and all the events thereof, the troubles, as well as the apparent burdens and distractions, come from his hands and are ordained to work together for good. If we seek to convert time into our own purely private property, life becomes one endless distraction, and we are too seldom "free" to do our self-appointed work. When we see time and its contents as God's ordination, gift, and opportunity to us, then Romans 8:28 takes on a new meaning. To regard time as our private property is therefore a sin, and it means that we are continually "losing time," because time does not move to our proposed calendar but rather to God's.

Fourth, we cannot legitimately concern ourselves with an abstract view of time. The only time that exists is God's creation, experienced by us as calendar time.

Isaac Watts, in his hymn, "Great God, how infinite art Thou" (1707), declared of God,

> To Thee there's nothing old appears;
> To Thee there's nothing new.

For man, this is an impossibility: man in this life lives in calendar time, and that time comes to him from the hand of God, not as a problem, but as an opportunity and a wealth. A philosophy of time, to be Biblical, must deny the abstractions of time and see time as an aspect of creation and of his life. To neglect calendar time is to neglect time itself.

11. Time, Sin, and Death

Parmenides in ancient Greece held that change and becoming are irrational illusions, whereas Heraclitus held that it is permanence which is an illusion, and that all things are characterized by change. St. Augustine, while trying to place time in a theological context, all the same laid the foundations for an existentialist view of time. Because of his neoplatonism, he was prone to see time as the neoplatonists did, in close connection with the soul, mind, form,

or idea. Hence he held, "Whence it appeared to me that time is nothing else than protraction (or, extension); but of what I know not. It is wonderful to me, if it be not of the mind itself."[65] As a result, self-analysis and autobiography became very important for Augustine's philosophy, and, in the Western tradition, time is generally viewed from a man-centered perspective. Newton saw time as independent of and prior to events, but Leibniz countered this position by viewing time as the relation of events, as the universal order of succession. The idea of the modern world, of space-time as the necessary condition of the physical, follows Leibniz in the main. In Kant, space and time, rather than being objective properties of things-in-themselves, became aspect of the requirements of reason, which the mind uses to organize the data of the senses.

In all these views, time is a basic aspect of ultimacy, of ultimate order, so that the problem of time is clearly a problem of metaphysics and epistemology. Because man, in his attempts to establish his pretended autonomy, begins with himself and the created order, rather than the triune God of Scripture, he begins and ends with a problem. The ontological trinity is the source of all proof, because it alone can give us the possibility of valid knowledge, of knowledge which does not disintegrate into mere opinion and myth.[66] With any other philosophical premise, both knowledge and the starting-point become unanswerable problems. It is not without reason that much of contemporary philosophy has abandoned metaphysics, epistemology, and other basic concerns of philosophy.

It has not, however, abandoned its claims to autonomy. Whether theoretically or practically, this autonomy has been claimed. Perhaps that assertion of autonomy can best be seen in symbolic form, in the chapel of the young Roman emperor, Alexander Severus (reigning 222-235 A.D.) In his chapel, Alexander had statues of Jesus, Orpheus, Appolonius of Tyana, Jupiter, Abraham, Alexander the Great, and also several of his deified predecessors. We have here a practical and working view of time, an early ancestor of Jean-Paul Sartre's view that man is a being whose passion it is to become god. Alexander Severus' chapel witnessed to the faith that man in time can become a god. The elevation to godhood was not reserved by Alexander to former emperors whom the senate had proclaimed to be deified. It was open to other religions, Greek, Jewish, and Christian, and hence to all men. Time thus was the context for process, the process of deification. Alexander Severus was not an exclusive god-in-process; his palace was at set hours open to all his subjects, even as his chapel witnessed to what even the despised Christians could become in time, according to his "tolerant" view.

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65. St. Augustine, "The Confessions," Bk. XI, Ch. XXVI, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol I, The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956). p. 172.

66. See R. J. Rushdoony: *The Word of Flux.* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1975).

That worshipful and adoring man of humanistic faith, Edward Gibbon, gave us a glowing account of Alexander Severus, declaring in part,

> The dress of Alexander was plain and modest, his demeanour courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his subjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleusinian mysteries, pronouncing the same salutary admonition; "Let none enter those holy walls, unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind."
>
> Such an uniform tenor of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wisdom and justice of Alexander's government, than all the trifling details preserved in the compilation of Lampridius.[67]

Gibbon was a humanistic hagiographer, giving us the pious saints' legends of humanism rather than history in the main, but his account of Alexander Severus' court as a mystery religion is sound. It was a court which set forth the manifest divinity of a man far more clearly than the chapel did. Every religion available was mixed by Alexander Severus to provide ideas for this flexible faith. The Biblical requirement, in revised form, was engraved on palace and public walls: "What you do not wish a man to do to you, do not do to him." The emphasis of Alexander Severus was to undercut the power of the army, of money, and of the bureaucracy through a series of reforms and to stress rather the rightness of his rule by birth, through a personal mystique. His was thus an historical legitimacy, one established by time and to be re-enforced by moral reform. His court proclaimed his future made manifest: only the pure could see the developing god. "Let none enter those holy walls, unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind." We are reminded of Psalm 24:3,4:

> 3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?
> 4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Both Alexander Severus and his mother, who dominated him, were familiar with the Bible, and his mother knew Origen. Their use of the Eleusinian cry sets their faith in its context: man through his own way attains the heights of being.

Bailey held that the conception of the deified man was "a foreign notion to the Romans and there were always limitations about it."[68] It was, he pointed out, a political rather than a personal apotheosis. True enough, but it was still an apotheosis. Moreover, remove the "foreign" aspects of almost any culture, and very little is left. Bailey's comment thus was true but gives a false

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[67] Edward Gibbon: *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, I. (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library). p. 132f.

[68] Cyrus Bailey: *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1932). p. 141.

impression. By the time of Alexander Severus, foreign notions were more at home in Rome than were the original Roman concepts.

Moreover, before Alexander Severus' day, in c. 155 B.C. Greek thought came to Rome in the persons of three influential Greek teachers, Critolaus the Peripatetic, Diogenes the Stoic, and the important Carneades, the Academic Skeptic. Carneades (c. 219-129 B.C.) lectured to the Romans that justice was only a convention. Man for Carneades is irrational in his actions and is not governed by truth or knowledge but by natural urges. Man does not have objective truth, only degrees of probability. Carneades ruled out God, and he ruled out objective truth. He also ruled out causality in favor of a limited probability concept. The reality left is thus man and time as a succession of events. What Carneades did by his skepticism was to reinforce his faith in the autonomy and free will of man. Like the God of Scripture, Carneades's man is autonomous and self-caused.

Such thinking by Carneades and others left God and the universe out of man's purview. The gods already had a very limited role in the presence of man. As Bailey noted, Roman prayer lacked any petitions "for moral qualities or ethical guidance in life."[69] The focus is on man. Thus, as skepticism eliminated the gods, justice, and other universals, the one universal which remained was the new universal man. Time became the arena of the freedom of man, but freedom in a meaningless void of pointless succession is not freedom at all.

Aristotle held to endless, uncreated time; Plato held that time has a beginning. Their differences were none too great, in that for both time was the stage on which man's autonomy was manifested and enacted. As Bussell pointed out, Aristotle's morals or ethics is "only episodic and provisional."

> At the ends of his scale of mankind Aristotle places the 'beast' and the 'god'. Intermediate is the average man, the citizen who must lean on convention, established laws and current examples around him, who is not strong enough to stand alone; even as the 'great-souled hero' of the *Ethics* stand in need of popular approval, and lives a somewhat artificial, indeed precarious, life as Triton among minnows.[70]

Autonomous man, far less than Christian men, cannot live alone. Because he does not have the eye of God to live under, he requires time and other men as the stage for his activities. Moreover, because of his claim to be autonomous, time is not a wealth and an opportunity for growth but rather a problem and the promise of decay and death. The problem of *time and mutability* haunt the non-Christian world. Sir Walter Raleigh, while giving a Christian conclusion, gives us a neoplatonic view of time in his poem, "The Conclusion":

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69. *Ibid.*, p. 85, cf. 105.

70. F. W. Bussell: *Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages.* (London, England: Robert Scott, 1918). p. 525.

Even such is Time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wander'd all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

These beautiful lines manifest a very common confusion. The facts of the Fall, sin, and death are confused with and made a part of time. In effect, what all such confusion tries to say, whether coming from within Christendom or from pagan antiquity to modern humanism, is that *the fall was into time, and it is time which must be overcome.* The goal therefore of Marxism and of Fabian Socialism is the unchanging, timeless communist society, or the Great Community, and other like final and unchanging orders. By arresting the movement of history, and by using science to conquer death, it is hoped that time and therefore the fall will be eliminated.

The Fall, however, involved precisely this rejection of time, the creation mandate to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. Time is the necessary instrument of dominion. God is separate from time, and His sovereignty and dominion are apart from and over time. Hence, with the Fall, man was seeking to be a god whose fiat word determined good and evil, and whose every word would be the word of sovereignty and dominion.

The chapel of Alexander Severus was ostensibly a chapel of deified men, heroes in man's struggle to conquer time and the fall and establish man's sovereignty. Even more, it was a witness to the faith of Alexander Severus in his own possibilities. His conduct was strictly governed by those possibilities, and, apart from his ridiculous subservience to his mother, was the correct behavior for a god in process of becoming, and a witness to his belief in the necessity of being a hero as the means of gaining his end.

In Genesis 1 and 2, however, we do not see sin and death as necessary aspects of time; sin and death appear thereafter as consequences of the Fall and as a cancer on life and time. Raleigh to the contrary, it is not time that is the destroyer but sin. Moreover, the plain sense of Scripture is that, as sin is gradually overcome, and the Kingdom of God extended in its scope and sway, man's life span shall be greatly lengthened, and the power of sin and death rolled back (Isa. 65:17-25). Finally, with the totality of the new creation at the Second Advent, death itself shall be "swallowed up in victory" (II Cor. 5:4; Isa. 25:8; Heb. 2:14).

The confusion of time with sin and death has thus had very sorry consequences for human thought and has led to the many and chronic lamentations of poets, philosophers, and preachers over the problem of mutability.

It has led to attempts to escape mutability, and hence time. All such attempts are in essence a flight from life.

The chapel of Alexander Severus must thus be avoided. Our chapel must be dedicated to the living and triune God, before whom we rejoice in the wealth of life and time, and whom we serve with gladness and rejoicing.

12. Biblical Time and History

As we have seen, time is commonly confused with sin and death, or else sin and death are seen as necessary aspects or consequences of time and history. Because of this, mutability has long been an unhappy theme in literature, and time a destroyer. John Keats, for example, in his "Ode to a Nightingale," sees no real escape from the painful realities of time into an ideal world. Attempts to flee into the ideal world of natural beauty, as symbolized by the nightingale, are futile. Reality accompanies him everywhere. The result is a deep sadness, of which the "Ode on Melancholy" speaks. Essential melancholy Keats found, not in unhappy things, but in beauty, joy, and pleasure, because in all these things there is always our consciousness of time's flux and decay. Thus, Keats declared of melancholia,

> She dwells with Beauty–Beauty that must die;
> And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
> Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
> Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips:
> Ay, in the very temple of delight
> Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
> Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
> Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
> His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
> And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

In 1821 Percy Bysshe Shelley expressed similar sentiments in his poem, "Time:"

> Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years,
> Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
> Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
> Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
> Claspest the limits of mortality,
> And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
> Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;
> Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
> Who shall put forth on thee,
> Unfathomable Sea?

Being humanists, these men and others railed at time rather than sin, because it was a necessary article of their faith that death is a natural and inevitable aspect of time. Granted their presupposition, their conclusion is a logical one. Man's original sin is his desire to be his own god, determining

good and evil in relation to himself, in terms of his knowledge, purpose, and experience (Gen. 3:5). The true God is the Eternal One, He who lives beyond time and is the creator of space, time, the universe, and every living creature. Man, in the context of time, is trapped in a world he never made, caught in the web of a universe of causality, and hence man's hopes of "realizing" his autonomy and divinity are rendered futile. In this situation, man refuses to see his sin as the evil; instead he ascribes to time, a condition of his creatureliness, his own moral disease, the cancer of sin and death.

The cost of this confusion is a great one, however. If time has as its necessary aspects both sin and death, then the meaning of history is sin and death, not life and victory. This appears clearly, for example, in Sigmund Freud, for whom the will to death is basic in man. The will-to-live is inseparable from man's desire for incest, parricide, and cannibalism, man's id, the pleasure principle in man. However, the ego, the reality principle, is forever bent on suppressing and killing man's most basic impulses, so that man's being is essentially suicidal.

In any and every faith or philosophy which makes sin and death inseparable aspects of time it means that sin and death, which are moral facts, are converted into metaphysical facts. They then become aspects of ontology or being rather than ethics or morality. Intellectually, the moral problem is side-stepped, but at the cost of life. Because man's life is lived in time, it follows that life has sin as its necessary shadow at all times, and death as its conclusion. There is then no really valid escape from sin and death.

As a result, not only the neoplatonists within the church but the humanists outside unite in a common disbelief in and hostility to post-millennialism. Heaven and the totality of the new creation after the Second Advent become remote and unreal, because both time and life are seen as inseparable from sin and death. The thought of life apart from the curse, and life and work without the impediments of sin and death (Rev. 22:3), seem unreal even to those who profess such a faith. Their minds are too clouded by this false connection between time on the one hand, and sin and death on the other, as necessary aspects of created being. Angels are for this reason unreal to them.

Where this confusion between time, sin, and death exists, time is then neither a blessed wealth and an ally, but instead an enemy to the would-be god. The goal of history then becomes either an escape from time, or the overcoming or arresting of time. Then too time must in some sense die for man to live.

With a false view of time, man can over-value the isolated moment, separated existentially from God, man, past, and future. In the existential moment, man denies the reality of sin and blocks out the world of death. He does this by affirming his own radical autonomy and freedom and then also choosing or affirming death as an aspect of his freedom rather than as a

necessity governing him. In Sartre' words, "Thus death is not *my* possibility in the sense previously defined; it is a situation-limit as the chosen and fugitive reverse side of my choice."[71] In such a perspective, both the moment and life become meaningless. It is not at all surprising that existentialism leads to a suicidal impulse in many. Existentialism begins by over-valuing the moment in time: it ends by despising both time and life. More than a few philosophies which over-value time end in the same predicament, however disguised. In John Dewey, time and history are ostensibly strongly stressed, but the individual and his consciousness are down-graded radically, and history is required to give way to the controlled and static Great Community.

The Stoics were at least more open in their contempt for time and history. Their quest for a passionless state was a desire to escape from the commitments of time. Thus, Marcus Aurelius, to further his own abstraction from time counselled himself and others in these words:

> Often think of the rapidity with which things pass by and disappear, both the things which are and the things which are produced. For substance is like a river in a continual flow, and the activities of things are in constant change, and the causes work in infinite varieties; and there is hardly anything which stands still. And consider this which is near to thee, this boundless abyss of the past and of the future in which all things disappear. How then is he not a fool who is puffed up with such things or plagued about them and makes himself miserable? for they vex him only for a time, and a short time.[72]

"There is hardly anything which stands still." This is a grief to Marcus Aurelius, when it should have been a joy. It is not surprising therefore that his rule over Rome was only a trusteeship over a dying empire rather than a means to its renewal. Marcus Aurelius sought to *restore* Rome, to undo time's havoc, rather than to *transform* Rome. He was thus a custodian over that which, by his philosophy, had to change *and* perish, because mutability, time and decay, govern all things.

It is not surprising also that, in our modern humanistic society there is a hatred of time, of the clock, and the calendar. They speak to modern man, not of life and opportunity, but of decay and death. Men once boasted of their advanced age; now they lie about their age, dye their hair, and seek to dress as though perpetually young. Time is an enemy, not a resource.

In the prayer of Moses, the misery of time is seen as the consequence of sin. Hence, he prays that men, in fear of God's anger, may take to heart their calling and number their days with wisdom. Only so can men work in time with gladness and song, rejoicing and "glad all our days" (Ps. 90:11-14). Under the blessing of God and with His deliverance, man can "walk before

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[71] Jean-Paul Sartre: *Being and Nothingness, An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*. (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1956). p. 547.

[72] Marcus Aurelias: *Meditations*, Bk. V., p. 23.

God in the light of the living" (Ps. 56:13), or, in the beautiful wording of James Moffatt's rendering, "In the sunshine of life." To the degree that men walk by faith and in obedience to God, to that extent they walk, not under the curse of sin and death, but "in the sunshine of life." Because the problem of sin and death is dealt with by Christ, for them, all such men, as they grow in sanctification, redeem the time (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). The Greek word *exagorazo*, redeem, means to buy out, i.e., to buy a slave out of captivity in order to free him. (Moffatt here feebly translates *redeem* as 'making the most' of time.) To redeem the time, therefore, requires that we see it as something separate from sin and death and as a "pure" (Titus 1:15) aspect of a creation which God pronounced to be "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

We then feel no fear of change, nor do we exalt it as our hope. Our hope is in neither the aspect of change nor permanence in the created realm. Our standard is from the word of God and is the word of God, who cannot change (Mal. 3:6). Time gives us the opportunity for maturity, for growth in the knowledge of God, for growth in holiness and righteousness, and for growth in dominion. Moreover, our ability to work and to rest depends on our view of time. There is no true Sabbath for those who see time as decay, sin, and death: rest then becomes a grim reminder of the victory of the grave. Work then also is haunted by the shadow of death and corruption. Time, the clock, and the calendar become symbols of the inevitability of death and decay, and the hatred of the clock becomes natural. It is the prayer of every Faust, in every age, like Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, "that time may cease, and midnight never come." To Faustus, it is a horror that "The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike."

Biblical time and history move towards the Sabbath year and the Jubilee, when Dominion Man rejoices in his holy freedom and rest. He is free from debt and slavery. He rejoices in the fruit of his labors, and he rests in the ease of victory and dominion. Time is not a threat to him, nor a reminder of death, but the area of life, work, and rest, of power and dominion under God.

13. The Logic of Time

Philosophers today are often unintentionally startling reading. Thus, a great deal of attention in recent years has been devoted to logic, to the truth and falsity of statements, and to truth-tables by men who do not believe in any viable concept of truth. Again, much time has been devoted to trying to establish time as a fourth dimension, and also to pointing out very ably the fallacy of such a notion, by men who all the same find time, whatever it is, to be meaningless.

This is hard for many to grasp. During my travels, I once talked for a while with an intelligent university student, by faith an old-fashioned liberal humanist. The idea of philosophy had drawn him to the philosophy

department for a time, but he left, he said, when he realized that philosophy now is the endless refinement of all ideas into nothing. His conclusion was forthright: if it's all pure bull, why waste any time on it?

It is ironic that, as time has come to have less and less meaning for philosophers and "the man in the street," it has at the same time become more than ever a concern of scientists and philosophers. Their analyses of time, however unhappy in their conclusions, are not without brilliance and a high order of intelligence in the process. We must surely agree thus with the observation of J.J.C. Smart:

> Most interesting concepts cannot be elucidated by explicit definitions. Thus, to explain the meaning of the word "length," we cannot give an explicit definition, but we can do things that explain how to tell that one thing is longer than another and how to measure length. In the same way we can give an account of our use of the word "time" even though we cannot do so by giving an explicit definition.[73]

This is true of more than time, as Smart notes.

Why do definitions escape us? A definition (from the Latin *de*, off, *finis*, end) is a fence which sets apart something from other things, which gives us the limits or outline of the thing defined. Words themselves are definitions of an aspect of life, experience, the world of thought, the physical world, etc.

For a Christian, this immediately points to the problem. The triune God having made all things, the true interpretation and definition of all things is only possible by Him. Thus, we must, as far as we possibly can, try to think God's thoughts after Him as we study His creation.

Definition is impossible in a world of brute factuality. If all facts are meaningless facts, then no fact can be defined or a meaning seen in it. The atheist or agnostic is thus false to his own faith when he ascribes a meaning to factuality or sees any order in it. In the world of brute facts, all facts are isolated facts; there is no Creator-God to give them meaning and to establish a common frame of reference. Only in a universe with a common origin in God's creative fiat, and subject to a common decree of predestination, is there both the unity and particularity which makes definition possible. All things are not one, nor are all things isolated and unrelated particulars. Definition implies an eternal decree, and, because of that eternal decree, definition and knowledge are possible.

Adam was thus in an excellent situation for naming or classifying the animals (Gen. 2:19-20). As an unfallen man, in the state of innocence, he recognized entirely that classification and knowledge rested on God's prior order not on his autonomous standards and judgment. While the extent of his science and knowledge was limited, and the time of his learning relatively

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[73] J.J.C. Smart, "Time," in Paul Edward, editor in chief: *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, VIII.* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, (1947) 1952). p. 126.

brief, it was still an accurate knowledge because it did not for a moment assume brute factuality. Adam knew that every animal or fact he had to classify was the creation of the Almighty God.

If a philosopher has wandered thus far in these pages, he has, of course, concluded that all this may be more or less about time, but it is not philosophy. Why? The reason is that, for most, philosophy excludes God the Creator and Adam the creature and replaces them with autonomous man and his mind, *i.e.*, with the philosopher acting as god. Is it any wonder that for all such men the God of Scripture is an impossibility? Possibility, after all, is that which is circumscribed by the mind of man.

Practically, this has meant that, since the time of the Greek philosophers, the real is that which exists in the closed realm of space and time. When philosophers speak of their faith in an "open" universe, they mean that great potentiality is ascribed to creation, to man in particular. The universe is "open" in the sense that man is "free" to move in independence from God, and all things have their own movement in a like freedom from a controlling power and His decree of predestination. The universe, however, is emphatically *closed* to any possibility that the sovereign, predestinating God of Scripture can either exist or can govern and determine that universe.

Granted that autonomy of the universe from God, there is much leeway then as to other factors. We can call the universe finite or infinite; we can have varying doctrines of time and space, but the one thing then that, as humanists, we will not permit is that the God of Scripture be acknowledged. Any god allowed must be finite and limited; such a tolerable god must exist within space and time as an aspect of the universe. He can only be "beyond" the universe in a very limited sense, *i.e.*, as one who is an aspect of it whose growth is somewhat beyond the rest of us.

To say that God created all things visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly, spatial and temporal, spiritual and material, and, moreover, created them out of nothing, means that God has no spatial or temporal relationship to His creation as a necessary aspect of His being. God is the Lord over creation, which moves totally in terms of His decree.

The universe is thus not a fortuitous concourse of atoms but an order decreed and absolutely governed by the triune God. Time is not merely meaningless succession in a chaos but an aspect of God's creation and totally governed by His eternal counsel and decree. Thus, time serves God's decree and is an aspect of it. There is therefore a logic to time, because time is the creation of absolute rationality and total meaning. Everything in time, man's fall and his attempts to create his own kingdom in defiance of God, is an aspect of God's ordination. Thus, man's rebel time and his philosophies of brute factuality are aspects of decreed time. All time moves only to God's

clock and in terms of God's calendar. Time therefore can only serve man if he serves God the Lord, and time works against man in revolt against God.

Time has no meaning from within time and the cosmos. There is no self-definition in the universe. Nothing is understandable in terms of itself, because nothing exists in and of itself. Humanistic definitions, definitions by the would-be autonomous mind are in final analysis self-definitions and invalid ones.

There is not an irrational second in all of time. Irrational men exist, and their uses of time are, like them, irrational. Behind them all stands the decree and purpose of God, which makes all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28), and hence, behind every second of time is the absolute rationality of God. We can thus speak of the logic of time and its absolute coherency in the divine decree.

It is in this confidence that David sings in Psalm 34:1, "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." In this faith, David can say, "My times are in thy hand" (Ps. 31:15), because it is the sovereign Lord of all things whom he worships, in whose hand is the life of every living creature. Job's answer to Zophor expresses the same faith:

> 9. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?
>
> 10. In whose hand is the soul (or, life) of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. (Job 12:9-10)

Because God created time and the universe, it is His decree which absolutely governs all things, and the meaning of time and all things in time cannot be understood apart from Him and His decree. As Van Til notes,

> It will readily be seen that if our theory of reality is true, we cannot simply say that God is prior to the universe, meaning by "prior to" temporal priority. Inasmuch as God is not subject to time, we cannot enclose him in the calendar. God is the creator of time itself as a form of created being. On the other hand, if we say that God is "prior to" the created universe we do not simply mean what is usually meant by logical priority. God is, to be sure, logically "prior to" the created universe but he is logically prior by virtue of the fact that he has actually created the universe with its temporal form out of or into nothing. Without the notion of temporal creation, the notion of logical dependence cannot be maintained.[74]

Without this doctrine of creation, we cannot have any meaning or logic to time and life. The logic of time stems not from man nor the universe but from the eternal decree of the sovereign, eternal, and triune God.

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[74] Cornelius Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith.* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955). p. 29f. of the 1967 revised edition.

14. The Hatred of Time

Whether we examine Kant, Kierkegaard, the romantic poets, contemporary writers, artists, and existentialists, we find that, in terms of their faith, man everywhere has a common problem. His problem is finitude and the temporal limitation, *i.e.*, space and time, combined with a nature or essence which defines itself as unlimited or potentially eternal. This is the "tragedy" of man as modern man sees it. Sartre has denied that man has an essence; man has being, existence, but no given nature. However Sartre then proceeds, in *Being and Nothingness*, to define man's essence as that of a potential god. The true and given nature of man thus is this "futile passion" to be god, and the combination of this existential essence with the limitations of space and time is man's tragedy. It is also called man's "anguish." Thus, modern man sees his problem with space and time as a metaphysical problem rather than a moral one. By this transformation, his "anguish" over space and time becomes a problem of metaphysics rather than an aspect of his original sin, his moral problem. Man by this means seeks to dignify his sin into metaphysics but instead only compounds it. The ostensibly Christian thinker who falls into the trap of treating the problem on the sinner's terms has compounded the evil. Where such mental and moral juggling takes place in any man, we should not be surprised at the consequences. The insanities of such men from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to the present begin and end in a moral crisis.

The literature of such a philosophy is the literature of "the romantic agony," of masochism, sadism, and suicide. These practices enter into both philosophy and life. Thus, the poems of Sylvia Plath (1932-1962), such as "Lesbos," "Edge," "Daddy," and "Last Words," scream with murderous self-hate and hatred of others, and are rife with masochism, sadism, murder, and suicide, but, above all, with the typical existentialist self-centeredness and self-righteousness. Her suicide was a logical outcome of her faith. When the existentialists write about life, they are really talking about death. When they write about art or poetics, they are again talking about death. Thus, poetess Lynn Sukenik, who teaches writing and literature at a large university, says of Poetics, "I want to bring to the law and order of existence the chaos of poetry."[75] Poetry once saw the order in the chaos of man's history; now it is insistent on seeing chaos, and, more than chaos, death.

The roots of this suicidal view of life, time, and history are in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel saw the meaning of time and history as "an impulse of *perfectibility*" and the capacity for change. This sounds very good, until we realize that Hegel has no test for perfection, no goal, no standard, nothing but

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[75] Laura Chester and Sharon Barba, editors: *Rising Tides, 20th Century American Women Poets*. (New York, N.Y.: Washington Square Press, 1973). p. 289. In terms of its existentialist contents, this book is misnamed; it should have been titled *Ebbing Tides*.

the blind faith that the world Spirit is "striving to realize itself," whatever that may be.[76]

> The principle of Perfectibility indeed is almost as indefinite a term as mutability in general; it is without scope or goal, and has no standard by which to estimate the changes in question: the improved, more perfect, state of things toward which it professedly tends is altogether undetermined.[77]

In other words, it is all meaningless, and to be perfect is to abandon all meaning for blind and senseless change.

Is this too harsh an assessment? The words of Hegel just cited give us this conclusion. More than that, Hegel tells us that it is precisely when a suicidal and schizophrenic inner conflict exists that perfection and freedom also exist:

> The realization of *its* Idea is mediated by consciousness and will; these very faculties are, in the first instance, sunk in their primary *merely* natural life; the first object and goal of their striving is the realization of their merely natural destiny–but which, since it is Spirit that animates it, is possessed of vast attractions and displays great power and (moral) richness. Thus Spirit is at war with itself; it has to overcome itself as its most formidable obstacle. That development which in the sphere of Nature is a peaceful growth, is, in that of Spirit, a severe, a mighty conflict with itself. What Spirit really strives for is the realization of its Ideal being; but in doing so, it hides that goal from its own vision, and is proud and well satisfied in this alienation from it.
>
> Its expansion, therefore, does not present the harmless tranquility of mere growth, as does that of organic life, but a stern reluctant working against itself. It exhibits, moreover, not the mere formal conception of development but the attainment of a definite result. The goal of attainment we determined at the outset: it is the Spirit in its *completeness*, in its essential nature, *i.e.*, Freedom.[78]

Note how Hegel despises "mere growth" and "the mere formal conception of development." Perfectibility for him is the radical freedom of autonomous man, freedom from God, freedom to oppose, and endlessly to oppose. Hegel is or should be the patron saint of psychoanalysts and psychiatrists: he has created the world of their patients. Hegel is also the father of revolutionists and artists. Walt Whitman caught Hegel's spirit early: war against everything; convert sex into perversion and outrage; play the role of the perpetual outsider, no matter how banal and trite your message. And, above all, despise life and time, as Hegel did: they are limitations on autonomous man, who should be, not only beyond good and evil, but beyond this life and time.

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[76] G.W.F. Hegel: *Philosophy of History*, "Introduction, III, The Course of the World's History." (New York, N.Y.: P. F. Collin and Son, 1901). p. 104f.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Hegel, in commenting on the God of Scripture, in commenting on Judaism, said, "the 'Jealous God' is known as the negation of the Individual."[79] Precisely. Because Hegel's Individual is a being whose goal it is to be god, the God of Scripture is his negation. Hence, Hegel's Individual must negate time, life, and God. He must say "Nay!" to all things, because all things reveal their Maker, and he must strive to remake the world after his own image of autonomy. The world therefore becomes a void, like himself, and time a burden.

Having rejected God, like Dostoyevsky's Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Hegelian man, modern man, must reject God's creation also. This means rejecting time. Hazel Barrington Selby's poem speaks of "Vengeful Time."[80] Putnam, as a good atheist, wrote that our lives are detective stories of which we are the authors, and hence "we know the cause and the results." Knowing the answers, Putnam concluded his poem, why do we wait? Having written the story ourselves, having affirmed our autonomy, we should have our two hands "severed from our wrists."[81] Does this mean Putnam renounced his atheistic faith? on the contrary: the more frustrating a faith, the more commendable it is to modern man, and Putnam wrote proudly and self-righteously, "I am an Atheist."[82] In his "Hymn to Chance," Putnam held that a man finds freedom when he finds *chance*.[83] He saw himself as a new Adam in the new world of anarchy and chance, totally existential in all his views.[84] Thus, we should not be surprised that he was in varying degrees an invalid all his life; health and life were not to his taste. In his "Morning Song," Putnam found it "weird" that the sun has a faithful cycle of setting and rising again. Putnam's hope which enables him to "scorn" the blue skies of day is that "soon enough I shall not have to rise."[85] Modern man hates time and is in love with death, not life. The moral problem for him is therefore to be ready and "willing to abide by the results of suicide."[86]

The hatred of time is the hatred of life.

15. Theological Time

The more explicitly time is seen as a theological concept, the more clearly does man's action in history gain focus and direction. What in humanistic hands became the doctrine of progress is in origin a theological view of time

79. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
80. Hazel Barrington Selby: *Stalks of Wind.* (Boston, MASS: Bruce Humphries, 1941). p. 50.
81. Charles R. Walker, editor: *The Collected Poems of H. Phelps Putnam*, "Authors Write Books." (New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus and Girouz, (1970) 1971). p. 164.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 152. cf. 204f.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-127; cf. 202.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

based upon the doctrine of the creation mandate and man's duty to serve the Kingdom of God.

This view has come slowly into focus, because the influence of Hellenism led to a separation of mind and body. In terms of this, mind, spirit, and ideas were relegated to eternity as their proper realm. This idea still is with us, and men within the church see man sometimes as an eternal being in the making. The body and matter were relegated to the material and temporal realm, to space and time, an ostensibly inferior realm. Hence the proper goal of man was seen as transcendental, something God never mentioned to Adam. *The Vision of God* became central therefore to the life of faith. Asceticism and monasticism were means for the abandoning of the temporal and material in favor of the eternal. In some ascetics, even communion was avoided. As Kirk noted, "Asceticism demands that we deny ourselves all good things of life: the Eucharist is a good thing: therefore we must achieve merit by abstaining from it."[87] Devotional books were not written for Christians living in the world; for many centuries, Christian devotion and piety meant monasticism. The world of space and time was the lesser world. The godly man was thus supposed to contemplate eternity and look forward to putting on eternity. (The Bible speaks rather of putting on incorruption and immortality, *i.e.*, deathlessness.) The regular clergy was the monastic; it was *regular* because it was under the rule of an order, a rule which separated it from the world. The secular clergy was in the world and hence was for some time regarded as being on a lower level.

The secular clergy gained the ascendancy finally, in part by adopting sacerdotal celibacy and separating themselves from the world, and in part because the view of time was changing. The vision of God was still the focus, but there was with it the mundane desire to create a social order dedicated to it.

With Protestantism, the value of time was enhanced; the Kingdom of God came more into view in terms of history and time. Man enters the Kingdom of God by God's sovereign grace and mercy; man then must work to further God's dominion over the earth by developing its implications for every area of life and thought. In this view, time is all-important and irreplaceable. The great Puritan compliment was to speak of a man as a redeemer of time, one who used time wisely. Charles Chauncey told Ezra Stiles that Cotton Mather was such a man: "He was the greatest redeemer of time I ever knew." Cotton Mather could, by the age of twelve, read Virgil in Latin, Homer in classical Greek, and the New Testament in Koine Greek. By fourteen, he was writing in Hebrew and mastering sciences. He could write in seven languages, and his works include one each in Spanish, French, and Iroquois. He published 300

87. Kenneth E. Kirk: *The Vision of God.* (London, England: Longmans Green, (1931) 1941). p. 192.

volumes and has two large and still unpublished works. Benjamin Franklin's proverbs are secular forms of Cotton Mather's teachings and his *Essays to Do Good.*

American Protestantism especially stressed the value of time in such a hymn as "Work, for the night is coming," *i.e.*, use time as good stewards of a wealth from the Lord.

The time before death is limited. Hence, work, and save time; hence too the American *haste.* Garrett wrote of the American zeal to save time:

> Yet after they had performed this incredible feat, after they had bound their continent together with bands of steel and it was entirely safe, still their feud with time went on. When they were fifty million, then one hundred million, and already the richest people in the world, still their minds were obsessed with time saving inventions of method, devise and machine, as if they knew how much more there was to do and were fearful that they could not get it done in time.
>
> This is what made American industry supreme in all the later phenomena of mass production. Other people had machines that were just as good, and had them first, other people knew the methods too, and were welcome to come and look, but they worked in another dimension of time.
>
> Here the machine was not to save labor; it was to save time.[88]

Many inventions have had as their motivation man's laziness and his desire to avoid some degree of his work. American inventiveness has had as its motive the desire to accomplish more work.

This Protestant American view of time, in secularized form, led to the easy predominance of "Protestants" over others. Thus, in New Orleans, this fact was basic to the triumph of the Know-Nothing Party, which was anti-foreign and anti-Catholic. The Creole, or French-Spanish element, with its old-world orientation, had a contempt for the American fervor, its time-saving ways, its strict schedules, and the like. The Americans similarly had a horror for the Creole ways.[89]

In time, as Protestantism in America became diluted, its insistence on the value of time became Yankee thrift and pragmatism. It led to a contempt of contemplation, which led to the rise of American intellectuals, who, as the new contemplatives, the monks of humanism, in turn despised the material and temporal world. Soon, however, even the men of the world, products of these new schoolmen, came to despise time and the clock, and to view their older attitude towards time as neurotic.

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[88] Garet Garrett: *The American Story.* (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1955). p. 44.

[89] See Leon Cyprian Soule: *The Know-Nothing Party in New Orleans, a Reappraisal.* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Historical Association, Thomas J. Moran's Sons, 1961). p. 7.

In the 19th century, however, the Protestant American view of time formed the nation. A visitor such as De Tocqueville saw at once how important time was to American theology, commenting:

> In the middle ages the clergy spoke of nothing but a future state; they hardly cared to prove that a sincere Christian may be a happy man here below. But the American preachers are constantly referring to the earth; and it is only with great difficulty that they can divert their attention from it. To touch their congregations, they always show them how favourable religious opinions are to freedom and public tranquillity; and it is often difficult to ascertain from their discourses whether the principal object of religion is to procure eternal felicity in the other world, or prosperity in this.[90]

As De Tocqueville noticed, "Among the Americans, all honest callings are honorable." For a man, however wealthy, to avoid work was regarded as so evil a use of life and time that rich Americans who had no desire to work went to Europe, "where they find some scattered remains of aristocratic society, among which idleness is still held in honour." In Europe, work with a view to profit was despised. "In the United States professions are more or less laborious, more or less profitable; but they are never either high or low: every honest calling is honourable."[91]

These views had their origins in English Puritanism, which while failing to an extent in England, triumphed in America. Baxter had declared in the *Christian Directory* (1678), "It is action that God is most served and honored by."[92] Time and space are not to be despised, and mind or thought is to be directed towards dominion in this world of time and space as man's only possible world.

Such a view is directly opposed to the Kantian and Hegelian views of man's autonomy, which lead to a hatred of time, and to anguish because of time. Salvation is then *from* time, a conclusion reached by a Japanese professor of philosophy and religion, and an ostensible Christian. According to Hatano, "the accomplishment of salvation, which is the perfect deliverance from sin, time and death, can be found only after death or after the end of time."[93] The Bible declares that salvation is from sin and death to the service of God, *not* from time. Salvation is in Time, and time is not something to be destroyed like sin and death, but to be redeemed, and made a means of exercising godly dominion. Man's life is inseparable from time; to reject time is to reject life and salvation.

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90. Alexis De Tocqueville: *Democracy in America*, II. (New York, N.Y.: J. and H.G. Langley, 1841). p. 135.
91. *Ibid.*, II, p. 162f.
92. A.S.P. Woodhouse, editor: *Puritanism and Liberty*. (London, England: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1938). p. 44.
93. Seiichi Hatano: *Time and Eternity*. (Japan: Ministry of Education, 1963). p. 161.

16. Future Time

According to a contemporary African philosopher, John Mbiti, in *African Religions and Philosophy*, the traditional African view of time is two-dimensional. There is a past, and a present with its immediate future, but no future in a Biblical sense. What *will* happen is a recurrence of the past as a part of the rhythm of life. The linear concept of Biblical thought is largely absent. Mbiti states that, "according to traditional concepts, time is a two-dimensional phenomenon, with a long *past*, and *present*, and virtually *no future.*" Because of this view, the future is really the past repeated. "Actual *time* is therefore what is present and what is past. It moves 'backward' rather than 'forward'; and people set their minds not on future things, but chiefly on what has taken place."[94]

This view is common to Asia and the Middle East, and, with the rise of existentialism, is again prevalent in Europe as in antiquity. Without a truly Biblical faith, man has no future and regards all time as his enemy. As Cullmann pointed out, Greek thought saw time as circular and hence without direction. It held thus that time is an enslavement and a curse, not the way of realization and direction, but an eternal recurrence of meaningless events and changes. The need of man was thus to be freed from time.[95]

Where men see time and history as a curse or a problem, they are then its slaves and subjects rather than dominion men, redeeming the time and ruling in it. Time is not a problem but a wealth for the covenant-keeping man. For men who are hostile to time, as Marxism is, time is something to be arrested by means of science and politics. Science must work to overcome aging and death; this goal in Soviet medicine means a deterioration of medical attention to the normal and necessary areas of medical practice. To attempt the impossible makes the possible improbable of realization. Again, in politics Marxism seeks to create a final order and to arrest time and history. The result of all such attempts is failure coupled with a present disorder.

Tyrmand, a refugee from Polish communism, gives us one amusing example after another of the radical failures and incompetence of Marxism. Thus, one of the surest ways of having a large, long, and patient line of customers is for a communist store to receive a shipment of toilet paper. People will leave their work and stand in line indefinitely, for "getting toilet paper is considered one of the most fortunate events of life under communism."[96] It would seem that, when "workers of the world unite," they gain some slogans but lose their toilet paper and more! In Red China Tung

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94. Cited in Peter Berger, Brigitte Berker, Hansfried Kellner: *The Homeless Mind.* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1973). p. 149.

95. Oscar Cullmann: *Christ and Time.* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1950). p. 52.

96. Leupold Tyrmand: *The Rosa Luxemburg Contraceptives Cooperative.* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1972). p. 136.

reported, during one period, men were permitted to buy only thirty *pieces* a month, and women were allowed sixty pieces of toilet paper, two sheets a day![97]

Even worse, when men adopt existentialism and renounce the future for the present, they must either seek a return to savagery and its unconcern for tomorrow, its lack of a future, or they must become psychopaths. This is seen clearly in an existentialist play, *The Hawk*, produced in 1967. The Hawk is a heroin peddler who is seen as an animal; he does what he does because it is existential being to be a hawk, to kill, to be hungry, and to kill, and kill. His need for victims is insatiable, and he gives each addict who comes to him a fatal dose. All things take place because of a senseless and natural inevitability. "Every man is a potential psychopath."[98] The only time left in this existentialist world is "The Now," "Dreams, Death, and Orgasm," nothing else.[99] The point of narcotics is to arrest the moment and to deny the future, "You got to score for the Now."[100] In such a world, the only future is death, and time must be evaded by the use of heroin. The existentialist thus has a will to die and to escape from time.

The Bible, however, tells us that our future comes from God's predestination and is a glorious realm in which, finally, not time, but sin and death are destroyed and man reigns with Christ over the Kingdom of God. Dominion is under God and in terms of His law, not in defiance of God. The view of the future promoted by McHale and others is one of a time planned, determined, and dominated by man. "Man's future may be literally what he chooses to make it."[101] However, the future for McHale is no more than the past and present better controlled. The future is the product of man, of his past and present, more fully controlled in terms of human needs. Thus, while McHale's future glitters with his technological and socialistic optimism, it looks more clearly like the Polynesian and African past and present extended forward.

Such a "future" as McHale envisaged will only destroy the past and present, and its technology, which it plans to utilize. Its lack of a valid theological view of time will and already is leading its adherents into a world similar to the Japanese Genroku Era. It's world became the floating world of transient pleasures, of pornography, of prestige and taste rather than morality, purpose, and direction. In such a world, the moment rules, and everything is done for effect and appearances now, not for consequences in the future.[102]

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97. Tung Chi-Ping and Humphrey Evans: *The Thought Revolution*. (London, England: Leslie Frewin, 1967). p. 146.
98. Murray Medrick and Tony Barsha: *Keystone's The Hawk*. (Indiannapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1968). p. 53.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 94f.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
101. John McHale: *The Future of the Future*. (New York, N.Y. Ballantine Books, (1969) 1971). p. 7.

As Guardini observed, "The end determines all that preceeds it."[103] If we believe that God created man to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth, and that all things are predestined towards His glorious and revealed purpose, then our lives will be governed by that purpose, and time for us leads only to triumph, whether we live or die. Our problems then are not inherent in time but products of the fall, aspects of sin and death, and only in and through time, by the sovereign and electing grace of God through Christ, do we serve His purpose in effecting a steady triumph over those problems. Our assurance of victory is set forth in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the new Adam, whose members we are. In Christ, we are members of the coming world order, developing in time and to be manifested in its fullness at His Second Advent. In His resurrection, the subjection of the world has begun, and we are citizens of that developing and coming world order (Heb. 2:5-10). The end which determines all things that precede it is ordained by God, as is all time and history. Thus, in all the events of time and space, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

[102.] Howard Hibbett: *The Floating World in Japanese Fiction.* (New York, N.Y.: Grove Press, (1959) 1960).

[103.] Romano Guardini: *The Last Things.* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, (1954) 1965). p. 12.

XVIII

AUTHORITY

1. Author and Authority

The words *author* and *authority* are related words, coming from the Latin *auctor, augere*, meaning to increase or to produce. In the English, an author is the creator, originator, or producer of something. An authority is one with the right to command, to exercise dominion, and to have jurisdiction.

Our religious perspective is determined by our doctrine of authority. The Greco-Roman world judged all things in terms of man's autonomous reason. As a result, such thinkers as Galen, Celcus, and Lucretius (who preceded Christ) judged the Biblical revelation in terms of their rationalistic presuppositions. Lucretius, writing in the first century B.C., was emphatic that "Nothing can ever be created by divine power out of nothing." The forces active in the universe were for Lucretius exclusively inherent forces. Thus, while these Greco-Romans could show interest in marvels, it was only from a naturalistic perspective. When Paul spoke of the resurrection at Athens, the philosophers were interested. Their naturalism left room for leaps in being in an evolving universe. They lost interest in Paul's position when they saw its God-centered premise. As Van Til noted,

> Even among the cultured it was in good style to recognize the fact that there was more in heaven and on earth than they had yet dreamed of in their philosophy. They believed in "the mysterious universe"; "the unknown." But this "unknown" must be thought of as the utterly unknowable and indeterminate.[1]

The God of Scripture is beyond man's control. Such a God was not acceptable to the Greeks and Romans; they wanted a god who could be controlled by man and by man's reason. Given this rationalistic premise, they were amazingly gullible. The miracles of the Bible were impossible to them. One of the most offensive verses of the Bible for Greco-Roman thinkers was Luke 18:27, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Celcus held it to be an outrageous refuge to say that "anything is possible to God."[2]

On the other hand, for them virtually all things were possible for man and nature. It was believed, for example, that men could animate the statues of the gods and effect religious union with them. The Pygmalion story has religious roots. Such theurgic practices were widely believed in. The emperor, Julian the Apostate, went to a philosopher, Maximus of Ephesus, to learn the art.

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[1] Cornelius Van Til: *Paul at Athens*. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: 1954). p. 6.

[2] Robert T. Wilken: *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1984). p. 90.

Such men caused torches in the hands of a goddess to burst into flames, and were adept at such novel tricks.[3] With secret mechanisms, some statues were made to talk, and to proclaim oracles. At Antioch, a statue of Zeus Philios (Friendly Zeus) had issued oracles which led to a persecution of Christians. The thesis of theurgy was that "the divine was invisibly diffused throughout the whole cosmos like a primordial electric wave; the action which succeeded in capturing this wave, that is, whatever induced the divine to reveal itself was a legitimate theurgic activity." Any props or devices to capture this divine wave inherent in all being was thus seen as legitimate and not as trickery.[4]

The appeal of theurgy was the appeal of humanism; power was placed in the hands of men. "Proof" became something man determined, and man's activity established the nature and boundary of the real. Hegel said, *the rational is the real*, i.e., what the mind of man conceives is alone reality. The modern scientific attitude reflects this Hegelianism: what science proves is alone true. To give a simple example of this, in one California mountain area, residents were long familiar with the existence of mountain lions; this fact, however, was not accepted by naturalists until one of them found it to be so! No one else constituted a credible witness. In such a perspective, scientific, naturalistic man is alone the authority, because he is the author of the dimensions of reality. Humanistic scientific man says that only what his autonomous reason accepts as valid can be true or real. The naturalistic scientist presents himself as an authority because he has presupposed himself as the author; he defines what can acceptably be classified as reality. Hence, creationism is not true, and evolution, an unprovable doctrine, is of necessity true because it conforms to his concept of the real. God and the Bible are rejected as invalid authorities, because the humanistic scientist sees, not God as the author, but his autonomous mind. Without acknowledging Schopenhauer, he follows him in implicitly seeing the world as will and idea. How we define reality rests on an act of faith. We are told, "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). *All life is an act of faith.* The only question is, faith in what or whom? Our doctrine of authority is manifested by our faith. Hebrews 12:1-2 declares:

> 1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
>
> 2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 167f.

[4] Guiseppe Ricciotti: *Julian the Apostate*. (Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960). p. 40.

The word here translated as *author is archegon*, which means prince or tribal leader. Its root is *arche*, beginning or cause. Jesus Christ is the beginning or cause of our faith and our prince or leader in the life of faith. He is also the *finisher*, the *teleioten* of our faith, its perfecter.

It should be noted that, in Scripture, authority is personal and is a person, the Lord. We are to run the race of life before the eyes of the world, a great mass of witnesses. The term "cloud" was used to describe a great throng in which the individuals were lost in the mass. Jesus Christ, as our Adam, and as the head of the new humanity, precedes us in this race, and He ran it with joy, despising the shame of the cross, to become our Prince "at the right hand of the throne of God." We run the race to receive "the promise" (Heb. 11:39f.) of the Kingdom or City of God (Heb. 11:10,16). Christ's reward was to reign, not only as God the Son, but as God incarnate. Our reward is to reign with Him and in Him for ever and ever (Rev. 22:5).

In Hebrews 2:10, Jesus Christ is called *the captain* of our salvation; the word in the Greek is *archegon*, prince, or beginning. Christ is the cause and source of our salvation and our personal leader therein.

In terms of Scripture, the author or authority is *beyond man's control*; He is our Maker, not we His. Even where human authorship is concerned, men may criticize a work, but they cannot declare it to be their creation nor remake it by their fiat word. Critics may find fault with a book, but this does not give them a right to rewrite it. About 1680, Nahum Tate rewrote Shakespeare's *King Lear* to give it a happy ending, the last line reading, "Truth and Virtue shall at last succeed." This version was acted until 1823. It is interesting to note, however, that the title page of a 1756 edition does not mention Shakespeare but reads, "Revived, with alterations by N. Tate," and with reason, because it is a very different play.

The Bible stresses God's sole authorship and the sovereignty of His purpose and pleasure; this is called predestination. Paul says, concerning this,

> 17. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.
>
> 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.
>
> 19. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?
>
> 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
>
> 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (Rom. 9:17-21)

In brief, God is man's author and authority. For man to presume to challenge God's work is presumptuous and insane. To question God and His authority

is suicidal, because it means questioning the validity of life itself. Life only exists on God's terms, not in terms of man's imagination.

God is God, and His word is revelation. Because God is God, His word is as authoritative as He is. Spinoza said of the Bible that it did "not contain propositional revelation, that is, actual statements of fact."[5] This same view is now very popular in the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, Canada. Seerveld, for example, rails against all who insist on propositional truth in the Bible; at the same time, he attacks the idea of "an infallibly inspired text," or "bibliolatry."[6] For all such men, God obviously lacks the intelligence and coherency which they possess! The aim of these men, in Van Til's words, "is to make Christianity acceptable to its cultured despisers."[7] In the process, they make themselves contemptible.

We cannot say with any legitimacy to our Creator, "Why hast thou made me thus?" We cannot honestly question His authority and establish our word as law over Him, nor can we judge Him at the bar of our reason. To do so is to manifest original sin, the great temptation of the tempter, that we should be our own gods, determining the nature and establishing the reality of good and evil for ourselves. Man in his fall challenged God's authority. Both in opposition to Biblical faith and in seeming friendliness to it, men continue to challenge God's authority. However, all who judge God are in due time judged by God.

2. Man's Relationship to Authority

The triune God is the source of all authority, but authority on the human scene can be exercised by man under God. God has not restricted the boundaries of authority to eternity; His authority must be exercised by men in history. Some such spheres of legitimate authority under God are the family, the church, and the state. To undermine Godly authority in these and other spheres is to further anarchy and to rebel against God Himself. On the other hand, to over-stress these human exercises of authority is also an evil. In fact, as men arrogate authority to themselves, they become progressively demonic, and they manifest the premise of the fact, in that such human authorities seek to be their own gods and their own determiners of good and evil. We should remember that, in his own way, the devil is a believer in authority, his own authority (Rev. 13:2; Matt. 4:9).

Authority on the human scene is closely tied to status or position, but it cannot be equated with status. To illustrate, parenthood is a natural fact; giving birth to a child gives the status of a parent to the father and mother.

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5. James T. Draper, Jr.: *Authority: The Critical Issue for Southern Baptists.* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1984). p. 31.
6. Calvin Seerveld: *Rainbows for the Fallen World.* (Downsview, Ontario, Canada: Toronto Tuppence Press, 1980). pp. 92-95.
7. Van Til: *op.cit.*, p. 14.

Authority, however, is not derived from this natural fact but from God's command, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). This is a law *from God* which promises long life as a *gift from God* for obedience. Moreover, the commandment here is to adults to *honor*, not to children, who are commanded more specifically to *obey* (Eph. 6:1). This law has no true analogue in the world of nature.

This means that the parents who seek to command their children naturalistically deny they have religious authority. Such mothers will tell their children of the "trauma" of conception and birth, and all their "sacrifices" for their children, and the fathers will recount how much time and money their children have cost them. The children are unimpressed: they didn't ask to be born, and none of these facts give the parents any true authority. Authority is a religious fact, and, unless it is religiously grounded, it quickly disappears.

Our understanding of authority depends on our awareness and acceptance of the religious foundation of life. The centurion of Luke 7:1-10 (Matt. 8:5-13) sees this clearly and manifests it. Our Lord says of him, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." This centurion at Capernaum describes himself thus: "For I am a man under authority." He knows the nature of command, because he is a commander, and he knows that Jesus is the great commander with great authority. Hence, he says, "speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." He sees with clarity the power and authority of Jesus Christ, because he himself was a man under authority and in faith, a man of whom the elders of the synagogue spoke favorably (Luke 7:3-5). The centurion knows that the healing he seeks for his servant is a miracle, and the presence of Christ is not necessary. Hence, "speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

By contrast, let us look at the over-governing church, the church whose gospel is excommunication. The word in Matthew 28:19 translated as *teach* is *matheteuo, matheteusate*, which means also to *disciple*. Church *discipline* has come to mean punishment or excommunication, something very different from discipling. Excommunication has its place in the life of the church, but not as a substitute for discipling. To disciple is to teach and to lead someone into the life of the faith. It requires a reliance on the Holy Spirit, not on coercion.

Before continuing with the subject of excommunication, let us examine briefly the nature of theocracy. According to a common error, theocracy means the rule of men in the name of God. The Bible clearly contradicts this view. The state in Scripture is a minimal institution, and so too is the church as an institution. The rule of God's law is essentially through the lives of men as they apply their faith, and as they create tithe agencies to govern various areas and needs. Where faith wanes, the theocracy wanes. The *Book of Judges*

gives us no change in polity from beginning to end, but it gives us an alternation from peace and prosperity to oppression and tyranny, and the key is faith. The essential government comes from the self-government of the Christian man. The U.S. was best governed when it was least governed, not because less control from the state was the essential ingredient but because Christian self-government was central in the eras of good government. Without strong, self-governing Christians taking back self-government under Christ in health, welfare, education, and more, we cannot return by politics to less statism.

This is the issue too with respect to excommunication. No amount of excommunication can restore strength to a church where sound faith is lacking. Indeed, a heavy use of excommunication indicates commonly the lack of a sound teaching ministry. Coercion replaces teaching and covers up the failure of the ministry. Coercion not only replaces teaching but also the Holy Spirit. Neither permissiveness nor excommunication can be productive of faith in the life of the church. Both in the Old and New Testaments, excommunication is for serious moral infractions of God's law, and for heresy (Titus 3:10). In the church, Catholic and Protestant, it is more commonly used for infractions of church rules, and this is especially true of some independent Protestant congregations. The church has no authority apart from Christ and God's law-word, the Bible. The binding and loosing power of the church is inseparable from God's authority, but it must be strictly in terms of God's canon or rule or else it can separate the *church* from Christ as a false church.

The centurion did not place his trust and hope in the power of the *natural* touch but in the supernatural power of Christ. My mere word, said the centurion, has power to command, because I am a man under authority. Jesus is at the least a great prophet of God; even more, the centurion calls Him *Lord.* Because Jesus is under the great and ultimate authority, He is capable of far more than myself and others.

In brief, the centurion saw that power and authority are closely related. The greater the authority we work under and are strictly faithful to, the greater the power we exercise. This is a fact which church and state, as well as persons, need to learn. The moral authority of both church and state is badly eroded, and contempt and indifference have become commonplace. Coercion by the state has failed to correct its waning authority and has in fact aggravated the erosion. For the church to take the same coercive route is to despise its teaching ministry and to treat with contempt the power of the Holy Ghost. Authority is *not* gained by putting on a garb or by the fiats of a consistory session, presbytery, or board but by putting on Christ, by being under His authority.

As Paul tells the Galatians, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). If our baptism is from the heart, then

we are clothed in Christ; we are a new creation in Him (II Cor. 5:17). Then we are under authority and have power in Him by His Spirit.

3. "The Power of His Resurrection"

Among the several Greek words used in the New Testament for *power* is *dynamis*, found 118 times from beginning to end in the New Testament. Add to this the very common usage of other words which in some cases unite the concepts of power *and* authority and it becomes apparent that the New Testament very strongly associates power with Jesus Christ. Some of these other words are *Kratos*, strength, power, or dominion; there is also *Kuriotes*, lordship, power, or dominion; again, *exousia* denotes authority, power, and absolute freedom of action; *ischus* is translated as ability, force, or strength; and *arche*, rule, or beginning, is also translated by some as power.

Paul's use of this word *dynamis*, with reference to the resurrection is especially important:

> 8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,
> 9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:
> 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;
> 11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Phil. 3:8-11)

The word *dynamis* in Greek thought meant the power to live and act independently of physical or spiritual strength. It referred to an inherent, not a derived, power. The Stoics logically equated this power or force with their idea of God. This power is effective in our salvation, and it is the power in all faithful preaching (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:18; II Tim. 1:8-9; 4:17). The natural man does not have this power, either to please God or to keep God's law (Rom. 8:7-8; Gal. 3:21). The Holy Spirit manifests this power of God in our lives. To be without this power of God unto salvation is to be powerless, or impotent; *adynatos*. The great manifestation of God's power is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an *authoritative* expression of power, because it destroys the power of sin and death, and also because it reveals that the true power in all creation is the Creator, who is also our Redeemer.

"The power of his resurrection" is a contradiction to all humanism. It makes clear that the justification for Christianity is not in its social utility; it can be argued with justice that Biblical faith gives freedom and power to our lives, strengthens the family and society, and makes for better living, but such a justification makes man the standard. In a fallen, rebellious world, our faith also requires "the fellowship of his sufferings." Humanism's basic test is

social utility; in terms of this standard, abortion and euthanasia are currently justified.

Our very word *religion* comes from a Latin word, *religare*, to bind. The Romans saw religion as social cement, as the binding force in society. Hence, Rome licensed and controlled all religions in order to ensure that they provided only the right kind of social cement, one conformable to Roman imperial policy. This same civil concern is operative in all the current efforts to control and regulate churches and Christians.

With this in mind, let us see what Paul has to say in Philippians 3:8-11. Paul weighs two things one against the other. On the one side, we have humanistic assets, including, literally, "a righteousness of mine own," i.e., a justice or justified position attained by his own moral attainments. This is derived from a perspective which treat the law as a way of salvation, reduces the law to a Pharisaic code, and then asserts a personal vindication and sufficiency. All this, Paul says, is *dung*. Dung, *skubalon*, refers to two things; first, human excrement, which was in Greece and elsewhere given to the dogs, who were a town or city's scavengers; second, table garbage was also thrown out for the dogs to devour. Vine's comment here was telling: "Judaizers counted Gentile Christians as dogs, while they themselves were seated at God's banquet. The Apostle, reversing the image, counts the Judaistic ordinances as refuse upon which their advocates feed, Phil. 3:8."[8] All this St. Paul thus sees as repulsive, as dung; in his eyes now, it is fit only to be thrown out. The whole realm of humanistic values is, in the light of redemption, seen for what it is.

Against all this, on the other hand, is God's righteousness or justice, which is altogether holy, which we know through faith, the gift of God through Christ. At the apex of all this is "the power of his resurrection." Linked to this is our resurrection, of which we have now the beginning in our justification and regeneration. We are in Christ a new creature or creation (II Cor. 5:17). This fact, that "we have been raised together with Christ" (Col. 3:1) is a great miracle. It means that "even when we were dead through our trespasses," the Lord God "made us together with Christ" (Eph. 2:56), so that, "as Christ was raised from the dead...we also might walk in the newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). As Muller commented, "By 'the power of His resurrection' is meant the living power which proceeds from the risen Saviour and reveals itself in the believer by working a total renewal of life in him."[9]

As Moule noted, the phrase, "the power of his resurrection," is "a phrase difficult to exhaust in exposition."

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[8] W. E. Vine: *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Vol. I. (Westwood, N.J.: Revell, (1940) 1966). p. 343f.

[9] Jac. J. Muller: *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955). p. 116.

> The Lord's Resurrection is spiritually powerful as (*a*) evidencing the justification of believers (Rom. iv. 24, 25, and by all means cp. I Cor. xv. 14, 17, 18); as (*b*) assuring them of their own bodily resurrection (I Cor. xv. 20 &c.; I Thess. iv. 14); and yet more as (*c*) being that which constituted Him actually the life-giving Second Adam, the Giver of the Spirit who unites the members to Him the Vital Head (John vii. 39, xx.22; Acts ii. 33; cp. Eph. iv. 4-16). This latter aspect of truth is prominent in the Epistles to Ephesus and Colossae, written at nearly the same period of St. Paul's apostolic work; and we have here, very probably, a passing hint of what is unfolded there. The thought of the Lord's Resurrection is suggested here to his mind by the thought, not expressed but implied in the previous context, of the Atoning Death on which it followed as the Divine result.
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> This passage indicates the great truth that while our acceptance in Christ is always based upon His propitiatory work for us, our power for service and endurance in His name is vitally connected with His life as the Risen One, made ours by the Holy Spirit.[10]

"The power of His resurrection" is tied to the work of God the Spirit. In I Corinthians 15:45-46, we are told that "the last Adam was made a quickening spirit," or, more literally for us, "a life-giving spirit." The reference is plainly to the Holy Spirit. By means of the resurrection, Jesus Christ overcame and destroyed the power of sin and death and became our Adam, the head of God's new human race. We must remember that the term *race* was in common use in the early church, which spoke of Christians as a *race* and prayers were offered up in the church for "the race of Christians."[11]

On the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ's new human race, Calvin said, with respect to I Corinthians 15:45,

> It must be observed, however, that Christ did also, like us, become a *living soul*; but, besides the *soul*, the Spirit of the Lord was also poured out upon him, that by his power he might rise again from the dead, and raise up others. This, therefore, must be observed, in order that no one may imagine, (as Apollinaris did of old,) that the Spirit was in Christ in place of a soul. And independently of this, the interpretation of this passage may be taken from the eighth chapter of the Romans, where the Apostle declares, that *the body, indeed, is dead, on account of sin*, and we carry in us the elements of death; but that *the Spirit of Christ, who raised him up from the dead, dwelleth also in us*, and that he is life, to raise us up also one day from the dead. (Rom. viii. 10, 11). From this you see, that we have *living souls*, inasmuch as we are men, but that we have the *life-giving Spirit* of Christ poured out upon us by the grace of regeneration. In short, Christ is greatly superior to the lot of the *first man*, because a *living soul* was conferred upon Adam in his own name,

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[10.] H.C.G. Moule: *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians.* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, (1889) 1907). p. 95.

[11.] See for example, J.N.W.B. Robertson, editor: *The Divine Liturgies of John Chrysostom, and Basil the Great, with that of the Presanctified, etc.* (London, England: David Nutt, 1894). p. 195.

> and in that of his posterity, but Christ has procured for us the Spirit, who is *life*.[12]

A persistent goal of humanistic man is power, and the coercive power state has always been to men the great means of attaining this goal. The state and especially in its modern power is based as in pagan antiquity on an act of faith, a trust in power. Men believe in and fear power and hence are subservient to it. Paul, however tells us that all humanistic considerations which were once so important to him are now dung. His life now is grounded in the power of Christ's resurrection. The modern state arose as men's faith in Christ waned. Paul tells us that all believers have, here and now, the power of Christ's resurrection in their lives, in and through the indwelling Holy Spirit. In the power of the Spirit, they move in the earth-shattering power of Christ's resurrection. The hymns of the resurrection celebrate this fact. Charles Wesley's hymn (1739), "Christ the Lord is risen today," declares in part:

> Vain the stone, the watch, the seal, Alleluia!
> Christ has burst the gates of hell: Alleluia!
> Death in vain forbids his rise; Alleluia!
> Christ hath opened Paradise. Alleluia!

Another hymn, "Lift up, lift up your voices now" (John Mason Neale, 1854), reads, in four of its verses:

> Lift up, lift up your voices now;
> The whole wide world rejoices now:
> The Lord hath triumphed gloriously,
> The Lord shall reign victoriously.
>
> In vain with stone the cave they barr'd;
> In vain the watch kept ward and guard:
> Majestic from the spoiled tomb,
> In pomp of triumph Christ is come.
>
> He binds in chains the ancient foe;
> A countless host he frees from woe,
> And heav'ns portal open flies,
> For Christ has ris'n, and man shall rise.
>
> And all he did, and all he bare,
> He gives us as our own to share;
> And hope and joy and peace begin,
> For Christ has won, and man shall win.[13]

The power of His resurrection makes us "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). In that power, we are sent forth by Him to whom "All power is given....in heaven and in earth" to bring all the world into and under His salvation, word, and dominion. We are sent forth "as sheep in the

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[12] John Calvin: *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, Vol. II. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959). p. 52f.

[13] *Trinity Hymnal*. (Philadelphia, PA: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1961).

midst of wolves," but we are at the same time sent forth in the power of the Spirit" (Matt. 10:16-20), so that we are never alone nor weak. The power of His resurrection, the Holy Spirit, is with us.

4. "The Spirit of Adoption"

As we have seen, the Bible grounds authority on God's law, *not* on the natural order. Thus, the authority of parents is not a naturalistic fact but a religious one. The natural order, i.e., the family with its generations, is a creation of God and an area of His law. God created all things as aspects of His law order, and the family is an arena of creation wherein God's law order is expressed. The priority always belongs to the triune God.

Thus Scripture gives us abundant evidence of the secondary status of the natural order. The first man, Adam, is supplanted by Jesus Christ, the last Adam. The firstborn of Adam, Cain, is supplanted by Abel, and, although Cain murdered Abel, the supplanting is not erased, and Seth gains priority. Isaac gains the birthright over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph and Judah over Reuben, and so on.

The logic of a natural order of authority and succession is regularly overturned by God's providence. The very fact of a continuing judgment in history makes clear that the time-developed authorities of man are regularly set aside. Among the reasons for this are two: *first*, given man's sin, the natural order and authority will only further man's depravity and his rebellion against God, and *second*, even without the fall of man, the natural order cannot be the source of authority. In a God-created world, the foundation of all authority is in the triune God and is supernatural.

It should not surprise us, therefore, that the doctrine of the covenant and of salvation alike rest on the fact of *adoption*. In adoption, there is an intrusion into the natural order. A child is adopted and made a member of a household previously not his own. Israel as a people entered into God's covenant as His son by adoption (Ex. 4:22). God declares, "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel: and I will bless them" (Num. 6:27; cf. Deut. 26:18). Moses says, "Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God" (Deut. 27:9). Paul in Romans 9:4 reminds us that the original adoption was of Israel. Moreover, he tells us that Christians receive adoption through the Holy Spirit:

> 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. (Romans 8:14-17)

Let us notice this reversal of the natural order carefully. With man, adoption is *a last resort*. Only when all else fails do we resort normally to adopting a child. God's order militates against this by giving the sole place in salvation to adoption. People in antiquity saw barrenness as a curse. Obviously, God did not so regard it, because it is again and again a condition which for a time affects some women as a prelude to God's blessing, as witness Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elizabeth. But this is not all. In a remarkable prophesy, Isaiah declares:

> 1. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear: break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.
> 2. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;
> 3. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left: and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.
> 4. Fear not: for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.
> 5. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: The God of the whole earth shall he be called. (Isa. 54:1-5)

Isaiah speaks here to the true Zion of God, to the faithful in Israel who felt alone and barren of success. In every era of faithlessness, there were many who felt, as did Elijah, very much alone and barren of success, saying, "I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). But why the imagery of the barren woman? The imagery of the Bible is *not* accidental. Isaiah speaks of a barren woman, abandoned and like a widow, who has sons and daughters so numerous that they people cities and "inherit the Gentiles." Her children are children of faith, not of blood. The stress in both the reference to a barren woman and to a discouraged church is on a supernatural birth of many children in the faith. God's image of blessing is the barren woman who by faith gains many children in the LORD, on one whose life is instrumental in giving faith to many, so that it is her seed which inherits the Gentiles. We have thus a very striking image of triumph which sets aside the natural order. The summons, "Sing, O barren," ran counter to everything men and women believed in antiquity. The bitterness of Rachel was a reflection of the common attitude (Gen. 30:1-2).

In the conflict of our Lord with the scribes and Pharisees, the presupposition of these religious leaders was in their natural authority in terms of an inherited order (John 8:39). All too often, the church has rested in the same inherited order as its authority. At this point, we must note, *first*, that all such inherited and natural orders are not without a *God-derived* authority.

We live in a network of authorities, of powers that be, which are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1ff.). These authorities are very real, but they are not ultimate. All human authorities are under and conditional upon the authority of God and His law-order, and on the faithfulness thereto of these orders. *Second*, as Peter and the other apostles declare, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). If a church is sound in its orders, its administration of the sacraments, its preaching of the word, and in its "discipline," that church still cannot command us if tomorrow it approves of abortion. Because God is the source of all authority, no departure from the law word of God can carry any authority with it.

In terms of this, we can look again at Romans 8:14-17. Paul's contrast between "the spirit of bondage" and the Holy "Spirit of adoption" is between man's state of depravity and separation from God as against man's redemption in Christ and His adoption. But there is more to it. A purely naturalistic doctrine of authority is "the spirit of bondage." Where God's authority is denied, men create humanistic authorities against whom there is no Supreme Court nor power of appeal. The essence of totalitarianism is that all power and authority are comprehended within the walls of the humanistic state. Such a view of authority places man in a strait-jacket from which, without Christian faith, there is no escape.

Attacks on Christianity begin as an assault on a supposedly repressive authoritarianism. Thus, in Paris, in the 13th century, many Dominicans were teaching radical concepts derived from Aristotle and Averroes. At the request of Pope John XXI, in a letter of January 18, 1277, Stephen Tempier, Bishop of Paris, condemned 219 such propositions. Proposition 48 declared, "God cannot be the cause of a new creation, nor can he be the cause of anything new." This reduced God to Aristotle's limiting concept, an idea necessary philosophically but not real ontologically. It followed then, as Proposition 175 declared, "That the Christian law impedes learning."[14] If God is not the Creator, then His law is an imposition on and an impediment to learning. If, however, God is the Creator, then neither learning nor authority can flourish apart from Him. Any system of thought or authority which sees the totality of meaning within the sphere of creation will logically dissolve all meaning and authority in every sphere. This is, of course, what our era manifests, an erosion of meaning and authority. The naturalistic perspective sees "freedom" from God as essential to learning and sound authority, but it has rather been essential to their destruction. Hallowell's excellent study on *The Decline of Liberalism as an Ideology* traced this development. German thought reduced law and authority to natural and historical limits; the authority of God was denied. *Law* became the will of the state, as did *right*, and the universities provided the rationale for Hitler and the Nazi faith.[15] It is

[14] Edwards Peters, editor: *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*. (London, England: Scolar Press, 1980). p. 228.

wrong to speak of Hitler controlling the German universities; he was their indirect product, and their faith controlled Hitler. Not surprisingly, they were in the main agreeable to him.

"The Spirit of Adoption" makes us heirs of God; it makes us a new creation and places us under ultimate authority. Instead of being the lawless element in society because of our obedience to God's higher authority, we become the law-abiding element, because "the spirit of bondage," by its rebellion against God's authority, has undermined all authority.

5. Living Under Authority

Any study of authority must of necessity deal with the subject of false authority. The matter is complicated by the fact that people *prefer* superficial or surface solutions, because they make life easier. They also choose to see the question in terms of ridiculously obvious alternatives. Thus, to cite an illustration someone once used, our federal government is a legitimate authority over us, but neither the Republican nor the Democratic parties can command our obedience as though they were the state. A better question would be, does the federal government always and in all things have a legitimate authority over us?

A favorite text with many husbands is Ephesians 5:22-23, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church." I firmly believe, in terms of unpleasant experience, that many men are nominally Christians because they like such verses. It gives them a security and freedom in their waywardness. The comment of Charles Hodge on this text, more than a century ago, is to the point:

> She is to be subject *en parti, in everything*. 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 all. This of course does not mean that the authority of the husband is unlimited. It teaches its extent, not its degree. It extends over all departments, but is limited in all; first, by the nature of the relations; 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.[16]

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[15] John H. Hallowell: *The Decline of Liberalism As an Idealogy, with Particular Reference to German Politico-Legal Thought*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1943).

[16] Charles Hodge: *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint). p. 314f.

All authority under God is conditional upon our obedience to God. No authority can long endure apart from Him.

This immediately raises some obvious questions. What authority then does a godless or a pagan state have over us? The New Testament term for legitimate authority is *exousia*. It is normally reserved for godly authorities, but we have two uses of the word which depart from this, because Satan is described as having authority or power. Even though Satan is in revolt against God, his authority is under God, by His permission, and derivative. One such usage is Luke 22:53; our Lord here refers to His trial and crucifixion as representing the power and authority of darkness. The word *exousia* (authority, power, dominion) appears also in Colossians 1:13; we are told that God in His grace "hath delivered us from the *power* of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." As our sin-bearer, Christ was delivered by God into the authority of Satan, that we might be delivered from Satan's authority. Thus, these texts separate us from Satan's authority.

But what if the state today is godless and is, as Augustine called it, a band of robbers, a Mafia, because it is not ruled by God's law or justice but by its own will. The medieval era was more ready to approve of tyrannicide than men can now accept on Biblical grounds. Paul's word is plain: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (I Cor. 7:20), and, again, "Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men" (I Cor. 7:23). Regeneration, not revolution, is the Christian way and hope. However, we cannot be quietists; we cannot be the slaves of men; we are called to freedom in Christ.

If the medieval era was more quick to counsel drastic action than ours, perhaps it was due to a more vigorous faith. Certainly this was true of Puritanism. Let us shift the argument to an arena where armed revolt is not possible, the church. When does the church's legitimate authority cease? Can we say that a church which condones or approves of abortion and homosexuality, and which denies the atonement, is any longer a true church? In every community we have churches which are marked by such evils. A Catholic reported recently to us that, on a business trip to one city, he found that the telephone directory's "Yellow Pages" listed two kinds of Catholic Churches, "Conservative," and "Liberal." In that particular city, a Catholic doctor, in a radio debate with me, favored abortion, euthanasia, and more.

Let us make the question even more pointed. Most churches which claim to believe the Bible from cover to cover are, to describe it kindly, dead. I am regularly told by members of such churches that neither the pastor nor the session, consistory, deacons, board, vestry, or any other governing body will tolerate any reference to abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, communism, or any subject seen as "controversial." Some pastors have lost their pulpits for preaching on God's laws concerning sexual sins. The majority of so-called Bible-believing churches preach Christ only as our Savior, i.e., as a fire and

life insurance salesman, but refuse to preach His Lordship. But if Lordship is separated from salvation, the doctrine of salvation collapses.

We must remember that, in the parable of the last judgment, our Lord is speaking of those who claim to be Christians when He declares that they never knew Him (Matt. 25:31-46). Moreover, if we list all the sentences of our Lord, we find that the passages of judgment are clearly the most numerous. It is a myth that the New Testament is full of sweetness and light.

Paul declares that this gospel of salvation and deliverance has been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23), or to all creation. As Lightfoot noted, "The statement is given in the broadest form, all creation animate and inanimate being included, as in Rev. V,13." It will not do, as Lightfoot did, to call this "hyperbole."[17] The fact that we cannot understand how this was possible nor in what sense it is true does not invalidate the plain and emphatic meaning of the text. If we limit Scripture's truth to our capacity to comprehend its full meaning, we might as well abandon it, because, beginning with the fact of creation in Genesis 1:1, it transcends our capacity to grasp all its implications.

Paul declares, in Colossians 1:19-22, that the purpose of our salvation and Christ's atonement is "to present you holy and unblamable and unreproveable in his sight." In other words, we are not saved to have a security with respect to heaven but in order to fulfil God's purposes for us. Paul in I Timothy 2:4 tells us that God's purpose or will concerning all men is their salvation so that they might attain the knowledge of the Truth. The *object* of God's purpose is thus our salvation in order that we may know the Truth. The word knowledge is *epignosis*, which means participation in the Truth. God wants us to be governed by the Truth, so that Paul is declaring that we are saved so that we might, as members of Christ, be governed by Him and by His law-word, by the incarnate Truth and the enscriptured truth. In other words, salvation presupposes *life and activity in Christ.*

This tells us much about the nature of legitimate authority. Our Lord does not tell the Laodicean Church (Rev. 3:14-22) that they are false in their doctrines, only that they are neither hot nor cold. In a world of evil, they sat in their corner, content with the formalities of orthodoxy. Unless they changed, they were to be no more a church, according to our Lord.

The letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 give us our Lord's judgments on the church. The church in Ephesus is commended for a great past and rebuked for its current indifferentism: unless it repents, Christ will cast it out (Rev. 2:1-7). The church in Pergamos is summoned to repent from its sins or face warfare from Christ (Rev. 2:12-17). The church in Thyatira is rebuked because some in its midst are majoring in the study of conspiracies,

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17. J. B. Lightfoot: *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, reprint of 1879 edition). p. 163.

knowing "the depths of Satan," rather than serving the Lord (Rev. 2:18-29). Sardis is also summoned to repentance for its lack of good works (Rev. 3:1-6). Philadelphia is promised blessing and protection for its faithfulness (Rev. 3:7-13).

Our Lord makes clear that he is the legitimate source of authority in all these churches. No apostolic foundation in any can preserve them from judgment or extinction if they are faithless. Basic to Scripture is the doctrine of the *glory* of God; the root meaning of *glory* in the Hebrew is weight or heaviness. The glory of God is the center of all creation; it is the ultimate point of gravity or authority. In Scripture, no authority can legitimately exist apart from God's Glory. When in Ezekiel 10 we are told that the Glory of the Lord left the Temple and went eastward towards Babylon, we are thereby told that the authority of the Temple and of the Kingdom of Judah was gone. Jeremiah ridiculed the belief that the formal correctness of the Temple had any standing with God (Jer. 7:4):

> 4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.
> 5. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor;
> 6. If ye oppress not the strange, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:
> 7. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.
> 8. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.
> 9. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;
> 10. And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?
> 11. Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD. (Jer. 7:4-11)

Malachi 3:8-12 makes clear that the House of God becomes a den of robbers when, among other things, men will not tithe. They then move under God's curse.

We may now draw some conclusions concerning legitimate as against illegitimate or counterfeit authority. The whole world is under authority; the question is, whose authority? We have seen that Satan has authority under God; it is the power, authority, or dominion of darkness. We are delivered from this authority by Christ's atonement into the authority of His Glory and power. If by faithlessness we do not obey that authority of Christ and His Spirit, nor grow therein, then the Glory leaves God's people, however seemingly faithful their profession. They are neither hot nor cold; they are lukewarm and indifferent. We are then handed over to the authority of Satan.

Even the godly, when erring, stubborn, proud, or self-willed, can be given for a time to the authority of Satan. We cannot question that our Lord loved Simon Peter, yet He tells him:

> 31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:
> 32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (Luke 22:31-32)

We cannot say, as some do, that Peter at this point was unconverted; our Lord prays, "that thy faith fail not," meaning that Peter had faith. "Converted" here means to turn about, to come back to a true perspective. For a time thus, because Peter was not moving in terms of faithfulness to the Lord's authority, he was given over to Satan's authority *legitimately.*

We cannot escape authority. If we do not obey and zealously follow after the Lord's authority, then, as individuals, families, churches, states, schools, and other institutions, we fall under Satan's authority, under "the power (or authority) of darkness."

The world of our time is very much under authority, but it is the wrong authority. Formal correctness has its place, but it cannot be a substitute for true authority and for faithfulness. In Micah's words,

> 6. Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?
> 7. Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
> 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:6-8)

This is a great indictment of formal correctness. Rams and oil were a legitimate part of the Temple sacrifices; Micah grossly exaggerates the requirement to indicate that no amount of formal correctness can replace faithfulness and justice. He *equates* with formal correctness the sickening evil of child sacrifice as practiced by Molech worship and other forms of Baalism. What these false offerings do is to offer up as offerings for *sin and rebellion* a false atonement. What the Lord requires is *faithfulness*, "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."[18]

We must recognize that the world of our time is an authoritarian world, but the authority it is under is the power of darkness. Only as we recognize and obey with all our heart, mind, and being the authority of Jesus Christ *our Lord* can we have true order and freedom.

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[18] See Leslie C. Allen: *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976). p. 371.

How do we obey authority? Tillard has said, "He who has the keys has authority."[19] From the perspective of many Catholics and Protestants, the discussion of the keys of the kingdom and the marks of a true church is the starting point. I do not believe that we are even remotely ready for such a discussion, and I believe that too much trouble in church history has come from starting at a conclusion and reasoning backwards.

Let us try to understand what that means. The starting place may well be infant baptism, even though we exclude the Baptists at once. The point, however, is this: a baptism can be strictly correct according to form, but, if the child is going to be given to humanistic educators, violence has been done. Baptism at its heart means giving a child to God, to whom the child belongs in the covenant; it is a recognition that we, our children, and all that we have belong to the Lord.

In *Institutes of Biblical Law*, vol. II, *Law and Society*, I discussed the essential relationship between communion and community (chapters 10-18). A formally correct sacrament can be administered where there is neither community nor faith. How much meaning does it then have? Must not a covenant community precede and accompany communion?

What this means is that the Christian faith means not a life of delegation but application. The Christian is *not* the end of the line for grace, but a generating point for action. Too often pietistic religiosity is substituted for faith.

"The marks of a true church" characterize many a sleeping or dead church. The reason for this is that the formalism of the marks is predominant. Let us posit in our minds the marks of a true state. Then consider the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., Switzerland, the Vatican, San Marino, Mexico, Libya, Lichtenstein, Canada, Red China, and Cuba. Which are true states?

The dictionary defines a *man*, among other definitions, as "a human being," and "an adult male of the human kind." This definition is a sound one, but it is inclusive of men dead and alive. There is a great difference between a dead man and a living one.

The marks of a valid church may be well and good, and necessary as well, but does a dead church have any authority? Can a dead and buried husband control a living wife legitimately? For that matter, can a dead and yet unburied husband control a living wife legitimately?

Our Lord says, "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). More is meant by good fruits than being merely alive and breathing.

We have seen that Satan has a God-given authority. When we are indifferent to God's authority, we pass under Satan's power and authority. Our Lord declares,

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[19] J.M.B. Tillard, O.P.: *The Bishop of Rome*. (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983). p. 113.

> 1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
> 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (John 15:1-2)

The castaway branch may be formally correct, *but it bears no fruit.* We must not define our faith in terms of our neighbor, as did the Pharisee praying in the Temple, saying "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are" (Luke 18:9-14). Neither can we define our church in terms of some other churches. Our standard must be the Lord's, and He requires a living faith, and the fruits of faith.

Thus, our fruits, our works, will clearly manifest the authority in which we live, and move, and have our being.

6. Authority and Power

As we have seen, the New Testament word for *authority* is mainly *exousia. Exousia* is translated as *jurisdiction* in Luke 23:7. In I Corinthians 8:9, it is rendered as *liberty.* It is translated many times as *right,* because it means the authority to speak or act, the liberty to do so, and the right of such actions. In Revelation 17:13 the King James Version translates *exousia* as "strength," in this case the authority given to the beast by the kings. Another common translation is *power,* as in Luke 12:5.

The relationship between authority and power is an essential one when we look at God's authority. A tyrant may have a great deal of power while lacking any legitimate authority; a usurper, or a conquering force, may exert power while having no authority at all. A gunman breaking into a house and holding a family hostage has power but no authority. Authority means a legitimate jurisdiction, a rightness morally, and the liberty which comes from this legitimacy. There can thus be no separation whatsoever of authority and power in the triune God. This is why Kenotic Christologies are so evil and destructive.

Having said this, we must go a step further. Can we legitimately separate godly authority and power? We must recognize that, in a sinful world, godliness attracts hostility; it incites attacks and attempts at obliterating God's witness in man's righteousness and holiness. The Westminster Confession of Faith, in Chapter XIII, declares that we are quickened and strengthened in the practice of holiness:

> I. They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in

> all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
>
> II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part: whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.
>
> III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the generate part doth overcome: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

This development is not a St. Vitus' Dance in no man's land; it is in the real world of everyday life, and the growth of holiness is also the growth of power in and through the Holy Spirit.

In the American version of the Presbyterian "Form of Government," an important statement concerning the relationship of truth, goodness, and holiness was made in 1788:

> IV. 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.[20]

In brief, true virtues do not come singly. The grace of God gives us not only growth in virtues but strength and power in and through them. Obviously, a fallen world at war with God will react with hatred and hostility, so that conflict and suffering do ensue, but so too, finally, does victory. "Truth is in order to goodness," and also to authority, holiness, and power.

A particularly great statement of this comes from Pope Benedict XV, 1914-1922. In an encyclical on preaching the word of God, *Humani Generis Redemptionem*, June 15, 1917, he declared:

> 3. The causes of those evils (the paganism of our times, R.J.R.) are varied and manifold: no one, however, will gainsay the deplorable fact that the ministers of the Word do not apply thereto an adequate remedy. Has the Word of God then ceased to be what it was described by the Apostle, living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword? Has long-continued use blunted the edge of that sword? If that weapon does not everywhere produce its effect, the blame certainly must be laid on those ministers of the gospel who do not handle it as they should. For no one can maintain that the Apostles were living in better

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[20] *The Constitutions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,* Form of Government, Ch. I, section IV. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1943). p. 330.

> times than ours, that they found minds more readily disposed towards the Gospel or that they met with less opposition to the law of God.[21]

Benedict's point is very clear. The authority and power of the word of God enabled the apostles and their successors to challenge and overthrow the paganism of their day. It was a grim battle, but, from the earliest years, Rome knew that these Christians represented power. We have less opposition now, said Benedict in 1917; the fault is not that the word of God has lost its power and authority but that we do not proclaim it as we should.

The church today wants to be a democracy, not a monarchy whose king is Christ. If predestination is unpopular, it is not preached, no matter what Scripture says. Men preach in terms of pleasing people, not pleasing God, and congregations feel that they have a right to object to the word of God where it does not agree with them. When churches assume the right of a private judgment with respect to God's word, they forsake both authority and power.

In Acts 1:7-8, we have a revealing use of the word *exousia*, and also *dunamis*, both translated as power:

> 7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.
>
> 8. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The word in v. 7 is *exousia*, authority and power; in v. 8, it is *dunamis*, power. God the Father keeps in His own power the knowledge of the timing of history. Men cannot seek after that knowledge; what the Lord wants us to know concerning Himself He sets forth in His word. According to Deuteronomy 29:29, "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." There is thus secret knowledge; we are not allowed to probe the mind of God with respect to undisclosed things. We do have an obligation to know the things revealed, and our knowledge must be practical. Its purpose must be "that we may do all the words of this law."

The believer who is faithful in this sense receives power. The source of that power is the Holy Spirit. The reference is to Pentecost, but to more than Pentecost. In every age, this power comes to those who are obedient in the faith, and it is the gift of the Spirit. This promise of power does not exclude the prophetic gifts of Pentecost, but its primary emphasis is plainly upon testimony, preaching: "ye shall be my witnesses...unto the uttermost part of the earth." This was obviously connected with the Great Commission. As

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[21] Claudia Carlen, IHM: *The Papal Encyclicals* 1903-1939. (McGrath, A Consortium Book, 1981). p. 154.

Alexander noted of our Lord's statement here, "He cures their morbid curiosity (says Calvin) by recalling them to their present duty."[22]

Thus, the Holy Spirit gives power to act for the Lord. The gift of the Spirit is not for our personal pleasure, satisfaction, or contentment. He comes as a power to enable us to do God's work. "Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17), and there is also power. The word *liberty* is here *eleutheria* and this context refers primarily to freedom of access to God, a freedom in Christ which is also a great power. Access to the King of all creation is the greatest of creaturely powers in terms of the meaning of royal access in antiquity. Anyone having such a freedom of access faced the world with very great power.

To return to the words of Benedict XV, we must say that no other conclusion is possible from Scripture. The word of God is the totally authoritative word and therefore the word of power. If Christians and their churches are powerless, it is because they have neglected the all conquering weapon which is at hand.

7. Undermining Authority

Throughout the centuries, authority has been undermined, often quite openly and even more often not so openly. It is important for us to recognize the covert undermining, because it comes commonly with a greater emphasis on authority, although a false one. Let us examine a well-known instance, the writings of Emmannel Swedenborg, whose influence in the English-speaking world began in 1788. No scholar has done justice to his influence on English and American writers. The Transcendentalists certainly felt his impact, and Melville's novels are very Swedenborgian in their influence. As Clark has noted of Swedenborg's system, "the whole scheme rested upon Swedenborg's word."[23] The meaning of Scripture as Swedenborg supposedly revealed it is incomprehensible to anyone from the plain words of the Bible. The key to a symbolic meaning, to a system of elaborate correspondences, is only in Swedenborg, who in effect claims to have decoded the Bible by special revelation. Swedenborg is an extreme and heretical instance of this, but all too many Catholic and Protestant leaders have been guilty of a like esoteric approach. The medieval emphasis on various kinds of meaning in the Biblical text placed the Bible beyond the understanding of the people. *Authority was thereby transferred from the Bible to the erudite commentator.* The emphasis of some Protestants of late on symbolic theology is another instance of false authority. Meanings are imputed to the text previously

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[22] Joseph Addison Alexander: *The Acts of the Apostles,* vol. I. (New York, N.Y.: Scribner, 1866). p. 11.

[23] Henry W. Clark: *History of English Nonconformity*, vol. II. (New York, N. Y.: Russell & Russell, 1965). p. 338.

undiscovered by godly men and now only apparent to these supposedly authoritative scholars. The net effect is to close the Bible to the simple believer and to require him to submit to "expert" authority. Such pretensions are blasphemous.

Another source of subversion to authority has been pietism. In the later middle ages, pietism as well as false approaches to the interpretation of the Bible undermined the faith and all true authority, and the same thing has recurred since the Reformation in both Catholic and Protestant circles. Pietism has from its earliest days discounted both doctrine and authorities in favor of "heart religion." Its basic premise is a radical egocentricity. The center of religion is not the triune God but the individual soul, its salvation and its experiences. Feeling replaces faith. The goal of religion then becomes personal peace of mind rather than the glory of God. Pietism makes it the chief end of God to save man's soul, whereas our Lord says, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Our Lord, in facing the cross, prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). The pietist sets aside the law of God in favor of emotional experiences. All this is erosive of authority.

A parallel movement to pietism in the humanistic camp has been romanticism, with its exaltation of feeling and experience. There is a close connection between romanticism and revolution. Both by-pass law and history. Because primacy is given to feeling, the romantic and the revolutionary believe in instant realization, as though their ostensible good will can replace the necessity for work and the processes of time. The assumption is that men can *will* themselves into a paradise on earth rather than work patiently for it in Christ.

This confidence in the will of man is shared by Arminian theology. Thomas Boston (1676-1732) ably set forth the absurdity of this confidence in man's will and added:

> And how is it that those who magnify the power of free-will, do not confirm their opinion before the world, by an ocular demonstration, in a practice as far above others in holiness, as the opinion of their natural ability is above that of others? Or is it maintained only for the protection of lusts, which men may hold fast as long as they please; and when they have no more use for them, throw them off in a moment, and leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom?[24]

Biblical authority is eroded by false theology. Theologies can be false not only in terms of bad doctrine but in terms of an abuse of good doctrine. To believe in God's grace is necessary; God's regenerating, sanctifying, and providential grace is the foundation of the Christian life. But God's grace is

[24] Thomas Boston: *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.d.). p. 53.

also energizing; it does not lead to quietism but to godly activity. Where there is grace, there will be the fruits of grace.

Our Lord speaks of the relationship of authority to work, i.e., to fruits:

> 32. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.
> 33. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.
> 34. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every men his work, and commanded the porter to watch.
> 35. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:
> 36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.
> 37. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. (Mark 13:32-37)

The word translated from the Greek as *watch* in vv. 33 and 37 is *agrupneo*. Vine said, "The word expresses not mere wakefulness, but the watchfulness of those who are intent upon a thing."[25] This is the watchfulness of an active, working person. The word authority in v. 34 is *exousia*, and the words, "and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work," are a unit. The Lord gives us authority and power when He gives us a calling, a work to do. Authority and power are undermined where a legitimate calling is undermined. Illustrations of this come easily. State officials lose authority with people as their work becomes oppressive rather than useful. A pastor whose teaching shows little faithfulness to his calling undermines his own authority, no matter how much he seeks to exalt it.

There is thus an essential relationship between authority and work, and to separate the one from the other is to harm both.

It should be noted that our Lord makes this connection as He speaks of His second coming. We are told very specifically that we cannot know the specifics of His return. For men to speculate on the subject in violation of His word is to manifest a disobedience to the Lord's authority. To make our rapture central is to separate ourselves from God's mandate that we have our authority because we have a calling from Him. There is a threat in our Lord's statement about His return: if they have not worked and exercised the authority of their calling, they will find the Lord ready to condemn them when He returns. Thus, the Lord's point is, not that we watch for His coming in order to be ready with an impressive show, but that we be intent on the exercise of our authority and calling because our Lord and judge will surely return.

If the church is not doing its work, it has no authority. If the believer is not doing his work, he too has no authority. When such is the case, the church

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[25] W. E. Vine: *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Vol. IV. (Westwood, N.J.: Revell, (1940) 1966). p. 201.

faces the world as an impotent body, not as the Bride of Christ, the King of Glory. Formal correctness does not make the man, nor the church. Human authorities are derived from God and are conditional upon faithfulness to an appointed task. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20).

8. Authority and False Responsibility

The relationship of authority and responsibility is an important if tangled one. Before we can understand their relationship, let us glance at some of the serious errors which mark much thinking here. *First*, there is a very great difference between the authority of God and that of man, who is God's creature and subordinate. Man's authority is derivative and conditional. Responsibility means accountability to a person or standard greater than we are; in this sense, the terms responsible and irresponsible cannot be applied to God, because He is accountable to none, and it is He to whom all are accountable. When man seeks to be his own god, he becomes irresponsible, as did Adam and Eve, who placed responsibility for their sin on the environment and God. (Gen. 3:1ff)

Second, fallen man is commonly given to environmentalism in his statements on responsibility. Like Adam and Eve, he seeks to be god but refuses to see himself as anything but a victim when he sins and fails. Basic to most psychotherapy is this rejection of responsibility. Parents, the community, teachings, and more are blamed for the individuals sins. Modern psychotherapy is dangerous because it aggravates sin by diluting or denying responsibility.

Third, humanism can sometimes aggravate a problem by exaggerating responsibility. This is more commonly done by humanistic psychotherapists who are churchmen. It is also basic to much pastoral counselling. Responsibility is over stressed and misapplied to the point where the implicit assumption is that the individual is both god and ultimate causality. The danger in psychotherapy is that the person seeking it is saying to a therapist, "heal me," and the therapist assumes that talking and affirming responsibility will lead to healing. The hidden assumption is that man can do the healing.

To illustrate from very real situations, men and women go to such a therapist to say, my spouse is unfaithful, or irresponsible, or some like thing. The erring spouse is often not present to be held accountable; as a result, in some sense, the hurt spouse is indicted. Have you tried to win back your spouse with love? A whole line of questioning makes the victim feel guilty for not having done more. If the victim says, I sometimes wish my spouse were dead, I am so weary of it all, a very serious guilt is imposed upon him or her.

The same is true if the problem is a child. The same "guilt trip" can be imposed. Since none of us are perfect, none of us can have a perfect

relationship with anyone, so we can easily be made to feel guilty when something goes wrong. The essence, however, of the Biblical faith is that we are not God; our spouse, and our children, our co-workers and associates, are not our creatures. Each is responsible to God for what he or she is, and we are in the final analysis only responsible for ourselves. If we do our duty, however faultily at times, we have discharged our very limited responsibilities for the lives of others. Thus, to blame ourselves for the sins of others can be as bad as blaming our sins on others. It is presumptuous.

Fourth, there is in humanistic psychotherapy, both within the church and without, thus a double offense: too much authority and power are given to the person, and it is assumed that delving into the person's mind will solve the problem. Instead of talking out a problem, such psychotherapists talk people into worse ones. Our Lord, in Luke 13:1-5, comes to the heart of the matter:

> 1. There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.
> 2. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?
> 3. I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.
> 4. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?
> 5. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

An incident is called to our Lord's attention: Pilate had somehow killed some Galileans who had come to offer up sacrifices in the Temple. Since Galileans were regarded as religiously lax, it was apparently seen as a judgment upon them that they were killed. Since our Lord challenges this idea, it was apparently the point of the discussion. Our Lord then cites eighteen Judeans upon whom a tower fell. "Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay." The Galileans were regarded as sinners generally; our Lord cites Judeans who died similarly; none were being punished.

The point our Lord makes is like that made by the Book of Job. Job's friends assume that because misfortune has befallen him, he must be guilty of sin. They try therefore to convince Job that he did something wrong. They were thus like contemporary religious psychotherapists. God, however, rebukes them. God is the standard, not man. Events do not have as their primary cause what man does but what God does. To affix ultimate causality on man is thus a humanistic error. God vindicates Job, not because Job was sinless, but because Job was God's servant.

Religious psychotherapists seek to affix responsibility upon the person who has the problem. While it is clearly true that our sins can create our problems, not all our problems are due to our sins. The disciples were at one point corrected because they assumed a totally human causality for all things:

> 1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.
> 2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?
> 3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (John 9:1-3)

The disciples raised the question, who is to blame, the man or his parents? Their question is humanistic; it presupposes only a human causality. Our Lord's answer denies both alternatives. The man's blindness is not grounded in any personal sin; it is an aspect of a fallen world. But behind all this stands the absolute cause, God, whose purpose it was "that the works of God should be made manifest" in the blind man. The blind man became a most eloquent witness to Christ and His power (John 9:4-41). He became a believer. His blindness was the prelude to greater sight.

Christianity is of necessity a personal faith, but if our faith is primarily or essentially personal, it is man-centered instead of God-centered. Such a faith is erosive of authority.

It has been said that famine victims follow a pattern as starvation sets in. They move less and less; their sexual energy disappears, and they are more and more marked by self-absorption. So too is spiritual starvation: there is less and less activity, an inability to reproduce the faith, and a self-centered religious life. These are the consequences of a man-centered religion: it destroys authority and power. The simple fact is that man needs transcendence, and pietism limits or destroys it in favor of self-absorption.

The presupposition of almost all counselling is that the counsellor has the solution, or that man in some sense has it. The presupposition and declaration of scripture is that God has the solution, not man.

Man is a responsible creature, but he is not self-created nor self-caused. His strength and power comes from knowing his limitations and the priority of God's purposes and causality in his life. What we experience in the way of griefs, troubles, depression, and crises are God's way of moving us forward, of compelling us to grow. If we make central our reactions, our feelings, we then miss out on God's meaning and purpose.

This humanistic orientation is the reason why so many ostensibly Christian counsellors are Job's comforters. Job's friends insisted that because certain things had befallen Job, Job was the problem, and they instead became Job's afflictors, not his friends. Job's friends would have been happy if Job had admitted that he found old Hiram down the road a major problem and sometimes wished that reprobate would drop dead. With their perfectionism, they would have blamed all Job's ills on this "terrible thought." They would have been very wrong.

Perfectionism of this sort is disastrous. A godly and quiet young man, married to an attractive and able woman who was a leader in both church and civic groups, had a problem. His wife, a liberal who believed in friendly non-

marital sex, was a major grief to him. He loved her and his children, but at times in bitterness he wished she would drop dead. At this point, his counsellor had a field day. How could he, the husband, hope to bring his wife back to faithfulness when he held such hateful and evil thoughts? The responsibility for "reclaiming" his wife, as well as the guilt for her ways, was in effect laid upon him. The result was an interesting and sad one: he dropped dead, very prematurely, of a heart-attack. I was sent a picture of her being installed as president of a civic do-gooder agency, looking as attractive as ever. Humanistic counselling subverts the moral order.

9. Authority and Ministry

We are told in Scripture that the mother of James and John, our Lord's aunt (Matt. 27:56; John 19:25), came to Jesus to ask for enthroned places for her sons in Christ's Kingdom (Matt. 20:20-21). The other disciples were indignant at this effort, and our Lord, who had denied Salome her request, called the disciples together to say,

> 25....Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.
> 26. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;
> 27. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:
> 28. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:25-28)

The word translated as *dominion* in v. 25 is used in the New Testament only in an evil sense. It is used of the power of demons over men in Acts 19:16, and of evil elders lording it over God's people in I Peter 5:3. In the Greek, the word is *katakurieuo*, which combines *kata*, down intensive in meaning, and *kurios*, lord. The word is usually translated as lording over someone, putting them down to exalt oneself. The same verse refers to Gentile *authority*, *kateousiazo*, again, the prefix is *kate* and the implication is an authority whose purpose is to put down people, not to serve God. In v.26, the word *minister* is *diakonos*, but in v. 27, it is *doulos*, *slave*. In v. 28, the word *ministered* and *minister* are again forms of *diakonos*.

Our Lord thus differentiates between two kinds of authorities. *First*, Gentile or ungodly authority aims at putting down people. We can recognize this evil all around us. Authority is equated with power, a boot stamping on a human face forever, as Orwell analyzed it. Our Lord is clear that all ungodly authority or dominion means putting down people, not ministering to them. It is a lording over other men.

In the triune God, authority and power are inseparable but, in fallen man they are not so. Authority in the Biblical sense is hierarchical, i.e., it is sacred rule in terms of God's law. Ungodly authority is elitist: it is grounded on

humanistic considerations. Men can hold what is a godly authority in an ungodly way and on alien premises. Thus, this past week some of us, including Otto Scott, had dinner with a visitor, an "authority" in the Benedictine order. This man believed that Lenin was more Christian than Tsar Nicholas II and expects Lenin to be in heaven; he also said, among many other like absurdities, that St. Paul did not know what he was talking about when he said, "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7; cf. James 4:4). This man was not embarrassed by the fact that he had never read the Bible. He was used to exercising power and lording over others, but he was without any authority in the Biblical sense. He had an institutional, not a theological authority.

This kind of "Gentile" lording over others is common to every area of life and thought, the academic, ecclesiastical, political, scientific, and other fields. Such people hold positions and power, but they lack godly authority. Their pre-eminence is possible because the culture sees authority in the same terms; men may resent being on the receiving end of such behavior, but they long to exercise it. Otto Scott's Irish grandmother cited a proverb, "Put a beggar on horseback, and he'll ride you down." A great many beggars are on horseback.

Long before Orwell, Chingis Khan had been plain-spoken about the goal of his life and his greatest joy: "The greatest pleasure is to vanquish your enemies and chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth and see those dear to them bathed in tears, to ride their horses and clasp to your bosom their wives and daughters."[26] Because power in this sense was so openly a Mongol value, the Mongols contributed little to history other than devastation. They left behind them ruined economies, their rule was systematic and ruthless exploitation.[27]

This Gentile doctrine of power, of lording over peoples, is common to history. The more any state gains in power, the closer it approximates oppression as a goal and the less government it provides. The lust for power is present-oriented, and it is not interested in ministering to a people but in using them to increase a present power.

Second, our Lord says that Christian greatness is in ministering to others; in Paul's words, it means being "members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). Such a doctrine of authority is neither self-centered nor present-oriented. It considers first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33).South Korea's dominant religion is Christianity, and its effects are discernible. J.J. Davis comments,

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[26] James Chambers: *The Devil's Horsemen, The Mongol Invasion of Europe.* (New York, N.Y. Antheneum, 1979). p. 6.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 167f.

> When Kim Kyang Won, secretary general to South Korea's president, was asked about the reasons for his country's progress, he replied, "It's the culture of discipline and postponing immediate satisfaction for the future–even for posterity." Such character traits have encouraged a national investment rate of 25 to 35 percent of the Gross National Product, twice the U.S. rate.[28]

The ungodly seek power; the Christian uses authority to minister to others, to love and to serve in Christ. It is in this context that the many references to love in Scripture must be set. Love is not a substitute plan of salvation for us, but an expression of our life in Christ. In the place of a desire to lord it over others, the Christian seeks to minister as a friend in Christ. Greatness is in terms of service. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

The quest for "Gentile" power, for the ability to lord it over others, is an ungodly urge and a mark of reprobation. Men may build their power structures in the names of Christ, freedom, or the people, but such efforts essentially seek self-glorification. Our Lord says, "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20); to deny the validity of this simple fact is to question Jesus Christ. It is neither humility nor suspended judgment but a challenge to Christ's wisdom.

Third, our Lord declares Himself to be our example of authority and power. He came, not to be served or ministered unto, but to serve, "and to give his life a ransom for many." The point is not that we make our lives an atonement but rather that, even as our Lord ministered to a fallen humanity and created a new one, the Christian race, we are to minister to one another. As members of the new creation, we separate ourselves from the Gentile doctrines of authority and power, which aim at exalting one man and at debasing others.

The disciples were concerned with false authority; this is still true too often of the church. Such a goal leads to the confusion of God's Kingdom and man's. The issues between good and evil are clear-cut. God and Satan cannot be confused. Neither can "Gentile" power ploys and Christian authority.

10. "By What Authority?"

One of the most important texts on authority is Matthew 21:23-27:

> 23. And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

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[28] John Jefferson Davis: *Your Wealth in God's Word.* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1984). p. 37. The quotation from Kim Kyang Won is taken from Louis Kraar, "Make Way for the New Japans," Fortune, August 10, 1981, p. 179.

> 24. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.
> 25. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?
> 26. But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.
> 27. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Some by-pass this text because the issue is the authority of Jesus; because He is the Christ, God incarnate, there is a necessary difference between His authority and any we may have. On the other hand, our Lord Himself places the issue on the human level by raising the question of John the Baptist's authority.

The Greek word for authority which is used in this text is *exousia*, so the matter is a plain question of authority.

This question, "By what authority?", is an important one. Especially in the West, the church has again and again faced the issue, not always wisely but generally fairly well.

Consider, for example, St. Francis of Assisi. Before his death in 1226, Franciscan missions had reached England, France, Germany, Spain, Morocco, Turkey, and Palestine. Less than twenty years after his death, two Franciscans reached the Mogul court. The missionary zeal, dedication, and ability of Francis was remarkable. On the other hand, many semi-heretical under-currents were present in St. Francis and his followers, and the strict Franciscans, called Spiritual Franciscans, were later suppressed. These Spiritual Franciscans were strong adherents of the third age thinking of Joachim of Fiore (1145-1202).

Moreover, Francis was militantly hostile to the ownership of property. As Armstrong noted, "When he found that a house had been built in which to hold a chapter meeting, he was so incensed that the brethren should be involved in holding property that he clambered up to the roof and began ripping off the tiles, only stopping when it was pointed out to him that the house did not belong to the friars."[29]

Greco Roman culture looked back to a golden age when men shared all things. This primitive communism the converts brought into the church and added to the faith. St. Ambrose (c.340-397) was not yet baptized when he was elected a bishop. He was a catechumen who was studying the faith. Because of his importance, both church and state favored his election as bishop of Milan. As bishop, he preached often on the ideal of communism. Monastic

[29] Edward A. Armstrong: *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic.* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, (1973) 1976). p. 24f.

orders early picked up the same classical tradition. This belief caused the church much trouble in the middle ages as different representatives of the orders attacked the church for its wealth and property and held to romantic ideas of a totally mendicant church. The popes finally had to condemn this concept of primitive communism and to deny the validity of this answer to the ills of the world and the church. Much earlier, Francis had gained Vatican approval, but Peter Waldo of Lyon had not, although both had similar doctrines. Fearfulness about what both represented may have been responsible for the guarded attitude of the Vatican. In 1179, Pope Alexander III gave a limited confirmation to the Poor Men of Lyon, and in 1210, Innocent III did the same for the Franciscans. Innocent III also approved the Rules of The Poor Catholics, a branch of the Waldenses.

It is easy for us to be wise at a distance, because we can see the beginning and the development of movements. There are no perfect movements in history other than the work of the triune God. However, even as we become a part of God's movement, we remain fallible and sinning men. We are told to "judge nothing before the time" (I Cor. 4:5); premature judgment can prevent many problems, but it also leads to sterility, because nothing is ventured or undertaken. Suspended judgment can lead to serious problems, but it can also allow for growth. Our Lord does require judgment and declares, "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24), and He says simply, "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). To refuse to judge by results is to deny Christ's wisdom and requirement. Thus, we must recognize that time is a factor here, but that judgment then is a necessity. This presupposes that the effort is a godly one. There was enough in Francis' position to give grounds for suppression *before* he began; there was enough there also to give grounds for rejoicing in the joyful view of creation and its redemption.

To bring the analogy of Franciscanism up to date, the charismatic movement has at times provided grounds for its condemnation or questioning; it has also provided some of the most dramatic instances of faithfulness and power.

Thus, the question to raise of all persons and all movements, new and old, is, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" Authority is transmitted through God-ordained channels in history, but it cannot be limited to these channels. All authority comes from God, and the essential test is the triune God and His law-word. As Isaiah 8:20 declares, "To the law and to testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

It is important for us always to remember that every age is a transient one. We and our era are not the terminal point of history. We must at all times live, move, and have our being in the Lord and in terms of our future in Him. It is in this sense that we are "strangers and pilgrims on earth" (Heb. 11:13); it is God's world and it is God's "promises" and purposes which govern it. We

must seek that country which is the Lord's, His Kingdom (Heb. 11:14-16; Matt. 6:33), and it is to be sought where we are in terms of obedience to His law-word. The patriarchs did not seek it by abandoning this world but by faithfulness to God in this present order.

We cannot bind God to our institutional channels. Neither can we despise the God-ordained institutional channels. For example, the family and the church, among others, have a very important and God-given authority which must be used in faithfulness to God. On the other hand, a lodge, whether it be Masonic or Christian, cannot command us as can the church or the family.

There are, on the other hand, what can be called "intermediate" institutions, such as bar associations, medical and dental associations, unions, and the like. These today are in league with the state to enhance their authority and power. By this alliance, they do increase their power, and yet they undermine their godly authority. These institutions are part of a growing pattern of coercive authority, i.e., of institutions which should be voluntaristic seeking coercion as the means of establishing authority.

Churches meanwhile are all too prone to approve of these "intermediate" institutions and their legalized coercion. The more a society ties authority to coercion, the more commonly does godly authority speak from outside the established channels.

When our Lord was asked, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" He countered with a question, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" This was the critical question. The established authorities had boxed out God's authority. By restricting truth to themselves, they were denying God any other voice than their own. Both John and Jesus lacked institutional training and accreditation. In terms of this, both were denied validation. The leaders said of Jesus, "How knoweth this man letters (or, learning), having never learned?" (John 7:15). Learning was equated with institutional validation. Institutional validation is well and good, but it cannot be an excuse for a "closed shop" as though God cannot speak except where an institutional validation exists. The limitation of authority to institutional channels is a limitation on God. It must be stressed that the institutional channels cannot be set aside, nor their importance denied. To illustrate, we can agree that universities and graduate schools are not all they should be, but we can also recognize their necessity as a means to a disciplined education and a specialized training. At the same time, we cannot for a moment limit learning and wisdom to a university doctorate. Very often, learning and wisdom are more prolific and virile outside rather than in the academic routine. This does not invalidate the academic routine; for the majority of practitioners in the arts, letters, and sciences, it is a necessity. They lack the ability to master a discipline on their own. Within the church, the same is true. Authority is best gained by being under authority,

the authority of God and man. Very few are capable of gaining it by a course of self-discipline and self-submission to godly authorities.

Similarly, God can train some men apart from the institutions; He can call and empower them. However, whether a man works in terms of an institutional mandate, a self-disciplined training or calling, or, like more than a few great saints of history, in terms of God's empowering and discipline, the question of all is the same: "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" The proximate answer may and usually must be an institution, a God-ordained authority. The essential answer in all cases must be God and His law-word. The word of Isaiah still stands: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

11. The Purpose of Authority

The symbolism of keys as authority is an ancient one. Keys unlock wealth, knowledge, property, and more. We use the symbol in a number of ways. A *key* man is a central person, a man of authority. A *keyboard* controls a piano's music; a *keystone* is the uppermost and last-set stone in an arch which locks all the stones together; a *key-note* is a musical concept which has been transferred to other realms, such as a key-note speaker, and so on. The Phi Beta Kappa key is an example of the symbolism of the key in our time.

Our Lord uses this symbolism in speaking of "the keys of the kingdom" in Matthew 16:19. He refers to the keys again, without using the word, in speaking of the key-holders of his day in Matthew 23:13, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." The image is of irresponsible key-holders who lock people out by misusing their authority. The purpose of a key is to unlock doors; these false authorities use their keys to lock everyone out.

According to Sherman E. Johnson, these false authorities "have taken away the key of knowledge." They have done this by making the knowledge of God's law too "difficult and abstruse" for believers, and by forming exclusive brotherhoods of experts to lock out all except themselves.[30]

We have seen that there is an important distinction between elitism and hierarchy. Granted that the idea of hierarchy has gained a bad connotation by its misuse in the hands of some hierarchs and many enemies, the difference still remains. Hierarchy means literally sacred rule, rule by God's law-word, the canon of truth. Elitism is rule by men who believe themselves to be superior. Plato's *Republic* is the classic document of elitist rule and theory.

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30. Sherman E. Johnson, "Matthew," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VII. (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1951). p. 533.

With this in mind, our Lord's comment becomes clearer. A key unlocks, and the keys of the kingdom unlock the doors to the knowledge of, membership in, and service under God in His Kingdom. God's Kingdom is God's law and government. The great Governor is Jesus Christ (Isa. 9:6-7). We are called to be priest-kings in Christ (I Peter 2:5; Rev. 1:6; 20:6, etc.). *This means that the call of all Christians is to authority, each in his appointed place.* The keys of the Kingdom given to the church are thus the keys to knowledge of God's law-word and calling, so that we may all become a royal priesthood. Our calling is thus in part to be *under* authority and to *exercise* authority and government.

As we have seen previously, there are many forms of government. The basic areas are the self-government of the Christian man; the family; the church; the school; our vocation; our society; and the state or civil government, one form of government among many. To equate government with the state is an error, a sin, and an invitation to totalitarianism.

Under these various spheres of government, there are many varieties of government. Tithe agencies can and do establish a variety of governmental agencies dealing with health, education, welfare, and missions.

Godly, hierarchical authority and government works to bring others into their rightful and God-ordained authority and government. Elitism, on the other hand, excludes all but the elite from these spheres.

Our Lord attacked and condemned all who used their authority to shut the door of knowledge and to trivialize God's law. For example, the Pharisees had made it unlawful to kill a flea on the Sabbath, because it meant taking life (Shabb 107b).[31] God's law is very simple: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8). Was a man more holy getting flea bites all day long on the Sabbath instead of killing the flea or fleas? Again, it was unlawful to eat an egg laid on the Sabbath unless it was laid, not by a laying hen but one kept for fattening (Beza, 2b).[32] What relationship is there between this requirement and the Sabbath law of holiness? During the Middle Ages, people who had a baby born on the Sabbath were required to do penance, because it was assumed that child was born on the same day of the week that conception had taken place. Marital sex on the Sabbath constituted unlawful labor. Some Puritans adopted this idea also. One New England pastor, who had punished several couples was mortified when his wife gave birth to twins on the Sabbath. He then confessed publicly that his idea had been erroneous, i.e., the idea that birth and conception took place on the same day of the week. It is unlikely that he changed his definition of laboring on the Sabbath.

These illustrations suffice to show one kind of misuse of the keys. Another is an elitist interpretation of the Bible to make it a closed book to believers.

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31. R. H. Charles: *The Decalogue.* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1923). p. 129.
32. *Idem.*

Symbolic theology and speculative theology are alike guilty of this. They see meanings in texts which are not there and which no ordinary reader can see, because they are imported meanings. Of all such, our Lord's sentence stands: "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Let us remember that this sentence is a part of a long curse pronounced by our Lord on all "blind guides" (Matt. 23:13-39). It is also a judgment pronounced on all who follow them (Matt. 23:36-39).

According to our Lord, the purpose of keys is to unlock doors. The keys of God's Kingdom must be used to unlock the doors of knowledge, vocation, and service for God's people, to make them a royal priesthood, priests and kings. The purpose of authority under God is to develop the authority and governmental powers of all those to whom we minister. The question thus is not merely, How do we govern those under our authority?, but also, How do they govern themselves? Something is wrong with us if we must continually support and finance our own children. Mutual assistance is one thing, continuing dependence is another.

Something is wrong with us if our church members are kept in close subjection and dare not grow on their own. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, aptly described most church members as "mummy Christians." Immediately after conversion, they are mummified to sit lifelessly on a church pew. Apart from that, they have little use. A church with "mummy Christians" is a dead church, and its leaders are Pharisees who shut up the Kingdom of God against men; they neither go in, nor do they allow others to enter. They are elitists.

12. The Source of Authority

The ultimate source of authority can be either God, or it can be the natural order, the universe. Where we locate ultimate authority has profound implications for man and society. Jean-Jacques Rousseau held that men project their man-made laws onto the gods in order to enhance their authority. For him, as *The Social Contract* made clear, the general will of mankind is the sovereign source of law. In terms of this Romantic perspective, men who in previous generations had first looked to God for law, and, second, with the Enlightenment, to reason, now began to look to man's emotional responses for truth and law. Not only was God now eliminated as the source of truth, law, and authority, but the "higher" and civilized aspects of man gave way to the "lower" and less civilized.

Art quickly responded to this new temper. Paul Gaugin, for example, prided himself on being a savage. He stressed his Peruvian blood, although his connection with Peru was aristocratic and Spanish. He delighted in the one or two ancient ex-cannibals he met in the South Pacific and saw "infinite

gentleness" in them and a special natural grace and saintliness. Tahitian child-prostitutes were a joy to him because they were not civilized, whereas Parisian women who were prostitutes disgusted him. The world of capitalism disgusted him as over-civilized. As a child, he had come home with a few colored-glass marbles, for which he had traded his rubber ball. His mother, in horror, exclaimed, "What, you, my son engaging in trade?"[33] As an adult, he grounded his contempt for trade on romantic ideas about the natural life. Because for Gaugin nature was the source of truth and authority, he despised marriage and chastity as pretensions and civilized deformations of life.[34]

Since World War II, such naturalistic thinking has gained in scope and power. In the 1950s, the U.S. Supreme Court began to dismantle Christian elements in the law. The Kinsey Reports on sexuality vindicated homosexuality, bestiality, child molestation, and more on the grounds that they were *natural* acts and hence *normative*, because what is natural is normative. The far-reaching moral and cultural change since World War II is a product of this naturalism. Its roots are centuries deep.

Alfred-Henry Jarry (1873-1907), a French literary figure, worked militantly against all standards and for man's usurpation of God's place and dignity. He was among other things, the enemy of the most elementary good taste, declaring, "Screw good taste."[35] Much earlier, Turgot and others saw genius as the new Logos.[36]

The direction of naturalistic authority is always downward. Freud distinguished between three aspects of the human mind: the id, or pleasure principle; the ego, or the reality principle; and the super-ego, the accumulation of religious, parental, and cultural influences. For Freud, the super-ego was the weakest, and the id the strongest. Thus, the "primitive" in man was seen as most basic and most authoritative. Whether we turn to politics, economics, psychology, education, sociology, or any other discipline, we find the prevalence of naturalistic concepts of origin and authority. The modern world is thus grounded on a dangerous doctrine of authority.

As against this, the Biblical doctrine is clear-cut:

> 18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
>
> 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

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33. Daniel Guerin, editor: Paul Gaugin: *The Writings of a Savage*. (New York, N.Y.: The Viking Press, (1971) 1978). p. 238.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 151ff., 177ff., etc.
35. Roger Shattuck: *The Banquet Years*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1961). p. 237.
36. Frank E. Manuel: *The Prophets of Paris*. (New York, N.Y.: Harper Torch Books, 1962). p. 26.

> 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:18-20)

The importance of these sentences to the missionary mandate of the church has long been recognized, and rightly so. We have also seen their importance to the dominion mandate. There is, however, another aspect which needs strong emphasis. The word translated as *power* is, in the Greek, *exousia*, meaning authority and power. It is translated as *authority* by the Berkeley Version, and *full authority* by Moffatt. This is first of all a declaration of authority, of full and total authority over all things in heaven and in earth. It is an authority shared by the Trinity, and it is to be exercised "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Our access to that authority is only through Jesus Christ, who declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Hence, our Lord declares that this full authority is given to Him.

Since it is total authority, it includes every sphere of life and thought. Nothing in heaven nor in earth exists outside of Christ's authority. The state can claim no independent jurisdiction, nor can the arts and sciences. The church, school, and family must be under Him.

The missionary commission and the dominion mandate alike rest on this fact of authority. Hence the order to "teach all nations."

Authority is an inescapable fact; man's perspective on himself and his world is governed by his doctrine of authority. To be in communion with authority, power, and truth is essential to life. The Romantic movement looked to nature first and then to man's urges for truth and communion. William Wordsworth aptly titled a poem, "The Tables Turned." He indeed witnessed to a reversal of the older idea that wisdom came from God; he also rejected reason, and the accumulated lore of reason. He summoned his readers to abandon books for Nature; birds were the better preachers and teachers. True blessing and "spontaneous wisdom" as well as truth come from Nature.

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> may teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can.
>
> Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
> Our meddling intellect
> Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:–
> We murder to dissect.
>
> Enough of Science and of Art;
> Close up those barren leaves;
> Come forth, and bring with you a heart
> That watches and receives.

"One impulse" from Nature was now the source of more revelation "of moral evil and of good" than all that religion and philosophy had previously taught. As Hallowell noted, "Communion with nature replaces communion with God as the source of inspiration and true enlightenment."[37]

The next step for naturalistic man was communion with his own id, or pleasure principle. Authority was democratized.

Our Lord declares that He is the source of all authority, over all things in heaven and in earth. We are ordered to teach His total word to all nations and to command their obedience to Christ. *If and when we do this*, we know communion with Him. Then He is with us "alway, even unto the end of the world." That promise is inseparable from what proceeds it, His command and the recognition of His authority.

13. Authority, Primary and Secondary

The word *authority* has been in disrepute for many generations. Man, having rebelled against God's authority, is not inclined to respect authority in any sphere. The liberal Anglican Bishop Hoadley said, about two centuries ago,

> Authority is the greatest and most irreconcilable enemy to truth and argument that this world ever furnished. All the sophistry–all the color of plausibility–all the artifice and cunning of the subtlest disputer in the world may be laid open and turned to the advantage of that very truth which they are designed to hide; but against authority there is no defense.[38]

What Hoadley had reference to was not true authority but rather the authoritarian pretensions of some men and institutions.

The question of authority has never been a simple one in church history. Two extremes have plagued the church. *First*, we have the insistence on the authentication of God's word and authority by the church. The danger in this position is that there is a tendency to exalt the church to an unduly central position. Our Lord refers to this fact indirectly in the Sermon on the Mount. In forbidding vain oaths, He cites as examples of false swearing an oath by heaven, or Jerusalem, among others. (That He does *not* condemn legitimate oaths is apparent in His command, "perform unto the Lord thine oaths." (Matt. 5:33) It is *forswearing*, *epiorkeo*, swearing falsely, that He condemns. God is greater than Jerusalem, or heaven and earth, or the church; nothing can be above God to validate His self-authenticating word.

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[37] John H. Hallowell: *Main Currents in Modern Political Thought*. (New York, N.Y.: Henry Holt, (1950) 1959). p. 167.

[38] Cited in "Authority," in John McClintock and James Strong: *Cyclopaedia of Biblical and Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. I. (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1895). p. 553.

Second, others have insisted on an authentication based on their religious experience. Like authentication by the church, this too has an implicit humanism in it. Authentication is placed within man or an institution in which men function.

There is, however, another consideration. To a degree, both of these approaches have a measure of truth to them, if we see them, not as examples of authentication or verification at work, but as evidences of submission to authority. St Paul, in Romans 1:18-23, speaks of the fact that all men without exception know the truth of God. The things visible and invisible are known in all their being, because God made them, and all men have God's truth coded into their total being. Because of their sin, they "hold" this truth in unrighteousness or injustice. The word translated as *hold* is *katecho*, to hold down, restrain or suppress. The authority of God and our knowledge of Him, is inescapable knowledge, according to Paul; no man can escape it, although men will seek to hold it down or to war against it. God's revelation and authority are self-authenticating; the church and the individual can only point to Him. Some medieval church paintings show various prophets and apostles pointing either to the Bible or to Christ as the ultimate and essential authority.

Secondary authorities are very real; they are God-ordained, and they are important. However, whenever the secondary authorities, church, state, family, or the like, gain too much authority, then the false center begins to warp man and society. Then too authority begins to break down, because the ultimate source of authority is not given the priority.

Our Lord deals with this problem bluntly. Secondary authorities in His day were "the traditions of the elders," and these had become in practice authoritative and governing over men. According to Matthew 15:1-9,

> 1. Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,
> 2. Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
> 3. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?
> 4. For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.
> 5. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me:
> 6. And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.
> 7. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,
> 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 do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Our Lord calls this weight given to tradition a transgression of the commandment of God; it goes hand in hand with vain worship, and these

men, while claiming to be near were at a distance from God. Paul, in Galatians 5:4, declares that a trust in the Pharisaic belief in justification by law renders Christ's atonement of "no affect" for them. Again and again, our Lord strongly condemns this emphasis on tradition.

According to the rabbis, their tradition came from an oral transmission of revealed truth by Moses. There was thus for them the written law and the oral law, tradition. For Roman Catholic theologians, a like view of tradition prevails. The source of tradition is held to be the oral teaching of Christ or the Apostles, and the organ of tradition is a *magisterium*, or teaching authority. Protestants dislike the word tradition, but they have developed their own concepts of it; it is called Presbyterian law, the Baptist way, Lutheranism, Congregationalism, and so on. Like every doctrine of tradition, it is technically subordinate to Scripture but in practice is the day by day governing word.

As a result, there is a conflict between the primary authority of the triune God and the secondary authorities of men. Thus, to go back to the Pharisees, Finkelstein wrote some years ago in their defense. Believing them to be much maligned by the New Testament, he documents their faith and character in some detail. Clearly, as compared to others of their day, the Pharisees were morally superior to the Gentiles and to most Jews. They were a learned and zealous group of intellectuals and leaders. All the same, our Lord's condemnation was fully true. According to Finkelstein, the Oral Law or tradition was held by the Pharisees to be "equally authoritative with the Written Law."[39] Finkelstein thus gives us evidence of the problem. Elsewhere, we find stronger evidence in the sources. *Pirke Aboth*, The Sayings of the Fathers, is a rich summation of Judaic wisdom; it is one of the sixty-three tractates of the Mishna. It is both a pleasure to read, and a sad document, because of its Phariseeism. The chief Rabbi of the British Empire in 1945 wrote a commentary to a new printing of *Pirke Aboth*. He noted that the word *Torah* meant not only the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch), but also the Oral Tradition and "the whole body of religious truth, study and practice."[40] He added, "Tradition is the key-word in the Jewish religious system."[41] Tradition has always had a crippling effect, in that it makes an appeal against authority more difficult. The appeal to God's enscriptured word is to a clear and written statement, whereas Tradition is nebulous and harder to define. One reason for the rise and appeal of modernism in Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism has been its revolt against tradition.

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[39] Louis Finkelstein: *The Pharisees*, vol. I. (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, (1938) Third edition, revised 1962). p. 261.

[40] Joseph H. Hertz, translator, editor: *Sayings of the Fathers, or Pirke Aboth*. (New York, N.Y.: Behrman House, 1945). p. 13.

[41] *Idem.*

God and His word are the eternal present as well as the future, whereas tradition enshrines a nebulous past.

The reliance of secondary authorities on tradition is a serious one. Whether it is the Jewish Oral Law, the Catholic Tradition, the Lutheran way, the Baptist way, or Presbyterian law, it is a means of continuity and preservation. The essence of Biblical faith, however, is continual reformation in terms of God's word and Christ's commission. It is not without significance that the role of laymen in making reformation in the church possible has been greatly neglected. Charles T. Wood, in an important study of medieval life, observed:

> Diverse in their origins as these movements for reform may have been, they displayed striking similarities, all of which shed light both on the problems and mentality of the age. Nearly every monastery, for example, owed its foundation or reformation not to the zeal of monks, but rather to the interest and encouragement of some lay patron such as Duke William VI of Aquitane, who granted Cluny's original charter. From the universality of this phenomenon the extent to which the laity had succeeded in seizing control of the church is apparent.[42]

Note that Wood speaks of "the universality of this phenomenon," although we seldom read about this. Wood notes that reforming laymen did not retain control and authority over the abbeys they founded. Reform in the church, Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox, has often come from laymen, or from clergymen who break with secondary authorities in favor of a return to primary authority.

This is true in other areas as well. In the world of the university, as well as professional schools, reform comes as a rebuke to an existing order. Civil governments have almost always been reformed very reluctantly and as a result of social pressures.

Our age is an era of specialization and of "experts." As a result, many men abdicate their responsibilities in many spheres to these elite experts. This is no less true in the church than elsewhere, although now healthy counter-currents are in strong evidence.

In brief, human authorities tend to make idols of themselves, their institutions, and their works. Our Lord accused the scribes and Pharisees of making the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition. He was unsparing in His condemnation of these leaders. Man is a sinner; the Christian, however much sanctified, is not free of sin, and for him to give weight to the human factor as against the law-word of God is to make an idol of himself and his handiwork. Human authoritarianism is an enemy to God's authority. When God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3), He most certainly includes us and our works among the false gods which are forbidden.

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[42] Charles T. Wood: *The Quest for Eternity, Medieval Manners and Morals.* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday (1970) 1971). p. 81.

Paul says, of the ministers of Christ,

> 1. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
> 2. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (I Cor. 4:1-2)

14. The Cherubim

One of the characteristics of fallen man is that things tend to depreciate in his hands. This is no less true of *words*. Words commonly lose their better meaning for cheapened connotations. An example of this from Scripture is cherub and cherubim (the plural). Our image of a cherub in popular art is of a baby-like angel of a harmless and meaningless nature. In the Bible, we first meet cherubim in Genesis 3:24, when God places cherubim "and a flaming sword" to keep fallen man out of the Garden of Eden. In I Samuel 4:4 God is spoken of as enthroned on the cherubim. Pagan antiquity knew the cherubim as symbols of authority and power, and "archaeological excavations have uncovered figurines of Mesopotamian and Canaanite gods represented as kings seated upon thrones flanked by cherubim."[43] Moreover, "The cherub is associated with gods or kings as a symbol of power and majesty."[44]

The cherubim guarded the tree of life (Gen. 3:24) after man's fall. Golden cherubim were carved at either end of the mercy seat, God's throne, to protect the Holy of Holies and to represent the power of God and His government (Ex. 25:18-22; Heb. 9:5; Ezekiel 10). Representations of the cherubim were embroidered on the curtains and veil of the tabernacle and on the walls of the temple (Ex. 26:31; II Chron. 3:7; etc.)

The symbolic use of cherubim in antiquity tells us how the pagans understood their meaning. Ezekiel's words concerning the king of Tyre were thus understandable to that monarch and to others:

> 11. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
> 12. Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
> 13. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.
> 14. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

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[43] Gonzalo Baez-Camargo: *Archaelogical Commentary on the Bible.* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984). p. 78.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

> 15. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.
> 16. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.
> 17. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.
> 18. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.
> 19. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more. (Ezek. 28:11-19)

The sardius is probably the ruby, sard or carnelian; the carbuncle was a green stone, as was the beryl; the jasper was either modern jasper or nephrite, green jade. The stones of fire on which the king walked represented power, God-like authority, since God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

The King of Tyre is compared to Adam in the Garden of Eden. More than Adam, he had great power in a developed and civilized context, surrounded by wealth, the great Phoenician trading enterprises, and vast power. In a sense, the King of Tyre had perfection, everything men could dream of; his life sealed up the sum of available wisdom, beauty, power, and wealth. He represented a human ideal. He sat "upon the holy mountain of God," i.e., at a pinnacle of power from God by His providence.

To have power and to have a rich and favored place in life is to inhabit God's sanctuary. It is to be like one of the cherubim, near to God and His power and authority.[45]

The importance of this prophecy should by now be obvious. Wherever great power is to be found, we must see it as due to God's providence, whether as a blessing, or as a means of judgment on an era. The concentration of wealth, authority, and a general prosperity in a civilization is to be seen as making it into a new Garden of Eden. Ezekiel's language tells us of God's intentions for Eden and the world. The goal is a glorious and prosperous world paradise under God. The purpose of godly authority is to develop such an order.

Keil said,

> ...the king of Tyre is called a cherub, because as an anointed king, he covered or overshadowed a sanctuary, like the cherubim upon the ark of the covenant. What this sanctuary was is evident from the remarks

[45] Patrick Fairbairn: *An Exposition of Ezekiel.* (Evansville, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1960). pp. 310-316.

> already made at ver. 2 concerning the divine seat of the king. If the "seat of God," upon which the king of Tyre sits, is to be understood as signifying the state of Tyre, then the sanctuary which he covered or overshadowed as a cherub will also be the Tyrian state...[46]

The cherubim signify God's power and authority. Wherever in history prosperity and authority come into focus, we have God's cherubim as it were covering and providing power to the people. For those who use their power apart from God, judgment follows, and the downfall of the people, rulers and state, as of Tyre. It is easy to think of recent examples of Ezekiel's Tyre; certainly Great Britain and the United States come to mind, and hence the necessity of this prophetic warning to our generation.

The meaning of *cherub* is important for us, therefore. Some scholars have expressed uncertainty about its derivation and meaning. Shalom M. Paul of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University holds that it comes from the Akkadian word for "to pray" or "to bless."[47] As we have previously seen, our Lord declares that authority and power must be exercised as a ministry of service. The cherubim, symbolizing and representing in their persons the power and authority of God, are at the same time a blessing. Paul in Hebrews 9:5, in speaking of the Holy of Holies, says, "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing (or, over-shadowing) the mercy seat." The cherubim, setting forth the power of God and His sovereign authority, are also closely tied to the mercy seat of God.

God is repeatedly described as He who dwells between the cherubim (Num. 7:89; I Sam. 4:4; II Sam. 6:2; II Kings 19:15; I Chron. 13:6; Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16, etc.). This sets forth the majesty, glory, and power of God, as in Psalm 99:1, "The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims: let the earth be moved." In Psalm 80:1-3, the cherubim are a reminder to us of God's mercy, and the entire psalm is a prayer for God's mercy and deliverance:

> 1. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.
>
> 2. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.
>
> 3. Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

This psalm refers to the captivity of the northern kingdom, Israel. In the exodus, the three tribes named in verse 2 led the march. The Lord is now summoned to lead Israel again as its Good Shepherd. He is the One who

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46. Carl Friedrick Keil: *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, reprint, n.d.). p. 413f.

47. Shelom M. Paul, "Cherub," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. V. (New York; N.Y.: Macmillan and Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing Company, 1971). p. 399.

dwells between the cherubim, both in majesty and mercy, and He is now the subject of prayer, an appeal to save Israel.

In summary, God regards a wealthy and prosperous country as a partial fulfillment of the Garden of Eden. Its rulers are compared to cherubim as well as to Adam. Prayer involves and in its essence is intercession. The purpose of authority is godly rule and the intercession of mercy. Authority must also bring judgment, as did the cherubim in Eden and in Ezekiel's Jerusalem. However, authority must also be a blessing to all those under it, or else God's judgment will be upon it. If the King of Tyre, who was not a believer, was judged a false cherubim, and He and his people destroyed, how much more so peoples and nations which have been Christian?

All authorities, husbands, employers, teachers, civil rulers, churchmen, and others have thus a duty to intercede with God for those under them, and to be a blessing to them. The fact that authorities do not think of their role as involving either prayer or blessing tells us how far astray we are.

It should be noted that Ezekiel makes a comparison between the trees of Eden, and Eden, with pharaoh and Egypt (Ezek. 31:18). All authorities in every sphere are accountable to God.

This imagery and use of Eden tells us also much about God's purposes concerning the Garden of Eden and paradise restored. The wealth and prosperity of this world, as they are brought into submission to God's Kingdom and glory, give us the new Eden of God.

15. The Seraphim

The seraphim appear only once in the Bible, but in a very important context. Isaiah, in Isaiah 6:1-13, describes his vision in the Temple of "the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). The word here translated as *Temple* can also be rendered as *Palace*. It is a palace vision of the Throne of the universe, and both J. A. Alexander and E. J. Young so translated the word.

The seraphim surround the throne and are above it, a notable fact. They are human in appearance except that they are described as having six wings each. They are clearly *throne attendants*. This fact tells us much about them. We are not accustomed to seeing throne attendants as more than decorative in our time, because kings themselves are usually decorative and severely limited in their powers. However, historically any throne attendant exercised great powers for the ruler and hence was a person of very considerable authority.

Throne attendants always stood on a lower level than the king. To this day, Japanese protocol is fairly strict on this point. At times, diplomatic problems have been created by the presence of very tall Americans being brought before the emperor of Japan. One analyst stated that Japanese-American relations prior to World War II would have been made a bit easier if short ambassadors had been sent to Japan.

In Isaiah's vision, God sits on the throne, whereas the seraphim stand *above* the throne. R. K. Harrison says of the seraphim that they are an order of angelic beings responsible for guardianship and worship. They also exercised "an atoning ministry," as in Isaiah 6:5-7.[48] R. B. Y. Scott read Isaiah 6:2, as "Above him (God) stood the seraphim," but saw it as meaning "attendant on him." He saw the seraphim as symbolizing lightning, "as the cherub symbolized the thundercloud (cf. Ps. 18:8-15)."[49] J. A. Alexander held that "standing above" could refer to both God and the throne; He saw the seraphim as "ministers," i.e., as ministers of state, for the government of all creation.[50]

An important fact, however, is not noted, The cherubim are portrayed as *under* God. God rides upon the cherub (Ps. 18:10), and He is enthroned on the cherubim (I Sam. 4:4; Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16; etc.); God's throne has the cherubim on either side, so that He is said to be either between the cherubim or over them. On the other hand, the seraphim are *above* God and the throne, a significant difference. The seraphim would thus appear to have at least a higher function than the cherubim. Moreover, while even an ungodly king such as Tyre's ruler could be compared to the cherubim, the appearance of the seraphim *and their station* seems to preclude any comparison to man.

The seraphim in Isaiah 6 give an antiphonal praise and worship of God. "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (v. 3). Both Calvin,[51] and E. J. Young translate the second part of the seraphs' cry, "the fullness of all the earth is his glory."[52] Young, calling attention to the distinction in theology between God's essential glory, and His glory as displayed in the created universe, noted:

> What is God's glory? It is the revelation of His attributes. By regarding the universe which He has created we behold His glory, His perfection and His attributes. The revelation of God in the created universe, His declaration glory, is sufficient to convince men of God's holiness, righteousness and justice as well as of His almighty power, so that man is without excuse.[53]

Calvin's blunt comment is also of interest:

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48. R. K. Harrison, "Seraphim," in J.D. Douglas, editor: *The New Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, (1962) 1973). p. 1161.
49. R. B. Y. Scott, "Isaiah," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, V. (New York, N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1956). p. 208.
50. Joseph Addison Alexander: *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, (1846) 1953). p. 146.
51. John Calvin: *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958). p. 205.
52. Edward J. Young: *The Book of Isaiah*, I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). p. 231.
53. *Ibid.*, I, p. 245.

> Literally it is, *the fullness of the whole earth*, which might be understood to refer to the fruits, and animals, and manifold riches with which God has enriched the earth, and might convey this meaning, that in the ornaments and great variety of furniture of the world the glory of God shines, because they are so many proofs of a father's love. But the more simple and natural interpretation is, that *the glory of God fills the whole earth*, or is spread through every region of the earth. There is also, I think, an implied contrast, by which he puts down the foolish boasting of the Jews, who thought that the glory of God was nowhere to be seen but among themselves, and wished to have it shut up within their own temple. But Isaiah shows that it is so far from being confined to so narrow limits, that it fills *the whole earth*. And to this agrees the prophecy which immediately follows (ver. 10,) about the blinding of the Jews, which opened up for the Gentiles admission into the Church of God; for they occupied that place which the Jews had forsaken and left empty.[54]

The praise of God thus calls attention to the transcendent and total power and authority of God, the Creator-King.

The purification and atonement affected by the seraphim is not the exercise of any independent function. As attendants to the throne, they must make acceptable to the throne anyone who draws near, or who is to be commissioned and sent forth.

The commission to Isaiah is set forth in Isaiah 6:9-13, a commission to proclaim judgment, captivity, and then the restoration of a remnant.

Thus, the seraphim prepare Isaiah for a ministry of judgment by first taking away his iniquity and purging his sin. As we have seen, the cherubim have a like ministry of judgment and blessing. There is however, a difference in their station, the cherubim beside or under the throne, and the seraphim above it.

The role of the cherubim is oriented to *history, to man*. They guarded the gates of paradise when man fell, to protect Eden from sinful man. However, under their power and authority, man and history move to paradise regained, a new world under God. The authority of the cherubim is history oriented; it is throne authority exercised to develop the meaning of God's covenant with man. The cherubim thus are providential powers, and men who exercise God-ordained authority are therefore compared to the cherubim.

The seraphim stand above the throne. Their focus is God-centered and theocratic in an eternal sense. The King of Tyre and other rulers and powers were, without faith, compared to the cherubim because of their office and opportunities. No man is compared to the seraphim, and even Isaiah, God's prophet, must be purged and his iniquity taken away when he stands before the throne; this the seraphim do. All men with authority must work as God's cherubim to exercise dominion and to provide judgment and blessings in God's Kingdom and creation. The seraphim symbolize and represent God's

54. Calvin, *op. cit.*, I, p. 205f.

authority in its essence, total in its holiness and visible in the fullness of the whole earth. God's throne represents His absolute rule over all creation, and the fact that the seraphim stand above the throne tells us that the focus of all authority is above all creation and above every other creature.

Isaiah, seeing the throne, and God upon it, cries out, "I am *undone,*" meaning, I am reduced to silence or to death. The fact of his sin, and his membership in a fallen humanity, renders Isaiah a dead man, i.e., sentenced to death, before God. By the authority of God, and with fire from the altar, Isaiah is cleansed; he finds atonement. The regenerating power of God comes out of the very nature, being, and authority of God. The generating power of God which alone gives men the power to exercise valid and faithful authority comes from the highest point in the government of God, from above the throne. It is from "out of the throne" that judgment proceeds (Rev. 4:5). It is from above the throne, at the highest rank of authority and power, that atonement and regeneration proceed. Atonement and regeneration manifest God's grace, authority and power. As Paul declares, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

16. Satanic Authority

When our Lord, on the eve of His arrest, went to the Mount of Olives, the authorities came to arrest Him. According to Luke 22:52-53,

> 52. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?
> 53. When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

The word translated as *power* is *exousia*, authority. Jesus declares that Satan has here a legitimate authority for his action against Jesus Christ. Again, in Colossians 1:13,14 Paul gives thanks to God the Father:

> 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:
> 14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

The word translated from the Greek in v. 13 as *power* is again *exousias*, authority, "the authority of the Darkness." Paul's reference is to an active and actual realm of law in a lawless sense, to power, and to authority, to a kingdom. This is the kingdom of the Darkness or of Satan. From this realm, Christ by His atonement has *translated* us, *metestesen*, has changed or removed us to a new standing before God (methistemi, from *meta*, change, and *histemi*, to cause to stand). Christ's atonement thus gives us a new standing. We are no longer citizens of the Kingdom of Satan but members and

citizens of the Kingdom of Christ. As Paul declares in Ephesians 2:19, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

This is a fact of great importance, i.e., the legitimate authority of Satan and his kingdom of darkness. We live in it, and around it, and we need to understand its authority. Peter and the apostles declare, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and yet at critical points they were both respectful of evil authorities while standing firmly on their God-given ground. There is a very real line of division here, but a fine one.

We have clearly the fact of two realms, the Kingdom of God or of Christ, and the Kingdom of Man, Satan, or the creature. The premise of the Kingdom of Darkness is summed up in Genesis 3:5, every man as his own god, knowing or determining good and evil for himself. The creature is thus his own god and therefore his own law-maker. This is a realm of revolution against God and of total warfare against all that God is and says. The essence of sin is that it is against God. As John tells us, "sin is the transgressing of the law," God's law (I John 3:4). The appeal of illicit sexuality is its sinfulness; the prevalence of homosexuality and incest, as well as the growing incidence of bestiality, indicate to what extent men will drive themselves in their defiance of God.

The premise of the Kingdom of Christ is, as Paul says, our change and removal to that realm by Christ's redeeming blood atonement and the forgiveness of sins. Our life premises in that realm are set forth by our Lord in His answers to Satan's repetition to Him of the temptation to Adam and Eve:

> Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matt. 4:4)
>
> Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (Matt. 4:7)
>
> Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Matt. 4:10)

Each of these statements is preceded by the words, "It is written", so that God the Son asserts the binding and governing nature of God's law-word, the Bible. We have thus two realms, each with its own premise for law. On the one hand, man is his own lawmaker, and, on the other, only God can be the source of law. Our Lord identifies worship with obedience to God's every word. The word translated as worship is *proskuneo*, from *pros*, towards, and *kuneo*, to kiss, i.e., to do homage, to submit to, obey, and revere. The meaning of worship is best set forth in Psalm 2:10-12; it means hearing the Son, serving Him, rejoicing in Him, trusting Him, and prostrating ourselves under His authority.

God requires that all men worship God the Son. Philippians 2:9-11 makes clear that all men shall bow before Him and acknowledge His authority, either as His people, or as their judge.

We have thus two realms in history, the realm of fallen humanity, and the realm of the new humanity in Christ. Scripture makes clear that God gives *authority* to the realm of Satan. We are told that we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29), but we are also warned against being rebellious and revolutionary (I Cor. 7:20,24; etc.); yet we are not to be the servants of men (I Cor. 7:23). Our way is now regeneration, not revolution (Col. 1:13,14).

William Blake (1757-1827), whose mind clung to every whisp of heresy and nonsense which came his way, sometimes was capable of remarkable insight. In one stray sentence, he observed, "I saw the finger of God go forth, giving a body to falsehood that it may be cast off forever." This is in line with Hebrews 12:18-29, where we are told that God shakes the nations and peoples throughout history so that only that which cannot be shaken may remain. God permits the fall, He gives permission to man's Towers of Babel, and He allows them to build their false Edens, so that evil develops into all its implications. Many texts speaks of the progression of sin. Thus, James 1:13-15 tells us,

> 13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:
>
> 14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.
>
> 15. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Man insists on seeing sin as a possibility; God allows man to see its conclusion, death. In this progression towards death, men are forced to see the conclusion of their faith, of their adoption of the tempter's premise (Gen. 3:5).

In brief, the very premise of sin, of man's rebellion against God, is given authority by the Lord. The authority or "power of darkness" is allowed by God to exercise an authorized sway in history. We see clearly the widespread scope of that realm. In economics, politics, education, law, religion, in the arts, sciences, and more, men exercise *exousia*, power and authority, by God's legitimation and permission. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). To the degree that they exercise authority in contempt of God and cease to be a terror to the evil (Rom. 13:3), to that degree they move towards and into death. Psalm 1 draws the parallel clearly between the way and counsel of the ungodly and the way of the Lord and His law. Of the man whose "delight is in the law of the LORD" we are told, "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." On the other hand, "the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. 1:2,3,6). In Psalm 2, this same premise is applied to the nations.

In brief, Satanic authority is real, but its logical end is death. The authorities of our time, insofar as they depart from God's law-word, have adopted a course whose end is death.

17. Authority, Justice, and Men

God in His law makes clear the untrustworthiness of man. Corroboration of evidence is necessary for conviction (Deut. 17:6-7). This law is very strongly stressed (Num. 35:30; Deut. 19:15 applies this test to any crime). The New Testament is also emphatic on this point (Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; II Cor. 13:1; I Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28). No man, however important, can by his testimony convict another unless his testimony is clearly confirmed.

In the sphere of authority, the same distrust of an uncorroborated authority is stressed. There was a system of appeals from the local elder, to one above him, on up to Moses, and, later, the governing judge or the king (Ex. 18:21-23; Num. 11:16-17; Deut. 1:12-17). This was not all. In all difficult cases, where there were questions about the proper application of God's law, three men or more had to sit in court to adjudicate the case:

> 8. If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose;
> 9. And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment:
> 10. And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee:
> 11. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left.
> 12. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.
> 13. And all the people shall hear, and do no more presumptuously. (Deut. 17:8-13)

This law is the continuation of Deuteronomy 16:18-20, which speaks of the courts of law. In 17:8, certain types of cases are specified as typical problem cases for such an appeal to the higher court of Deuteronomy 17:8-13. "Between blood and blood" means a decision as to whether a crime is manslaughter or premeditated murder. Between plea and stroke (Ex. 22:1-15) refers mainly to matters of theft, embezzlement, and restitution, and also personal injury (Ex. 21:18-34). The decisions of this supreme court are final, and failure to obey is punished by death.

This appellate court must include priests, levites, and judges. The Levites are instructors, educators, and God's law is basic to true education (Deut. 33:10). According to Ezekiel 44:15,23,24, the priests have a like function; together with the Levites, they are to function as a part of the court, to set forth the laws of God which apply to the case at hand (cf. Mal.2:7).

A modern term for this dilution of authority on the human level is checks and balances. However, the checks and balances provided by God's law are more thorough than those of the U. S. Constitution. Not only is there a system of appeals, but there is also the fact that God's law is applied to the particulars of the case. The judges are assumed to be covenant men; all the same, theological experts in God's law must be in the court, presiding together with the civil judges. In the history of the application of Deuteronomy 17:8-13 in Israel, it is worthy of note that disobedience to the ruling of the religious leaders was very serious. In fact, it was later ruled that disobedience to the words of the scribes was more serious than disobedience to the words of the Torah.[55] In time, Psalm 119:126, which declares, "It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law," was taken to mean, "It is time to do something for the Lord, so make void the Torah." The plain meaning of God's law was regularly set aside because the Sanhedrin came to maintain that circumstances could require correcting or altering God's law. At the same time, as Horowitz noted, it was held that God's law, the Torah, was unchangeable and that there could be no addition or subtraction from it.[56]

This development not only invoked the wrath of Jesus Christ but constituted the heart of Phariseeism. It also pinpoints the fallibility of human authorities. We have repeatedly had like developments in history, as witness many decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court. Thus, God, in Deuteronomy 17:8-13, does not give us an infallible means of preventing injustice. What we do get is a dilution of human authority in order to protect the judicial process.

We have thus a *first* conclusion that must be faced, namely, that not even a God-provided law can prevent injustice. On the human level, there is no infallible justice. Man, being a sinner, perverts the best possible law structure to suit his purposes. The Sanhedrin took the provision of God's law and turned it upside down, so that man's word was given priority over God's word. The rationale was that men were on the scene, knew more, and were more flexible. The yardstick of law was made into rubber, and a rubber yardstick is no valid measure at all.

Having said this, however, we must add, *second*, that the history of Israel is without equal in antiquity. Despite the dereliction, periodically and then finally, of the Sanhedrin, Israel provided a longer history of justice than any

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55. George Horowitz: *The Spirit of Jewish Law*. (New York, N.Y.: Central Book Company, 1973). p. 91.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 94ff.

other nation of antiquity. In a sea of evil, it was still an asylum of justice. The fact of God's law provided a major brake against sin. The Sanhedrin meeting which condemned Jesus apparently had a majority present, but it was an illegal session; however, pragmatism had for some time replaced legality. All the same, when the apostles were brought before these authorities, Gamaliel represented a temper of judicious restraint and legality (Acts 5:33-40). Thus, the fact of an infallible standard, God's law, set Israel apart and gave it a history of some justice as against the constant tyrannies of pagan states.

Third, the fact of the law meant, as we have seen, a form of checks and balances. Priests, Levites, and civil judges had to be a part of the appellate court, so that the perspective of God's law could be maximized. There was, however, much more. Over the centuries, the prophets served as a major check. By proclaiming God's law and inditing transgressors thereof both in and out of power and authority, the prophets required the people to remember the priority of justice under God's law. The defense of the covenant and the law of the covenant was the prophetic task. Wherever the prophetic calling is operative, there too the people will resist every violation of God's justice. However, where priests and prophets go astray, there too will the people. Isaiah 28:7-8 gives us an indictment of false priests and prophets alike:

> 7. But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision they stumble in judgment.
> 8. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

The very people who should lead the nation in righteousness or justice are filthy pigs. The tables which should be places to eat to keep strong in God's service are tables of filth. Jeremiah makes a like indictment: both prophet and priest are profane; instead of justice, they manifest sin in God's very house (Jer. 23:11).

Instead of leading the people in terms of God's law word, these false leaders are giving the people what they want. Micah gives us a telling description of this:

> If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people. (Micah 2:11)
> The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us. (Micah 3:11)

The leaders are mercenary and they put their advancement above God's justice; at the same time, they invoke God's name and the covenant as their

security from evil. However, such evil authorities flourish because the people want them. God told Isaiah,

> 9. That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:
> 10. Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. (Isa. 30:9-10)

In brief, God says that a people will get the kind of leaders they want. They will demand and only approve of men who speak smooth things and prophesy and promise lies. In fact, says Micah 2:11, if an evil-spirited man declares that salvation lies in drunkenness, "He shall even be the prophet of this people." The authority and leadership people demand is in conformity to their character. The authority exercised by our presidents reflects the weaknesses of American character, and the same is true of every country in the world.

A people will be ruled by an authority which conforms to their faith and character. Attempts at legislative and judicial reform without a like reform of the faith of the people are futile.

God's appellate court system is not designed to eliminate sin; rather, *it offers justice to a people who want justice.* The whole world today is plagued with injustice because people do not want justice, except where it will serve their interests. People may agree that justice is good, but they are more comfortable without it. People are ready enough to condemn debt, and to admit the personal and social evils of long-term debt, but they will still justify their long-term borrowing. At every point, men in effect say, let the world be good so that I might be more free and secure in my sin and selfishness.

If people today truly wanted justice, we would have it. If they wanted a godly president, we would have one. All over the world, however, we see only the evil leaders as strong ones. Apparently, what men least desire is a just social order because it requires that they first of all be just.

God's law provides true justice and authority for those peoples who want it.

18. The Power to Kill

In the Song of Moses, God declares Himself the Creator, Judge, and Avenger. In a key sentence, He says, "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand" (Deut. 32:39). The Lord declares, "there is no god with me;" He does not share His sovereignty with any other power. Through Isaiah, centuries later, this same fact is stressed: "I am the LORD; and there is none else" (Isa. 45:18). "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me" (Isa. 45:21).

This emphasis is a necessary one, because original sin is man's claim to be his own god, knowing or determining good and evil for himself (Gen. 3:5).

Man's every sinful act has this claim as its presupposition. Man says in his sin, my will be done, not God's.

Humanism is the logical development of this presupposition, and the pagan and modern states represent the institutionalization of man's passion to be his own god.

However, despite all man's efforts to create life scientifically, this aspect of man's sinful drive remains unfulfilled. God says, "I kill, and I make alive," and the scientific humanist dreams of creating life. The humanistic state plays god by killing. The more openly and systematically humanistic a state, as witness France during the French Revolution, the Soviet Union, Red China, and other like states, the more murderous it is. George Orwell, in *1984*, wrote of the humanistic state's goal in gaining power, the exercise of power to stamp the boot of power onto man's face. Refugees from the Soviet Union have written about the delight of their torturers in inflicting pain on their victims. This is man's version of playing god.

In Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Act IV, scene 1), the Earl of Gloster says,

> As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,–
> They kill us for their sport.

This, very plainly, gives us a common idea of divine power as fallen man sees it. Isabella, in *Measure for Measure* (Act II, scene II), said of man's dreams of power,

> Could great men thunder
> As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
> For every pelting petty officer
> Would use his heaven for thunder: nothing but thunder.–
> Merciful heaven!
> Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
> Splitt'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
> Than the soft myrtle;–but man, proud man!
> Dress'd in a little brief authority,–
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
> His glassy essence,–like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As make the angels weep.

In practice, fallen man plays at being god by killing, or, at least, by exercising obscene and ungodly power over others. Scatology is an example of this. The word scatology comes from the Greek, *skatos*, dung, and scatology is filth and obscene language which center on excrement. In recent years, some presidents as well as other men in high places have been marked by a strongly scatological speech. The meaning of this is a very obvious one. One form of abusive language used by guttersnipes in high and low places speaks of defecating or urinating on others. Such actions are very common in the torture chambers of humanism. In scatological speech, men who cannot

get away with like acts in more civilized situations use language as the means of dumping filth on others. It is an exercise of the power to pollute, a way of destroying the good.

Our society is increasingly scatological and murderous in the direction of its entertainment. Television and film plots seek to dirty up and to kill the godly, and all Biblical standards. The direction of a society which sees such things as entertainment is murderous. Unless regenerated by God's saving grace, its goal is to wound and to kill, and to claim, "neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

Since to play god is evil, the course of humanism, left to itself, has only one direction. To follow the implications of trying to be god means to seek power over others, which means ultimately the power to kill. The popular words for the sex act almost invariably imply taking advantage of and using the other person; sex becomes disguised aggression. Politics pretends to be the means of promoting the public welfare, but, in the hands of fallen man, becomes a power game.

Lavrenty Beria, Stalin's most important head of the secret police, in effect licked that dictator's boots because, knowing himself, he knew also what motivated Stalin, the lust for power. Beria despised Stalin's mind; he regarded him as "a rude boor with no manners," with bad breath, and whose dirty feet smelled from some distance.[57] Beria's delight was to have young adolescent girls brought to him to be raped. "The joy was to smash her and to destroy her." Stalin enjoyed these escapades of Beria and "even laughed loudly when he learned some details of this or that escapade of Beria's."[58] Pleasure in the exercise of brutal power, the power of life and death over others, was their delight. Not a few of the young girls victimized by Beria committed suicide.

In the history of Israel, the significance of Deuteronomy 32:39 was appreciated. When Naaman came to the king with his letter asking for healing, the king said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive....?" (II Kings 5:7). The issue was healing Naaman of leprosy. It required the intervention of God's prophet to cure Naaman, and healing, medicine, in essence is a religious discipline. The physician works to restore *health*, which is akin to salvation, in terms of godly premises. Likewise, the godly state has the authority to kill in terms of God's law. Even in the approved social forms of killing and making alive, God's priority, law, and creation ordinances must be observed. The goal, however, of men who, in terms of Genesis 3:5, original sin, seek to be god, is to kill or to make alive on radically autonomous and humanistic premises. For such men, salvation is by killing, by

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57. Thaddeus Wittlin: *Commissar, The Life and Death of Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria.* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1972). p. 214.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 25ff.

obliterating all that opposes them. The world will be made into a new paradise, not by regeneration, but by the elimination of one's enemies.

Murder was, however, regarded by the early church as one of the most serious offenses. Cyprian saw murder, adultery, and fraud as the gravest offenses; Pacianus linked murder with fornication and idolatry; Augustine agreed with Pacianus. Abortion was treated by all as a form of murder.[59]

Killing a man is serious because man is created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-28), in knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Gen. 1:26). Man, in their hatred of God, strike at God's image-bearer, man.

Thus, to kill gives a double "advantage" to the ungodly. *First*, killing enables fallen man to play god, to determine for himself the issues of death. *Second*, killing gives the ungodly a means of striking out against God by destroying his image bearer. There is in all this a *third* factor: power is equated with authority. However, only in God is there an identity of the two. In man, power is limited, and all authority is derivative. As men deny God's authority, they seek to replace the resulting loss of moral force with brute power. As a result, the humanistic state becomes increasingly brutal and murderous as does also humanistic man in the streets.

The only rightful power and authority in all creation is that of the triune God. The departure of men from God is their departure from life itself. "He that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36).

19. Authority and Life

Psalm 1 is too little appreciated in our antinomian age. Not only does it give us the temper of all the psalms, but it sets forth a fundamental fact, namely, that submission to God's authority means life, while the rejection of God and His law means death.

How serious our predicament is can be seen in the fact that some commentators have held that this psalm gives us a "distorted statement of the nature of true happiness." Because the psalm praises the study of God's law, others have seen the temper of the psalm as supposedly alien to Christianity.

Wright saw this psalm as anticipating "millennial conditions," a "pen picture of the ideal man of the theocracy."[60] Dewi Morgan wrote eloquently about Psalm 1 as one "in which the distant poles of God and man merge into a splendid orb and man becomes one with his Creator."[61] Morgan does not mention the law at all, of which the psalm speaks plainly!

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[59] George Mead, "Homicide," in William Smith and Samuel Cheatham, editors: *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, Vol. I. (London, England: John Murray, 1875). p. 780f.
[60] Walter C. Wright: *Psalms*, Vol. I. (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1955). pp. 77, 34.
[61] Dewi Morgan: *Arising from the Psalms*. (London, England: A. R. Mowbray, 1965). p. 4.

Men like J. A. Alexander and C. H. Spurgeon have approached Psalm 1 with more wisdom.

The psalm has no author listed. Much later, Jeremiah 17:5-8 cites this psalm, and the text tells us that this is God's statement:

> 5. Thus saith the LORD: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.
> 6. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.
> 7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.
> 8. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

As we compare these words with Psalm 1, it becomes clear that, *first*, to trust in the Lord is to obey His covenant law. It means that we then believe that God's law is the way of life and blessedness. *Second*, to delight in the law of the Lord is to delight in life, and to reject God's law is to choose death. Let us read Psalm 1 with this in mind:

> 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
> 2. But his delight is in the law of the LORD: and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
> 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
> 4. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
> 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
> 6. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

As Kirkpatrick noted at the beginning of this century, "Divine knowledge cannot be abstract or ineffectual."[62] Our Lord makes clear the essential unity of faith, obedience, and doctrine. He declares, in John 7:16-17,

> 16....My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.
> 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Those who insist on separating faith, works, and knowledge can be compared to a man who beheads another and expects both head and body to live, speak, and work.

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62. A. F. Kirkpatrick: *The Book of Psalms.* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1906). p. 5.

A godly man is "like a tree planted by rivers of water." As Spurgeon noted, this man is compared, not to a wild tree, but to a *planted* one, cultivated and protected as God's property. He is by *rivers* of water, by an abundant supply. Because the godly man is a planted and nurtured tree, he is God's possession and is under God's authority. He is blessed because he is faithful and obedient to the Lord: "his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The word *planted* in v. 3 has the implication of *transplanted.* The tree whom the Lord chooses is transplanted to His appointed place, which whatever the problems which may occur, is the place of blessing.

We thus have an equation. On the one hand, we have the ungodly: they are scornful of God's law and are sinners. Their way shall perish, so that ungodliness and death are equated.

On the other hand, here and now, not in a future millennium, the godly are blessed; they are productive, and they endure in times of judgment and come forth in victory. Godliness and life are equated. Godliness is clearly identified with an obedience to "delight...in the law of the LORD." On the other hand, the scornful despise all things. As one rabbi commented, "To the man whose soul is rotted with scorn, nothing is sacred."[63]

This psalm militates against a powerful tradition and force in the modern era. Creativity, power, freedom, and all things desirable are equated with revolt against God. To be alive means to the modern temper to sin and to defy God. During the early 1970s, a university student on drugs stood outside a church service to rail at all as they left. According to him, they were the living dead because they had never "experimented" sexually to find total liberation in total permissiveness.

William Blake, c. 1793, expressed like opinions about the virtues of rebellion against God's law, declaring, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,*

> Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.
> And being restain'd by it, by degrees becomes passive, till it is only the shadow of desire.[64]

Man's desire must take priority over the law of God. Man's will, instead of being seen as fallen and depraved, is seen as good. This fallen will is given authority, and to deny man his will is seen as slavery. In this view, Christianity is the enslavement of man. For man to be free, to realize himself, means setting aside the law of the Lord. Thus, in the modern humanistic faith, the

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63. Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer: *Psalms (Tehillin)*, Vol. I. (Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, (1977) 1979). p. 60.
64. Geoffrey Keynes, editor: *Poetry and Prose of William Blake.* (London, England: The Nonesuch Press, n.d.). p. 191.

moral equation of Psalm 1 is turned upside down. Ungodliness, rebellion against God, becomes the life-nourishing force, and Biblical faith is held to be the way of death. Both Humanist Manifestoes presented that faith as a liberating force. Central to that liberation is for humanists the radical denial of God's authority.

Thus, the central question with respect to authority is not in the realm of secondary or human powers. The issue is between God and man. This, in Genesis 3:1-5, was the issue as the tempter saw it, and also in the temptation of Christ (Matt. 4:1-11). The matter is unchanged still. Men have pursued the tempter's concept of authority, of every man as his own god, to disaster and death. In Psalm 1, the alternative God provides is plainly set forth. Only under God's total authority is there life for man.

XIX

PRAYER

1. Prayer

Over the years, I have read many books and articles on prayer. These have contained a number of good points, but basically I am at the least unhappy with, if not somewhat hostile towards, "how-to-pray" literature.

Such works begin with a fundamental fallacy; namely, that we need to be taught how to pray to God. This I find very strange. No one ever had to teach me how to talk to my wife. When I fell in love with her, I most definitely wanted to talk to her! After all these years, when I am away from home, I call her nightly, and we find it difficult to end our conversation. At home, we talk all day long; we share our experiences, reactions, ideas, and feelings. Talking to my wife is as natural as breathing! No more than I needed instructions before I started breathing at birth do I need instructions on how to talk to my wife. I love her, and talking to her is an aspect of the expression of our love. When by God's grace we are born again, talking to Him is an aspect of our new life, like breathing. The how-to-pray literature does have, however, a certain value. It concentrates on formal prayer. It tells us how in our devotions, or in public prayer, to praise God, to thank Him, to remember the needs of all His people, the sufferings of the needy, and more. Such prayer involves also the confession of sins, the commitment of ourselves and our hopes, fears, and needs to the Lord, and so on. At the table, in our private devotions, and in public prayer, these prayer manuals and instructions serve a very necessary and useful function. They keep our prayers from becoming self-centered and they require us to keep our minds fixed on the kingdom of God and all His glory.

But my concern is the prayer that is most basic, our talking to God. By this I mean our one-sentence prayers all day long, by which we silently but continually communicate with God. We thank Him for our night's rest and the day's joys. When we face a difficult situation, we ask, "Lord, give me patience to cope with this problem." Then, later, we thank Him for His guiding hand and care. If we have a difficult person to meet with, we ask, "Lord, I don't know what to say, and I don't want to lose my temper or hurt the Kingdom by my failure here. Give me grace to deal with this man." When we are afraid of something confronting us, we tell God so, and we ask for courage to cope with the problem or hurt.

But this is only the beginning. I do not talk with my wife about serious and important matters only. I talk to her for the joy of communion with her. We tell each other of our love a dozen or more times daily. I enjoy the sound of

her voice, and she mine. The Song of Solomon speaks of this more than once, referring with joy to "the voice of my beloved."

So too when we delight in the Lord, we talk to Him all day long. Is it a beautiful day? "Lord, how glorious is Thy creation!" When I go fishing, the first one to hear about the results is the Lord. Of course, He knows before I do. But talking to Him is life itself. (Last year, on a single cast, I caught two bass, each hitting the plug from different directions when it hit the water. Thanks, Lord, what a thrill!)

Prayer is talking to God. Now, when I talk to my wife, I do not limit my conversation to the start of meals, or morning or evening, beginning by saying, "Dear Dorothy..." I talk to her all day long, going and coming. The more we talk, the more we enjoy talking to each other. If I only talk to God when I am in church, at the dinner table, or in private devotions, my relationship to Him will be cold, formal, and a bit awkward. If I talk to Him in the shower, at my desk as I work, while gardening, or walking, or whatever I am doing, I am much closer to Him and more familiar with Him. I have then a happy relationship in which talking to God comes easily.

I once met someone I had known very well years before. We had been close friends, but about forty years ago, we moved to difference areas, and our lives took very different directions. It was a pleasure to see him, but a bit strange. We very quickly ran out of conversation, because our lives had grown so far apart.

So too when our praying is merely formal, at the table, in devotions, or in church meetings, we grow apart from God.

But, if we walk and talk with God every hour of every day, we can't help but grow close to Him. We breathe easier and talk more easily and talk more around someone we love and delight in. Likewise, we pray more easily and are more alive when we maintain a continual conversation with the Lord–talking with Him and walking with Him all day long.

2. Matthew 6:8 and Prayer

Let me repeat, many books on prayer irritate me. They seem designed to give the reader a sense of inferiority and hopelessness. Some years ago, a distinguished pastor told me that too many devotional and prayer manuals are destructive of the mental and spiritual health of their readers because they call for an unreasonable dedication to spiritual exercises.

The calling of most believers is not to be a monk or a nun! They cannot spend their days in meditation and prayer. For centuries, it has been traditional to downgrade Martha because of the incident recorded in Luke 10:38-42:

> 38. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.
> 39. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.
> 40. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.
> 41. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:
> 42. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

This was a great medieval text, but it has not lost its popularity with Protestantism! Jesus was with His disciples, at least the twelve, and possibly more. The coming of such a crowd to Martha's house was no small matter. It was Martha's home, and she was the hostess. In good Near Eastern manners, she was preparing a major dinner for them all. Our Lord's comment to her simply said that His presence and His teaching were more important than maintaining traditional standards of lavish hospitality. It was *not* a statement about the superiority of the contemplative to the active life. It was a statement about, *priorities*, and, from a reading of all Scripture, we see that at times the priority is action, at other times prayer, because at all times the service of the Lord must govern us.

In John 11:5, we are told, "Now Jesus loved *Martha*, and her sister, and Lazarus." The house was Martha's, and she in particular seems to have been closest to the Lord. Martha's faith is clearly evident in John 11:19-46, in raising of Lazarus. There is no reason for down-grading Martha, or Mary, for that matter. To put the contemplative against the active life is abstractionism and alien to Scripture.

Prayer as such is no more valuable than talking; it is the purpose and content that matters. Our Lord ridicules those who make a display of prayer and who believe "that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. 6:5-8). He says,

> Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. (Matt. 6:8)

This is a very important text for any understanding of prayer. Otherwise we pray like the prophets of Baal, crying, "O Baal, hear us" (I Kings 18:26). Calvin's comment on Matthew 6:8 is very telling:

> ...From whence comes this folly of thinking that great advantage is gained, when men weary God by a multiplicity of words, but because they imagine that he is like a mortal man, who needs to be informed and solicited? Whoever is convinced, that God not only cares for us, but knows all our wants, and anticipates our wishes and anxieties before we have stated them, will leave out vain repetitions, and will reckon it

> enough to prolong his prayers, as far as shall be necessary for exercising his faith; but will reckon it absurd and ridiculous to approach God with rhetorical embellishments, in the expectation that he will be moved by an abundance of words.
>
> But if God *knows what things we have need of, before we ask him*, where lies the advantage of prayer? If he is ready, of his own free will, to assist us, what purpose does it serve to employ our prayers, which interrupt the spontaneous course of his providence? The very design of prayer furnishes an easy answer. Believers do not pray, with the view of informing God about things unknown to him, or of exciting him to do his duty, or of urging him as though he were reluctant. On the contrary, they pray, in order that they may arouse themselves to seek him, that they may exercise their faith in meditating on his promises, that they may relieve themselves from their anxieties by pouring them into his bosom; in a word, that they may declare that from him alone they hope and expect, both for themselves and for others, all good things. God himself, on the other hand, has purposed freely, and without being asked, to bestow blessings upon us; but he promises that he will grant them to our prayers. He freely anticipates our wishes, and yet that we obtain by prayer what we ask. As to the reason why he sometimes delays long to answer us, and sometimes even does not grant our wishes, an opportunity of considering it will afterwards occur.[1]

In prayer, we never tell God anything He does not already know. Prayer is thus more than enlightening God about our predicament or our needs.

In recent years, prayer manuals have had much to say about asking and getting things from God. One school of churchmen affirm a "Name it and claim it" approach to prayer, reducing prayer then to methodology. This is an application of the Pelagian and Arminian approach of C.G. Finney, who said of revivals:

> What are the laws of nature according to which it is supposed that grain yields a crop? They are nothing but the constituted manner of the operations of God. In the Bible, the Word of God is compared to grain, and preaching is compared to sowing the seed, and the results to the springing up and growth of the crop. A revival is as naturally a result of the use of the appropriate means as a crop is of the use of the appropriate means.[2]

This reduces revivalism's success, and, applied to prayer, success in praying, to a naturalistic technique, and power is transferred from God to man. Failure then to receive a desired answer in prayer becomes man's fault; his technique is faulty, or else some hidden sin is the impediment. Certainly sin can be an impediment, but we must remember that a thoroughly ungodly man like Ahab was heard by God (I Kings 21:21-29). We can impose no limits upon God's

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[1] John Calvin: *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949). p. 313f.

[2] Cited by Keith J. Hardman: *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875*. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987). p. 21.

grace and mercy; as Lord, He establishes all boundaries. Thus, the emphasis on what we say and do in prayer is wrong and can even be blasphemous. In Psalm 34:6, David says, "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."

Turning again to Matthew 6:8, and its statement that our Father knows our needs before we ask Him, it must be noted that here and in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13), our Lord tells us that we pray to God as "our Father." Here we see again a great evil in the "Name it and claim it" type of prayer. It depersonalizes prayer; it wants us to get *things* from God. God certainly gives us many things when we pray to Him, but the essence of prayer is talking with God. As we open ourselves to Him, He opens Himself to us as our Father. Prayer is a confession of need. We confess our need of His grace and mercy, of His protecting care, of our need for the forgiveness of sins, our daily bread, and more. We pray rejoicing in His mercy and our hunger and thirst for His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We open ourselves to God to whom we are already open, but do so in prayer as His family by the adoption of grace.

That He knows our needs before we ask Him is a great comfort, because we know that our needs, griefs, and adversities are by His ordination and for the sake of His Kingdom and our growth in Him. Tertullian wrote, in *On the Veiling of Virgins*, "Christ did not call Himself the conventions, but the Truth." Praying means going to the Truth Who is Life Himself (John 14:6), and it means confronting the truth about ourselves as well as Truth Himself.

More than forty years ago, I had a very strong and ungodly young man come to me in fear of death because of a developing ailment. It was a problem which a change of life could have alleviated and corrected. When I urged that he pray for his regeneration, he left, saying, "How can a man humble himself to pray?" As against this, young Borden of Yale prayed that God give him grace to take hands off his own life and to trust in Him. This is praying. Borden wrote, in his freshman year,

> Lord Jesus, I take hands off, as far as my life is concerned. I put Thee on the throne in my heart. Change, cleanse, use me as Thou shalt choose. I take the full power of Thy Holy Spirit. I thank Thee,
> May never know a tithe of the result until Morning.[3]

This same faith manifests itself in various ways, While in nurses' training, in the 1930s, Dorothy Rushdoony overheard a black woman tell another worker of all her personal griefs and problems. It was an amazing account of how many troubles can afflict one family and one person. The co-worker asked her what she was doing about her impossible burden. The woman answered, "Why, I just said, You take it, Lord, it's too much for me!" We pray because we know our limitations.

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[3]. Mrs. Howard Taylor: *Borden of Yale '09*. p. 123. William Whiting Borden, 1887-1913, died four years later on the mission field.

Prayer is not a substitute for action but its accompaniment.

Praying is like breathing; it is a part of the Christian's life and basic to it. It is more than formal prayer, important as that is. It is a continual openness to God in all our being. Instead of talking to ourselves as we go through the day, we talk to God, sentence prayers, momentary calls for help, grace, or strength, quick words of thanks, or expressions of need, all this and more. Such constant sentence praying gives us the greatest freedom and advantage in prayer, because it is the practice of the presence of God, of our awareness of it. Its greatest reward is the growing awareness that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

The irritability and bad temper of modern man is in part due to his sense of aloneness. This is his own doing. Having cut himself off from God, he is cut off from closeness to other men, and alienated from himself. The habit of continual sentence prayers will take a man out of these evil times and give him grace and power to triumph over the spirit of the age and more.

3. John Calvin on Prayer

In Book III of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin devoted a long chapter of 77 pages to prayer. This chapter, XX, is titled "On Prayer, the Principal Exercise of Faith, and the Medium of our daily reception of Divine Blessings." The title gives us a good summary of its contents; it will not be summarized here, but some aspects of it will concern us.

Man, Calvin held, has a problem: "we are stupid and insensible to our own miseries," but God "vigilantly watches and guards us, and sometimes affords us unsolicited succor." This does not lessen our duty to pray to Him.[4] Said Calvin,

> We clearly perceive how utterly destitute man is of every good, and in want of all the means of salvation. Wherefore, if he seek for relief in his necessities, he must go out of himself, and obtain it from some other quarter.[5]

For Calvin, man's "necessities" have to do with his salvation and his growth in grace. This is a very different emphasis on prayer than is common today. For Calvin, Romans 10:13,14,17, is an important text not only with reference to faith but also to prayer, for the two are very closely allied. Even as "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), so too prayer is dependent on hearing, and the ability to hear comes from Scripture. Even as faith enables us to penetrate and understand the word of God, so too does prayer:

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[4] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, Chap. XX; III; Vol. II. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). p. 95.

[5] *Ibid.*, Book III, Chap. XX, I; Vol. II, p. 93.

> II. By means of prayer, then, we penetrate to those riches which are reserved with our heavenly Father for our use...prayer digs out those treasures, which the gospel of the Lord discovers to our faith...It is certainly not without reason that our heavenly Father declares, that the only fortress of salvation consists in invocation of his name; by which we call to our aid the presence of his providence, which watches over all our concerns; of his power, which supports us when weak and ready to faint; and of his goodness, which receives us into favor, though miserably burdened with sins; in which, finally, we call upon him to manifest his presence with us in all his attributes.[6]

Men today miss the primary point of this statement because they pass over its primary affirmation, namely, "That *the only fortress of salvation consists in invocation of his name.*" The early church, medieval man, and Reformation man would have understood it. Paul knew what it meant when he wrote, in Philippians 2:9-11,

> 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
> 10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
> 11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Charles Buck (1771-1815), in his *Theological Dictionary,* defined "Name of God" thus:

> By this term we are to understand, 1. God himself, Ps. 22.1 2. His titles peculiar to himself, Ex. iii. 13,14. 3. His word, Ps. v. 11, Acts ix. 15. 4. His works, Ps. viii. 1. 5. His worship, Ex. xx.24. 6. His perfections and excellencies. Ex. xxxiv. 6. John xvii.26. *The properties or qualities of this name are these*: 1. A glorious name, Ps. lxxii.17. 2. Transcendent and incomparable, Rev. xix.16. 3. Powerful, Phil. ii.10. 4. Holy and reverend, Ps. cxi. 5. Awful to the wicked. 6. Perpetual, Is. lv.13.[7]

The correct reading of Philippians 2:9 is not "a name," but "the name." *Name* has a variety of Hebraic connotations; it stands for the person himself, and for his dignity and glory. We have an echo of this in the still slightly familiar police statement, "Halt, in the name of the law." *Name* here means that all the power of the law is behind the command and will prosecute the offender. The name *Jesus* means God incarnate, He who became like us and endured the humiliation and shame of the cross and is now enthroned as King over all creation. J.J. Muller wrote:

> The "name of Jesus" signifies Jesus Himself. According to the Hebrew usage of the word, the *name* gives expression to the very being itself, and designates a person as he is, and as he reveals himself.[8]

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[6] *Ibid.*, Book III, Chap. XX; Vol. II, p. 94.

[7] Charles Buck: *A Theological Dictionary.* (Philadelphia, PA: Joseph J. Woodward, 1826). p. 401.

Hence, to invoke the Name of Jesus is to invoke His Person, power, and presence. Hence also to hold aloft the sign of an empty Cross is to invoke Him who has destroyed death and is King over kings, and Lord over all lords (I Tim. 6:15). There is little such invocation of the Name in our time because there is little awareness of the reign and presence of the Great King, Jesus the Christ.

The Third Commandment tells us:

> Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (Ex. 20:7)

The trivial invocation of God's, or Christ's, Name for emphasis or in profanity is therefore a sin. It is a contemptuous use of God's Name for our purposes rather than in terms of His word and glory.

On the other hand, all Christian action is to be in the Name of Jesus: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). All our speech, action, and prayer should be in His Name.

We can believe in the historicity of Scripture and the work and words of Jesus Christ; we can affirm Him to be Lord and Savior, but we place and posit a distance between first century Judea and ourselves, and between Christ in heaven and ourselves, unless we "believe on the Name." Hence, in the New Testament, the summons is repeatedly phrased like this:

> And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:21)
>
> Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. (Acts 4:10)
>
> Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

These are only a few of the many such references. The Name means the presence and power of God the Son. Failure to invoke it and to understand its meaning is to live with a sense of remoteness from God. The faith can be real enough, but it will be cold and weak. Hence it is that the summons is not only to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31), but to believe in the Name of the Lord:

> And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. (I John 3:23)

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[8] Jac. J. Muller: *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955). p. 88.

> These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (I John 5:13)

Our Lord makes it clear that it is not enough to do great works in His Name: we must do "the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21-23). Given this fact of obedience, we can then ask God in Christ's Name for those things needful:

> 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
> 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)

To ask *in His Name* means to ask in terms of His Kingdom and our life in Him. To ask in His Name is to acknowledge His Lordship over us, and His Sovereign right to give as He ordains, much, little, or nothing, and to thank Him for everything.

We are commanded to pray *in Jesus's Name*. Calvin rightly stressed the invocation of His Name as our "only fortress of salvation."

4. The Cure for Blindness

The Psalms are hymns and prayers given to help us, among other reasons, in our own prayers. In Psalm 34:11-18, we read:

> 11. Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
> 12. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?
> 13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.
> 14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.
> 15. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.
> 16. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
> 17. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.
> 18. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

David here sets forth the means of longevity; as a general rule, those who desire life and long years are godly men. They are faithful to the Lord; they "seek peace, and pursue it;" and they pray readily, and God hears them. He is close to the broken hearted, and He saves those who have a contrite spirit. Earlier in the psalm, in v. 8, David says, "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." The second half of this verse can be rendered, happy or blessed is the man that taketh refuge in Him. As Kirkpatrick pointed out also, the blessed *man* "means properly a *strong man*, and suggests the thought that be he never so strong in himself, man's only true

happiness is in dependence on Jehovah."[9] The strong man is he who relies most on the Lord.

Some years ago, O. Hallesby, in writing on prayer, told the story of a lone elderly country woman. Trudging home from the village store to her home, she was met by a neighbor, a farmer, who invited her to ride to her home with him. She climbed onto the wagon, and seated herself, still carrying the heavy sack on her back. When the farmer suggested that she take the weight off her shoulders and put the sack behind her on the wagon, Old Mary said, The horses have enough to do carrying me. The least I can do is to carry my own burden.

Deservedly, Old Mary had a reputation for being none too intelligent or thoughtful! Hallesby's point was this: for us as Christians to persist in our anxieties and fretfulness when Christ is our Lord is to be like Old Mary, carrying our heavy sack when we are ourselves being carried to our destination.

Some years ago, I wrote an article entitled, "Why Pray, When you can Worry?" This is the position of many. They feel that, unless they worry themselves sick over a matter, God will forget about it. We all have times when we are guilty of such stupidity.

According to I John 5:14, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." The fact that He hears us does not mean that we therefore get what *we* want, but that we are in better hands then our own. It is our persistent foolishness and sin to believe that God would do better if He listened to us and followed our urgings! Our devotions and prayers, Calvin said, should be subject to God's commands, although too often we will not have it so.

> Therefore, to assist this imbecility, God gives us the Spirit, to be the director of our prayers, to suggest what is right, and to regulate our affections. For "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;" (Rom. viii. 26) not that he really prays or groans; but excites within us confidence, desires, and sights, to the conception of which our native powers were altogether inadequate.[10]

If we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our prayers, it is too often to have Him be our "Amen Charlie," seconding all that we have to say.

The habit of prayer means sentence prayers all through the day to share our experiences and thoughts with God. Hence, James says, in Moffatt's rendering, "Is anyone of you in trouble? let him pray, Is anyone thriving? let

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[9] A. F. Kirkpatrick: *The Book of Psalms*. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1906). p. 172.

[10] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Book III, Chap. XX, V. (Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), vol. II, p. 99.

him sing praise" (James 5:13). This is what "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17) means.

Prayer, it must be noted, does involve at times a confession of guilt and a supplication of pardon, but a routine and formal confession in *all* prayers reduces praying to a meaningless routine. Thanksgiving too is essential to prayer, but not merely as a prelude to what we feel is important for us. If we are not thankful, we should say so, seek God's pardon, and ask for His grace to conquer our grief and rebellion by His power.

Praying is a private exercise in the main, but it has a public function. We are commanded to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). As Calvin said, "In a word, all our prayers ought to be such, as to respect that community which our Lord has established in his Kingdom and in his family."[11] We are very much prone to praying *only* for ourselves and our needs; these are the things which are uppermost in our minds. It is good to pray for our concerns, and necessary, but we must not neglect those beyond our own horizons and remember all of the church, and the world as well. Such praying should be specific and in terms of the realities of men's problems and crises. At the same time, we cannot discharge our responsibilities to the world at large by prayer alone. We have a world mission. As Thomas Wilson (1663-1755) wrote, "He lives to no purpose, who is not glorifying God."[12] Again, Wilson wrote, "Thou hast sent us into the world, not to do our own will, but Thine,"[13] and His will calls for bringing all things, beginning with ourselves, into captivity to Christ. Wilson said further:

> Grant that I may suffer like a Christian, and not grieve like an unbeliever;–that I may receive troubles as a punishment due to my past offenses,–as an exercise of my faith, and patience, and humility,–and as a trial of my obedience;–and that I may improve all my afflictions to the good of my soul, and thy glory.
> Thou alone knowest what is best for us: let me never dispute Thy wisdom.[14]

The importance of prayer as Wilson saw, is to take us out of our own wisdom into God's wisdom "because we are really blind as to what concerns our own true good, and should infallibly ruin ourselves, if left to our own choices."[15] We need thus to say with Wilson, "Know, O Lord, that it is good for me to be in trouble, or Thou wouldest not suffer it so to be."[16]

Therefore, "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17). It is, among other things, the cure for blindness, mental and spiritual.

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[11] *Ibid.*, Book III, Chap. XX, xxxviii: Vol. II, p. 149.
[12] Thomas Wilson (Bishop of Sodor and Man, England): *Sacra Privata, Private Meditations and Prayers.* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whitaker, 1879). p. 166.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 92f.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

5. "Hallowed Be Thy Name:" Prayer and the Future

Our Savior gives us a prayer, the Lord's Prayer, which, unlike other prayers, is not in His Name because it is in His very words. But the Name is not forgotten: we begin, "Our Father which art in heaven, *Hallowed be thy name"* (Matt. 6:9). The Greek word for "hallowed" is *agiastheto*, meaning to make holy, venerate, or consecrate. The Name of God is already holy, as is God in all His Being. How do we make it holy? Calvin is here again very relevant:

> XLI. The first petition is, THAT GOD'S NAME MAY BE HALLOWED; the necessity of which is connected with our great disgrace. For what is more shameful, than that the Divine glory should be obscured partly by our ingratitude, partly by our malignity, and, as far as possible, obliterated by our presumption, infatuation, and perverseness? Notwithstanding all the sacrilegious rage and clamors of the impious, yet the refulgence of holiness still adorns the Divine name. Nor does the psalmist without reason exclaim, "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth." (Psalm xlviii. 10) For wherever God may be known, there must necessarily be a manifestation of his perfections of power, goodness, wisdom, righteousness, mercy, and truth, which command our admiration and excite us to celebrate his praise. Therefore, because God is so unjustly robbed of his holiness on earth, if it is not in our power to assert it for him, we are at least commanded to regard it in our prayers. The substance of it is, that we wish God to receive all the honor that he deserves, that men may never speak or think of him but with the highest reverence; to which is opposed that profanation, which has always been too common in the world, as it continues to be in the present age. And hence the necessity of this petition, which, if we were influenced by only a tolerable degree of piety, ought to be superfluous. But if the name of God be truly hallowed, when separated from all others it breathes pure glory, we are here commanded to pray, not only that God will vindicate his holy name from all contempt and ignominy, but also that he will constrain all mankind to revere it. Now, as God manifests himself to us partly by his word, and partly by his works, he is no otherwise hallowed by us, than if we attribute to him in both instances that which belongs to him, and so receive whatever proceeds from him; ascribing, moreover, equal praise to his severity and to his clemency; since on the multiplicity and variety of his works he has impressed characters of his glory, which should draw from every tongue a confession of his praise.[17]

"Hallowed be thy Name" is thus essentially related to what follows immediately:

> Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)

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[17] John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, Chap. XX, XLI; Vol. II. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). p. 151f.

This tells us why we hear so little about hallowing God's Name in our time. Premillennialism and amillennialism see no mandate to work for God's Kingdom, nor to seek the establishment of His will, as revealed in His law-word, as the governing rule over men and nations. We are required to hallow God's Name *now*, and to seek His Kingdom *now*. God does not say, I shall do all the hallowing in a distant millennial kingdom, or in the distant new creation, but here and now *we* must hallow His Name. Calvin said, of Matthew 6:9,10,

> There is a close connection and resemblance between those three petitions. *The sanctification of the name of God* is always connected with his *kingdom*; and the most important part of his *kingdom* lies in *his will being done*. Whoever considers how cold and negligent we are in desiring the greatest of those blessings for which we are here commanded to pray, will acknowledge that nothing here is superfluous, but that it is proper that the three petitions should be thus distinguished.[18]

To hallow God's Name means to work for His Kingdom and to seek the establishment of His Will on earth even as it prevails in heaven. There is no qualifying limit on this petition. It is our bounden duty to work that the kingdoms of this world might indeed become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11:15).

This is the primary emphasis of the Lord's Prayer, and hence should be central to all our praying. This tells us something about the perspective of prayer: *prayer is future oriented.* If we are prayerless, we are either indifferent to the future, or we feel God is irrelevant to it. The future can be and often is the immediate future and a crisis, as when King Jehoshaphat prayed with intensity in a crisis (II Chron. 20:5-13). God's answer through Jahaziel is a familiar and moving one:

> 15. And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of the great multitude; for the battle is not your's, but God's.
> 16. To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.
> 17. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.
> (II Chron. 20:15-17)

Whether we pray for God's Kingdom, our loved ones, Christ's church, our country, or, among many other things, ourselves, we are praying much of the

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[18] John Calvin: *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949). p. 318.

time about the future. Our future comes from God, and, like all our todays, needs hallowing. It must be prayer for His Kingdom and His *will.*

The word "will" in Matthew 6:10 is in the Greek *thelema*; it is a form of *thelo* and refers to God's determination or decree; it is thus essentially related to God's predestination. Thus, when we pray, "thy will be done," we bow before God's sovereign decree and make it our own. About fifty years ago, I heard a pastor pray, "We thank Thee for all our yesterdays;" I have never forgotten that prayer. It is a confession that Romans 8:28 is true, that God indeed makes all things work together for good for those who are the called according to His purpose. It is a recognition that God's government uses even the sins, errors, and wrath of man to accomplish His good, and our good in Him (Ps. 76:10).

To pray "Thy will be done" is to hallow God's Name, because it means we see our only good future in God's will, not our own.

If we are prayerless, it is because we see the future, whatever our formal profession of faith, as something in our hands and for us to determine. It is an insistence on working on our own instead of under God.

At the same time, formalism can pray, but without the high hope and faith of Matthew 6:9,10, and the triple petition: "Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, *as it is in heaven."* That last clause has an amazing audacity to it. We ourselves would never dare to ask for so much on our own, but, Christ having commanded this petition, and having supplied the words, we dare not ask for less, namely, that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This is what God required of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and what the last Adam, Jesus Christ, requires of us.

We can recognize the logic of those dispensationalists who refuse to use the Lord's Prayer because of these petitions; supposedly, it can only be prayed in the millennial Kingdom when Christ is ruler on earth. But our Lord does not say, pray thus in some distant future, but He says, "After this manner therefore pray" (Matt. 6:9); the present tense is used.

God's Name cannot be hallowed by retreat from the world, because we cannot surrender God's creation to evil men or to Satan without sin. Men now commonly desecrate the name of God by their failure to believe and obey what our Savior commands us to pray and work for. This is a sacrilege which invites judgment.

6. "Give Us This Day:" Prayer and the Present

In Deuteronomy 8:3, and again in Matthew 4:4, we are told, by Moses and by Jesus Christ, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God doth man live. Because man is God's creature, and the Lord is the source and meaning of all life, for man to live without God is to turn to death. However, because man is a creature, he

cannot live without bread either. There always have been idiot religionists who have tried to be indifferent to food, eating "only to live," they say, to prove their spirituality. What they have proven is their ungodliness. Scripture tells us that drink offerings were once required, and Psalm 104:14,15 tells us of God,

> 14. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;
>
> 15. And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

Temperance is required, but, as creatures, we are to rejoice in our creatureliness. To deny it is a sin.

The Lord's Prayer, after ordering us to be future oriented, reminds us that as creatures we are very much bound to the present. We cannot live only in terms of God's Kingdom glory tomorrow, nor with heaven in mind. We live in the present always. Hence, we are taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11).

The present in a fallen world is commonly a difficult time. This is, after all, a *fallen world*, a realm in which every man seeks to be his own god, determining good and evil, law and morality, for himself (Gen. 3:5). *This present world* preferred a murderer to Jesus Christ, and its evil temper is very much in power now. Illusions about our world are dangerous. Too many churchmen believe that we have a good world which only needs Christ as a *donum superadditum*, as a plus added to it, not as the regenerator of all things and the remaker of this world order.

Because we are creatures, we cannot be stoics. Stoicism believed in man's divinity and thus sought to transcend all creaturely feelings and distresses. We are plainly told, in John 11:35, the Bible's shortest verse, "Jesus wept," that our Lord was troubled and filled with grief at times. Are we holier than Christ if we become stoics and show no distress, grief, exuberance, and laughter as the occasion may require? We are creatures, and God expects us to recognize our creatureliness, because we are then most open to Him and to our need of Him. We are never called to behave like a corpse and therefore have no reaction to the world around us. A creature bleeds when cut, and grieves when hurt. Stoicism fosters prayerlessness because it seeks to rise above human reactions. The stoic can never say, in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child." Calvin called stoicism a "proud wisdom." Stoicism, he said, presents "an image of patience" which is unreal and ungodly. "At present there are among Christians modern Stoics who think it is wrong to groan and to weep, and even to grieve in loneliness." These, he said, are "wild opinions." Our Lord "wept for his own calamities as well as for those of other." If to be sorrowful is "displeasing" to God, "how

can we be pleased with his confession that his soul was 'sorrowful unto death?'" (John 16:20; Matt. 26:38; Luke 22:44)[19]

We are creatures, and we have needs. We are commanded to pray for them. We cannot reduce prayer to asking for needs; the priority belongs to God's Kingdom. On the other hand, there is no question that our needs have an urgency with us.

Edgar J. Goodspeed's rendering of John 14:13-14 is of interest in this context:

> Anything you ask for as followers of mine I will grant, so that the Father may be honored through the Son. I will grant anything you ask me for as my followers.

This is a remarkable promise; its only qualification is, according to the King James, "in my Name," and, for Goodspeed, "as my followers." The emphasis is on the *Name*; Goodspeed shifts it to us as followers. In either case, this is an amazing promise. Hallesby said of it,

> Here we are told what the real purpose of prayer is, namely, to glorify the name of God.
> We are quick to make use of prayer for the purpose of praying ourselves away from suffering and difficulty and of gaining some advantage for ourselves and our dear ones. That is why we have so many *disappointments* in our prayer life. That is the reason for the many *unfulfilled* petitions of the past...
> No, my friend, on the contrary, you should pray God for even greater simplicity of heart in your daily fellowship with Him. It is written, as you know: "In *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Nothing in your daily life is so unimportant and inconsequential that the Lord will not help you by hearing your prayers with reference to it.
> But let us remember that the purpose of prayer is to glorify the name of God. Whether we pray for things large or small, let us always add: if it will glorify Thy name, then perform this miracle and help us. But if it will not glorify Thy name, then let us remain in our extremity. However, give us power to glorify Thee through it.[20]

It is hard to disagree with this, and yet difficult also to agree with it. It is a theologically correct statement, but God does not readily listen to us theologians, and sometimes not at all! When Ahab prayed, he met no theological conditions; he was an evil and ungodly man, asking out of self-interest that God's judgment should fall after his death, and God heard Ahab's prayer (I Kings 21:25-29). Again Elijah, deeply discouraged, prayed for death. God had just performed the great miracle on Mt. Carmel through Elijah, but Elijah, expecting dramatic changes to follow, now wanted to die,

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[19] John Calvin: *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*. Translated by Henry J. Van Andel. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, (1952) 1953). p. 62f.

[20] O. Hallesby: *God's Word for Today*. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House (1937) 1948). p. 132.

since nothing had changed (I Kings 19:4). Neither prayer could be called as truly in God's Name. God, however, granted Ahab's prayer, and He fed Elijah and made clear his work would continue and grow under Elisha. In both instances, God was mindful of the creatureliness of Ahab and Elijah, even as He is of ours.

Thus, we are commanded to pray for our daily needs, our daily bread. Our praying does not determine whether or not God will give us what we want. We cannot ascribe to our prayer, our spirit in praying, or to the number of people who unite with us to pray for a particular need, any special power with God. On man's side there is no power, only a duty to pray. The determination is entirely on the part of God. Hence we pray, "Thy will (Thy determination or decree) be done," knowing also that we are in His will or determination, and we are never forgotten. Our Lord tells us,

> 28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
> 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.
> 30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
> 31. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Matt. 10:28-31)

Praying is thus more than a formula, or an appeal to a bank teller. It is a personal relationship between creature and Creator. He commands us to make our daily needs known to Him. The rest is in His sovereign hands.

This means that those who talk about having an especial power with God, of receiving much because they go to Him in the "right" spirit, are converting prayer, asking and receiving, from a matter of grace to works. Men of little faith and at times very weak character are sometimes given their petitions by the Lord, and men of great faith have gone to the stake. It is not for us to judge God, nor determine which prayers should get the desired answer. We are told, however, and by our Lord: "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

7. Forgiveness and Prayer

In Matthew 6:12, the Lord's Prayer reads, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." In Luke 11:4, we find this reading: "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." In Matthew 6:14, we are told, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." The word translated as *debts* in Matthew 6:12 is *opheilemata*, and debtors is *opheiletais*. *Indebted* in Luke 11:4 is a form of the same word; it means that which is owed, and it is used for marital relations in I Corinthians 7:3. The primary meaning is a monetary debt. *Sins* in Luke

11:4 is *hamartias*; it refers to moral wrongs. In Matthew 6:15 *trespasses* is *paraptomata*, a falling away, or a false step.

Our Lord, as He travelled from place to place, proclaimed the Kingdom and His proclamation was a repetition with variations of a common theme. Hence we find variations with an essential similarity.

The word *forgive* as it appears in Luke 11:4 and Matthew 6:12,15 is *aphiemi*, i.e. forms of this word, which means to remit or to cancel, and the reference is to debts and sins primarily. The most obvious reference to the remission of debt in Scripture is to the Sabbath year (Deut. 15:1-18). Our Lord's words here would at once invoke that law in the minds of His hearers. Loans were only short-term lending, payable within the time span between Sabbatical years. Because of this fact, large-scale lending was uncommon, and most debts were paid. Sin as debt meant the necessity of restitution, and this was done in terms of Exodus 22:1-17. A sin is a legal offense before God, and a debt is a legal debt to a man. The cancellation of either sin or debt is a legal fact. To *forgive* is thus not an antinomian fact but a legal and moral one. The word *apheimi* in classical Greek was used, among other ways, to describe a divorce, a canceling of a marriage, and, *to release from a legal bond.*[21]

How does this affect our praying? Let us examine the three verses once again:

> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Matt. 6:12)
> And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. (Luke 11:4)
> For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt. 6:15)

These words are spoken to the disciples (Matt. 5:1); they presuppose persons who have received God's grace. They are now told that God's grace to them will abound as they manifest grace. As we forgive, we are forgiven.

But this is not an antinomian forgiveness. All too often in our time, we see the horrifying sight of someone who "forgives" a rapist or a murderer who has never repented and made restitution. This is the same as blessing sin.

Here again we must examine a related text, Matthew 18:21-22:

> 21. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?
> 22. Jesus saith unto Him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

We should take Peter at his word: he said *brother*, *adelphos*. This would be Andrew, not some criminal who had done Peter wrong. Andrew was of the Twelve, thus one of Christ's inner circle. Peter asks about the extent of

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[21] H. Vorlander, "Forgiveness," in Colin Brown, general editor: *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975). p. 698.

forgiveness. He uses the limit of *seven*, a reference to the Sabbatical pattern. If there is a cancellation of debt on the Sabbath year, why not also a cancellation of further forgiveness also? If there is a release, forgiveness, from the legal bond, why not also a release from the manumission duty, forgiveness?

Our Lord's answer does not give a freedom to endless sinning. Restitution is basic to forgiveness; the debt is canceled because in some real and specific way amends have been made, not by word only. As long as the repentance which leads to restitution is there, forgiveness must be there.

If we so forgive, God forgives us. We have here then a standard for social order. In Christ we have the forgiveness of sins, a release from a legal bond, the death penalty for our rebellion against God and His law. We are now in Him a community of grace and law; we delight in God's word instead of rebelling against it. Having received grace, we manifest it one to another. Being now within the law instead of outlaws, we seek to do God's will and to extend the circle of God's grace and law.

To cite a specific example of this: when Ann Stroppini was assaulted by a purse-snatcher, she had to go to a hospital for her injuries. She told the police that, rather than seeing the young man go to prison, she wanted restitution. The young man was placed in a half-way house, working at a job daily and being locked up at night. Ann Stroppini gave the young man a Bible and witnessed to him. When double restitution had been made (and she told him its Biblical meaning), he went free. He is now a Christian, working with youth on drugs. What Mrs. Elmer (Ann) Stroppini did was to fulfill the requirement of this petition of the Lord's Prayer.

This transforms forgiveness from the empty, humanistic meaning it now has to a manifestation of both God's law and God's grace. Instead of an emotional feeling with no content, it becomes a transforming power in society.

The Sabbatical reference is not incidental. The Sabbath means resting in the Lord. To conduct society on a Biblical basis is to ensure man's true rest. Isaiah tells us:

> 20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
>
> 21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. (Isa. 57:20-21)

Forgiveness in the Biblical sense is basic to social order and personal peace. We are therefore commanded to pray for it. Prayer, after all, is a privilege, the privilege of access to God through Jesus Christ. Prayerlessness is an abuse of wealth.

8. "Lead Us Not into Temptation:" Reality and Prayer

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13). This petition of the Lord's Prayer can be more accurately translated as "deliver us from the evil one." Evil does not exist in the abstract. It is the mind, heart, and act of men who are against God and His law, supremely Satan. The reference here is not specific; it can mean either evil men, or Satan himself. Sin and evil in the world have their origin in man's fall. We face no vague thing in the air which can be termed evil but rather the actual malignancy of men and the evil works and things they have created. To pray, "deliver us from evil" and to imagine evil as a vague something is to pray wrongly. All around us are evil men and their works; we see evil men attempting to build new Towers of Babel and to control the minds and hearts of men. We must pray, therefore, "deliver us from evil," from evil men and all their works, and from Satan.

The first part of this petition is, "And lead us not into temptation." *Temptation* is the Greek *peirasmon*, trial, or testing. The Scottish form was, "Let us not be sifted." This then definitely does not mean that God tempts us to evil; He does not. He does test us and sift us to refine us for His service. This is a good process, even a necessary one.

This raises an important and necessary question: If being tested and tried is so good for us, why is it necessary to pray, "Lead us not into temptation"? Why does our Lord give the matter so prominent a place in prayer?

The answer to this is in Scripture. A few key texts give us the answer:

> For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. (Psalm 125:3)

> There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (I Cor. 10:13)

> 7. Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:
> 8. Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:
> 9. Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. (Prov. 30:7-9)

The first and second are pleas for, or a statement of, God's moderation in testing us. It is He who determines how much or how little testing we need, and what we can take. Paul certainly was tested severely (II Cor. 11:21-33); so too were many Christians whose names are unknown to us, both then and now. We have only to think of the sufferings of Christians in Red China and Red Russia to know how grim and savage this can be. The Lord alone knows our limits: we do not, and, if we complain about what He sends us, He may well give us more. Our consolation is that "God is faithful, who will not suffer

you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). Every man's faith shall be tested, and God alone determines the nature of the testing. To complain against our lot is to complain against God.

The statement in Proverbs 30:7-9 is Agur's, whose confession of faith is given in Proverbs 30:2-6. His confession and his prayer are marked by humility and self-knowledge. He wants neither riches nor poverty, because he is aware of the possibility of his waywardness in either case. Agur's prayer is thus 'Lead me not into temptation,' but he asks this primarily by refusing to ask for wealth, and by praying that he be spared poverty.

Thus, when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," we must at the same time *cease* from praying for those things which will place us in a need for testing. This can be, as with Agur, wealth or poverty; it can also be getting things we want, having too much leisure, undue success, an unclouded life, and much, much more. It can be anything that satisfies us and separates us from God, or it can be a spirit of discontent which separates us from Him. God, says Agur, is only "a shield unto them that put their trust in him" (Prov. 30:5).

Thus, when the Lord commands us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," He is requiring us to pray, "Thy will be done" (Matt. 6:10), not ours.

Now we can understand the unity of the two parts of this petition: 1) "lead us not into temptation, 2) but deliver us from evil," or, the evil one. The testing referred to in the first part of the petition has reference to the evil in us. In "A Litany, XVII", John Donne prayed to be delivered "from tempting Satan to tempt us." We, by our pride, our rebelliousness, our determination that it is *our* will that must be done, and many more ways of asserting our will, ensure our testing and refining. To pray rightly, "lead us not into temptation," means to pray against our own will. If we gain our will, if it is our will that is done, then *we* deliver ourselves into the hands of evil men, or even Satan.

Wilson rightly observed:

> Take all things that befall you as coming from God's providence, for your particular profit. And though they are evil in themselves, yet as He *permits*, or does not think fit to *hinder* them, they may be referred to Him. God no sooner discovers in your heart an ardent desire of well-doing, and of submitting to His will, but he *prepares* for you occasions of trying your virtue; and therefore, confident of His love, receive cheerfully a medicine prepared by a physician that cannot be mistaken, and cannot give you anything but what will be for your good.[22]

When we say, "Thy will be done," the adversity ceases to be a temptation and becomes a source of strength and growth. When we love ourselves or this

[22] Thomas Wilson: *Sacra Privata, The Private Meditations and Prayers*. (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1879). p. 98f.

world blindly, and we seek our "happiness on earth," as Calvin said, the Lord makes sure that we are "disturbed and molested."[23] "We are inclined to overestimate this present life,"[24] and hence we are always discontented, because we expect our life here to reward us. As Calvin made clear, "The blessings of this present life should not be despised."[25] We are neither to despise or hate our life here, nor to make it our hope. "For this life is a post at which the Lord has placed us, and we must stay at it until the Lord calls us away."[26]

We saw earlier that *evil* in this petition is not an abstraction: It refers to evil in a creature, Satan or some man or men. Similarly, *we* are not abstractions. We are persons created by the triune God and ordained to live at a particular point in time and history, and in a particular place and country. We are not abstracted by God from our context, nor should we try to think of ourselves in abstraction from it. Our place is where God's ordination has placed us, and there are no "flowery beds of ease" to be found in abstraction from it.

When we read Homer, we see what pagan prayer is. Paris, faced with defeat and death on the battlefield before the walls of Troy, is snatched up by the goddess and placed in Helen's bedroom for a different kind of experience. Too many Christians want similar answers to their prayers. They ask, in affect, remove the context of my life, and give me freedom from it. So to pray means to ask for God's judgment and testing. The Lord God is not a character in a fairy tale, nor is He our fairy godmother. Such thinking is blasphemous.

9. The Doxology

"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matt. 6:13). This doxology is not given in Luke 11:2-4, and some scholars therefore hold that it is an addition to Matthew 6:13. The *fact* is, however, that it is in Matthew 6:13, and there is no valid argument against it.

This doxology tells us *why* we can pray, and why we can be confident in prayer. Spurgeon said it well:

> The prayer finishes with a doxology. That devotion which begins with prayer ends in praise. All rule, and might, and honor, belong to God; only to him let them for ever be ascribed. His is "the *kingdom*", or right to rule; "the *power*", or the might to uphold his authority; and "the *glory*", or the honor that comes out of his government.[27]

The doxology is a confession that God is God.

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[23] John Calvin: *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, (1952) 1953). p. 69f.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[27] Charles Haddon Spurgeon: *Spurgeon's Popular Exposition of Matthew*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, (1893) 1962). p. 35.

Sometimes it is the very devout church members who need most to be reminded of this. One of the evils of our time is the propensity of many people for "the numbers game." Is something worth praying for? Then let us get hundreds, even thousands, earnestly united in prayer for it. Just as people work to get millions of names on a petition to Congress, or to the president, so many people believe that volume in prayer will be efficacious. They assume that God will be impressed by the prayer of so many, as though God is like a congressman, counting the votes before He decides. Such churchmen "think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. 6:7).

There is nothing wrong with and there is much good in many people uniting in prayer over a common concern. *It is highly commendable.* The assumption, however, that God is impressed by this "numbers game" is blasphemous. There is no standing with God in volume prayer. Wholesale prayers can be "vain repetitions" (Matt. 6:7).

Prayer is a privilege, and it should not be abused. This doxology tells us, as the beginning of the Lord's Prayer does, that our lives should be God-centered. "For thine is the kingdom," not man's, and our prayers should be more than a catalogue of our wants and wishes.

The early church is easily criticized; the converts came out of a vicious paganism and often carried their moral and intellectual errors or problems with them into the church. They were, however, aware of the difference between a man-centered empire and Christ's God-centered Kingdom. It was this that gave them a marked edge and power.

A description of the early church survives in "The Apology of Aristides." Aristides of Athens was a philosopher whose surviving work comes from the reign of Hadrian, 117-138 A.D. Aristides wrote to inform the emperor and the cultured despisers of Christianity of the Truth, and the difference He made in men:

> But the Christians, O King, while they went about and made search, have found the truth; and as we learned from their writings, they have come nearer to truth and genuine knowledge than the rest of the nations. For they know and trust in God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, in whom and from whom are all things, to whom there is no other god as companion, from whom they received commandments which they engraved upon their minds and observe in hope and expectation of the world which is to come. Wherefore they do not commit adultery nor fornication, nor bear false witness, nor embezzle what is held in pledge, nor covet what is not theirs. They honor father and mother, and show kindness to those near to them; and whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols (made) in the image of man; and whatever they would not that others should do unto them, they do not to others; and of the food which is consecrated to idols they do not eat, for they are pure. And their oppressors they appease (lit.: comfort) and make them their friends; they do good to their enemies; and their women, O King, are pure as virgins; and their daughters are modest; and

> the men keep themselves from every unlawful union and from all uncleanness in the hope of a recompense to come in the other world. Further, if one or other of them have bondmen and bondwomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his burial. And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning and every hour they give thanks and praise to God for His loving-kindnesses toward them; and for their food and their drink they offer thanksgiving to Him. And if any righteous man among them passes from the world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God; and they escort his body as if he were setting out from one place to another near. And when a child has been born to one of them, they give thanks to God; and if moreover it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins. And further if they see that any one of them dies in his ungodliness or in his sins, for him they grieve bitterly, and sorrow as for one who goes to meet his doom.[28]

It would be a mistake to assume that Aristides exaggerated the virtues of Christians to appeal to the emperor. There were too many hostile philosophers ready to correct any factual errors and embarrass the Christians. Note how Aristides begins by saying that Christians have found the truth and have come nearer to "genuine knowledge than the rest of the *nations.*" The doxology begins, "For thine is the kingdom," and Christians saw themselves as a new race, the new humanity, and a new realm, nation, or kingdom on earth. When Scripture was read, they stood because it was the King's royal law-word. We cannot understand the early church apart from this fact.

To their King they ascribed all *power* and *glory*. His power made them a new creation and gave them moral character and strength. As a result, they were making all things new. Their slaves when converted were, in terms of the law of God, freed to become brethren. As members of the family of Christ, they provided for one another in need, even to the costs of funerals.

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[28] "The Apology of Aristides," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. X, pp. 276-278. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980 reprint). pp. 276-278.

They saw themselves as members of the only eternal kingdom or empire: "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever." Hence the *Amen*, the so be it; saying that we seek to make God's will our will, for there is none other realm or kingdom in which we can believe or hope, none other king or ruler who can redeem us and give us life everlasting, and therefore we gladly recite or sing the Doxology given to us by Christ our King.

Doxologies have been in the liturgy and music of the church a joyful conclusion to prayer. In the words of a most familiar one:

> Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
> Praise Him all creatures here below.
> Praise Him all ye heavenly host.
> Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

10. Asking and Receiving

At the heart of prayer is this knowledge: Nothing is too great or too small for our God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). It is only the madness and the rage of unbelief which blinds men to the knowledge of God. As Paul tells us, the knowledge of God and "the invisible things of Him" are "clearly seen...(and) understood" by every man, but men hold back or suppress this knowledge in their unrighteousness or unbelief (Rom. 1:17-21). If they confess the knowledge which is in all their being, they must confess also that they are not their own gods but are fallen men and under condemnation. They prefer to deny God.

John D. Barrow has written, "if the entire material universe is described by mathematics (as modern cosmology leads us to expect), then there must exist some immaterial logic that transcends and permeates the material universe."[29] This awareness does not lead Barrow to confess the living God of Scripture but simply to posit a Platonist world view. This means that order in the universe is recognized, but not the Creator to whom we are all accountable.

This is the greatest problem in Bible-reading and prayer, and the great impediment to true prayer: *accountability*. We are plainly told,

> 12. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
> 13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:12-13)

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[29] John D. Berkow, "The Mathematical Universe," in *The World and I*, May, 1989, Vol. 4, No. 5., Washington, D.C., p. 309.

Because there is no escaping such a God, men either deny His existence, or pretend He is merely there to grant us our wishes. Men find the living God as welcome as a live and bare electrical wire; the wire is good if covered and connected with appliances to give us light and heat, but not for a direct encounter. So too men feel about God, good to use if possible, but a direct encounter can destroy our human hopes and pretensions. Thus, they seek a carefully insulated God.

But there is no other God than the living God, the triune God who reveals Himself in Scripture. To believe in anything else is to posit a staggering miracle. Those who reduce God to an indulgent grandfather, a carefully insulated God, a God without thunder, create thereby an idol smaller than themselves. God takes a dim view of idolatry.

As for atheism, Psalm 14:1 tells us, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Behind atheism is a moral dereliction, a refusal to admit to accountability. There is also intellectual dereliction. To believe that the universe evolved out of nothing not only violates all known science, it also posits an impossibility. The atheist is the true believer in miracles: spontaneous generation, something out of nothing, evolution instead of devolution, and more. He denies the foundations of knowledge, and his faith rests more on miracles than anyone else's faith. His miracles are performed by no one, violate all known causality, and are the epitome of the absurd.

Having stressed the necessity of recognizing God's absolute sovereignty, we must then confront the fact that this God in His grace and mercy calls Himself "Our Father" (Matt. 6:9). As David tells us,

> 10. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
> 11. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
> 12. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
> 13. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.
> 14. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. (Ps. 103:10-14)

God knows our limitations better than we do. We may prefer to ignore them, but God begins with them in dealing with us as our Father. We may, like Jonah, justify ourselves and become angry with the ways of God, who responds, "Doest thou well to be angry?" (Jonah 4:4). John Newton wrote of God's "amazing grace," and rightly so. We can also speak of God's amazing patience.

Our Lord's great promise concerning prayer to our Father needs to be seen in its context:

> 6. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.
> 7. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
> 8. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
> 9. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread will he give him a stone?
> 10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?
> 11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?
> 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (Matt. 7:6-12)

We have here a magnificent promise concerning prayer set in a sobering context. We can all think of "dogs" and "swine" to whom anything holy will be given in vain; they are destroyers, consumers, and abusers. What we need to think about is, to what degree are we like them? Are we asking for God's gifts without regard to the holiness of His giving and His purpose?

There is more: not only must we see the holy and Fatherly purpose of God's gifts, we must see ourselves as a community in Christ, and with a mandate. Hence, "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." The Lord never allows us to think of ourselves as an only child, His only child! To pray so is to pray falsely.

With this in mind, we can see what asking and receiving means. Even a human father will normally feed his children properly; he will not give them stones for bread or a serpent for fish. God will give good gifts to His children, "to *them* that ask Him." We are members of a family, God's family. We should ask as members of His community, not as pigs or dogs. James, the brother of our Lord, says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). We will not normally give to one of our children who is selfish, thoughtless of his brothers and sisters, and only concerned with his demands. Why should God do so? As godly parents, we give to our children what they need, and more, in terms of our wisdom, not theirs. We have this great promise concerning God's purpose to give:

> 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.
> (I John 5:14-15)

Hear us, O Lord, we beseech Thee. Like blind Bartimaeus, we cry, Jesus, "Thou son of David, Have mercy on me" (Mark 10:48).

11. Prayer and Gratitude

Most prayers are requests, petitions to God for a variety of things. There is nothing wrong with this. God is our heavenly Father, and we are totally dependent on Him; failure to pray is a denial of our dependency. If our children refuse to ask anything of us, we have reason to be troubled: it is a form of radical rebellion.

We ask, and we receive, not as much as we want, for our capacity for wanting more is limitless. The important factor is this: are we grateful? Scripture repeatedly summons us to be grateful:

> O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. (I Chronicles 16:34)
> Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 106:1)
> O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 107:1)
> O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 118:1)

This same refrain is repeated many, many times, as witness Psalm 136:1-26. St. Paul sums up the matter of thanks in these words:

> Be careful (or, anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Phil. 4:6)
> In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (I Thess. 5:18)

Gratitude is thus an important religious requirement.

The precondition of gratitude is knowing that God is good, a point much stressed in the psalms. We may not always feel that God is being good to us, but we are not to be governed by our feelings; rather we are to "give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good." "His mercy endureth for ever." God owes us nothing, and all that we are and receive is an act of mercy on His part. His mercy is eternal, and His mercy is our security. Hence, "in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Verbal thanks are good and necessary. In hymns, psalms, and prayers, we are to give thanks. We cannot, however, limit ourselves to words. Obedience is a form of thanksgiving and an expression of gratitude, both in relationship one to another, and especially in relation to God. To obey, we are told, is better than sacrifice (I Sam. 15:22), and God declares,

> But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. (Jeremiah 7:23)

Another form of gratitude is tithing. This is a particularly telling way of giving thanks in our time, because modern culture does not equate wealth

primarily with family, land, friends, or learning, but with money. Similarly, security is seen in terms of money also. The results are deadly in the life of man, in that obedience to God here is for many a departure from common sense. Both clergymen and church members can become uncomfortable or indignant at any stress on tithing *and giving gifts beyond the tithe* as a necessary form of giving thanks. Words cost less.

The fact is, however, as Malachi 3:8-12 makes clear, failure to tithe is to rob God. Note that in Malachi 3:8 to rob God means to withhold both tithes *and* offerings, i.e., gifts in addition to the tithe. This means that gratitude must have practical consequences. This is why giving thanks in both words and deeds is so essentially related to prayer.

Thanksgiving in Scripture requires the firstfruits of our lives and work; priority belongs to God. To deny God His priority is to insult His majesty; we cannot give the leftovers of our lives, money, time, and interest to God without serious consequences.

The necessity for thanksgiving, prayer, and praise holds for men and nations alike. The briefest of all psalms summarizes the requirement for us:

> 1. O praise the LORD, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people.
> 2. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD. (Psalm 117:1-2)

The whole earth has a duty to praise the Lord and to thank Him for His merciful kindness. This praise and thanksgiving must begin with us.

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