

# CHALCEDON

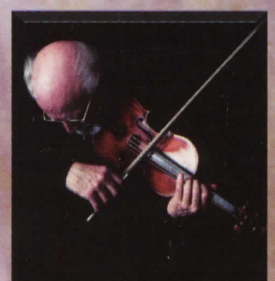
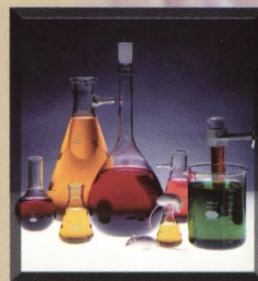
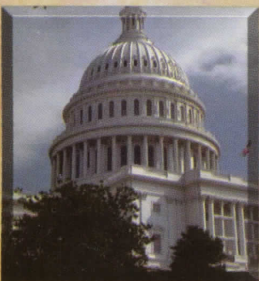
No. 403, February 1999

## *Report*



# THE REFORMED FAITH

# APPLIED



### **In This Issue:**

- R. J. Rushdoony** on *Why I Am Reformed* ■ **Andrew Sandlin** on *Calvinistic Comprehensiveness* ■  
**Brian Abshire** on *Calvin's View of Preaching* ■ **Steve Schlissel** on *Morbid Introspectionism* ■  
**Tom Rose's Review** of *Pat Buchanan's Critique of Free Trade* ■ **and more...**



# Chalcedon Vision Statement

Chalcedon labors to articulate in the clearest possible terms a distinctly Christian and explicitly Biblical solution to the prevalent evils of the modern world. Our objective is nothing short of setting forth the vision and program for rebuilding the theological fortifications of Christian civilization. These fortifications have been eroded by the forces of humanism and secularism over the past three centuries. We are not committed, though, merely to reproducing a glorious Christian past. We work to press the claims of historic Christianity as the Biblical pattern of life everywhere. We work for godly cultural change across the entire spectrum of life. We strive to accomplish this objective by two principal methods.

First, Chalcedon is committed to recovering the intellectual foundations of Christian civilization. We do this in two main ways. Negatively, we expose the bankruptcy of all non-Christian (and alleged but compromising Christian) systems of thought and practice. Positively, we propose an explicitly Biblical system of thought and action as the exclusive basis for civilization. Only by restoring the Christian Faith and Biblical law as the standard of all of life can Christians hope to re-establish Christian civilization.

Second, Chalcedon is dedicated to providing the tools for rebuilding this Christian civilization. We work to assist individuals, families, and institutions by offering explicitly Biblical alternatives to anti-Christian ideas and practices. In this way we guide Christians in the task of governing their own spheres of life in terms of the entire Bible: in family, church, school, vocation, arts, economics, business, media, the state, and all other areas of modern life.

We believe that the source of godly change is regeneration by the Holy Spirit, not revolution by the violence of man. As God regenerates more and more individuals, and as they reorient their lives and areas of personal influence to the teachings of the Bible, He employs them to advance His kingdom and establish Christian civilization. We believe that God's law is the divine pattern of sanctification in every area of life, but it is not the means of justification; man is saved by grace, not by law. The role of every earthly government—including family government, church government, school government, vocational government, and civil government—is to submit to Biblical law. No government in any form can make men Christians or truly obedient; this is the work of God's sovereign grace. Much less should civil government try to impose Biblical law on an unbelieving society. Biblical law cannot be imposed; it must be embraced.

A guiding principle of Chalcedon, in fact, is its devotion to maximum individual freedom under God's law. Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition of Jesus Christ as God of very God and Man of very man, a formula directly challenging every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; only Christ may announce that "All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Historically, therefore, the Chalcedonian creed is the foundation of Western liberty, setting limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of all human freedom (Galatians 5:1). Consequently, we oppose top-heavy, authoritarian systems of government which are, by definition, non-Christian. We advocate instead a series of independent but cooperative institutions and a highly decentralized social order.

Chalcedon is an educational institution. It supports the efforts of Christians and Christian organizations to implement the vision of Christian civilization. Though unapologetically Reformed, Chalcedon supports the kingdom work of all orthodox denominations and churches. Chalcedon is an independent Christian foundation governed by a board of trustees, Christian men in accord with Chalcedon's vision statement. The foundation is not subordinate to the authority of any particular denomination or ecclesiastical body.

# CHALCEDON *Report*

## *A Monthly Report Dealing With the Relationship of Christian Faith to the World*

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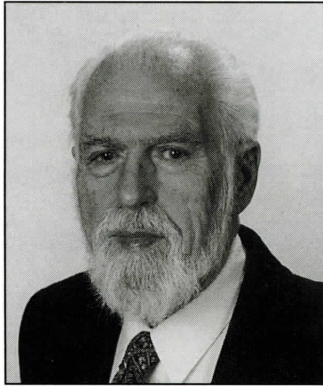
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# Why I Am Reformed

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony



Over the years, I have often been asked what made me a Calvinist, and now the Chalcedon staff has asked that I write an answer to this question. In part, I answered that question in my appendix to *By What Standard?* many years ago. Basically, the answer is this: I am a

Calvinist because God made me so in his mercy and predestinating power.

Thus in a sense, I was born a Calvinist. Again, I was baptized a *covenant* child. My Armenian heritage reinforced this fact. From my earliest years, my memories were of the arrival of friends and relatives from the old county. Numerous meetings with them followed in the three-county area as others met with them to ask about their own loved ones. Some would be told that their loved ones were seen floating dead in a stream, or seized by Turkish and Kurdish forces. This and more told me that this world is a battle between two forces. We were ordained to victory, our Faith assured us, but at a price.

The Bible in this context was a military book, our King's orders to us, his people. As soon as I could read, I read the Bible over and over again. It did not occur to me to doubt anything it said. I did not understand all that I read, but I understood enough to know that the King's word was to be believed and obeyed.

Years later, as a graduate student, I was asked by another if I really took the Westminster Standards literally, so I reread them. It made me more aware of what

a Reformed believer is, and more clear in my grasp of the line of division.

At the time, of course, much that passed for the Reformed Faith or Calvinism was vague and compromising. Much of it was simply a more "dignified" fundamentalism. This is where Dr. Cornelius Van Til was so important. He clarified, restored, and developed the Reformed Faith. He settled and shaped my own faith and direction. I cannot overstate his influence, nor the strength he gave me in my development and direction.

It was the Lord who made me Reformed in his sovereign grace and mercy, in his predestinating power and grace. In youth, his directing power made clear to me that a believer is a doer, and so I gained a vocation.

Being a Reformed believer is very easy: You go with the flow of history, you go with God as against man. Being an unbeliever is what is hard, painfully hard. I have known well enough unbelievers to know how true this is. Life then has no meaning, and we are empty of any truth or purpose. There is then no victory in history, and life is barren of purpose.

The Reformed Faith tells me that there are no meaningless facts, *no brute factuality*, to use Van Til's term, in God's creation. I live in a cosmos of universal and blessed meaning. True, it is at present a battlefield between two alien powers, but the victory of our Lord is assured.

My place in that battle and that victory are all of grace—a privilege. It has brought me my share of problems, but my life has been a rich one compared to the many relatives and ancestors who died for the Faith.

Chalcedon was founded to further our victory in Christ. It amazes me that prominent churchmen actually see my faith in that fullness of victory as wrong. I pity their lack of faith, and I pray they will change.

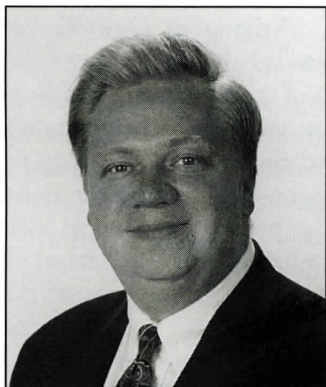
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# Calvinistic Comprehensiveness

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin



The chief conceptual distinctive of Calvinism is covenant theology; the chief material distinctive of Calvinism is comprehensive religion. On these two hinges swing the fortunes of a healthy Calvinism.

## Covenant Theology

Undeniably, covenant theology arose within the Reformed Faith.<sup>1</sup> In summary, covenant theology is the view that God's relationship to man is a distinctly covenantal relation. A covenant is a solemn agreement secured by oath, often by bloody oath. Its secular versions are contracts and compacts. It lays down stipulations for both parties to the covenant, and it applies not only to those parties, but also to their heirs. God graciously enters into covenant with man. He establishes the terms of the covenant, sometimes in treaty format, like the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>2</sup> God in his prevenient grace promises to bless and honor his sovereignly chosen people (there is no hint whatsoever of human goodness or merit stimulating God's choice of whom he will enter into covenant with, or of man's bargaining with God<sup>3</sup>). Man, for his part, pledges allegiance to the Triune God, including obedience to God's commands. God deals with man by means of covenant, and the Bible itself is structured as a covenant document. This is not merely the Reformed understanding of God's dealing with man; it is, in large measure, the structure of Reformed theology itself. This covenantalism distinguishes Reformed theology from the theology of other sectors of the Christian church.

## Comprehensiveness

The chief *material* distinctive, however, is comprehensiveness. By this I mean that the Reformed see the Christian Faith generally, and the Bible specifically, as the source of authority for every aspect of life, not merely the narrowly religious. The outlines of this distinctive were laid in the Reformation era. As Allister McGrath observes of the Reformation's distinct break with the medieval idea of holiness as a special vocation:

The noted Reformation scholar Roland H. Bainton once remarked that when Christianity takes itself seriously, it must either renounce the

world or master it. If the former attitude was characteristic of much medieval Christianity, the latter dominated the thought of the reformers. The Reformation witnessed a remarkable turnabout in attitudes towards the secular order. Monastic Christianity, which had been the source of virtually all the best Christian theology and spiritual writings during the Middle Ages, treated the world and those who lived and worked in it with a certain degree of disdain. *Real* Christians would withdraw from the world, and enter the spiritual security of a monastery. Yet, for the reformers, the real vocation of a Christian lay in serving God in the world. Monasteries were something of an irrelevance to this task. The real business of Christian living was in the cities, marketplaces and council chambers of the secular world, not in the splendid isolation of the monastic cell.

The importance of this shift in outlook cannot be overstated. It might be thought that monastic Christianity was only one component—and perhaps not even the most significant component—of medieval Christianity. Yet Ernst Curtius is one of the many scholars who have emphasized that it is a conveniently neglected matter of historical fact that much of what we refer to as “medieval Christianity” is actually *virtually monastic in its character and origins*. As a result, medieval Christianity was characterized by a strongly anti-secular attitude. To live in the everyday world was a second-rate option; to value the everyday world was seen as a spiritual absurdity, which could lead to all kinds of spiritual degeneration.<sup>4</sup>

For the Reformers, and especially the Reformed, Christianity is, in Abraham Kuyper's words, a “life-system,”<sup>5</sup> what Germans call a *Weltanschauung*, or we call a “world view.” The medieval era, as McGrath observes, had developed a firmly otherworldly character. There is something of Plato's “idealism” about this: man's life on earth can never approach the perfect, aesthetically balanced “ideals” of the eternal. One striking contribution of the Reformation was, without in any sense denying the absolute claims of eternity, to turn men's attention to their earthly responsibilities set forth in the Bible.

## Western Ecclesiocentrism

Closely related to the medieval church's strong separation of secular and sacred categories was its pervasive ecclesiocentrism—its church-centeredness. To a large degree, the Roman Catholic Church had simply assumed the structure of pagan, imperial Rome.<sup>6</sup> As time



went on, the power of that structure rivaled that of the Empire at its zenith. A disastrous byproduct of this ecclesiocentrism was the idea that, so long as men and thought were subordinated within the bosom of the church, they were genuinely Christian; the church itself—in more ways than one—baptized all within its province. It was merely the *objective* existence of the church that mattered. Perhaps even more dangerous, however, was the fact that autonomous, non-Christian thought could easily operate within the strictures of the church merely by virtue of its association with the church itself.<sup>7</sup> It was not subjected to rigorous, Biblical examination. In this way a distinctive rationalistic bent easily won wide acceptance under the very watchful gaze of the ecclesiastical hierarchy charged with preserving the purity of Christ's body.

A prime example of this rationalism is natural law and aspects of natural theology. Natural law is the ancient Greek idea that men can deduce eternally valid law from careful observation and deductions from the natural realm.<sup>8</sup> Natural theology is the notion that man can construct a theology without reference to supernatural revelation (namely, Sacred Scripture) but rather by the same appeal to nature. The idea of the medieval schoolmen, coming to the fore in the approach of its greatest proponent, Thomas Aquinas, is that men can gain extensive knowledge of the universe apart from supernatural revelation, but that that revelation is necessary for salvation and certain higher knowledge—the Trinity, for example. This is the so-called “nature-grace” distinction.

## Two Forms of Autonomy

This notion of *epistemological* human autonomy was paralleled by *soteriological* human autonomy. Since the Second Council of Orange in the sixth century, the Western church had moved progressively in a Pelagian direction. Basically Pelagianism held that men are not naturally sinners, but are divinely endowed with the ability to save themselves. The Western church never went quite this far, though they did embrace a semi-Pelagianism: God graciously furnishes the seed of salvation, but man does the watering and nurturing. In other words, God does not save sinners; he helps them save themselves. The Reformation confronted both forms of autonomy—epistemological and soteriological—with the message that the Bible should govern all of life directly, and that man is saved totally by the grace of God. In principle, at least, all human autonomy was denied. The inner principle of the Reformation swept away the twin mediating factors that created a dominating autonomy within the Western church: an institutional church that stood between the Bible's immediate authority and man's earthly sojourn, and a sacerdotal system that stood between God's immediate grace and man's sinful plight. The Reformation rediscovered the *immediacy* of God's dealings with man. The Bible was

to govern all of life *immediately*, and salvation was to apply to men *immediately*, without intervening institutions.<sup>9</sup>

## The Revenge of Medieval Autonomy

The long-lived autonomy of the medieval church finally got its revenge, however. As the insightful Roman Catholic church historian Christopher Dawson has observed, when the European Enlightenment “began its struggle for the emancipation of the European mind from religious authority, and the reconstitution of culture on a purely rational basis, it found this tradition ready to its hand, and throughout the eighteenth century the cause of rationalism was regarded as practically identical with that of Deism and natural religion,” for the “revival of philosophy as an autonomous, rational discipline and the beginnings of physical science as a systematic rationalisation of nature had their origins in the integral intellectualism of medieval scholasticism.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, *the theoretical foundation of the European Enlightenment which incrementally subverted orthodox Christianity was bequeathed it by the Western church herself!* This simply would not have been possible had the church recognized the error of its ecclesiocentrism and forced every single aspect of life to be governed, not by an ecclesiastical hierarchy, but by the authority of Sacred Scripture.

This is what the inner principle of the Reformation actually required, and it constitutes a distinct break between the Reformation and medieval worlds, despite the obvious and overwhelming continuities.<sup>11</sup> Not that the Reformers held a low view of the church. All of the Reformers were dedicated churchmen, and their work in reforming the church was vital. However, the inner principle of their approach to the Faith demanded an assault on every form of human autonomy wherever it was found. In the first couple of generations, this was not entirely apparent to the Reformers themselves.<sup>12</sup> Naturally, they were occupied with the theological and practical abuses within the church itself. To a certain extent, they assumed the inherited ecclesiology of the medieval world. For example, we know that the Westminster Confession, like Rome, identifies the church as the kingdom of God on earth. Later leaders of the Reformed church, of course, recognized how mistaken this identification really was. Kuyper,<sup>13</sup> Berkhof,<sup>14</sup> Ridderbos,<sup>15</sup> Rushdoony,<sup>16</sup> and others<sup>17</sup> knew that the Reformed approach to the Faith entails a definition of the church as a vital *aspect* of the kingdom of God, but not the kingdom of God itself. The Reformed Faith demands nothing less than the authority of the word of God directly and immediately applied in every sphere of life.

## Sphere Sovereignty

This is where Kuyper's idea of “sphere sovereignty,”<sup>18</sup> adopted by Rushdoony, makes such a valuable contribution. The family, church, state, science, art,



technology, and on and on, all operate as valid spheres of life, independent of each other, but ideally cooperating with one another immediately under divine authority. The institutional church no longer is seen as the incarnation of Christ on the earth, mediating all divine blessings to every aspect of life.<sup>19</sup> Rather, it is the word of God itself, the Sacred Scriptures, that by means of the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, governs all spheres of life independently and mediates God's blessings as God's people adhere to the authority of that Scripture.

## Reconstruction

This means, among other things, that every area of life must be rigorously subjected to the word of God, "reconstructed" in terms of Biblical revelation. It is not enough, for instance, to attach a Christian cover to humanistic textbooks and assume that we are teaching a genuinely Christian language, science, history, art, or so forth. This is the practice of some leading fundamentalist Christian day school textbook publishers, who assume that the "traditional" view of education is somehow Biblical. They are no doubt unaware that they are simply perpetuating the pernicious nature-grace error of the medieval church under a more recent fundamentalist banner. Likewise, those who argue that the Bible has nothing to say about economics, architecture, education, agriculture, and so forth, and instead opt for humanistic versions of these disciplines and practices, perpetuate the grave error of medievalism. Merely to place a Christian cover on a secular and humanistic textbook is not to Christianize the text. Merely to include secular and humanistic ideas within the bosom of the institutional church is not to Christianize those ideas. The church (or for that matter, the family and state) should never be permitted to shield our ideas and practices from a rigorous Biblical critique.

The distinctive material contribution of the Reformed church is just this relentless emphasis on the comprehensive character of Biblical religion. No area of thought or life may be shielded from the searchlight of the Sacred Scriptures, and every area of life presently under the domain of sin must be "reconstructed" in terms of explicit Biblical revelation. This does not mean, of course, that the Bible contains all the specific answers to all the specific questions of sociology, physics, medicine, and so forth. It does mean, however, that the Bible articulates all of the *general* answers to questions on these and all topics, and, in addition, many *specific* answers. Sacred Scripture alone is the revelation in terms of which we can know anything rightly.

To be Biblically Reformed means we are necessarily committed to reorienting every area of life and thought in terms of the teachings of the Bible—not just in the individual, the family, and the church, but in every area of life. This requires rigorous examination (including

self-examination), and a rigorous devotion to scholarship, properly understood.<sup>20</sup> It requires intense study. Of course, no single individual can do all of this work; this is why it is necessary to raise up an entire generation of young thinkers and activists whose objective it is to reorient all areas of life and thought by the Sacred Scriptures.

This is *the* challenge springing necessarily from the single material distinctive of the Reformed Faith—a comprehensive religion.

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<sup>1</sup> William Klempa, "The Concept of Covenant in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Continental and British Reformed Theology," in ed., Donald K. McKim, *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids, 1992), 94-107.

<sup>2</sup> P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, 1976), 36-45.

<sup>3</sup> That the covenant is entirely gracious on God's part is expressed powerfully by Rousas John Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology* (Vallecito, CA, 1994), 1:376-379, and Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, 1966), 214-226.

<sup>4</sup> Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought* (Oxford, 1993 edition), 220, emphasis in original.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, 1931), 9-40.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New York, 1957), 219.

<sup>7</sup> Albert Mirgeler, *Mutations of Western Christianity* (Montreal, 1964), 53, 111, 142.

<sup>8</sup> Heinrich A. Rommen, *The Natural Law* (Indianapolis, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Kuyper, *op. cit.*, 30, 47.

<sup>10</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* (London and New York, 1933), 148, 146.

<sup>11</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels* (New York and Evanston, 1964).

<sup>12</sup> One example of this was their retention of natural-law theory. See August Lang, "The Reformation and Natural Law," in ed., William Park Armstrong, *Calvin and the Reformation* (Grand Rapids [1909], 1980), 56-98.

<sup>13</sup> Kuyper, *op. cit.*, 30.

<sup>14</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1941 edition), 569-570.

<sup>15</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia, 1962), 354-356.

<sup>16</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *Law and Society* (Vallecito, CA, 1986), 335-338. He identifies the church and the kingdom, but holds that the church "includes all regenerate men, the redeemed in heaven and earth, the angels, true 'churches,' Christian states, families, schools, callings, and more," 337.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Dawson, *The Historic Reality of Christian Culture* (London, 1960), 43; Heinrich Hepppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, 1978), 693; Gary North, "God's Covenantal Kingdom," in eds., Gary DeMar and Gary North, *Christian Reconstruction—What It Is, What It Isn't* (Tyler, TX, 1991), 28-29.

<sup>18</sup> Kuyper, *op. cit.*, 79.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Dawson, *The Formation of Christendom* (New York, 1967), 287-296.

<sup>20</sup> For a good start, see ed., Gary North, *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Vallecito, CA, 1979).



# Perseverance in Our Calling

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

*But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

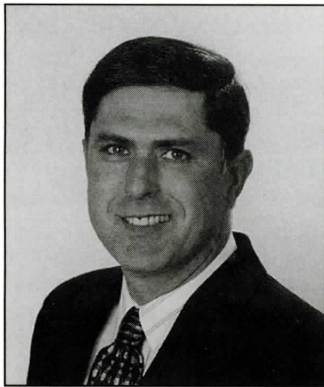
*I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;*

*That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*

*Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

(1 Timothy 6:11-16)



Paul has just finished an exhortation against covetousness which he concluded with his well know exhortation against “the love of money.” Here he commands Timothy as a “man of God” to follow after “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

Focusing on these essentials will prevent any preoccupation with other less important things. Lest we make these goals into a vague, pseudo-spiritual state of mind we must remember that *righteousness* is God’s justice. It is right as defined by God, not one’s own personal definition of “goodness.” If we understand righteousness as God defines it we will understand what true *godliness* is. As we understand God’s grace to us we understand his gift of *faith*. We respond to his love to us by our *love* to others. As we grow in grace we learn *patience* in seeking God’s will and timing rather than our own. In submitting to God’s will, we practice godly *meekness*. These virtues reflect a real understanding of the things of God and growth therein by the power of God’s Spirit. There is no rebellious, self-defined spirituality in view.

The man of God must “fight the good fight of faith.”

Too many see Christianity from a humanistic perspective; they know its joy only in terms of its blessings and ultimate reward. But Christ offers us a cross; he offers us the contempt of the worldly-wise; he offers us the opposition of all who oppose the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his kingdom. Paul tells the man of God to use his Christian virtues and enter the struggle and “lay hold on eternal life.” He is not saying merely to contemplate eternity; he is saying to fight with the self-consciousness that the struggle is an eternal, not a temporal one. This is the fight to which we are “called.” We struggle and focus on God’s righteousness and our responsibility therein because we know it is our calling and the only possible source of fulfillment and joy. Paul then reminds Timothy of his “good profession before many witnesses.” Timothy’s profession was not his words but his life. His life, as should ours, reflected his faith.

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*As we understand God’s  
grace to us we understand  
his gift of faith.*

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Paul then admonishes Timothy in his calling by reminding him of whom he serves. God “quickeneth all things,” Paul tells Timothy and us. As we fight the good fight of faith there will be many times when we see only failure, feel only rejection, and hear only ridicule. This can happen on the individual, church, community, national, or international level. The answer is not to yield to the false assumption that Satan is or can be victorious. The answer is to have faith in the God whose word never returns to him void. We must hold on to “eternal life” (v. 12) and to our God who will, in his own good time, right all wrongs and turn our mourning into joy.

Paul then adds an interesting example of a good confession—Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate. Christ said very little to Pilate. He did not use the opportunity to admonish Pilate or even call him to repentance and faith. Christ yielded to Pilate’s sentence of death as a lamb brought to slaughter. This was Christ’s purpose, and his confession was that he yielded willingly to the



Father's will no matter how agonizing that act was. The atonement saves us and enables us to fight the good fight of faith. Christ obeyed the Father's will; we serve him by taking up our cross and following.

This faithfulness despite great difficulty, as exemplified by Christ himself, is the "charge" (v. 13) or "commandment" to which we are called. Man, even in paradise, was called to work. It is how we find fulfillment; it makes our lives bigger than ourselves. We do not find ourselves in our work, however. We find ourselves in serving our God and Christ. Our callings are then understood in this larger context of God's kingdom. Our work has value because we do it as to the Lord.

We are charged with Timothy to faithfulness in our ministry "until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." We persevere because we were made to work. We persevere because we are focused on righteousness and godliness (v. 11). We persevere because we are fighting the good fight of faith with our eye on the reality of God's eternal truth (v.12). We persevere because our Savior persevered to Calvary (vv. 13-14).

You have heard the old line, "You don't know whom you are dealing with." Perhaps, at times, we believers forget "Whom we are serving." Timothy was separated from his spiritual father fighting alone in a pagan world with churches confused between Paul, Phariseism, and Plato. Heresies about the very nature of Jesus Christ would not be thoroughly denounced until four centuries

later at the Council of Chalcedon. Persecutions on the local level were already taking place and would become common and universal before they would subside. Believers had been given the commission to take the gospel to the ends of the earth but had struggles and opposition within their own number. Paul is telling Timothy that he must remember *who* it is he serves. Jesus is our blessed and only Potentate; not Caesar or any of his arrogant successors. Christ alone is King of Kings and Lord of lords. Only God rules by virtue of his own authority; all other power is derivative, even that which is badly misused. Only God is immortal; it is he who judges all men and nations from all eternity. None have life or hope apart from him. If we understand God's majesty throughout all eternity, we will be able to flee not only sin, but all adversity that detracts us from our callings.

God dwells in the light, the apostle tells us, yet no man can approach him. Our sin keeps us from seeing God. We can *know* him by grace through faith, but now we see only through a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13:12). It therefore behooves us to *understand* our duty, keep our eye on eternal life (v.12) even if we cannot see God, and fight the good fight of faith in our calling. For Timothy, it was the ministry. He needed, as we now need, to keep focused on the majesty of the Sovereign God he served—to him "be honor and power everlasting." If we remember whom it is we serve we will also persevere in our callings.

## FEBRUARY CHALCEDON LECTURES IN TAMPA AND NAPLES

Andrew Sandlin will be in Tampa, Florida February 26, 1999.

Invite your friends and family to come to the Tampa Airport Marriott at the Tampa International Airport (813) 879-5151; time: 7:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Chalcedon's Administrative Assistant, Susan Burns at (209) 532-7674 or [sburns@goldrush.com](mailto:sburns@goldrush.com).

On February 28, Nicene Covenant Church, 4405 Outer Drive, Naples, FL, Andrew Sandlin will be preaching at morning worship. For more information call (941) 566-7167.

## ATTENTION COVENANT YOUTH!

We intend to begin a new feature in the *Chalcedon Report*. Every month we would like to publish a brief article by young Christians (no older than 20) either home schooled or in a Christian day school. The article should be 500-1500 words and be on a topic in line with Chalcedon's Vision Statement.

Chalcedon will pay \$50.00 for any article published.

Please send submissions to Susan Burns c/o Chalcedon,  
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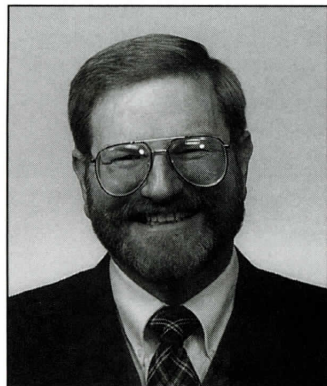
E-mail address [sburns@goldrush.com](mailto:sburns@goldrush.com)



# Calvin and Powerful Preaching

By Rev. Brian M. Abshire

## The Problem



Over the years, after listening to a great many men preach a great number of sermons, I have often asked myself, “Why did they bother?” Oh, they delineated their three points well enough, demonstrated adequately their knowledge of the pluperfect and told their mandatory joke, and

received the mandatory chuckle. But frankly, for all their time, energy and effort, they simply had little to say worth hearing. Their preaching had no point. It is tempting to speculate on what motivates a man to step into a pulpit week after week and plague the people of God with inanities, irrelevancies, wooly-headed nonsense, and pious mush; but you would think I was just being nasty again. But the sad fact is, even in Reformed churches, much of our preaching is often deplorable, and this may well explain the present deplorable state of the church. To demonstrate my erudition, I am going to sprinkle a few quotes from Calvin who saw many of the same problems.

## Calvin's View

Calvin said, “among so many excellent gifts which God has adorned mankind, it is a peculiar privilege that He deigns to consecrate men's lips and tongues to His service, that His voice may be heard in them.” It is the grace of God that he entrusts the proclamation of his word to men. He could have given this job to angels; he could have written it in mile-high letters in the sky. Instead, he chose to reveal himself in Scripture, and allow men to make that revelation known through preaching. Therefore, before a man steps into the pulpit, he must know the God who put him there, why God put him there, and what God expects to be accomplished. God does not call men to preach so that they can pontificate on their own opinions, entertain people with amusing anecdotes, or make a few helpful suggestions. They are there to proclaim the very words of Almighty God. Calvin said “. . . the office of preaching is committed to pastors for no other purpose than that God alone may be heard there.” That means our task is to love, understand, and proclaim the law of God. God is our King; preaching is primarily proclaiming the King's

commandments to his people. Calvin said, “. . . a rule is proscribed to all God's servants that they bring not their own inventions, but simply deliver as from God hand to hand, what they have received from God.”

If a preacher does not know the law of God, if he does not understand how God's precepts work out in his own life and how they are to work in other lives, he simply has nothing to say. Instead he fills up the time wandering around the theological landscape, blathering about nothing while the people of God starve for want of spiritual food. The law is more desirable than gold and sweeter than honey (*cf. Ps. 19*). But thinking they are wiser than God, too many preachers give God's people pious platitudes, warmed-over humanistic psychology, or theological irrelevance. Hence, one acid test of powerful preaching is whether or not the congregation understands WHAT God wants them to do as a result of the sermon and are then motivated to do something as a result of it. If the congregation cannot answer that fundamental question after their pastor preaches, then he has failed them. If the pastor cannot answer that question before he preaches, he has failed God.

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*Powerful preaching gets  
down inside someone's soul  
and transforms it through  
the power of the word.*

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## Many Are Not Truly Called

Part of the problem is that there are many men in the pulpit who are clearly not called to be there. Oh, they may have all the required academic degrees, their theology may be impeccable, and a properly constituted authority may have duly ordained them. But they are not called to preach. You can tell because they do not have “fire in the belly,” *i.e.*, an overwhelming passion to proclaim the word of God—a passion so powerful they cannot just sit idly by but are compelled to preach the word. Preaching for such men is not a chore, but rather life itself. The Apostle Paul said, “I am constrained to preach the gospel” (*1 Cor. 9:16*). For Paul, preaching was not a ticket to an easy middle-class job; it was not a way of attaining the respect



and admiration of others. He *had* to preach. He could not keep himself from preaching. He had “fire in his belly.” If a man does not have this fire, then he is not called to preach. Calvin said, “*God’s servants ought to speak from the inmost affections of their heart.*” Powerful preaching is something that begins deep down inside us at the very root of our being.

Now granted, simply WANTING to preach is not exactly the same as being CALLED to preach. James is very clear on this, “let not many of you become teachers, brethren, knowing as such we will incur a stricter judgment” (3:1). Some “preachers” ought to consider these words carefully and perhaps think about getting themselves an honest job, saving themselves and God’s people a lot of grief.

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*“Then only are reproofs beneficial when they are in a manner seasoned with honey.”*

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Powerful preaching gets down inside someone’s soul and transforms it through the power of the word. It is God through his Holy Spirit who takes his word and rips out sinful hearts. It is God who through his Holy Spirit uses that word to replace wicked hearts with new ones. It is God through his Holy Spirit who then takes his word and rebuilds new lives.

### **Not Pleasing Men**

Powerful preaching is not the same as the rabble-rousing manipulation of the street-corner radical. Neither is it the crowd-pleasing machinations of the great orator. The Apostle Paul was no great shakes as an orator. In fact, it certainly appears that his delivery lacked a few things (*cf. 1 Cor 2:1ff.*). But his words changed lives. Hence a man called to preach is someone God uses to build character into his people. Powerful preaching convicts us deeply of our sins, makes us want to obey God and love our brother, enables us to grow in grace, wisdom and holiness. Powerful preaching is not intended primarily to entertain, or thrill, or excite, but to change lives. Calvin said, “*It is too common a fault that men desire to be taught in an ingenious and witty style.*” But powerful preaching will grab the attention and demand that people listen because of the profundity of the subject matter, the clarity of the presentation, and the application that it demands.

Powerful preaching also requires more than just proclaiming true doctrine (*1 Cor. 11:1*) or giving an interesting theological treatise. Calvin says, “*the duty of a good teacher is rather to exhort to a holy life, than to occupy the minds of men with useless questions.*” We ought to preach so that men might repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. When the Apostle Peter preached the first gospel message at Pentecost, he laid out the true doctrine of Christ by reminding them of the Old Testament prophecies and testifying to what they themselves had seen and heard. But he did not stop there; he also “kept on exhorting them saying, ‘be saved from this perverse generation’” (*Ac. 2:40*). His sermon demanded an application. Erudite philosophical sermons that engage the mind but do not demand a change are just so many empty words in the air. Yes, God’s people need truth, but they need truth *applied!*

Finally, powerful preaching is more than just jumping on peoples’ cases. Calvin says, “*Some ministers are always fulminating through a pretence of zeal, they show no sign of benevolence, hence they have no authority and all their admonitions are hateful.*” The Scriptures give us a number of terms referring to how we should preach. We are to “admonish” the unruly, “encourage” the fainthearted, “strengthen” the weak (*1 Thes. 5:14*). Thus powerful preaching will convict, but it will also encourage. We identify the problem but we also carefully explain the answer. Sometimes, people will be deeply wounded by the Holy Spirit through our preaching and our words are what he will use to comfort them in their distress. Sometimes they must be humbled before God and our words are used to bow their proud necks. But we never leave them in that state of humiliation, for we must always bring back the grace of God in Jesus and our acceptance to him through him. We only bring them down, so that we can then exalt them with Christ. Calvin said, “*Then only are reproofs beneficial when they are in a manner seasoned with honey.*”

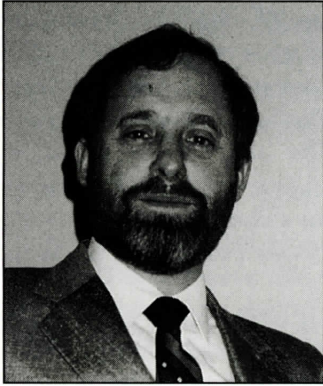
### **Conclusion**

There is much more to say but since Andrew Sandlin’s new editorial policy limits the length of our columns these days (you would think he paid by the word!), we have to cut this short. Just let it be said that powerful preaching is not an option. God demands it, his people need it, and we who are called to preach have a responsibility to provide it. Start with your own heart, daily applying the word of God to your own life (*Jos. 1:8*) so that you know by experience what a sinful heart needs to hear. Love your people and know them so you can preach to the trials, tribulations, and temptations they face. Cry out to the Holy Spirit to fill you (*Ac. 1:8*) and use you, for unless God gives you something, you simply have nothing to say. And then step into that pulpit, wanting to please God, present his word clearly, and see his power unleashed.



# The Reformed View of the Law

*By Rev. William Einwechter*



**I**n the midst of confusion and error regarding the law of God, the Reformed segment of the church speaks a clear and definite word. The Reformed have paid particular attention to the nature, purpose, and authority of the law of God, and their searching the Scriptures has yielded

a solid understanding of the Biblical teaching on the subject. In this article, we will endeavor to briefly summarize the Reformed view of the law under six points.

1. *The law of God is a transcript of the holy character of God.*

The law of God is based on the changeless moral perfections of God. Hence, the commands of God are not arbitrary but flow from the very nature of God himself. Therefore, the law of God is not ultimately rooted in the will of God but in the holy character of God. God cannot will that which is contrary to his own nature; to do so would be to deny himself, and God cannot deny himself. It is true that the law of God is the will of God, but the will of God is the perfect expression of the holy attributes of God. Hence, God commands men to be holy because he himself is holy; God condemns falsehood and calls men to speak the truth because he himself is truth and cannot lie; God commands men to be faithful to their covenant obligations because he himself keeps covenant and is faithful to perform that which he has promised; God commands men to love their neighbor because he himself is love; God commands his ministers to punish the wicked in accord with his revealed sanctions because he is a God of justice who punishes transgressors of his law; etc. Charnock states that in God's law "[t]he purity of his nature was first visible . . . hence, it is called a 'holy law' (*Rom. vii. 12*); a 'pure' law (*Ps. xix. 8*). Holy and pure, as it is a ray of the pure nature of the Lawgiver. When our lives are a comment upon his law, they are expressive of his holiness: we conform to his holiness when we regulate ourselves by his law, as it is a transcript of his holiness. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

2. *The law of God is revealed most clearly and authoritatively in Biblical law.*

One of the ways that God the Creator makes himself known to man is by means of natural revelation. Natural

revelation includes the knowledge of God's power, glory, and Godhead, through his works, and the knowledge of God's moral law through the mind and conscience of man. Man, as one made in the image of God, has the impress of God's moral law stamped on his reason and conscience. The moral law revealed through natural revelation is usually referred to as the "natural law." Turretin states that the natural law "is rightly described by common practical notions, or the light and dictation of conscience (which God has engraven by nature upon every individual, to distinguish between virtue and vice, and to know the things to be avoided and the things to be done)."<sup>2</sup> The existence of this natural law is clearly affirmed by Paul in *Romans 2:14-15*.

However, the natural law is not sufficient to serve as a reliable and authoritative standard for the moral law due to man's limitations as a creature and also due to his fall into sin. Even before the Fall man needed the word of God to interpret his circumstances and to know the will of God for him. With his fall into sin and the resultant corruption of his reason and conscience, the word of God became even more essential. For fallen man, "so great was the blindness of mind, such the perversity of the will and disturbance of the affections that only remains of this [natural] law survived in the hearts of all. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, God revealed his moral law in the pages of Holy Scripture so that man would have an infallible record of the will of God for him. Biblical law is perfect and complete (*Ps. 19-7-10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17*); as such, it is the only authoritative and reliable standard for the knowledge of God's law.

3. *The law of God is unchanging and binding on all men in all ages.*

The moral law, as a transcript of the holy nature of God, is unchangeable as he is unchangeable. As God says, "I am the Lord, I change not" (*Mal. 3:6*), so his law does not change either: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (*Ps. 119:89*); "Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever" (*Ps. 119:160*). Dabney defends the unchanging nature and authority of God's law, saying:

But the view I have given of the Law, as the necessary and unchanging expression of God's rectitude, shows that its authority over moral creatures is unavoidable. If God reveals Himself to them, He cannot but reveal himself as He is. Just these precepts are the inevitable expression of a will guided by immutable perfections. It is therefore impossible that any dispensation, of whatever mercy or grace, could have the effect of abrogating righteous obligation over God's saints. God's mercy through a redeemer satisfying justice,



may lift off the curse of the law for transgression; but it is impossible that it should abrogate rightful authority. The Law then must remain, under every dispensation, the authoritative declaration of God's character.<sup>4</sup>

4. *The law of God is comprehensive in its demands and sets the ethical standards for every sphere of life.*

God's sovereignty extends over all of his works and over all aspects of man's existence. There can be no area of endeavor, no sphere of life, no part of the family, church, or state that should not be governed by God's law. As Creator and King of all the earth, God holds all men and nations accountable to live and act in accord with the standards of his moral law. Berkof states, "The law lays claim, and justly so, on the entire life of man in all its aspects."<sup>5</sup> Therefore, God's law is the supreme standard of ethics—it is the only proper rule and the only acceptable standard to judge the rightness and wrongness of any and all human behavior.

5. *The law of God serves five fundamental purposes in the plan of God.*

First, the law reveals the holy character of God, and teaches man his duty to worship and serve God and to love his neighbor as himself. The law should be used to teach sound doctrine concerning God and man's obligation to God and his neighbor. Second, the law reveals to man that he is a transgressor and under condemnation for his sin. The law must be used in the preaching of the gospel. Third, the law is a schoolmaster to lead men to faith in Jesus Christ. Having taught men their sins and condemnation, it points to the only hope of salvation, the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for sinners. Fourth, the law serves as a means of sanctification for the Christian. The law restrains sin and makes known the will of God. Fifth, the law provides the basis for a just and well-ordered society. God's law instructs man in the proper role of civil government, the sins of men that are to be considered crimes by the state, and how those crimes are to be punished. Adherence to God's law in society restrains evil, protects the citizens, and promotes peace and prosperity.

6. *The law of God has two primary classifications.*

In analyzing the content of God's law, Reformed teachers and theologians have normally divided the law into three categories: moral, ceremonial, and civil. Turretin explains the meaning and significance of these divisions:

The law given by Moses is usually distinguished into three species: moral (treating of morals or of perpetual duties towards God and our neighbor); ceremonial (of the ceremonies or rites about the sacred things to be observed under the Old Testament); and civil, constituting the civil government of the Israelite people. The first is the foundation upon which rests the obligation of the others and these are its appendices and determinations.<sup>6</sup>

However helpful this threefold division has been in discussing the law, it should be recognized that there is no explicit Scriptural justification for this means of categorizing the law of God. There is more Biblical evidence to suggest a two-fold classification of the law, moral and ceremonial: "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable than sacrifice" (*Pr.* 21:3); "But go and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (*Mt.* 9:13; *cf. Hos.* 6:6; *Am.* 5:15, 21-24; *Ps.* 40:6-8; *Jer.* 7:22-23; *Mt.* 12:7).<sup>7</sup> If the law is distinguished by two species, then how do we understand those laws that were given in regard to magistrates and the civil government of Israel? It is best to see the civil laws of the Bible as a subset of the moral law. The civil laws of Israel are a declaration of the moral law in terms of social and political ethics.

The moral law is unchanging and binds all men in all ages to a specific standard of righteousness in the worship and service of God and in the treatment of their neighbor. The moral law (and thus, also, the civil law) has not been abrogated in the New Testament. The ceremonial law which regulated Israel's worship was typological of Christ, his redemption, and the New Testament church. With the coming of Christ these shadows have been fulfilled, and therefore, have been nullified.

## Conclusion

The Reformed view of the law provides the necessary basis for the understanding and use of God's law today. It is faithful to the teachings of Scripture, and seeks to implement the instruction of our Lord that calls his disciples to do and to teach even the least of the commandments of God's law (*Mt.* 5:19). With David, the Reformed believer shouts, "O how love I thy law!" May it please God to use us to cause others to join in that chorus!

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, [1853] 1979), 2:200.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols. (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1994), 2:3.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 2:7.

<sup>4</sup> Robert L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh, [1878] 1985), 353.

<sup>5</sup> L. Berkof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1941), 614.

<sup>6</sup> *op. cit.*, 2:145.

<sup>7</sup> See Greg L. Bahnsen, *By This Standard* (Tyler, TX, 1985), 132-138; *No Other Standard* (Tyler, TX, 1991), 93-110.

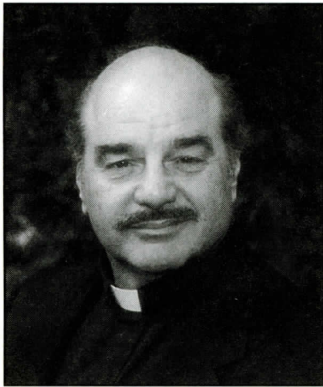
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# Upscale Mansions in Heaven

*By Rev. Ellsworth McIntyre*



The Reformed Faith is always described in textbooks as a debate about doctrines too weak to capture the passions of the great majority of Christians; one must marvel that men would lay down their lives over such impossible-to-understand doctrines. Surely something is

missing from our church history courses. I wonder why?

The Reformed Faith, at least the practical application of the Reformed Faith, is still understood by ordinary Christians who never did, nor ever will, take a history course from pointy-headed church intellectuals.

In the time of Luther, the church owned one third of all property in Europe. The church claimed power to save or condemn from inside history. The Christ standing outside history and speaking through his Bible was ignored. The civil government, the people, and the family all stood in fear of arbitrary power. The Reformation didn't begin with the 95 debate points nailed to the church door at Wittenburg. It began when Luther threw the pope's order of excommunication into the fire. Kings, princes, governments, and shopkeepers were ready to make war for freedom from a tyrannical church claiming power not given to it by the word of God.

In those nations that threw off the yoke of Rome, a great burst of prosperity exploded. Northern Europe, England, and America became masters of the world, and all others enjoyed only the crumbs from the master's table. The Industrial Revolution came first to Protestant nations and nowhere else.

Today, however, the West is declining in every way. The birth rates of northern Europe and America are below replacement. We are a dying culture that could soon burn on the ash heap of history. What is the reason? The history of the first Reformation is not taught anywhere, not even in church schools, as the triumph of God's law over church law. In fact, the false plan of salvation taught by our television evangelists and effeminate pastors claims to free the sinner from the law of God. Lawless, permissive love has replaced the Lord's stern warning, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (*Jn. 14:15*). If heaven has an underclass of slum dwellers, today's pastors will surely dwell in them. We shall not all be equal in heaven. The Lord

warns, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (*Mt. 5:19*). If sinners can ignore the Ten Commandments, cannot the civil government also? Now, you know why some Democrats say, "Clinton didn't break any law." This filthy doctrine was taught to the Democrats by the Republican clergy. Is it any wonder that ". . . judgment must begin at the house of God" (*1 Pet. 4:17*)?

I believe, however, Western man will not die on the ash heap of history because a great Christian revival has been going on for the past thirty years. My high school class of 1953 never gathered at the flagpole for prayer, nor did we have a Bible study group, nor did we hear any arguments against evolution. All of these are common in schools today. We never heard of home schooling, Promise Keepers, or humanism as a bad idea. The "good old days" were not that good. We old guys should rise above our prejudices and admit the truth. Behind the conservative movement is the new Christian Reformation. This time, the monster sitting in the temple claiming to speak for God is civil government. The church shivers like a wet mouse, while our government claims to define the family, sexual relationship, and every area of life. The American government owns over thirty percent of our land in direct contradiction to its own law. One day a few Christians will say, "We will not serve you any longer. You can't take our children to die in wars that are not justified by the Bible. You can't take the property that belongs to my family to buy votes from your friends. You can't protect baby killers, homosexuals, and adulterers and claim to speak for God. The law of God forbids such things. The government must obey the law of God or else!"

When this happens, a new burst of prosperity greater than the first Reformation will explode like a star in the sky. Our enemies in the civil government and the church will step forward to claim credit, but the real heroes of this reformation will reign with the heroes of the first Reformation forever in heaven. If you get there, you will find us living in the upscale mansions of the permanent world above.

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# “1631”: A Variation on a Theme by Orwell

By Alex Hammer



It was a bright, cold day in April, the clocks were striking thirteen, and the second worship service had just begun. Winston Smythe, whose chief responsibility at Goodchurch 1631 was to smile and hand out bulletins, had finished his Sabbath chores for the morning, and taken his customary seat in the back

of the sanctuary. He removed his ballpoint pen from his left breast pocket and began dutifully taking notes on the behavior of the several people in front of him, all of whom had their back to Winston while they stared straight ahead.

“Bible is double-plus-good,” said Pastor Whittle from behind his pine pulpit at the front of the sanctuary.

“Amen,” said nearly everyone in perfect unity, including Winston, though his mind was occupied elsewhere. He was staring at someone in the seventh pew from the front.

“It won’t be long now,” Winston inwardly lamented with a silent sneer, “before that poor devil is gone and forgotten.”

Winston wrote on his pad, “Pew #7, Hamilton Burgeron: ungood worshiper, double-plus-unhumble.”

“Double-plus-unhumble” was the current official term for such behavior as might draw attention to one’s self in church, and so divert attention away from God. The older description for this sort of behavior, however subtle or extreme, had been “Proud,” but this term had been discarded from the most recent edition of the Plaintalk Manual, which was appended to Winston’s Gov-Book. Winston had recently been enlisted as an agent for the Conscience Committee, and was now permitted to read the Gov-Book under the supervision of the Sitters, who, together with the Pastor, made up the entire executive, legislative, and judicial government of Goodchurch 1631. Winston greatly admired the efficiency of his church’s denomination in the destruction of needless words, and was especially delighted at having been selected to serve a term on the Conscience Committee. He was determined not to use a single obsolete term in his testipad, but to make his written testimony as breviclear as possible.

“Jesus double-plus-good!” Pastor Whittle shouted at everyone, and then cast his gaze around the sanctuary, his confident jaw now basking in the contrast of absolute silence, as if daring any Christian in the sanctuary to disagree with him or punch him in the mouth. No one dared.

“Man need Bible, Man need Jesus,” he continued in a more casual and intimate tone, relaxing his chin.

But Winston could see that Hamilton Burgeron was not paying attention to the sermon; that he was ignoring the means of grace and scorning from his heart the authority of God’s ambassador. On this point there could be no doubt, the objective evidence was incontrovertible. Certainly the Sitters would agree with Winston’s judgment and congratulate him for a good Sabbath-day’s work.

Winston had been trained to judge the probability of inward sins even from such slight observable factors as the angle of a man’s chin during the sermon, or the way he folded his hands during prayer. Up to this point in the morning’s exercises Hamilton had been nodding his head whenever the people said “Amen,” but when a trained eye perceived these mannerisms in context, such activity was only a dead giveaway that a man was faking his worship. Winston’s personal instructor had taught him that the surest sign of hidden sin—surer even than a downcast slouch during handshaketime—was a flawless outward appearance.

“Anyone whose life is lived in such a manner as to defy even the slightest censure according to Biblical Law,” Winston’s Shepherding Sitter had told him, “is obviously attempting to escape the embarrassing duty of public repentance by hiding his true nature from those God has appointed to discipline him. He is definitely guilty of a far deeper wickedness than can be seen with the naked eye, and most likely that sin is pride, or ‘unhumbleness,’ as you will soon learn to call it.”

Winston was shaken out of his reverie by some more thunder from up front. “Jesus double-plus-good! Believe-obey and heaven next!”

Pastor Whittle was one of the most eloquent Pastors in the entire Goodenomination. He was famed among the Tithingclass for his courage in denouncing sin, and was famed among the Sitters for his tact in denouncing it in such a manner that it was left up to every Christian’s conscience to decide for himself exactly what sin was, and if he had any of it in his life. This was called “doublepreach” in the Gov-Book, and it had brought more souls to Jesus than any other method of ministry in recent memory. And not only were the enhanced attendance and membership figures attributed to the innovations of doublepreach, but also the increase of peace and unity among those who attended and joined.

Religious arguments had stopped a long time ago at all Goodchurches; and in most places, even disagreeable thoughts were a thing of the past. The miracle of the Goodenomination System and its doublepreach was that



it had cut out the possibility of heresy and schism at the very root of the problem—which was theology itself. The progress of the kingdom of God, it was discovered, depended not on the increase of knowledge but on the increase of agreement, and this could be achieved only by the reduction of the Christian Faith to the lowest common denominator of agreeable doctrine and practice; first in the ministry of the Word, by the use of plaintalk and doublepreach, and secondly in the administration of church discipline.

The system of government, with its simple checks and balances, was what made discipline so easy to maintain in all Goodchurches. The system required a subscription of faith only from the Sitters, while allowing the Tithingclass to maintain any belief they pleased, so long as they vowed to keep their beliefs to themselves and always to submit to those in authority over them who had subscribed to the doctrines of the church.

Doctrine could never divide a Goodchurch, since the interpretation of Scripture was kept private, and never disputed nor made the basis of any disciplinary charge. The Sitters were granted the sole authority—not to interpret Scripture—but rather to interpret all the rest of reality for the church; a member could be disciplined only on the basis of the Sitters' collective interpretation of his soul. As a check and balance against the possible corruption of this enormous power, all members were granted the authority to pray for their leaders not to be corrupted.

Within this covenant, the local Sitters of every Goodchurch could easily and efficiently maintain perfect harmony in their congregations by enforcing standards of conscience rather than conduct. All crimes of doctrine and practice had long ago been wiped out of existence when the Goodenomination had perfected the simplicity of its disciplinary system. Now there was only one kind of sin for which a member might be disciplined; the sin of conscience, or "sincon," as it was called in plaintalk.

Sincon was the reality behind the words and deeds of rebellious or unhumble members; doctrine and practice were moot and arguments unnecessary once sincon was discovered in a church member by those whom God had appointed to interpret reality for him. One could be disciplined by the Sitters for giving to the poor in arrogance, or for telling the truth in hate, or for working hard in greed. The pronouncement of sincon was the perfect instrument of justice, since it accounted for everything in the life of an enemy of the peace, and since it was impossible to disprove. And even if it were possible to disprove a charge of sincon, there would be no jury capable of being persuaded by such a defense.

The Goodenomination had inherited this judiciary strength from the Presbyterians of earlier times, whose structure required that the courts of the church at every level act as both prosecutor and judge, allowing for the possibility of appeal only to a larger court of exactly the same structure and interests. In this manner, the Goodenomination System was secured against any

rebellion by having disarmed its subjects of any exact standard of law and of any other judges than those men whose very existence depended on their cooperation in condemning all enemies of the peace.

The System was a perfect delight to almost every professing Christian in the modern world, since it promised absolution for all sins of omission and commission so long as a church member never gave the Sitters any cause to take notice of his life. Those of the Tithingclass, because of their extraordinarily devout nature, were especially delighted and thankful to God for granting them relief from the tiresome and socially dangerous duty of making a stand for any article of faith. In a Goodchurch, a Tithingman's single duty to God was the increase of his wealth for the church's sake. In this manner, he won honor not only in the church but in the world, and so long as he kept himself from poverty, he could rest assured of his safety from the wrath of God in the world to come. For even if the Sitters were to replace the worship of God with the worship of Satan, the Tithingclass would be immune to God's judgment, since it was not their responsibility to govern but only to fund the government with a tenth of their income. No matter what the government did with the tithe itself, the Tithers could remain certain of their reward in heaven, so long as they had fervently prayed against the corruption they had funded.

The System had a favorable effect also on the very lowest class of the church, which was also the largest class by far. Members of this class were called the Pops, which was plaintalk for "populace." Individuals of this class were given the greatest freedom in the church, since they were by nature incapable of subversion. The Pops had neither the motivation nor the intellectual capacity for organizing themselves into a union for the achievement of any goal whatever in the church. They were all content merely to complain quietly amongst themselves about how "the church isn't what it used to be." Most of the Pops were non-tithers out of disinterest rather than principle or actual poverty, and had as little knowledge of God as they had respect for his worship or care for his church; even their complaints were for the most part very misinformed and almost entirely peculiar to the individual.

The Sitters would cultivate this disorder and ignorance of the Pops through complicated church activities designed to quell the cultivation of grassroots ecclesiastical power through the maintenance of mediocrity. Revolutionary ecclesiastical power was proven by historical research always to have begun in Presbyterian bodies with the education of the electorate by overtalented and unhumble agitators. Such agitators never rose up from the Pops themselves, nor from the Sitters, and certainly never from the Byters or anyone who attended the Gener-Ass on a regular basis. Agitators were always of the Tithingclass, and would abandon the social benefits of their ecclesiastical origins in order to move among the Pops, gathering them together in larger and larger groups and always teaching them which of their gripes were in accord with Scripture. "Excellence,"



the Gov-Book declared, “is the symptom of rebellious discontent; therefore make the first to be last and the last to be first, humble the great and exalt the lowly.”

One way the System provided against the possibility of subversion was through the institution of what came to be known as the lottery. The lottery was the annual ceremony of electing from among the Pops a candidate for the office of Sitter. Any Pop who desired to labor for the improvement of the church could enter his name in the lottery. At the next congregational meeting, all the names would be collected and put into a fishbowl. Then the Pastor would pick a name from the bowl and read it aloud. There would be applause, and then prayer for the candidate concerning the training process that was ahead of him. Within a month the Pop would return of his own accord to his original status, most humble, contented, and thankful to God.

The most general rule concerning the control of the Pops was that they were never to be disciplined, nor even to be challenged; rather they were always to be entertained, and all the while led to believe that they were participating in the government and glory of the church, chiefly through the rituals of the lottery and the congregational vote. But it was their financial participation—and only as a mass, since individually every Pop’s contribution was paltry—which was essential to the survival and prosperity of the whole Goodenomination System. For this reason, the pleasure of the Pops was always the System’s primary concern; the chief and highest end of every Sitter, Byter, and Ass.

“Jesus! Jeesus! Jeesuhs!” Pastor Whittle shouted, louder and angrier each time; pounding his pulpit and stamping his feet in open and public defiance of the devil and his angels; challenging all the army of darkness at once to do as they would with his body, for his soul was safe from harm.

“Amen!!!” Winston rose to his feet and led the church in spontaneous applause, as was the custom at Goodchurch 1631 whenever the Pastor would say Jesus more than twice in a row.

Of all the faithful, only Hamilton was not applauding. Winston prayed a silent prayer for Hamilton’s rebellious soul, and also thanked the Lord for the opportunity to impress the Sitters with a special case in his testipad this week. As he took his seat again, Winston wrote one word next to Hamilton’s name, all in capital letters.

#### EXCOM.

This word was an abbreviation of the obvious, and its execution in Goodchurch was rare enough to merit a great deal of recognition for those who were able to accomplish it against an enemy of the peace. Winston was filled with the joy of the Lord. Hamilton had exposed himself as a schismatic in the presence of the entire assembly of God’s people, and now was subject to examination and process in room 101.

“Those who are taken to room 101 come out with a new conscience or they don’t come out at all,” Winston’s

Shepherding Sitter had told him once at a prayer breakfast. Winston had known better than to ask any questions or to betray any curiosity to his mentor, for curiosity was an early symptom of sincon. Winston only smiled toward his master, as if in awe of his eloquence, which was beyond Winston’s poor capacity to interpret without help. This brought about the desired effect, as humility always does with Sitters, and his master patiently explained his meaning in between bites of bacon. “Room 101,” he chewed and swallowed, “is where they keep the thing that Christians fear the most. Room 101 is where you experience the judgment of God. There is no grace, nor even any benefit of the doubt in Room 101. The Sitters are God, Winston. What they bind on earth is bound in heaven. They have the sole authority to interpret life itself, if not the Scriptures. Any disagreement of conscience which the Sitters regard as dangerous to the peace of the church—unless the criminal repents of his interpretation and makes amends—is punishable by Excom.”

The teacher chewed some more and Winston smiled at him again. The Sitter continued, “Of course, this does not contradict every member’s sacred right of private interpretation. Any interpretation of the Bible is allowed at all Goodchurches, so long as it is kept private. Jesus does not even have to be God, exactly, nor raised from the dead, precisely; there does not need to be a hell, as such, nor a judgment, *per se*.”

Winston betrayed himself with a look of slight confusion. But his mentor only took great delight in showing him all the more mercy for his many faults. He continued slowly and patiently, “This is the great mysterious wisdom of doublepreach, Winston. At Goodchurches, all interpretations are equal and united, and none of them punished or corrected as if they were errors. With doublepreach the Pastor and the Sitters are able to avoid such unnecessary controversies over words and to get down to the substantial underlying spiritual problems that cause God to be double-plus-unhappy.

“Doublepreach speaks directly to the heart and to reality itself—without quibbling over the meaning of words. With doublepreach, the rulers and teachers of the church don’t need to waste any time with the devil’s arguments—arguments go on forever, and they always lead to diversity, and sometimes even to persuasion. And you know what that means.”

“Persuasion is Schism,” Winston quoted from memory, beaming with humility.

“That’s right. Persuasion is of the devil—it is the seed of discord, Winston. And we discovered a long time ago that God doesn’t want his appointed leaders to use any of the devil’s tactics to achieve the advancement of the kingdom of God. Instead of persuading people about anything, we just declare things to be so in terms so simple as to defy contradiction. When discipline is necessary, the Sitters simply command the enemy of the peace to do whatever we declare to be the right thing to do at the time—or rather we tell him to stop doing whatever it was



that caught our attention in the first place. If he refuses to stop, then he has demonstrated through his rebellion that he is guilty of sincon, or through his sincon that he is guilty of rebellion—it doesn't matter which way you say it (as a matter of fact, in the next edition of the Plaintalk manual the word "rebellion" will be deleted entirely as a dangerous word). All that's left to do at this point in the trial is to pass judgment and then be rid of him." The Shepherding Sitter wiped his mouth and that was the end of Winston's lesson for the morning.

Pastor Whittle was now beginning the second and least pleasant of the three stages of his doublepreach sermon, the part that must deal with the sin of man and the curse of God. Doublepreach researchers had been working night and day for the last ten years to figure some way to eliminate this unpleasant stage entirely from the process of doublepreach, but unpleasant conflict had thus far proven to be an almost unavoidable ingredient for genuine entertainment; just as novels and films could not entertain without some temporary stimulation of the negative emotions, so also with sermons, it seemed.

Thus far the only sermons which lacked any negative content and yet had entertained the test-groups of Pops were the sermons constructed at Research Central two years ago. An anonymous team of seminary professors had achieved remarkable results by replacing the conflict section of the sermons with a professional pornographic performance. But while the results of these experiments were economically promising, the method was later determined by the General Assembly's lawyers to be hazardous to the non-profit status of the Goodenomination. It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed that they should sell the technology to the highest bidder and use the money to fund other types of research. For now, anyway, the stuff of sin and wrath remained a necessary element for a doublepreach sermon, and Pastor Whittle's skills were still in the highest demand.

"Sin double-plus-ungood," he began in a whisper, instantly capturing everyone's undivided attention, including that of Hamilton, who was now in direct and extended eye contact with the Pastor, and leaning over the empty pew in front of him.

"Dammit," thought Winston, as he erased EXCOM from his testipad, "Posture disqualification."

The Pastor continued, almost as if preaching to Hamilton alone, "Christless Eternity . . ." he said with an operatic flourish, ". . . if unbeliebe-obey Bible! If unJesus, then unheaven; if unheaven, then unhappy! Double-plus-unhappy!"

Hamilton leaned in even closer, making an obvious show to all the people behind him that he was paying attention. Winston glowered at the back of his head, knowing full well how effective this sort of tactic was with the Sitters. "He is deliberately making my job difficult," Winston thought.

The volume from the front of the sanctuary began to rise as the second stage of the sermon neared completion. "Sin! Siiin! Siiiii! God double-plus-unhappy at sin! Repent-believe-obey!"

Pastor Whittle began the third stage of his sermon smiling wide at heaven with upraised arms, "Jesus double-plus-good; man double-plus-ungood. But if man believe-obey Jesus; then man double-plus-good in God-sight! Then God double-plus-happy and man double-plus-happy!" The Pastor's hands at last descended from on high in silence, and folded neatly on the pulpit. His eyes fell from heaven too, the lightning gaze of rapture vanished and replaced by a patience without end, without need for hope. His rhythm was unmistakable—this was the end of the sermon and it was time for people to close their Bibles quietly and prepare to shut their eyes. Pastor Whittle said, "All-pray."

Everyone in the sanctuary bowed his head in silence to receive the benediction. Pastor Whittle pronounced it with expert softness into the pulpit microphone, "Be good. Be happy. Amen."

Winston was now standing a few feet away from the Pastor in the church lobby as several people came filing out of the sanctuary. Winston was keeping an eye out for Hamilton, but it was hard to see him through the crowd. After an irritable delay, Hamilton came into Winston's view. Winston pressed halfway through the crowd to greet his friend with a smile.

"Well, Hamilton. How are you this fine day?"

The crowd dispersed a little and Hamilton said, "Winston!" Hamilton moved through the crowd a few steps to his right and exchanged a word with his spiritual brother at the side of the exiting throng, "I can't thank you enough for recommending this church, Winston. You know how my family and I regard the Reformation as more precious than life itself. I think that we are going to be very happy here. The Pastor's sermon, as always, was flawless—not one single error of doctrine—all perfectly in accord with the Confession of Faith and with the Scriptures! And everybody seems to get along so well in this place. I can say with unwavering confidence that Goodchurch 1631 is without a doubt the very best church I've ever attended. I only hope that I can be of some use in this place while I continue my studies at seminary. Praise God that there is still a remnant in the earth."

Winston shook his hand vigorously and said, "Amen."

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*Although known and feared by a growing number of angry liberal powers as the ringleader of the highly controversial Reformation Underground, Alex Hammer's origins and true identity remain almost a complete mystery. He is rumored to have earned his Ph.D. at Westminster Theological Seminary, though he continues to deny it, and repeated investigations have failed to uncover any trace of his attendance. A scholar, an artist, and a Reformed Reconstructionist, Alex Hammer styles his ministry as "ecclesiastical activism." Many of his theological and satirical works are on display at [www.reformers.org](http://www.reformers.org).*

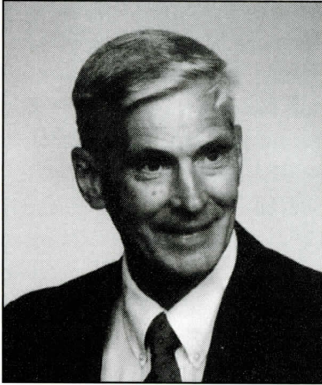


# The Great Betrayal

By Patrick J. Buchanan

Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1998, 376 pp., \$22.95

*Reviewed by Tom Rose*



The sub-title of this book is “How American Sovereignty and Social Justice Are Being Sacrificed to the Gods [sic] of the Global Economy.” Its fifteen chapters are divided into three parts:

**Section 1: “A Tale of Two Nations,”** in which the author states that “free

trade” has pitted high-wage American workers against extremely low-wage workers in less-developed countries (LDCs).

Mr. Buchanan points out that there are now two classes in America, the so-called “Third Wave,” which is made up of bankers, lawyers, diplomats, investors, lobbyists, academics, journalists, executives, professionals, high-tech entrepreneurs, all of whom are “prospering beyond their dreams” (p. 6). The other group is the “Second Wave,” who are the “forgotten Americans left behind.” This group is made up of white- and blue-collar people who work for someone else, “many with hands, tools, and machines in factories soon to be hoisted onto the chopping block of some corporate downsizer in some distant city or foreign country” (p. 7). “Free trade,” the author claims, has led to the closing of factories in the USA and shipping them overseas. This leads to rising profits and high salaries and stock options for top management of big, international corporations; but it leads to lost jobs and despair for middle-class America. The cause of this disturbing scenario is wrong government policies, low-cost loans by the World Bank, and subsidies and bailouts for foreign nations (recent examples being the Mexican bailout in 1994 and the current bailouts of the so-called “Asian Tiger” nations whose economies have gone sour).

In this section the author also gives the history of so-called “free trade” policies, which in reality, opened up one-way trade to foreign countries which themselves practice protectionist policies at the expense of the United States. He does, in fairness, relate some other causes: high domestic taxes, militant labor unions, and onerous government regulations. (Note: My own evaluation is that wrong government policy, even verging on treason, and not *true* free trade, is what has caused the sorry debacle

that Mr. Buchanan so aptly describes.) On p. 48 the author correctly points out:

In the name of “free trade” we let foreign companies—abetted by the regimes that own them—collude and kill U.S. companies, using tactics that would have brought criminal indictments if done by such a conspiracy in the United States.... The corruption of thought begins in the corruption of language. Politicians talk of “trading partners” as though the relationship between the United States and China, or the United States and Japan, is comparable to that between Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Such language does not clarify; it distorts. Toyota and Ford, Boeing and Airbus are not partners; they are adversaries. They may enter into alliances, as even hostile nations do, but added market share for one means diminished market share for the other. Victory for one can mean the death of the other.

Mr. Buchanan also points out (pp. 49-50) that countries like Japan, France, and South Korea may be military allies, but that each has a budget for industrial espionage and technology theft; and that China and India require, for instance, that Boeing transfer aircraft technology in contracting to build plants in their countries. In short, he points out that a vicious form of industrial warfare is going on under the guise of “free trade.” He states (p. 66) that:

Postwar Japan listened to our discourse on open markets and went its own mercantilist way. As long as Western wealth, technology, and jobs are moving eastward—through foreign aid, loan guarantees, and huge U.S. trade deficits—China will go along. But when wealth and its all-important by-product, power, no longer move eastward, China will walk away from this global system as casually as the Europeans walked away from their war debts....

The author stresses that, when large transnational corporations set up overseas plants to ship goods into the United States, there arises a conflict of interest between the transnational corporation and the country, for the corporation becomes a potential loser from policies designed to preserve and protect production *inside* the country (p. 102). Then he goes on to point out a working collusion between large international firms and both the Democratic and Republican Parties. Transnational firms



control the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations (ACTPN), which was established by the Trade Act of 1974. The ACTPN employs high-pressure political lobbyists in Washington, D.C., to achieve the goals of the transnational corporations.

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*The second most important question in life, the answer to which will determine the degree of freedom or slavery that people will enjoy or suffer while here on earth is this: What is the proper role of civil government in society? This is the crucially important question that Mr. Buchanan fails to do intellectual battle with.*

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Section 2: "Where and How We Lost the Way" contains seven lengthy chapters.

This is a review of America's past experience under both "free trade" and "protectionist" policies. While it is the longest section and makes for interesting reading, it can be summarized thus: Mr. Buchanan claims that America prospered economically when our political leaders followed protectionist, *i.e.*, high-tariff, policies; but that we suffered economically whenever our country followed "free-trade" policies. One example given, for instance, was when Britain tried to nip young American industries in the bud, after the War of 1812, by flooding us with low-priced imports from Britain. He claims that historic high-tariff, protectionist Republican policy led to high economic growth while low-tariff, "free-trade" policy followed by the Democratic party tended to lead to low economic growth.

Section 3: "The Counterrevolution and the Coming of a New Populism" comprises three chapters in which the author summarizes and makes a final pitch extolling the economic and political benefits of high-tariff protectionism.

Buchanan says that, after World War II, "New Deal

Democrats" resurrected the dream of Woodrow Wilson in creating the International Trade Organization (ITO) "with the power to enforce worldwide free trade over which no nation would be granted veto power" (p. 258). He refers to the "collapse" of the Soviet empire (p. 259), thereby not explicitly recognizing that the engineered "collapse" there did not end communist control of that nation, but was just a dialectic tactic used to cover up the still-existing communist goal of world domination. He correctly stresses the point that 60 years of following present government policy, which he calls "free-trade" policy, has left the United States "dependent on foreign imports, foreign markets, and foreign capital as it had been in the infant days of the new republic" (p. 259).

Again (on p. 261) Mr. Buchanan refers to the communists, "After all, it took the communists decades after the failure of their idea was manifest for them to give up on it." In truth, the communists have *not* given up on their ideal of centralized statist hegemony over their own economy and over the entire world. Any temporary appearance to the contrary is simply a surface dialectic maneuver. I don't doubt that Mr. Buchanan knows that this is so, but he should state it clearly, because such knowledge is important for political leaders to have. To his credit, Mr. Buchanan correctly points to the truth when he states that the Mexican bailout in 1994 (and all other bailouts, for that matter) help the large banks and financial institutions that make shaky loans to LDCs (pp. 268-269). And his following quote is a gem that should be taught to every student in our schools, because it is a truth that America's politicians seem incapable of learning:

Ultimately, NAFTA and the peso devaluation were about larceny on a global scale. Mexico's good people were robbed of half the dollar-purchasing power of the pesos they had sweated for and saved. American border towns lost loyal Mexican customers. American workers saw factories and jobs go south. All so a Mexican regime could run a \$15 billion trade surplus with the United States—and raise the cash to pay off its New York creditors. Mexican and American workers lost, but the big banks were made whole, and the wages the transnationals pay their Mexican labor were sliced in half. No wonder America's financial elite finds a lot to like in Bill Clinton. (p. 273)

In writing about giving the president "fast track" authority in negotiating trade treaties, Mr. Buchanan states (correctly) that, like NAFTA and GATT, it was heavily supported by all the ex-presidents, all the major newspapers in the New York-Washington corridor, all the major think tanks, as well as the Business Roundtable, whose membership had lavished millions of dollars in "soft money" on both political parties to get the measure passed. He states that Republican House members, who were called to a midnight conference by the speaker of the House, had to pass through a gauntlet of corporate



lobbyists demanding that they support “fast track.” (This, dear readers, shows government-big business collusion on a grand scale!) Finally, Mr. Buchanan shows the results of NAFTA: 1) an expanded flood of illegal aliens, 2) a great increase in the flow of drugs being trucked into our country for the benefit of the drug cartels (Remember, drugs used to be flown in to the Mena, Arkansas, airport during Clinton’s governorship era!), and 3) An increase in tainted foods because of lower health and sanitary standards in LDCs.

In the last chapter of his book, Mr. Buchanan calls for a “new nationalism” of high, protective tariffs. He has the integrity to quote some free traders, von Mises, for instance:

A nation’s policy forms an integral whole. Foreign policy and domestic policy are closely linked together, they are but one system. Economic nationalism is the corollary of the present-day domestic policies of government interference with business and of national planning as free trade was the complement of domestic economic freedom.... The trend towards protectionism is ... the outcome of the endeavors to make the state paramount in economic matters. (p. 295)

To this, Buchanan’s reply is “Intending no disrespect, this is nonsense.”

On page 298 the author makes a good case for a “revenue tariff” of 15% (as opposed to a much higher “protective tariff”). He says that a revenue tariff “should be high enough to generate a powerful stream of revenue, but low enough not to destroy trade.” (Note: I can certainly agree with his statement, as I can with the author’s earlier claim that use of a tariff for revenue purposes would allow American citizens freedom from the existing tyranny of the IRS, which could then be disbanded!) In this section he seems to mildly favor both the proposed “flat tax” and the “national sales tax,” both of which would extend the need for the IRS. (I cannot understand Mr. Buchanan’s endorsement of these tax proposals. If our founding fathers made one mistake in drafting the Constitution of 1787, and I believe they did, it was giving the Congress power to levy *direct* taxes on citizens. This was something that the Anti-federalists vigorously opposed! If we have any hope of ending the growing tax and control tyranny in Washington, D.C., it is to emasculate the ability of our central government to levy direct taxes on citizens. A sound method of taxing imports, *i.e.*, a revenue tariff rather than a regime of protective tariffs, is the economic answer to restore lost liberty.)

Buchanan calls for eliminating the corporate income tax and replacing it with a corporate revenue tax as a means of equalizing the taxes that domestic and foreign corporations pay, thus eliminating the incentive for domestic firms to relocate in Mexico or overseas. He shows that too many foreign corporations engage in

“transfer pricing” through which they can artificially generate losses at their domestic American subsidiaries and artificially raise profits in their out-of-the-United States facilities. For instance, European subsidiaries in our country report only about 50% of the profits that domestic American corporations report, while Asian subsidiaries here report only about 10% as the result of hanky-panky bookkeeping (p. 322).

Lastly, Mr. Buchanan confronts his readers with the frightening truth that foreigners today control U.S. companies responsible for such defense items as the D-5 Trident missile, the flight controls of the B-2 bomber, the F-117 Stealth, and the F-22. He also points out that overseas factories are far more susceptible to espionage, sabotage, political dictation, and attacks by terrorists or enemy forces (all of which is true). And he boldly declares that the U.S. income tax code does not need reform, but needs to be ripped out by the roots (p. 324). This stance alone would win him the presidency if he were to run again for that office; but he would have to rescind the endorsement of the flat tax, which he endorses on the same page, lest he lose the votes of citizens who are anxious to be relieved of the present IRS tyranny. As I said in a paragraph above, there can be no restoration of freedom in our Republic *unless* we eliminate the power of the federal government to tax American citizens directly!

## Summary and Evaluation

*The Great Betrayal* makes for interesting reading. In some respects the book is a challenge to a review because the book covers so many topics, and the terminology changes. For instance, in one place the author pans the term “free trade,” meaning the type of international trade that is currently taking place under NAFTA and the WTO, which is really not *true* free trade at all, but rather *bureaucratically managed* trade. But in other places he admits that trade under NAFTA and the WTO *is* managed trade. But, in general, he presents his case well, and does so in such a way as to catch the attention of the special interest groups to whom he appeals for support. He is evidently an astute and able politician. He appeals directly to the large voting blocs that generate enough votes to win an election: blue- and white-collar workers, Blacks, and Mexican-Americans. He forthrightly admits that he is a populist, a word that I personally don’t like because the word means “people’s socialism.” And herein is the danger: A populist stance is inherently a play to empower the civil government to assume powers in society that God does not give it.

The book, as good as it is in covering important points of economic and political history, would be even better if Mr. Buchanan would approach the topic of civil government from an explicitly Biblical viewpoint (but doing so would no doubt alienate an important percentage of those to whom he is appealing). The second most important question in life, the answer to which will



determine the degree of freedom or slavery that people will enjoy or suffer while here on earth is this: *What is the proper role of civil government in society?* This is the crucially important question that Mr. Buchanan fails to do intellectual battle with. Without starting from a consideration of what God's plan is for the role of civil government in society, it is very unlikely that one will be able to develop a plan of government that will truly protect citizens' liberty. Any other approach is more likely than not to concentrate too much arbitrary power in the hands of the civil authority and thus lead to the oppression of the very people whom God raised up civil rulers to protect.

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*published by Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, NY; Christian Economics, published by Christian Freedom Foundation, Buena Park, CA; The Christian Statesman, published by National Reform Association, Pittsburgh, PA; and in many other publications. For ten years he wrote a weekly syndicated column published by newspapers such as The Santa Ana Register (CA), The Indianapolis Morning News (IN), The Manchester Union Leader (NH), The Gazette-Telegraph (CO), The Odessa American (TX), and others. He and his wife, Ruth, raise registered Barzona cattle on a farm near Mercer, PA, where they also write and publish economic textbooks for use by Christian colleges, high schools and home educators. Rose's latest book is Reclaiming the American Dream by Reconstructing the American Republic, published by American Enterprise Publications, 177 N. Spring Rd., Mercer, PA, 16137. Phone: 412-748-3726; Fax: 412-748-5373.*



Monte Wilson, Andrew Sandlin, Brian Abshire, and Joe Morecraft at the Chalcedon Conference at Chalcedon Presbyterian Church, Dunwoody, Georgia, Joe Morecraft, pastor. The conference was held in November 1998.



# Christian Statesman Radio

By Sheryl Ferroni



Jeff Ziegler and Leo Harris



Jeff Ziegler  
broadcasting on  
WERE 1300 AM  
(Cleveland)

“The voice of righteous thunder” is broadcast throughout Northeast Ohio each Wednesday afternoon at 2 p.m. over radio station WERE 1300 AM (Cleveland). The man behind the voice is Rev. Jeffrey A. Ziegler, president of Christian Endeavors and Reformation Bible Institute, a gifted teacher and long-time reconstructionist who has sought “to boldly define the religious landscape of Ohio and translate that into social power.” His hour-long issues-driven program provides Ziegler yet another vehicle among many with which to take ground for the kingdom of Christ.

“Christian Statesman Radio” claims to broadcast the platform of the Religious Right from a strictly Christian perspective. The articulate, confident, and knowledgeable Ziegler accomplishes this in a very forthright and succinct manner. You can be certain that self-proclaimed “right-wingers” have had to redefine their political position to meet the convincing criteria set forth by Ziegler. The politically charged issues addressed on the program are centered on their relevance to the Christian Faith. Topics for discussion have included abortion, political activism, home education, national confessionalism, Knoxian social theory, and the establishment of godly government.

Ziegler opens the program with a well-controlled monologue that effectively sets the stage for the day’s program. His quick paced, rapid-firing presentation leaves the listener in awe wondering if the good Reverend is reading a pre-prepared script. However, it becomes obvious when Ziegler opens the phone lines or when an impromptu call comes in, that this gentleman has clearly thought through the issues, and has been gifted with the ability to present the Reformed position emphatically and without apology. WERE’s programming is marketed toward a very secular audience; thus, frequent callers like Ted, an over-educated would-be Greek philosopher-king who idolizes Plato and Aristotle, keep Ziegler full of opportunities to evangelize and educate the public about the Christian principles that our country was founded upon. Though he

remains polite and courteous, Ziegler literally cuts through the smoke and exposes the type of democratic nightmare with which Ted and his cohorts would enslave us. Were Ziegler to be confined to the comforts of Christian radio, the urgency of the message he brings would surely have far less impact, sandwiched between sets of Christianized elevator music.

Leo Harris, an extremely capable and talented orchestrator of the airwaves, technically assists Ziegler. Not only does he keep the program running smoothly; he screens calls and serves as an accurate gauge of public reaction. Leo smiles and shakes his head a lot, yet I’m not sure this means he disagrees with what he is hearing. Christians (Recons aside!) with guts are a new phenomena for most people.

With the day’s topic sufficiently introduced, Ziegler turns the microphone over to Rev. Phillip “Pastorman” Vollman for a “Clinton Watch Update.” Vollman is the senior pastor of Shiloh Christian Church in Leroy, Ohio, and is well known and respected for his political involvement and uncompromising stand for the unborn. Pastorman meticulously searches the Internet and national news sources to bring to the common folk an update of relevant affairs in Washington D.C. You’ll never hear this stuff on the news at 6 or read it in the morning paper. He has an earnest desire to expose the sin of our philandering President and to send a wake-up call to a sleeping church that has allowed this corrupt administration to take root in our country.

Pastorman also keeps tabs on current national events, as well as state and local political activity and the effects they have on the American people. Vollman’s sincere desire to see this country return to her godly roots is evident and his ability to speak to the common man commendable.

In the interview portion of the program, Ziegler has hosted an eclectic group of people representing laudable Christian endeavors. Guests have included: Rev. Andrew Sandlin, editor of the *Chalcedon Report*; Bill Einwechter, editor of *The Christian Statesman*; Larry Pratt, director of



Gun Owners of America; Bernie Kromer, director of Take Back America; and many local activists who are being converted to reconstructionism. For a homeschooling segment, Ziegler interviewed three mothers currently teaching their children at home. Karen Ziegler, wife of the host, presented a fresh list of resources, and encouragement for others new to the home schooling movement; Jane Coumos, who, amid smoke from a kitchen fire that required a 9-1-1 call, urged fellow veterans on with current legal information on home education; and Sheryl Ferroni provided the details of pre-regulation homeschooling, recounting her experience over the past 17 years.

In answer to the liberal jargon that "Christians want to stop abortion yet do nothing with the children that are spared from death in the womb," Ziegler interviewed Gary Humble. Mr. Humble, with his wife Mona, have adopted a special needs child. Stephen is a joyful, lively little one with several physical challenges. Gary is a New Start board member. New Start is an adoption agency founded by Dona Setzer; it specializes in the placement of special needs children like Stephen.

Frequently Ziegler interviews candidates for public office whose conservative views benefit from CSR exposure. Re-elected State Representative Ron Young, a Lake County, OH, Republican, spent a lot of pre-election time on the program promoting Christian principles in government. Joe Slovenec, candidate for the U.S. House and long time pro-life and political activist, who lost a hard-fought battle in a heavily entrenched democratic area, also brought his campaign to the airwaves.

Locally, Ziegler has affected the political climate with his untiring effort and his faithful pursuit of the establishment of godliness in government. When questions with legal ramification arise, such as picketing or bringing a civil suit against pornographers, he relies on the good judgment of attorneys James O'Leary and Jeffrey Tuomala, who have appeared on the program on several occasions to clarify such issues in a judicial manner.

Fellow statesmen and patriots would do well to follow the lead of Jeffrey A. Ziegler. If we are to impact society in a way that will advance the kingdom of God, we must be willing to publicly proclaim the Faith and the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ. As reconstructionists, we owe this to our forebearers and many future generations.

"Christian Statesman Radio" is now available on the World Wide Web. To download the broadcasts, access CSR's Christian Endeavors and Reformation Bible Institute-sponsored website at: <http://csr.cee-rbi.org/>. To download Real Player, simply follow the link from CSR's site.

This venture not only allows CSR to be broadcast nationally and internationally, but also enables its sponsors to receive the same benefits of worldwide publicity while being linked to an explicitly Christian cause. If you would like to become a CSR sponsor or would like to send donations to this kingdom-advancing cause, you can reach Jeffrey Ziegler by writing in care of: **Christian Endeavors, 35155 Beachpark Drive, Eastlake, OH, 44095.**

### THEONOMY VS. ANTINOMIANISM

In Matthew 5:18, Christ said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

What did he really mean? Was this a call to antinomianism or an affirmation of God's law? Hear Andrew Sandlin and Bob George square off on this important issue!

This radio debate was presented on Cross Talk, hosted by Rich Agozino of KBRT AM 740.

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### ANNOUNCING A CONFERENCE IN NEW ENGLAND

The *Compass* and Tri-City Covenant Church are pleased to announce an important conference on "The Sensate Culture and the Secular State to be held at Tri-City Covenant Church" in Somersworth, New Hampshire on February 27, 1999. The featured speakers are Dr. Harold O. J. Brown and Mr. Otto Scott.

For details, contact:

Rev. Thomas F. Clark  
Tri-City Covenant Church, 150 West High Street, Somersworth, NH 03878  
(603) 692-2093



# An Open Letter to a Morbid Introspectionist

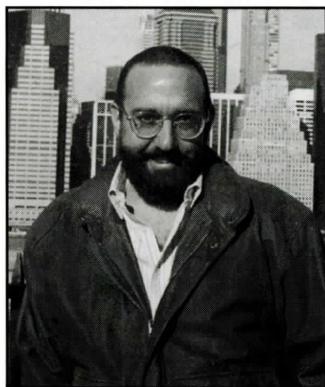
By Steve M. Schlissel

This article by Steve Schlissel pinpoints one of the premier errors of the modern church. As he so incisively shows, not only does the pietistic spirit detract from the Christian's true calling in the earth, it does not even reflect genuine piety. Before the church can be recalled to its world-conquering vision, it must jettison the Morbid Introspectionism Schlissel so deftly refutes.

Steve Schlissel is one of the most profound and poignant ministers in the Reformed church today, and his message deserves careful attention.

*"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad."*

(Ezekiel 13:22)



**T**he event which occasioned this letter was my discovery, some years ago, that many members of my congregation had received tracts (of the "Are You Truly Born Again?" variety) from a former member who, though a lover of the Lord, was deeply affected by that pietistic current in Christian thought which I

will call "Morbid Introspectionism." The people to whom the tracts were sent were/are outstanding Christians who devote their lives daily to the service of the King. Apparently, their zeal and righteous walk were not enough to convince our friend that he should regard them as co-laborers on par with himself. Since this "-ism" remains with us today, we thought it appropriate to revisit its arguments. This is an appeal for a return to the objective standards of Scripture, rather than shifting human sentiment, when we seek to understand the nature of truly Biblical piety in contrast to pietism.

My Dear Brother:

Greetings in our Messiah. It is obvious that you love and fear God and seek to please him in every way. Thank you also for the tracts which you sent to me and many of the congregation which, if not meant to imply that we weren't truly saved, at least suggested that one more close look within wouldn't hurt. You explained that you meant the tracts to be an encouragement to the brethren. It

appears to me that you are faced with a twofold problem: one, what is encouragement? and two, who are the brethren? These are no mean questions for one who devotes so much time and effort in calling people to self-examination! I believe your difficulty stems from a somewhat truncated notion of the system of doctrine taught in Scripture. Allow me to explain.

Very early in the life of the church, false teaching appeared. Jesus had predicted this would happen (*Mt. 24:9-11*). Similarly, in Acts 20 we find Paul warning the Ephesian elders against those who would distort the truth (*v. 30*). To counter such distortions of the truth, the Acts passage exhorts us to proclaim the whole counsel of God. Truly, this is the strongest weapon against error, since error is parasitical by nature, feeding on truth, and then twisting it.

But alas, sinful creatures that we are, we soon forget the desirability—the necessity—of balance, and we often find ourselves giving undue emphasis to one particular doctrine of Scripture. For example, many (oh so many!) today live their Christian lives as if they were on an eschatological egg-hunt. They scan the newspapers daily for more clues that might help them become the first to infallibly identify the triple-sixer. Others concentrate on the gifts of the Spirit (as they understand them), not only missing the significance of the place of these gifts in redemptive history (see Richard Gaffin's, *Perspectives on Pentecost* for a good treatment of the subject), but often living as if there were no other manifestations or ethical demands of a consistent Christian walk. Still others are virtual Satanists, speaking incessantly about demons being the cause of this, that, and of the other thing (some might even say, this letter). Now, to be sure, the Bible does discuss last things, spiritual gifts, and demonology; but none of these constitute the whole (or even the main) teaching of Scripture, and further, none can be truly understood unless properly seen in relation to Jesus Christ himself, his person and work.

## Severing Creation from Redemption

Getting down to specifics, I believe your approach to "the test for spiritual life," while to a certain extent supported by Scripture, suffers from an imbalance which reveals a misunderstanding of the whole will of God. Getting "The Big Picture" may help you see this imbalance. The Bible reveals a three-fold relation which the self-existent God sustains to that which is not himself (*i.e.*, economic relations). These may be expressed as a three-fold covenant, understanding "covenant" to mean



“relationship”: The *Covenant of Creation* (the most basic distinction, Creator/creature, is protected in this covenant); the *Covenant of Redemption* (which distinguishes the church from the world), and the *Covenant of Consummation* (which distinguishes the elect from the non-elect forever). Jesus Christ is Lord in each of these relations.

The characteristic error of those who are commonly called “pietists” is that they sever the Covenant of Creation from the Covenant of Redemption. Christ’s Lordship over God’s “relation to creation” is either denied, minimized, or trivialized. By disconnecting redemption from creation, pietists deny the validity or applicability of the creation commission, *i.e.*, the creation mandate to exercise dominion over the earth, throughout the redemptive (post-Fall) era.

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*But how often must one  
cry at services to be truly  
spiritual?*

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The result of this severing is that the period in which we live and move and have our being is seen *exclusively* (and herein lies the disproportion) as a “training school” for the Covenant of Consummation. God is now doing nothing with the world beyond gathering his elect and preparing them for eternity. With one stroke, most of life on earth has become irrelevant! Against this, Scripture asserts that the “usefulness of spirituality is unlimited, since it holds out the reward of life here and now and of the future life as well: that is a saying you can rely on. . .” (1 Tim. 4: 8, 9—JB).

### **Preserving the Truths of Pietism**

We must be careful, however, to distinguish that which is lopsided in the teaching of pietists from that which is true and valuable. Pietists often exhibit an admirable eagerness to please the Master. No one can doubt that they firmly believe the aspects of truth which they press so vigorously as the ones which will determine, not merely whether one will be called least or greatest within the kingdom, but whether one is to be reckoned as being in the kingdom at all! (Alas, eagerness and sincerity are not the measure of truth—Rom. 10:2.)

The clear devotion of pietists to our Lord, their selflessness in giving, and their willingness to be despised for the gospel’s sake marvelously manifest God’s grace working in and through them. This is what we are all called to, following his example: the daily taking of the cross, despising the shame, keeping our eyes on the

reward now unseen but not uncertain, bearing our momentary and light afflictions in view of the eternal weight of glory, counting ourselves blessed when men revile and persecute us for the Lord’s sake, caring little if we are judged by men so long as we might receive praise from God. This is all most Biblical and admirable (1 Pet. 2:21; Mt. 16:24; Heb. 12:2; 11:26; 2 Cor. 4:17; Mt. 5:11; 2 Cor. 4:3).

Furthermore, only the ignorant could deny that many introspectionists are concerned about real problems that are all too common in the church today: smug complacency, coldness toward God, hypocritical professions, faith in faith rather than faith in Christ. To whatever extent the church can rid herself of these vexatious rashes on the body, she must lift up her voice in harmonious praise!

But to have identified actual problems is not necessarily to have offered appropriate solutions. Rather than a sword (or better, a surgical knife), pietistic preachers often aim a sawed off shotgun at gathered worshipers, wounding many who are truly loved of the Lord. And I often have a nagging suspicion that these bombardiers think they alone have passed all the tests of humility and have thus assumed their seat in the Sanhedrin of the spiritual aristocracy. One friend remarked that introspectionists seem to believe more in an “elite” than an “elect.”

This “overkill” response of pietists to spiritual lethargy is both significant and alarming. As Berkhof explains, early in church history, “increasing worldliness and corruption of the Church gradually led to reaction and gave rise to the tendency of various sects, such as Montanism, the middle of the second, Novationism in the middle of the third, and Donatism at the beginning of the fourth century, to make the holiness of its members the mark of the true Church.” Surely, this is cause for pause.

With these issues in mind, let me briefly analyze what I believe to be wrong with the position you seem to hold, a brand of pietism (or “piosity,” as Professor Murray used to call it) which could well bear the label “Morbid Introspectionism.” I will restrict myself to four areas of concern.

### **Pietism Denigrates Assurance**

First, pietists generally do not give proper place to the grace of assurance (see Larger Catechism, Q&A 80; Confession of Faith, Chapter XVII; Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Days I & XXIII), at least not a solid Biblical assurance, which is built on a Spirit-given confidence in the finished work of Christ and evidenced by a lawful walk, not a passing grade on one’s own self-exam.

Morbid Introspectionists seemingly advocate penetrating self-examination for the goal of perennial self-examination. In a sad twist, Morbid Introspectionists



appear to dread assurance! If one is confident of one's salvation, you make it appear that this is a sign that one is on the broad road leading to destruction. Or, to put it another way, the only way to be sure that you are saved is never to be sure. If you are very insecure, then you may rest assured—perhaps.

We are all well aware that God's people commonly marvel at the very thought of their sins being washed away. One writer has noted that there is nothing easier for the unregenerate to imagine than that God will forgive his sins; and there is nothing more difficult for the regenerate soul, under conviction by the Holy Spirit, to imagine, than that God could forgive his sins! Yet, that is exactly what God has done in Christ. May not such a forgiven sinner take God at his word and proceed with the matters of life?

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*Many (oh so many!) today  
live their Christian lives  
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Moreover, I find it interesting that the Scriptures simply do not contain as many calls for self-examination to those living an orderly and godly life, as you and many others would have us believe. 2 Corinthians 13:5 is the Morbid Introspectionist's natural *locus classicus*, but its point seems to have eluded you: "Examine yourselves, whether ye are in the faith: prove [test] your own selves. Know ye not yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?" R.V.G. Tasker's comments on this passage ought to be required memory work at pietist deprogramming sessions: "The Apostle seems to be reminding them that, after all, they *are* Christians, for in the appeal, 'know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' He is in effect dismissing the idea that they will in fact fail to stand the test . . . If each Corinthian Christian puts himself to the test, he will conclude, Paul is convinced, that Jesus Christ is in him."

In other words, dear brother, according to the Bible, yea, according to the Morbid Introspectionist's favorite text, *there is a decided presumption in favor of the sincerity of a person who confesses Christ*. But in the writing and practices of Introspectionists, there appears a presumption against him. With such a regulating suspicion of professing Christians, it's a wonder that a Morbid Introspectionist minister can pronounce a benediction at the end of a worship service, without a string of qualifiers! As inconsistent as the Corinthians were, Paul accepts their

profession as one that entitles them to be called "brothers" (see 13:11). Let me repeat, while presumption may be mistaken for assurance, doubt may also be mistaken for reprobation. We need a better test than mere "self-examination."

### **Pietism Invokes Unbiblical Criteria**

Second, pietism does not give proper place to the objective criteria given to us in Scripture. What, indeed, *does* form a valid test of an individual's faith commitment, according to the Bible? In the pietistic view, as we have seen, part of the test of whether you're in the Faith is whether you're testing whether you're in the Faith. Sound confusing? I agree. There seems to be no room for a quiet and abiding confidence in one's salvation. "Presumptuousness" is the charge frequently brought against those who have committed the terrible trespass of simply taking God at his word and who enjoy an assurance of his love, feeling no compulsion to take a never-ending inward look. Other criteria for judging the validity of Christian profession encountered over and again in the literature of Morbid Introspectionism are:

*Intensity in prayer:* But how intense is intense enough, according to the Bible?

*Attending upon sermons with tears:* But how often must one cry at services to be truly spiritual? Weekly, monthly, or seasonally? If I haven't cried at the preached word in two or three years, ought I begin to seriously doubt my salvation? Or do I just need a more "Biblical" preacher?

*Unending mournfulness over sins:* One must wonder if some of these brothers have rightly heard the *Good News?* (Lk. 24:47; Heb. 10:17, 18; 1 Jn. 2:12; Ac. 10:43; and please see 2 Cor. 7:10).

*A doctrine of separation that is often more pagan than Christian.* Now I believe with all my heart that Christians ought to pray without ceasing; that we ought to pay close heed to the word preached; that we ought never to be glib about our sins, past or present; and that we ought to practice Biblical separation. But the fact of the matter is that while we may personally demand a great degree of piety from ourselves before we'd think of ourselves as coming close to being worthy of the name "Christian," the Bible indicates that we may question the genuineness of a profession of faith only of those living in open and/or flagrant violation of the law of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. Please note that in the Bible, even false teachers are described according to their own profession and the judgment of charity. They gave themselves out as redeemed men and were considered such in the judgment of the church while they still remained in fellowship.

A man who calls himself "a brother" but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler, may—indeed *must*—be confronted and, if necessary, excommunicated. But where, pray tell, *in Scripture*, has God given us the right to call into question



the faith of someone who professes to love Christ and is living a decent, orderly, and lawful life? Where does Paul challenge the faith of those who aren't praying intensely? Does he not rather exhort them to greater fidelity *in terms of grace received*, in terms of their high calling?

The folks who are cast out by our Lord in the chilling scene described in Matthew 7:21-23 passed their own self-examinations. But note well, that according to Jesus Christ, the difference between mere professors and true possessors is something tangible, measurable and objective: obedience to the law of God. Jesus taught that true believing always results in doing the will of God. The will of God, of course, includes our sanctification (1 *Thes.* 4:3). Our sanctification is by the word, every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God (*Jn.* 17:17). As we do God's word, we find that we are strengthened in our faith (*Jn.* 7:17).

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies" (*Ps.* 119:59). Self-examination has a goal, and that goal is increased conformity to the image of God as revealed in his Christ, his word, his law. Obedience to God's commands brings confidence, a sense of freedom, and answers to prayer (*1 Jn.* 3:21-23). No one is saved who does not confess the true Christ. No one is sincere in his confession of the Christ if he "keepeth not his commandments" (*1 Jn.* 2:4). Here, by the grace of God, is an objective referent that keeps us from Morbid Introspectionism, from frustration and unproductivity. Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The subjective criteria by which Morbid Introspectionists measure professing Christians is too arbitrary and prone to great abuse. "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep his commandments, because this applies to every person" (*Ec.* 12:13, NASB).

### **Pietism is Dualistic**

Third, proper place is not accorded to externalization of the Spirit's power. In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul tells us that the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power (*v.* 20). He says in another place that we have incomparably great power in Christ, power like that which raised him from the dead and enthroned him above every other power. What do pietists do with all this incredible power? They take it and turn it in only on themselves, instead of moving it out into earth-changing, world-sanctifying action. That is the moral equivalent of the apostles taking the bread which Jesus broke and, instead of distributing it to the 5,000, hoarding it for their own use! What a travesty of true piety!

And here we discover one of pietism's most serious problems: It has no earthly goal. To be sure, the ultimate goal of all Christians is eternal heaven with Christ, to actively glorify and enjoy God forever. But if we keep in mind the fact that God is the Creator, as well as the Redeemer and Consummator, we will see that just as it is wrong to expect to participate in the glorious

Consummation while bypassing God's only redemption, so it is wrong to bask in redemption without seeking to have its benefits rebound to creation. We have a cultural mandate given to us in Genesis (1:26-28; 2:15; 9:1-3:7) which has not been rescinded. If we would not incur God's displeasure, we must take our place and his power and seek to fulfill that mandate. "The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned back on the day of battle" (*Ps.* 78:9). We must not be like them.

The newness we enjoy in the gospel, we must remember, is largely *re*-newness. It is this old sinner, Steve Martin Schlissel, who is being made new. God did not grind me to powder to save a cell for a clone. He saved *me* and is making *me* new. Similarly, it is this world that is in the process of being redeemed, this cosmos. The creation waits in eager expectation for the consummation, just as we do. Personal and universal sanctification proceed concurrently. Because neither will be perfected until the final glory doesn't mean that we sit idly by, self-absorbed. The pietist's rejection of his God-assigned role in creation necessarily carries with it a rejection of history. But we need not denigrate the temporal in order to appreciate the eternal. Both are created.

If Liberals overemphasize "this world," paying no mind to the next, pietists commit the opposite error. They identify themselves strictly in terms of themselves, failing to understand that we have been enmeshed, in the design and decree of God, in a complex history of the redemption of the world. This history is *now*; it is rich; it is exciting.

Pietists, unable to see that the Spirit's power is to be externally manifested through Christ's people in this world, bringing God's word to bear upon this world unto judgment and salvation, pray for revival only, not restoration. If we recognize God as the Creator as well as the Redeemer, we will not attempt to sever man from the realm of nature. Bavinck describes this tendency well:

Outside of and apart from God there is no existence. This truth has been disregarded again and again. Plato's dualism, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Manichaenism, limited God's revelation, and posited a material substance, represented as existing independently of and in hostile relation to God. In various ways this dualism influenced theology; the same dualistic principle is evident when ... the seat of religion is confined to the heart or conscience, mind or will. In this way the realm of nature with its forces and energies, man in his social and political life, and also science and art, are given a place outside of the sphere of God's revelation. They become neutral spheres and are viewed as existing apart from God.... Religion, altogether confined to the inner chamber and to the innermost recesses of the heart, forfeits every claim to respect.

Thus we see that Morbid Introspectionism is based on dualism. The Introspectionist can never (on his principles)



really know God, because he views creation as *hiding* God rather than revealing him. But if we recognize that creation and providence, *i.e.*, all of life in all its vast array, reveal God, then we must conclude that what obscures the beatific vision is *not matter*, but sin. And if we are to act redemptively, well then, we ought to go a'redeeming! That means redeeming all of life, putting sin to death by the Spirit in accordance with God's perfect word, so that God might be more clearly seen, more closely felt in all activities, until that great revelation, to be made in his own time, at the Consummation.

### **Pietism Encourages Impiety**

Fourth, pietism actually encourages impiety. Like all disproportionate interpretations of Scripture, pietism ends up promoting what it sought to relieve. As women's lib resulted in women's bondage, as humanism dehumanizes, so pietism "de-pietizes." To put it plainly, pietists are often among the most obnoxious hypocrites we encounter on earth. By failing to see the cultural obligations of God's word, pietists make a wrong turn onto the endless highway of self-examination. They turn within and never leave. This is where the road to frustration begins for too many Christians who fail to understand that the value of self-examination can only be discovered when it is part of the broader program of God. Tragically, what God gave as a means to an end becomes an end in itself and sinful traits emerge. The life of the church becomes an ugly struggle over meaningless trifles in which the sole purpose is sinful power.

All too often this sinful urge to dominion is masked with hypocritical meekness. The Morbid Introspectionist's "big picture" extends only to personal sins—finding them, discussing them, bemoaning them. His obsession with his own sins is soon unsatisfactory. He now moves on to carefully examine the behavior and attitudes of his fellow-travelers. While continuing to give lip-service to his own sins, he finds much greater pleasure in picking out and magnifying those of others. Eventually, he cannot utter a

kind word about another Christian without adding a remark about this or that sin or defect. Everyone is regarded with suspicion except those who will join him in barbecuing fellow-believers. This is "I-thank-you-that-you-have-not-made-me-like-that publican" with a vengeance.

The church and the Christian must have a task as big as the gospel. Christ is bringing all God's enemies under his feet. The war is fought on all fronts, wherever God gives us opportunity. The standard is the entire word of God. The power is the Spirit's. The Commander is Christ. *Other Christians are our fellow-soldiers, not our enemies.* If they wear our uniform, swear allegiance to our Commander, and abide by his rules, we accept them. We *love* them. We make every effort to build all our brothers up in the Lord, not tear them down. We may not call their loyalty into question without solid, Biblical warrant. To do so is to undermine the morale of the troops and might be considered a crime against the Commander. Rather than question their faith, we encourage their faithfulness.

Our fight against sin begins within, but it does not end there. My dear, Morbidly Introspective brother, we have a world to conquer for Christ. We cannot do it riding high horses. I beg you, please get off yours. You'd make a great infantryman if you'd only recognize the enemy. Ask God to help you learn which way to point your gun.

*Yours and His,  
Steve Schlissel*

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*Steve Schlissel has been pastor of Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn, NY since 1979. He serves as the Overseer of Urban Nations (a mission to the world in a single city), and is the Director of Meantime Ministries (an outreach to women who were sexually abused as children). Steve lives with his wife of 24 years, Jeanne, and their five children.*

## **MATCHMAKING FOR REFORMED SINGLES**

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# Chalcedon Itinerary 1999

- February 3 6:30 p.m. A Debate on Calvinism with Andrew Sandlin and Charles Doughty, Church of Christ at Mountain View, **Winchester, VA** (Route 11, South, next to the DMV). Call Maxine Shiflette at (540) 869-2250 for more information.
- February 12 7:00 p.m. Chalcedon Lecture Series, **Vallecito, CA**.
- February 14 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**.
- February 26 7:00 p.m. at Tampa Airport Marriott at Tampa International Airport, (813) 879-5151.
- February 28 Nicene Covenant Church, 4405 Outer Drive, **Naples, FL**. Andrew Sandlin at morning worship. For more information, call (941) 566-7167.
- March 12 7:00 p.m. Chalcedon Lecture Series, **Vallecito, CA**.
- March 14 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**.
- March 19 7:00 p.m. Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott, 8440 Freeport Parkway, **Irving, TX**. (972) 929-8800.
- March 20 7:00 p.m. Houston Hobby Airport Hilton, 8181 Airport Blvd., **Houston, TX**. (713) 645-3000.
- April 9 7:00 p.m. Chalcedon Lecture Series, **Vallecito, CA**.
- April 11 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**.
- April 16 **Portland, OR**. Andrew Sandlin lectures, details to be announced later.
- April, 17 **Seattle, WA**. Andrew Sandlin lectures, details to be announced later.
- May **Peter Hammond** travels to the U. S. for speaking engagements, details to be announced later.
- May 14 7:00 p.m. Chalcedon Lecture Series, **Vallecito, CA**.
- May 16 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**.
- May 21, 22 **Northern Virginia**. Andrew Sandlin lectures, details to be announced later.
- June 11 7:00 p.m. Chalcedon Lecture Series, **Vallecito, CA**.
- June 13 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**.
- June 15-20 **Midwest**. Andrew Sandlin lectures, details to be announced later.



***“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.”***

**First Timothy 5:8**

The Apostle Paul wrote those words near the beginning of the First Millennium A.D. We stand on the threshold of the Third Millennium, the Year Of Our Lord 2000, “Y2K.”

Many credible individuals around the world are quite concerned about “Y2K.” They believe that businesses and governments will not be completely prepared. Some computers that run the world will “go on strike” at midnight, 1/1/00 (or sooner). And it may take weeks, months, or even years to get them working right again.

Although we know there will be problems,  
no one knows HOW BAD they will be,  
or HOW LONG they will last.

Right now, about one third of the world goes to bed hungry every night.  
If enough computers fail beginning on January 1, 2000,  
**FOOD SHORTAGES** may appear in America and other “civilized” places.

At the minimum, every family should have some food stored away in case shortages appear. As a Christian, it is your duty to feed and provide for your loved ones. If your family is hungry, just about everything else will stop until they are fed. Without food, you may become like the animals featured on TV nature shows that spend most of their waking hours looking for the next meal.

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**We all need to “HOPE for the best, but PREPARE for the worst.”**



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## Back Issues

Back issues of the *Report* will no longer be complimentary. This policy has been too expensive to maintain. Back issues will be \$2.00 each. Phone Chalcedon for quantity prices.