

ANTITHESIS

A Review of Contemporary Christian Thought and Culture

INSIDE:

Reconciling the Media and the Military
Slicing the "Problem" of Evil
Dicing Morbid Introspectionism
Mincing It Up Over Beverage Alcohol Use
and How to Create a Water Shortage

"The immortals know
no care, yet the lot they spin
for man is full of sorrow; on
the floor of Jove's palace
there stand two urns, the
one filled with evil gifts, and
the other with good
ones....He for whom Jove,
the Lord of thunder, mixes
the gifts he sends, will meet
now with good and now with
evil fortune."

Homer, Iliad

"Yet doubt not but in
Valley and Plain

God is as here, and
will be found alike

Present, and of His
presence many a sign still
following thee,

Still compassing thee
round with goodness and
paternal Love."

John Milton, Paradise Lost

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ANTITHESIS

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.

Genesis 3:15

My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations...and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

Genesis 17:5-7

Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Deuteronomy 6:4,5

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant — As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from old — Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; To show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant — the oath which He swore to Abraham our father.

Luke 1:68-73

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

Matthew 28:18,19

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

II Corinthians 10:5

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

I Corinthians 1:20

Though there are very many nations all over the earth,...there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities,...one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God....To the City of Man belong the enemies of God,...so inflamed with hatred against the City of God.

Augustine

Without Christ, sciences in every department are vain....The man who knows not God is vain, though he should be conversant with every branch of learning. Nay more, we may affirm this too with truth, that these choice gifts of God — expertness of mind, acuteness of judgment, liberal sciences, and acquaintance with languages, are in a manner profaned in every instance in which they fall to the lot of wicked men.

John Calvin

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

Westminster Larger Catechism

There can be no appeasement between those who presuppose in all their thought the sovereign God and those who presuppose in all their thought the would-be sovereign man....Rather than wedding Christianity to the philosophies of Aristotle or Kant, we must openly challenge the apostate philosophic constructions of men by which they seek to suppress the truth about God, themselves, and world,...so that we may present Christ without compromise to men who are dead in trespasses and sins, that they might have life and that they might worship and serve the Creator more than the creature.

Cornelius Van Til

The Christian cannot be satisfied so long as any human activity is either opposed to Christianity or out of connection with Christianity. Christianity must pervade not merely all nations but also all of human thought.

J. Gresham Machen

ANTITHESIS

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Observing the Current...

How to Resolve the Conflict Between the Media and the Military

Every once in a while we encounter an ethical dilemma that should lead us to rethink the assumptions that produced the dilemma in the first place. One such dilemma is prayer in public schools. On the one hand, we shouldn't support such prayer because it would have to be idolatrously amorphous and State imposed; but, on the other hand, we should oppose anti-prayer advocates because we know that all of life, including education, is religious. The solution to the dilemma is to reject the assumption that the State should interfere in education at all. Once we reject that assumption, then the dilemma vanishes: all schools would be private and could pray faithfully, or not, as they choose.

We find another such dilemma arising out of current American war policy, namely, the now regular conflict between the military and the media.

The media, for whatever actual motive, aim to "get to the truth" behind Pentagon pronouncements. They want the people to know what is "really" going on. They complain about military censorship and the limitations of "pool" reporting.

The media believe that when government officials declare that the Gulf war will "not be another Vietnam," they mean that the media will not have the access to subvert this war like they supposedly subverted the Vietnam war. So, we hear from Ed (not Ted) Turner, Executive Vice-President of CNN, that "the public wants us to be a Watchdog."

Hence, the media claim to be skeptical of all government reports. After all, the government has a long history of lying to the people. As Virgil Jordon, President of the mainstream, pro-WWII, think tank, the National Industrial Conference Board, glibly noted in 1940, "In peace time it is the accepted custom and normal manners of modern government to conceal all important facts from the public, or to lie to them; in war it is a political vice which becomes a necessity." It is no news that Roosevelt and others have lived up to this dictum well.

In direct opposition to this pervasive media skepticism, we have a military who wants to keep some element of tactical surprise. The military claims that to allow full and free coverage of the war would not only jeopardize tactical surprise but also American lives.

For the military, such media skepticism is dangerous to the war effort. Unbelievable media questions to Pentagon officials of the type, "When and where is the next military offensive," are now regular material for late night comedians. Noted government defender, Reed Irvine, ironically head of Accuracy in Media, complains that the media "is not on the U.S. side." He reminisces that "in World War II, they were for us."

But beyond tactical considerations, the military also sees the need to play-down failures, like Iraqi civilian deaths, in order to maintain U.S. civilian morale for the war. Media pictures of maimed women and

children ("collateral damage" in ugly war euphemism) do not bolster American morale.

The popular solutions to this conflict are clearly unacceptable. On the one hand, the media might desire fully unrestrained reporting, but this would jeopardize *even a just war*. On the other hand, the military might desire complete censorship of the media so as to "get the job done properly," but this easily opens the door to tyranny. Neither of these options is acceptable.

However, like the dilemma of prayer in public schools, we can resolve or at least greatly minimize the media/military conflict by rethinking its assumptions.

In short, the practical solution to the conflict lies in aligning the self-interest of the military with the self-interest of the media. Impossible? No. We could do this by rejecting our humanistic penchant for modern "crusade" wars and only fight *defensive wars*.

The current media is skeptical because they doubt the propriety of interventionist goals: Oil? Defending tyrannical monarchies? A New World Order? However, if the military was used defensively, then the war aims would be clear, and the self-interest of both military and media would be largely aligned.

In a defensive war, media lives, property, and families would be at stake. Hence, they would, for the far greater part, defend military action for the sake of their own interests. They, like the military, would want to preserve tactical surprise and support morale.

The military leadership, too, wouldn't have to resort to disinformation tactics to counter the people's interests or sustain morale. Moreover, in a defensive war, we would not need to consider a military draft since individuals would gladly defend themselves.

Defensive wars would not resolve all the conflicts between the military and the media arising out of modern crusade warfare, but it certainly would be superior to the present situation

The Limits of National Prayer

This past February, President Bush called for a national day of prayer. So far, so good. But then he went on to talk about the god to whom he was praying. He mentioned those Americans who have given their lives in the conflict and told us that they were all safe with the Benvign Benevolence in the Sky. There was no indication on his part that repentance and regeneration had anything to do with salvation. Americans are queer ducks; we think the Muslims are strange because

they think that any Muslims who die in battle are saved; whereas we think that any Americans who die are saved. In short, President Bush was not asking us to pray to the God of the Bible.

All Christians should love their country, and they should gladly pray for her — and not just when the president asks us to. But the reason we pray at all is that we love the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has told us to keep ourselves from idols.

DJW

DMJ

"Hate Crimes" as Opposed to?

More good news! We're cracking down on hate crimes! . . . and becoming Oh So Wise. Soon, no crimes will be committed out of hate; all crimes will be committed lovingly, by unbiased, unprejudiced criminals!

Good grief. How is a "hate crime" different from a normal crime? Is it one done with a bad attitude instead of a good one? How does one even begin to comprehend the mindbogglingly foolish "rationale" behind this movement?

The attack is on the attitude now, not just the crime itself. Those behind this idea know that the state — their only lord and savior — can't change the bad attitudes of the world by punishing the outward actions, so now they wish to punish the inward motive. This is just one more example of the state trying to save us from our sins, this time by idiotically attempting to change the hearts of criminals, rather than by restricting itself to their actions.

But why should we confine ourselves to hate, if we're so interested in changing the heart? Why not

prosecute for "lust crimes" separately from rape, and "greed crimes" separately from theft. Why single out hatred, or crimes committed because of hatred, as specially heinous? Are crimes committed in sheer cold blood better because no feeling was involved? Or are crimes where the criminal went through a great deal of anguish, struggling with overwhelming moral ambivalence while beating the daylights out of his victim, that much more understandable and therefore less evil?

The state has a religious viewpoint; it always does.

Some of us remember the case a year and a half ago in Madison, Wisconsin, wherein a woman was charged with discrimination because, after she had advertised a vacancy in her apartment she, refused to let a lesbian room with her. The upshot? The state forced the woman to attend classes designed to raise her tolerance level for those of other sexual "orientations." Brainwashing, that is.

Now can't anyone with approximately half a head on his shoul-

ders see what that means? The state is supporting a particular viewpoint — a religious viewpoint — that says homosexuality is morally neutral. That is a fundamentally religious judgment. And why that particular judgment? Why didn't the court decide in favor of the poor woman and send the lesbian to counseling to help her overcome her intolerance for people who are repulsed by the idea of having a homosexual roommate? Why not send the state to classes for states who are intolerant of those with ethical standards?

One wonders why those who are behind movements like this one haven't seen the absurd conclusion to which their logic leads. If they truly believe, without a standard, that it's an awful thing for people to take action against those with whom they disagree, then why don't they put themselves behind bars for taking action (instituting "hate crime" laws) against those with whom they disagree (people who take action, using crowbars, against people with whom they disagree).

WJC

Democracy is Not Enough

It appears that the Soviet Union is currently occupied with falling down the stairs. More reactionary military crackdowns are likely, but those crackdowns, when they occur, will not change the final result — it will merely make the fall down the stairs more painful. Militant socialistic statism has had it.

But this doesn't imply that we may let down our guard against the socialist nightmare. Some very great dangers remain, and they do so quite a bit closer to home. The ongoing collapse of Soviet-style socialism has been played in the press as a triumph for democracy. But there is no significant contrast to be made between democracy and socialism, any more than there is such a contrast between monarchy and private property. These are different things, to be sure, but they are not necessarily incompatible. A socialistic government is quite capable of getting and maintaining the support of 51 percent.

The real battle is between

liberty and slavery, between the City of God and the city of man, between the rule of law and the law of rule; that is to say, it's between Christianity and humanism. Just because the humanist slavemasters can get a majority of the freely-cast democratic votes (i.e. most of the people agree to be slaves), it does not change the fact of slavery. When the people of Israel were grumbling in the wilderness a free democratic election, with impartial international observers would have sent them all marching back to their taskmasters in Egypt.

In our Western democracies, the collapse of Eastern socialism has brought about no re-thinking of the oppressive statism we have here. Consequently, some of our ancient liberties still need to be recovered, and those which remain are still in grave danger.

Where will be the principal battleground? I think it is safe to say that the battle in the nineties will be over the control of education. Will

young children of professing Christians be trained and educated by the government, or will that education be returned to the hands of parents?

Our statist schools are failing to educate; this does not mean that their power base has been seriously threatened. It has not been. This means government-certified teachers, government-approved curriculum, and government-issued truth continue as our nation's central mechanism of education. Consequently, Christian parents who send their children to such schools are allowing their children to be catechized in the tenets of a rival faith. As more and more Christians pull out of our socialized system of education, we will see the conflict between the two faiths intensify.

The coming collision between faithful parents on the one hand, and the intrusive state on the other, will demonstrate quite clearly that statism in the United States is not dead. Quite the contrary.

DJW

How Many Polls Does it Take?

In modern political life, the position of the pollster is untouchable. Polls are taken and believed, on every conceivable subject. In the war against Iraq, pollsters have been taking the country's temperature on a daily basis.

One of the most remarkable things about these polls is their ability to command trust. It doesn't matter how often they are wrong, or how off the mark the predictions are. Polls continue to be taken, and people continue to believe them.

This entirely misplaced confidence is possible for two basic reasons: First, polling is perceived as a scientific endeavor, and we all know how reliable science is. Whenever a network conducts a phone-in random sample, they will generally fall all over themselves in explaining that this kind of poll is not "scientific."

But consider for a moment what a "scientific" pollster is doing. Two hundred people are interviewed, and we are then told what two hundred million other people think.

Because the sample size is so small, any conclusions are extremely dangerous. Now, it is not that induction can tell us nothing, but rather that induction is particularly susceptible to abuse. If one examines 10,000 crows on five continents, and all are black, it is reasonable to conclude that crows are black. But the same process of reasoning is more than a little suspect if it is based on the two crows you saw in the back yard.

If induction can be misused in the area of material facts which have relatively few variables, how much more is there a problem in the realm of changing human opinion, emotional response, convictions, etc.? Because there are so many variables, pollsters try hard to pick a representative sample. But when this is done, they have to anticipate their results. In other words, a representative sample is carefully chosen which tells the pollster that Americans believe the way the pollster thought they did when he selected the sample.

A second reason why pollsters are given credibility has to do with curiosity about the future. A man with a preoccupation or an obsession has very little sales resistance. In this case, it happens that many people are preoccupied with the future — say, the results of an election, or whether support for the war will continue. Consequently, such people are not discriminating when someone offers to sell them a glimpse of that future.

Fortune tellers gaze at palms and at crystal balls. Astrologers check out the sky and tell you about your day. Polling is simply a device which satisfies the same kind of curiosity. Because of the scientific veneer, someone can satisfy that curiosity without sacrificing intellectual respectability. But there is another consideration which Christians must not forget.

God controls history. As the hymn put it, we do not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future.

DJW

Feminist Dilemmas

We lose many spiritual battles because, in our defense against some misbegotten charge of wrongdoing, an enemy traps us into committing the offense with which we are charged. This happens constantly in the war against feminism. Christians who do not think clearly find themselves attacking women or denying plain truths; the feminist then rounds on them, saying, "Ah ha! You see? Christianity is misogynistic!"

We forget that not all of feminism's assumptions are true. Feminists believe that all women, at some level, agree with them, and the deceit by which feminism works has more women sympathizing than would claim the philosophy. Even the name *feminism* lends credibility to this assumption — it identifies itself as supporting the feminine gender. This is a falsehood which must be rejected, for if we agree, then our attack on feminism will be

an attack on women.

But worse, we forget that not all of feminism's assumptions are false! It has accurately located the source of much spurious oppression in male abuse of patriarchal power. Men abuse power because they are rebels against the God who gave it. They beat their wives, ignore them, cheat on them. Male bosses sexually harass female employees and unjustly prevent them from being rewarded for their work.

When feminists point out how badly men have treated women through the ages, we should agree. But because feminism identifies male leadership itself, rather than its abuse, as oppressive, we part company radically because of our radically antithetical viewpoints. The difference between us is not that we deny a problem which they affirm, but that we understand its nature and cure very differently. The Bible

gives us a *reason* for upholding Biblical headship and a *reason* for condemning the abuse of women. If we give up one, we may not keep the other.

When we argue the Biblical case for headship, feminists hear us defending its abuses and conclude that patriarchy itself is evil. We ought indeed to argue the case, but we ought most of all to attack furiously the sins of the fathers and husbands against wives and children.

Men have selfishly perverted their positions to the injury of women. Through the gospel they must be called to repentance, and to sober *humility* in their careful leadership of the women over whom God has given them charge. Only through the Biblical exercise of headship will God be glorified and the error of feminism destroyed.

WJC

California's Government-Produced Water Shortage

We regularly mock the Soviet bureaucracy for imagining it can organize means and ends in place of a market system — the perennial picture of bumper crops and empty bread shelves. But we tend to neglect the log in our own eye, as in the case of the California water "shortage."

Behind all the bloated propaganda about California's five year drought lies a rather interesting truism. Water has never been naturally plentiful in California, *but neither has milk*. In fact, milk is much more difficult to "naturally" acquire than water (you don't have to squeeze an animal to get water), but California has never had to ration milk or send out "Milk Police." Why the difference? We all use more water than milk, but this is irrelevant to the issue. The answer is that one product, milk, is provided by a relatively free market, but, the other product, water, is "managed" by a deeply entrenched, monopolistic, government bureaucracy. California doesn't need government rationing, it needs to get rid of its Soviet-style water management system, and water would be as plentiful as milk.

Zealous Centralized Planning

The two major water projects in California, the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project, are both creatures of centralized government planning. They weren't motivated by natural cost-benefit growth of market development but by tax money and government agencies which induced artificial expansion.

The CVP (1933) was part of Roosevelt's entire New Deal centralized planning efforts. The SWP (1960) arose under California governor Pat Brown for similar goals. One of the commissioners of the federal department who oversaw much of the artificially motivated California water projects would boast in the late 1960's that it was "fortunate that progress was not held in check while economists debated over the refinements of economic evaluations." The goal of California centralized planning was "new farms, new jobs, and increased production," apparently regardless of the consequences. Under these two programs, agricultural land increased

from 4.9 to 8.6 million acres. But this sort of government produced expansion cannot last forever.

Central planning naturally creates distortions like the current water shortage by means of: subsidies, user fees, monopoly control, and a lack of property rights.

Water Subsidies

The centralized agencies would cause enough havoc if they charged a price for water, but influential agricultural interests and landowners have for decades notoriously sought and received direct water subsidies through the Californian legislature. Such "cheap water" was overused and wasted.

Under the Reagan administration's federal Payment In Kind program, some farmers received state subsidies to irrigate new lands and at the same time received federal subsidies not to produce crops on the new land. What a deal.

User Fees Vs. Prices

The California water problem has been further exasperated by agency imposed *user fees* as opposed to *prices*. A user fee is determined by bureaucratic ledgerdom regardless of supply and demand, whereas prices reflect supply and demand. If the price of lemons rises, then consumers cut-back on lemon consumption until more lemons enter the market and reduce the price.

User fees attempt to override this crucial process and so never pass on the costs to consumers. In the case of water, when prices don't rise, consumers continue to use water as if it were plentiful, thus further depleting the water supply.

Water Monopolies

California's government controlled water system created the water crisis not only by government subsidies and user fees but also by monopolizing water distribution. Consumers have no choice between potentially competing water distributors since local and state agencies rule out any competition.

Competitive water distribution would force suppliers to serve

consumers and provide cost-efficient water service or face bankruptcy. Water bureaucracies cannot go out of business, and so they have no incentive to protect the supply of their product. Analogously, imagine how bad milk distribution would be if it were controlled exclusively by the U.S. Postal Service.

Lack of Property Rights

California's government also created the water crises by failing to define property rights for water. Without clearly defined and transferable property rights, the problem of "the commons" will always arise. If many people attempt to share some resource at little or no cost, then the incentive is to use up that resource as quickly as possible since none of the users has to bear responsibility for the loss.

California farmers sit over some of the largest groundwater deposits in the world. However, since the groundwater is commonly shared with others, farmers have an incentive to pump as much out on to their land as possible, thus creating the problem of "overdraft" — like a group of children with straws in the same milk shake. Both farmers and the children have every incentive to use the resource before their neighbor does, thus quickly depleting the supply.

California Governor, Pete Wilson, has messianically joked that, "If I'm to fulfill my place in history, I'm going to have to learn how to make wine into water." Perhaps that's the problem: the government should stop trying to play messiah with the water and stick to its Biblical role of administering justice and defense.

But instead of dissolving the centralized system, California Senator John Seymour is already planning to appeal to the federal government for more subsidies, unemployment benefits for farmers, and low-interest loans for new wells.

Jason Peltier, manager of the Central Valley Project Association, invoking another Biblical image, declared that the only way out of the current water shortage is "forty days and forty nights of rain." Maybe he is saying more than he knows.

DMJ

Second Opinions

Dear Editors,

The "Issue & Interchange" on Public Schooling (Vol. II, No. 1) was interesting. I note the debate included definition of public schools as agnostic (Wilson), corrupt (Simonds), neutral (Simonds).

I think we need to back up a little. Is a public school a necessary institution that has become agnostic, corrupt, no-value, etc. and that can be improved? Or is it, at its base, the result of an unbiblical concept that the government has a right to order (compulsory education) parents what to do with their children?

Answering this question does not necessarily answer the question of the debate, "Is It Morally Permissible to Educate Our Children in the Public Schools?" But I think it does answer the question whether or not it is possible to improve them. No, not in a significant or lasting basis.

Barbara Needham
Laton, California

that results from assuming the neutrality of education. Little progress is made because no one is right and no one is wrong. Marx, Freud, Sartre, Plato, Hobbes, Kant, and others are all thrown together into an intellectual melting-pot which tastes of nothing but confusion. I am looking forward to future articles on the Christian and education.

Thank you all, and I pray that God will continue to bless your work.

Mark Careaga
Los Angeles, California

Dear Editors,

One word of encouragement: your articles are bold, refreshing, and though-provoking. Keep up...the antithesis!

Channing Miller
Lynchburg, Virginia

awakening to its timeless truths. Thank you for your part in helping get the cause going.

Clyde Bowie
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Editors,

Great journal. Keep doing what you are doing!

Jeffrey Black
Port Allegany, Pennsylvania

Dear Editors,

I am currently a full-time student pursuing a degree in Nursing Home Administration. Having a student rate is greatly appreciated.

Wallace Crawford
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Editors,

Having read and re-read *Antithesis* for a year now, I want to express my appreciation for your work and commitment. Each issue has challenged and inspired me, and I am grateful for the work God is doing through your ministry.

I found special interest in two articles from the November/December issue: *Beyond Creation vs. Evolution* and *The Biblical Antithesis in Education*. Regarding the former, we need to seriously address the extent to which our society has been influenced by the thinking of Sagan, Gould, Hawking, and the like. This article is a good start. Specifically, Mr. Moore mentioned "the growing conviction among paleontologists that life on earth appeared almost at once" (p. 10). I had not been aware of such a conviction, and I would like to hear more.

Regarding the second article, Mr. Wilson's incisive survey was on the mark. Being a student at a liberal arts college in Los Angeles, I can see first-hand the intellectual anarchy

Dear Editors,

Keep the excellent articles coming!

Kenneth Simpson
Franklin, New Hampshire

Dear Editors,

I have thoroughly enjoyed my subscription to *Antithesis* this past year. Please renew my subscription with the addition of another subscription for a friend.

Thank you for such a scholarly publication and for so many timely articles. May God grant you all a prosperous and joyous New Year.

Charles Clark
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Editors,

I am thrilled to be a part of this noble undertaking. I have a deeply felt conviction that the great "Reformed" message is the best expression of the faith that God has thus far revealed. It is time for a new

We welcome our readers to interact with material published in *Antithesis*. Letters are subject to abridgement for length and clarity. Send editorial correspondence to:

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CORRECTION:

Our January/February 1991 issue inadvertently attributed the editorial entitled, "The Bankruptcy of Conservatism" to "DMJ" instead of its author DJW (Douglas J. Wilson), one of our new Contributing Editors. We generally do not welcome new editors by attributing their work to others. (Unless, perhaps, their work is too good.)

Please note that in this issue we welcome Wesley Callihan as a new Contributing Editor. You may correctly associate his editorials and article with his name.

DMJ

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**Paul Johnson anatomizes 20 of them —  
their ideas, their lives, their morals**  
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ANT-4

CHRISTIANITY YESTERDAY

Samuel Rutherford's Pastoral Counsel for Godly Living

Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) was one of the most faithful, influential, and heroic figures of classical Protestantism. As a servant in the Scottish church, Rutherford powerfully strengthened the work of the gospel in his country. He served as Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews college, authored influential theological and political treatises, signed the National Covenant, and actively represented the Scottish church at the Westminster Assembly. Rutherford's remarkable collection of letters, many of which were written while he was imprisoned for the sake of the gospel, continue to inspire generations.

In the brief selection below, Rutherford writes to John Fleming, a timber merchant who had aided Rutherford on numerous occasions. The most notable section of the letter is Rutherford's discussion of his regrets: for of all people, he seemed to excel in these areas most of all. Rutherford understood the wretched depths of sin and the heights of faithful gratitude in ways that are tragically distant for many of us not privileged to be part of Christianity yesterday.

Aberdeen, 15 March 1637

To John Fleming, Bailie of Leith

Worthy and dearly beloved in the Lord:

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you. I received your letter: I wish I could satisfy your desires, in drawing up and framing for you a Christian Directory. But the learned have done it before me, more judiciously than I can; especially Mr. Rogers, Greenham, and Perkins. Notwithstanding, I will show you what I would have been at myself, although I came always short of my purpose.

1. That hours of the day, less or more time, for the Word and prayer, be given to God, not sparing the twelfth hour or mid-day, although it should then be a shorter time.

2. In the midst of worldly employments there should be some thoughts of sin, judgement, death and eternity, with a word or two (at least) of ejaculatory prayer to God.

3. To beware of wandering of

heart in private prayers.

4. Not to grudge, although you come from prayer without sense of joy. Downcasting, sense of guiltiness, and hunger are often best for us.

5. That the Lord's day, from morning to night, be spent always either in private or public worship.

6. That words be observed, wandering and idle thoughts be avoided, sudden anger and desire of revenge, even of such as persecute the truth, be guarded against; for we often mix our zeal with our own wild-fire.

7. That known, discovered and revealed sins, that are against the conscience, be avoided, as most dangerous preparatives to hardness of heart.

8. That in dealing with men, faith and truth in covenants and trafficking be regarded; that we deal with all men in sincerity; that conscience be made of idle and lying words; and that our carriage be such as that they who see it may speak honourably of our sweet Master and profession.

I have been much challenged.

1. For not referring all to God, as the last end: that I do not eat, drink, sleep, journey, speak and think for God.

2. That I have not benefited by good company; and that I left not some word of conviction, even upon natural and wicked men, as by reproving swearing in them; or because of being a silent witness to their loose carriage; and because I intended not in all companies to do good.

3. That the woes and calamities of the kirk, and particular professors, have not moved me.

4. That in reading the life of David, Paul, and the like, when it humbled me, I, coming so far short of their holiness, laboured not to imitate them, afar off at least, according to the measure of God's grace.

5. That unrepented sins of youth were not looked to and lamented for.

6. That sudden stirrings of pride, lust, revenge, love of honours, were not resisted and mourned for.

7. That my charity was cold.

8. That the experience I had of God's hearing me, in this and the other particular, being gathered, yet in a new trouble I had always (once at least) my faith to seek, as if I were to begin at A. B. C. again.

9. That I have not more boldly

contradicted the enemies speaking against the truth, either in public church-meetings, or at tables, or ordinary conference.

10. That in great troubles, I have received false reports of Christ's love, and misbelieved him in his chastening; whereas the event hath said that all was in mercy.

11. Nothing more moveth me, and burdeneth my soul, than that I could never, in my prosperity, so wrestle in prayer with God, nor be so dead to the world, so hungry and sick of love for Christ, so heavenly-minded, as when ten stone-weight of a heavy cross was upon me.

12. That the cross extorted vows of new obedience, which ease hath blown away, as chaff before the wind.

13. That practice was so short and narrow, and light so long and broad.

14. That death hath not been often meditated upon.

15. That I have not been careful of gaining others to Christ.

16. That my grace and gifts bring forth little or no thankfulness.

There are some things also, whereby I have been helped. As,

1. I have benefited by riding alone a long journey, in giving that time to prayer.

2. By abstinence, and giving days to God.

3. By praying for others; for, by making an errand to God for them, I have gotten something for myself.

4. I have been really confirmed, in many particulars, that God heareth prayers; and therefore I used to pray for any thing, of how little importance soever.

5. He enabled me to make no question that this way, which is mocked and nick-named, is the only way to heaven.

Sir, these and many more occurrences in my life, should be looked unto: and,

1. Thoughts of atheism should be watched over, as, "If there be God in heaven," which will trouble and assault the best at some times.

2. Growth in grace should be cared for above all things; and falling from our first live mourned for.

3. Conscience made of praying for the enemies, who are blinded.

Sir, I thank you most kindly for your care of my brother, and me also: I hope it is laid up for you, and remembered in heaven. I am still ashamed with Christ's kindness to such a sinner as I am. He hath left a fire in my heart that hell cannot cast water on, to quench or extinguish it. Help me to praise, and pray for me; for you have a prisoner's blessing and prayers. Remember my love to your wife. Grace be with you.

Samuel Rutherford

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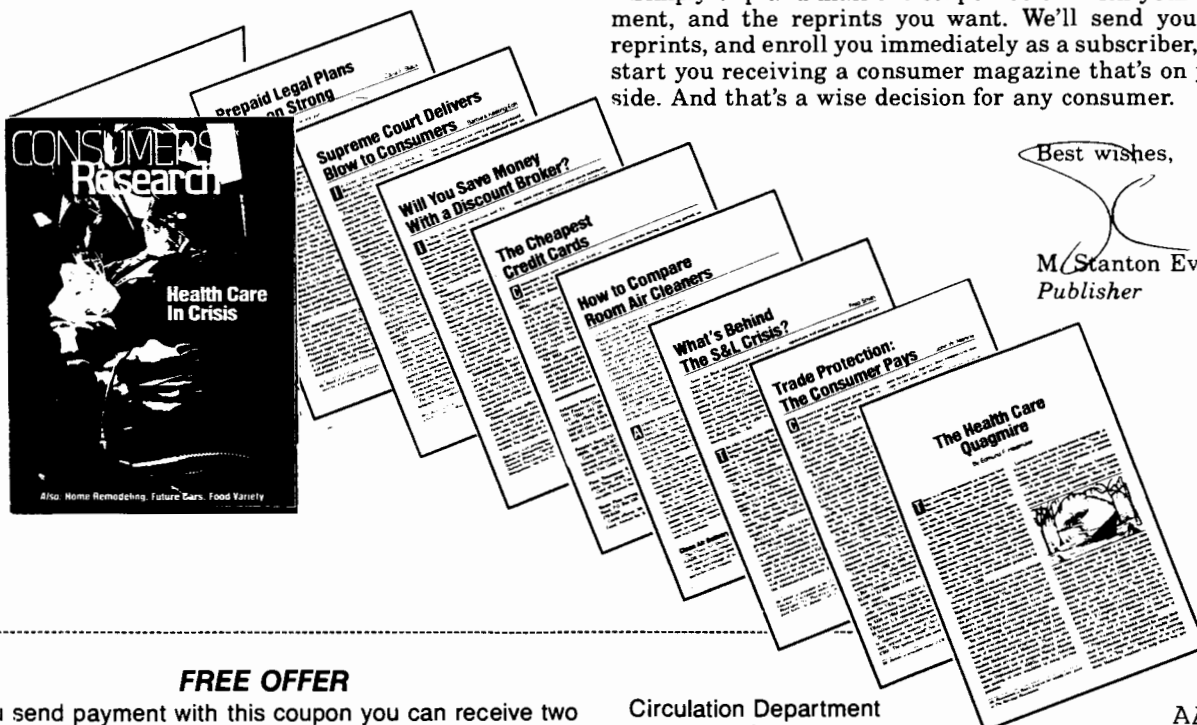
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A New Perspective on the Problem of Evil

Though non-Christians cannot rightfully generate the objection from evil, Christian solutions usually compromise Biblical truth.

Doug Erlandson

Anti-theists¹ often present the following dilemma for Biblical Christianity:

If God is totally good, omnipotent, and omniscient, why is there evil in the world? A totally good God would want to prevent evil if He could. An omniscient, omnipotent God certainly has the ability to prevent evil. Therefore, God is either not omnipotent and omniscient or not totally good.

This dilemma is called the "problem of evil," and both theists and anti-theists have debated it for many centuries.

The Anti-theist Cannot Generate the Objection

Anti-theists sometimes argue that the problem of evil shows the logical untenability of theism. This demonstration usually runs as follows:

- (1) A totally good God will prevent all the evil that He can.
- (2) An omniscient, omnipotent God can prevent all evil.
- (3) Evil exists.

Therefore, either God is not totally good or not omniscient and omnipotent.

¹ I use this term to refer to anyone who disavows the view of God presented in the Bible and formulated in the Ecumenical Creeds of the church. An atheist or agnostic is an "antitheist" but so is someone who believes in a finite deity.

The theist has a ready response. A being is not morally culpable in allowing preventable evil if he has a "morally sufficient reason" for so doing. The theist, then, can offer the following counter-argument:

(1') A totally good God will prevent all the evil that He can *unless He has a morally sufficient reason* for permitting its existence.

(2') An omniscient, omnipotent God can prevent all evil.

(3') Evil exists.

Therefore, God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting the existence of evil.

Let's suppose that the anti-theist objects that the theist has not demonstrated that God has this morally sufficient reason. The theist can counter this by arguing that the anti-theist cannot even generate the so-called problem of evil.

To talk meaningfully about morality the anti-theist must assume that an objective foundation for morality exists. If he does not (that is, if he is what is sometimes called a *moral subjectivist*), he must logically admit that one foundation is as good as any other. Thus, he cannot object to a foundation on which God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting evil; even worse, he cannot even justify the premise, "Evil exists." If, on the other hand, he claims that an objective foundation for ethics exists, we must press him to give his reason for this. Can there be an objective foundation without a Supreme Lawgiver?

Many anti-theists have tried to find one. For instance, Immanuel Kant proposed his "categorical imperative." According to Kant, an act is morally right only if a person is willing to make that act a universal law. In other words, suppose that I want to steal my neighbor's baseball card collection. I can determine whether this act is moral by asking myself whether I would be willing to abide by the principle that everyone should be allowed to steal his neighbor's baseball card collection. Because moral and social chaos would follow if this principle were universally adopted, my act cannot be universalized and is therefore immoral.

Utilitarians such as John Stuart Mill and his spiritual descendants have proposed a different foundation. They argue that an act is moral if it leads to the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Still others have appealed to intuition or conscience as a foundation for morality.

While it would be possible to refute each of these alleged foundations individually (since they all suffer from various internal difficulties), a conclusive refutation of all of them is available. It has to do with the nature of the foundation itself.

Let us call the foundation *F*. *F* (e.g., the categorical imperative, greatest happiness principle, etc.) cannot itself be part of the system of morality. If it were, it could not serve as the foundation of the system. Rather, *F* must be a statement (or statements) *about* the moral system (such statements are sometimes known as *metaethical statements*).

At the same time *F* does not appear to be a statement about a state of affairs (or states of affairs) in the world. If it were, we should expect general agreement on whether it is true or false. At the very least, its proponents should be able to tell us how its truth or falsity could be determined. Metaethical statements, however, are typically open to great dispute. For instance, many people reject the categorical imperative and the greatest happiness principle.

Perhaps *F* is true by definition. (Kant seemed to treat his categorical imperative in this way.) Competing ethical systems, however, have conflicting metaethical statements. Therefore, if these statements function as definitions, they appear to be arbitrary.

The only remaining alternative is that *F* consists of statements of preference. Any system of morality which they uphold, then, is entirely subjective. The proponents of such a system cannot rightly question the moral rightness or wrongness of any action. When they do, they are merely expressing their preferences.

If the anti-theist were truly honest he would say nothing more than, "I personally don't like the idea of God allowing evil" or "evil is determined subjectively." He has no right to say anything more. In particular, he has no justification for asserting that a totally good God would not permit preventable evil.

Traditional Theodicies

Although the anti-theist has no grounds for his objection to the Biblical view of God, it is still important for the theist to try to determine why a totally good God would permit evil to occur. Attempts to do this are called "theodicies."²

Certain "solutions" are not open to the Biblical theist — namely, those which deny one of the attributes of God or those which deny the existence of evil. Therefore, we can immediately rule out the following:

Evil is an illusion: The Bible does not shy away from evil or treat it as unreal. Therefore, the Biblical theist must take its existence seriously.

God is not totally good: According to the Bible, God is altogether righteous.³

God is finite: So-called "theistic finitism" posits a deity who is good but unable to eliminate evil. The Bible clearly teaches that God is both omnipotent⁴ and om-

niscient,⁵ and, therefore, any resolution along these lines must be rejected.⁶

None of the above theodicies really addresses the problem of evil. Rather, they dodge the problem by avoiding its parameters. Hence, we may discard them as sub-Christian responses. Other theodicies, however, attempt to take seriously the Biblical view of God and the world. We may classify these as follows:

Metaphysical Theodicies: These point to a feature or features in creation or in man which make the existence of evil inevitable. The assumption is that the very act of creating results in evil.

Free Will Theodicies: These claim that God gave man free will. Man misused his free will to do evil. The evil in the present world is a result of his ongoing misuse of his freedom.

Greater Good Theodicies: God has permitted evil to bring about a greater good which could not have come about without the existence of evil. The specific good in question varies from theodicy to theodicy. Often several "greater goods" are cited.

Some might contend that there is a *fourth* type — *best-possible-world-theodicies*. However, no one that I know of has argued that the present world is the one with the least amount of evil that God could possibly have created (though Leibniz has sometimes been misunderstood as holding this view). Rather, proponents of this view hold

that God created the world best suited for bringing about some greater and otherwise unattainable good. Thus, best-possible-world theodicies become a subspecies of our Greater Good category.

Let us now look at the problems with each of these solutions.

Rejecting Traditional Theodicies

Critique of Metaphysical Solutions:

Certain of St. Augustine's proposals typify this way of thinking. Augustine argued that evil is merely a lack of good (*privatio boni*). To capture the flavor of this argument, I will quote fairly extensively from Augustine's *Against the Epistle of Manicheus*:

⁵ See e.g., I Chron. 28:9; Job 12:13, 22; Ps. 136:5; Is. 46:10; Dan. 2:20.

⁶ Theistic finitism includes not only the views of E.S. Brightman of the Boston Personalist school (in vogue at the turn of the century) but Manicheanism (i.e., two equiprimordial deities, one good, one bad) as well.

If the anti-theist were truly honest he would say nothing more than, "I personally don't like the idea of God allowing evil" or "evil is determined subjectively." He has no right to say anything more.

² "Theodicy" comes from two Greek words, *theos*, meaning God, and *dikei*, meaning justice. A theodicy is an attempt to defend the justice of God in the face of evil in the world.

³ See e.g., Ps. 119:137; 145:17; II Tim. 4:8; Rev. 16:5.

⁴ See e.g., Gen. 17:1; Job 42:2; Is. 26:4; Dan. 2:20.

Everyone sees, who can see, that every nature, as far as it is nature, is good; since in one and the same thing in which I found something to praise, and he found something to blame, if the good things are taken away, no nature will remain; but if the disagreeable things are taken away, the nature will remain unimpaired....If then, after the evil is removed, the nature remains in a purer state, and does not remain at all when the good is taken away, it must be the good which makes the nature of the thing in which it is, while the evil is not nature, but contrary to nature....This shows that the natures, as far as they are natures, are good; for when you take from them the good instead of the evil, no natures remain.⁷

A bit further on he tells us:

For who can doubt that the whole of that which is called evil is nothing else than corruption? Different evils may, indeed, be called by different names; but that which is the evil of all things in which any evil is perceptible is corruption. So the corruption of an educated mind is ignorance; the corruption of a prudent mind is imprudence; the corruption of a just mind, injustice....Again, in a living body, the corruption of health is pain and disease; the corruption of strength is exhaustion; the corruption of rest is toil....Enough has been said to show that corruption does harm only as displacing the natural condition; and so, that corruption is not nature, but against nature. And if corruption is the only evil to be found anywhere, and if corruption is not nature, no nature is evil.⁸

And finally:

But if anyone does not believe that corruption comes from nothing, let him place before himself existence and non-existence...then let him set something, say the body of an animal, between them, and let him ask himself whether, while the body is being formed and produced, while its size is increasing, while it gains nourishment, health, strength, beauty, stability, it is tending, as regards its duration and permanence, to this side or that, to existence or non-

existence. He will see without difficulty, that even in the rudimentary form there is existence, and that the more the body is established and built up in form, and figure and strength, the more does it come to exist, and to tend to the side of existence. Then, again, let the body begin to be corrupted; let its whole condition be enfeebled, let its vigor languish, its strength decay, its beauty be defaced, its framework sundered, the consistency of its parts give way and go to pieces; and let him ask now where the body is tending in this corruption, whether to existence or non-existence; he will not surely be so blind or stupid as to doubt how to answer himself, or as not to see that, in proportion as anything is corrupted, in that proportion it approaches decease. But whatever tends to decease tends to non-existence. Since, then, we must believe that God exists immutably and incorruptibly, while what is called nothing is clearly altogether non-existent; and since, after setting before yourself existence and non-existence, you have observed that the more visible object increases the more it tends to existence, while the more it is corrupted the more it tends towards non-existence, why are you at a loss to tell regarding any nature what in it is from God, and what from nothing; seeing that visible form is natural, and corruption against nature? The increase of form leads to existence....the increase of corruption leads

to non-existence, and we know that what is non-existent is nothing.⁹

Once we assume that free will means the autonomy of man from God, we are faced with the consequence that God cannot ensure the triumph of good over evil in the life to come without quashing man's free will.

If we set this in its neo-Platonic context, we can see what Augustine is saying. For the neo-Platonist, "being" or "existence" stands at one end of a scale and "non-being" and "non-existence" at the other. God is true Being. Finite things participate in being, but because they are distinct from God they always tend toward non-being. However, insofar as they continue according to their nature (e.g., to the extent that apples continue to be what apples should be — juicy, crisp, and the like), they will not tend towards non-being in any pernicious

way. When something departs from its proper nature (e.g., when an apple becomes mealy, shriveled, and wormy), it becomes "corrupt" and tends toward non-being.

Augustine is equating being with goodness and non-being with evil. Evil is not a thing at all, and complete evil is simply non-existence. Augustine has shown (to his satisfaction) that evil does not really exist.

Augustine recognizes a problem with this. Why

⁷ Augustine, "Against the Epistle of Manicheus Called Fundamental," tr. Richard Stothert in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans) Vol. IV, p. 148.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.

couldn't a sovereign creator make finite beings that would all continue according to their true nature, never deviating toward corruption and non-being? To this, he responds:

What harm, you ask, would follow if those things too were perfectly good? Still, should anyone, who admits and believes the perfect goodness of God the Father, inquire what source we should reverently assign to any other perfectly good thing, supposing it to exist, our only correct reply would be, that it is of God the Father, who is perfectly good. And we must bear in mind that what is of Him is born of Him, and not made by Him out of nothing, and that it is therefore perfectly, that is, incorruptibly, good like God Himself. So we see that it is unreasonable to require that things made out of nothing should be as perfectly good as He who was begotten of God Himself, and who is one as God is one, otherwise God would have begotten something unlike Himself.¹⁰

Augustine has now introduced his *ex nihilo implies corruption* theme: Anything created out of God's nature would be God Himself. Anything which God creates distinct from Himself must be created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). However, any being created *ex nihilo*, although good because created by God, cannot be incorruptibly good. It must tend toward corruption.

God has thus been absolved from responsibility for evil. Having chosen to create, He had to create being that tended toward corruption. The only other option was not creating at all.

What about this theodicy? First, the *privatio boni* theme seems to be based on a series of confusions. In a Biblical view of reality, something either *is* or it *is not*. It doesn't tend toward being or non-being. Moreover, we use words such "good" and "evil" to describe properties which entities possess or lack, not, as Augustine does, to describe the relative being or non-being of the thing itself. An apple is "good" if it is crisp, juicy, and sweet. An apple is "bad" if it has brown spots and is mealy. Finally, "badness" and "evil" do not imply something's tendency toward non-existence. To be a bit facetious, a good apple is more likely to be eaten and hence cease to exist than a bad apple. A rusted-out car doesn't cease to be a car. It may be undrivable, but until someone dismantles it, it is still a car.¹¹

More to the issue of moral goodness, a person is called good or bad on the basis of his *attitudes* and *actions*, not his being. We call him good if he does what is morally right and bad if he does what is morally wrong. His tendency toward being or non-being (if such were even possible) has nothing to do with our evaluation.

More crucial, however, are the implications of the *ex nihilo* theme. Augustine has not shown why a being created *ex nihilo* cannot be perfectly though finitely good. We may agree that the goodness of any being

created by God will not begin to equal the goodness of God. But from this it does not follow that a finitely good being must be subject to corruption. Even if Augustine could show this, he would still need to show why corruptibility must lead to corruption. Why couldn't an omnipotent, omniscient God create beings that would never actualize their tendency toward corruption?

But let us say that these questions can somehow be answered. There awaits a further difficulty for Augustine — and I believe for all purportedly orthodox metaphysical solutions. A central theme of Scripture is the realization of the New Heavens and Earth. The Bible regards these as distinct from God Himself. We may therefore raise the following dilemma: If inherent in *any* created world is the tendency toward corruption, consistency demands acknowledging this tendency to be part of the final stage of the New Creation. This flies in the face of all Scriptural testimony. If, however, we acknowledge that the New Creation will not have this tendency found in the old, then we have admitted that God can create a world not subject to corruption. Why didn't He do so in the first place?

One final problem: Scripture places responsibility for evil on man. However, if evil is a result of the very nature of man or the world as created by God, man is exonerated. He is and always has been the helpless victim of conditions beyond his control. In a nutshell, metaphysical solutions see evil as a metaphysical problem. The Bible, by contrast, regards it as an ethical problem.

Critique of Free Will Theodicies

Though presented with varying degrees of sophistication, free will defenses may be distilled in the following summary:

God created Adam good, but with freedom to obey or disobey Him. Adam used his freedom to disobey God. However, giving Adam (and by implication his descendants) free will to choose good or evil, obedience or disobedience, is of sufficient value to outweigh the resulting evil.

This argument rests on three assumptions:

- (1) Man has free will.
- (2) Free will is of sufficient value to outweigh the resulting evil.
- (3) Free will must result in evil.

For the sake of discussion, I will assume the truth of (1) and (2). The crucial assumption is (3). What about it?

Freedom to choose does not necessarily mean that we cannot always choose the same alternative. Does my always choosing chocolate ice cream over vanilla show that I do not have free will? No. I may consistently choose chocolate for a variety of reasons — taste preference, owning stock in the Hershey company, to be different from my wife, and so forth.

Perhaps the assumption is not that free will must result in evil but:

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹¹ The example of a rusted-out car was given by Norm Geisler on *The John Ankerberg Show* a few years back in an attempt to explain how evil could arise in God's good creation. Apparently, he accepts the *ex nihilo implies corruption* theme.

(3') God could not give man free will and at the same time ensure that he would use his free will always to choose good rather than evil.

Underlying (3') is a further assumption:

(4) Not even God can ensure the result of a genuinely free act.

Without (4), the free will defense is vitiated. If God could have ensured the result of man's free choices, He could have created Adam with free will while at the same time ensuring that he would always use it to do good.

However, (4) makes free will entirely inconsistent with Biblical theism. If God cannot ensure the results of the free acts of men, God does not have complete control. He is no longer the sovereign Creator who foreknows and foreordains all according to His good pleasure and will (Eph. 1:11). Man has genuine autonomy and God must helplessly watch man wreak havoc with creation.¹²

But this is not all. Once we assume that free will means the autonomy of man from God,¹³ we are faced with the consequence that God cannot ensure the triumph of good over evil in the life to come without quashing man's free will. If man will have free will in the coming life, there is always the chance that he may use it to do evil and once again fall. If, however, free will theodicy advocates admit that man will not have free will, we must wonder about its value. If it is of such great value that God would give it to man despite the consequence of evil, we would think that man would retain this in his state of eternal bliss. Either way, the free will defense faces a most unwelcome result.

¹² Attempts have been made to formulate a type of Biblical theism which does not assert God's total sovereignty but gives man the ability to act in ways which even God cannot control. Two formulations of this can be found in Nash, Ronald, ed., *Process Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987). They are David Basinger's article, "Divine Power: Do Process Theists Have a Better Idea?" and Clark H. Pinnock's article, "Between Classical and Process Theism." I believe that neither of these articles demonstrates the internal consistency of "free will theism" or its compatibility with the Bible.

¹³ This is not the place to examine whether free will implies autonomy because this is not germane to my purposes. I do not believe it does. Briefly, I would say that an act is free if it arises not from external force or compulsion against one's will but if it is done according to one's will. This is certainly how we use "freedom terms" (e.g., "free," "freedom," "free will," "liberty") in ordinary speech, and insofar as Scripture by implication addresses this issue, this seems to be the Scriptural concept of freedom as well. Moreover, I find the idea of autonomous free will to be not only contrary to Scripture, but philosophically incoherent as well. If what characterizes a free act is its lacking predetermination (whether by the decrees and power of God or not), then the paradigm of acts of free will should be those that appear most random and senseless. But we seldom regard such acts as acts of free will. On the contrary, what in ordinary language we call acts of free will are often precisely those which appear most ordered and done with good and sufficient reason.

Critique of Greater-Good Theodicies

Many greater-good theodicies have been proposed, but none more influential in recent years than that developed by John Hick in *Evil and the God of Love*.¹⁴ We may briefly summarize its main features as follows.

According to Hick, God's purpose in creating the world was to create beings who would enter into a personal relationship with Him. Love, trust, and faith are crucial to such relationships. Since these cannot be established through coercion, the created being needed relative autonomy from his Creator.

Thus, God could not simply reveal Himself in His full glory. Doing so would destroy the possibility that His creatures would come to worship Him of their own volition. Initially, then, God had to create human beings at a relative distance from Himself. (Hick calls this "epistemic distance.") This in turn means that they had to be placed in a less than perfect world.

Moreover, man needs to develop moral worth and build his character. One who has come to perfection through the struggle of overcoming evil will have greater moral worth than will a primordially perfect being. He will also have acquired virtues such as courage, sympathy, fortitude, and compassion along the way.

Thus, when asked how God can permit evil, Hick answers: God has made this world a place of soul making and character building so that He may bring us to a state of love and trust in Him.

Has Hick solved the problem of evil? To begin with, it is difficult to see just why faith and trust could only be formed in a world in which evil abounds. In *Evil and the God of Love* and elsewhere¹⁵ Hick defines faith as the loving and heartfelt acceptance of the person and work of God. We may grant that the idea of faith implies the conceptual possibility of its opposite. This does not mean that the opposite is necessarily realized. In fact, the Biblical theist must hold that Adam had faith and trust in paradise at the time when lack of faith and distrust had not yet come about.

Hick, of course, argues that faith is not really faith if it is compelled. This is why he claims that God creates man at an "epistemological distance," in a world of mixed good and evil. But the whole idea of trying to compel faith makes sense only where lack of faith and distrust are the normal conditions. Where faith and trust are normal — as in the Garden of Eden or glory — we would not need to worry about the possibility of faith being compelled, and all this talk would be irrelevant.

Suppose that Hick insists that faith and trust are possible only in a situation in which the normal condition is lack of faith and distrust (i.e., in the world of epistemic distance) and not in a Garden-of-Eden setting. We may then ask this question: Will the glorious future state be one of epistemic distance or not?

If Hick answers in the affirmative, then that state will contain good and evil. Man will still distrust God and lack faith in Him. This is hardly the eschatological realm to which Hick thinks God is leading us.

¹⁴ John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

¹⁵ For instance, in his *Philosophy of Religion* (Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1973).

If Hick answers in the negative, then on his definition faith and trust will not be present in that realm. In fact, the very moment we come into it and God's presence is overwhelmingly manifest, we will be said to have come to Him through "coercion." Further, one is left to wonder why God would place us in this vale of tears to gain faith and trust if they will no longer be found in heaven.

If on the other hand, Hick admits that faith and trust *are* possible in a Garden-of-Eden setting, then this present vale of tears isn't necessary after all.

In sum, the first response leaves Hick with all sorts of undesirable consequences. The second destroys the very basis of his theodicy.

We may raise a similar dilemma for Hick's claim that the sin and suffering of this vale of tears are necessary to develop virtues such as courage, sympathy, compassion, and fortitude. Would Hick be willing to admit that these are of sufficiently great value to our character that we will have a use for them in heaven? If he doesn't, we are left to wonder why God put us in this vale of tears to develop them. If he does, and evil is necessary for their development and exercise, it would seem that evil will abound in heaven so that we can exercise them.

We may generalize these criticisms and apply them to all greater-good theodicies. Take any greater good, *G*, (e.g., a faith relationship, courage, or anything else). If *G* is of such great value as to outweigh the evil necessary to attain it, *G* should be of value in the life to come. For example, why go through such great evil to gain courage if we are not going to have a chance to exercise it in the New Creation? But if evil is necessary for *G*, we should expect to find evil in the New Creation so that we may exercise *G* there as well. If evil is not necessary, we are left to wonder why God permits evil in the first place.

A Biblical Perspective

All the theodicies examined so far are fatally flawed. This is because of their common assumption — that God created the world specifically to bring about the best state possible for *man*. All the talk about man's greater good, the value of freedom, or whatever, points to this as the underlying assumption. However, if one makes this the starting point of his theodicy, he will never answer the problem of evil in a way that accords with Scripture. Moreover, his theodicy will be subject to the sorts of criticisms that I have presented. For, he will be trying to do what cannot be done — justifying God on the assumption that His chief purpose in creating the world is for the good pleasure of man.

**The Biblical
theist's theodicy
must rest on the
presupposition
that God's pur-
pose in creating
this world is to
most fully mani-
fest His glory**

Scripture, however, does not proceed on this assumption, and neither should the Biblical theist. He needs to adopt a new perspective. His theodicy must rest on the presupposition that God's purpose in creating this world is to most fully manifest His glory and that the world He created accomplishes this purpose.

God's glory is manifested through His various attributes. Scripture repeatedly speaks of four attributes which bear crucially on the problem of evil — righteousness, justice, mercy, and grace.¹⁶ It is hard to see how these attributes could be fully displayed except in a world in which man willfully fell from primordial goodness into sin, brought evil on himself, and God redeemed him from sin by grace alone. Let us consider this for a moment.

Certainly an omniscient and omnipotent God could have ordained that mankind would faithfully keep the divine law. The righteousness and justice of God would have been displayed as He rewarded Adam and his posterity for their faithfulness. Even His mercy and grace may have become known, for Adam and his descendants could have been taught that their preservation in righteousness was due to the sustaining power of God and not their own strength.

Nevertheless, righteousness and justice are more fully displayed when not only is good rewarded but evil punished. Mercy and grace are more perfectly manifested when the recipients are utterly unworthy. This is precisely what happens when God manifests His mercy and grace to the lost sinner by saving him for the sake of Christ. A righteous Adam may have had an abstract understanding of the ideas of grace and mercy. The unrighteous sinner who is drawn to Christ experiences God's grace and mercy in a much more profound fashion: "He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy" (Rom.

9:23).

Grace and mercy are also more wondrously displayed in a world in which man's fall resulted in spiritual *death*, not partial impairment. A spiritually sick person might claim a hand in restoring himself to God's favor. Only a once-dead person who has been restored to divine favor will see the *extent* of God's mercy. In Ephesians 2:4-5 we read: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even

¹⁶ Among those passages which speak of the righteousness of God are: Ps. 119:137, 145:17; II Tim. 4:8; Rev. 16:5. His justice is spoken of in Deut. 32:4; Rev. 15:3; Ps. 58:11; Rom. 2:6-9. Scripture speaks of God's mercy in Ezra 3:11; Ps. 57:10; 80:5; Tit. 1:4. God's grace is proclaimed in Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9. These attributes are described in their relationship to one another in Ex. 34:5-7. The above passages, of course, are just a small sampling of those which speak of these attributes.

when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." Grace and mercy, to be perfectly displayed, require man's redemption from a spiritually *helpless* position.

We may go further. It is hard to see how the relevant attributes could be adequately displayed in a world in which *all* were elected to salvation. Justice, for example, requires punishment for sin as well as reward for righteousness. Some argue that eternal punishment is inappropriate for finite sin. However, what I find unclear is the view that sin committed against the most high majesty of God, though done *by* finite creatures, deserves finite punishment. One can easily argue that sin committed against the eternal commands of the infinite and majestic God requires proportionate, that is, infinite and eternal punishment.

Nor does it seem possible that mercy and grace could have been fully displayed in a world in which God elected all men to salvation. If all men were saved in Christ, then, although not strictly of works, salvation would be a matter of birthright and not grace. (The Barthian idea of God's elective grace being universal destroys, if not election, the grace it seeks to preserve.)

I contend, then, that the Bible offers an explanation for evil quite consistent with what it says about God's glory, particularly as it is manifested in His attributes of righteousness, justice, grace, and mercy.

To recapitulate: God has ordained evil in order to display to all creation, and in particular to humanity, His glory in a way otherwise impossible. Namely, He has ordained man's fall and the resulting evils to demonstrate His righteousness, justice, grace, and mercy as fully as possible.

Countering Objections

The foregoing is just a sketch of the new perspective which the Biblical theist must adopt as he approaches the problem of evil. It is not a complete theodicy by any means. Nevertheless, I anticipate several objections may be raised against it.

First, one might argue that I have made no distinction between *moral* and *natural evils* (e.g., earthquakes, floods, famines, etc.). We must remember, however, that for the Biblical theist there is no natural evil strictly speaking. For him, the world itself was profoundly affected and shaken at the time of the fall. Ultimately, then, all "natural" evil is a result of the antecedent moral evil of man.

A second and related objection is that I have given no explanation for why God does not appear to distribute natural evil on the basis of sin. Sometimes the godly suffer while the wicked prosper. A full answer would extend our discussion beyond its intended parameters. A brief response must suffice. First, Scripture indicates that God blesses the godly and visits the wicked with calamity in this life (see in particular Ex. 20:5-6 and Deut. 28). Moreover, whatever prosperity the wicked enjoy is short-lived from the eternal perspective (Ps. 49 and 73), and whatever suffering the righteous suffer will pale in comparison with their future glory (Rom. 8:18-28). Finally, *none* are righteous, and all are

deserving of wrath. Therefore, whatever good comes our way is due solely to God's grace.

One might also object that I have not fully demonstrated that the purpose of God in creating the world ought to be first and foremost to manifest His glory. My theodicy is based on what Scripture says about God's purpose in creating; full exegesis is beyond the scope of this essay. However, I challenge anyone to demonstrate that the primary purpose of God in creating the world ought to be for the overall pleasure and benefit of man. This, too, is an assumption. The Biblical theist takes his from Scripture. From where does his opponent's come?

A similar objection is that the account I have given profoundly shifts the meaning of "good" and "evil," "right" and "wrong," particularly as these terms apply to God. God, it seems, is justified no matter *how much* evil He ordains. Moreover, the very concept of reward and punishment on the basis of grace and not merit seems to fly in the face of our ordinary moral intuitions.

Once again, however, this is a matter of Biblical assumption. The Biblical theist is not operating on the assumption that an act is right if it leads to the greatest pleasure of the greatest number of people. In fact, he appears committed to saying that God's actions, no matter what they are, must be morally right.¹⁷ This assumption is derived from Scripture, which clearly argues that God's goodness is never questioned (cf. Rom. 9:19ff.).

Finally, one might object that the Biblical theist will convince no one but other Biblical theists with this theodicy. *Precisely*. However, unless one can show that the problem of evil by itself places the theist in a logically self-contradictory position (which I argued at the outset it doesn't), this is all the Biblical theist really needs to do. The road of traditional theodicies is strewn with the corpses of those who have tried to do the impossible. By starting with the assumption that God must create a world designed for the greatest good of man, they have offered theodicies that collapse under their own weight and compromise the very theism they wish to defend. As far as I can tell, the new perspective I have sketched does not do this.

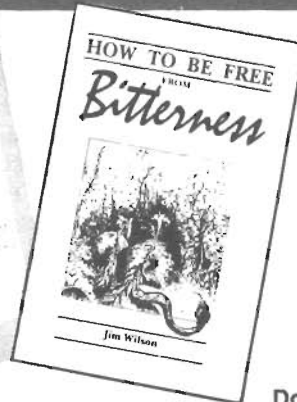
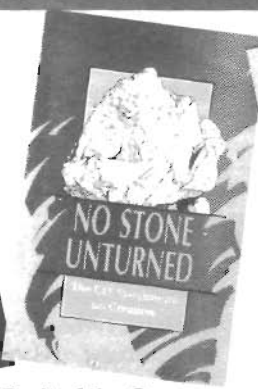
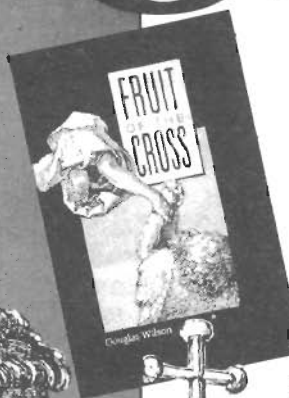
But shouldn't theodicy try to do more? No, for the primary purpose of theodicy is not to convince the anti-theist of Biblical theism but to show that given the presuppositions of Biblical theism, the existence of evil is not inconsistent with an omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect God. Conversely, the only way in which evil provides counter-evidence to the God of the Bible is through prior acceptance of anti-theistic presuppositions. Δ

¹⁷ Thus the Biblical theist espouses what is sometimes called the divine command theory of morality (*viz.*, an action is right because God commands it).

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Wesley Callihan

Classicists, out-of-date liberal arts majors, the sort of people who belong to the Conservative Book Club, and even many Christians like to say that there are certain books or certain classes of books that are more valuable than others. They talk about "enduring values," "the condition of man,"

"timeless beauty," and "the common cultural consensus." They take the view that if one has only so much time in this life which may be devoted to reading, then a good portion of that time would be better spent with these "classics" than with just any old thing that comes to hand. I must confess that as a member of three out of these four groups of people (you may rest easy as to my position in the fourth), I agree with them.

Within the best class of books — what most people would understand you to mean if you said the phrase "the classics" to them out of the blue at the drinking fountain — we find a conscious dependence upon the preceding literary tradition. At one level, this dependence is evident in an author's familiarity with a literary tradition; the terms that he uses in his own works — his "grammar" — are those of the authors who have preceded him. They have communicated to him, and he has been receptive. So we see names from classical mythology (Achilles, Hercules, Apollo, Zeus) appearing over and over again throughout the history of Western literature as a kind of shorthand. The significance of each name is part of the "common cultural consensus," and because we agree on the meaning of those terms, they communicate far more, and better, in one word than the author might have with many paragraphs of faceless abstract words. For example, "Trojan horse" is a more lively, enduring mental image than "clever subterfuge" and may even carry far more useful connotations.

On a deeper level, authors within the literary tradition appropriate ideas and themes and even struc-

tures handed down to them by earlier authors, and they make them better, or even make something new using the old materials. The epic formula, the ode, the drama, the lyric — all have been used, imitated, developed, matured, and added to in the twenty-five hundred to three thousand years since their first known use. Although most of the greatest authors were in fact "original" in this sense in that they made something new, originality *per se* has not been, until the last two hundred years, the dominant virtue for which an author felt he had to strive. When that notion began to thrive under the Romantics (who wrote some beautiful poetry but had terrible theories), it took the form of a deliberate attempt to shake off the past, while pretending to appreciate it, rather than building on it.

Finally, and most importantly here, we find within the "classic" literary stream a specific kind of adoption that matures the forms: *authors in the Christian age have redeemed secular ideas, themes, and structures.* Augustine reminds us that at the Exodus, the Hebrews "borrowed" from the Egyptians "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold," to illustrate how Christians ought to treat such things as pagan mythology. Many of the stories of the Greeks and Romans — Achilles, Aeneas, Orpheus, the gods — are wonderful jewels, and rather than abandoning them, subsequent Christian authors influenced by those stories have borrowed them, sprinkled blood on the posts, and run away with them in the night.

Redemption is possible for at least two reasons. First, since the old (pagan) terms are part of the Western literary tradition, Christians must possess some familiarity with them in order to communicate with others who operate within that tradition. Paul the Apostle used his knowledge of the pagan poets (Homer, Epimenides, Menander), dramatists (Aeschylus), and philosophers (Socrates) to communicate to the Greek world. Second, as C. S. Lewis argues in *The Pilgrim's Regress*,¹ there may be more to the story of the origin of the myths than simply depraved creativity on the part of the early Mediterranean people. We shouldn't find it unreasonable to suppose that God had his hand in the making of at least some of them, especially in light of the obvious grain of truth many of them carry. Gold and silver are not inherently evil, and neither (considered carefully) are the myths.

Classic literature provides some of the richest ground for a Christian to study if he is interested in understanding and appreciating the classics, if he is interested in demonstrating to his less intrigued brethren the value of immersing oneself in the classics, and especially if he is interested in discovering how Christian writers in the past have exercised the cultural mandate in literary history. One of the clearest and most fascinating examples of a Christian poet exercising redemptive stewardship over the classical literary tradition is John Milton in his use of the Roman poet Vergil.²

The high peaks of the Western literary tradition are the great epics, but the epics change according to the

¹ Lewis, C.S., *The Pilgrim's Regress*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 147-48.

² The Latin is "Vergilius." Most English writers spell it "Virgil," but I prefer "Vergil" out of stubborn contrariness. Either is acceptable.

worldviews of the authors, and it is the result of that change, of the maturing of the epic form, which allowed Milton to do what he did. Milton had a view of history which was preceded not by Homer, although Homer is the first in the epic line, but by Vergil. Homer, in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, reveals a view of history without design and without purpose. In the last book of the *Iliad*, Priam, king of the Trojans, and Achilles, hero of the Greeks, mourn together for their dead; then Achilles says, "Such is the way the gods spun life for unfortunate mortals, that we live in unhappiness, but the gods themselves have no sorrows."³ He describes immediately afterwards the two urns at the threshold of Zeus from which the chief god bestows blessings and curses on men without any apparent order or goal. Throughout the epic, "Destiny" is mentioned often, but it is very clear that Destiny is not about the long-range future of mankind or a nation — it is about the future of each man, and it is capricious, not teleological. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus goes to Hades to receive a prophecy, and there meets Achilles, hero of the *Iliad*, who says,

O shining Odysseus, never try to console me for dying.
I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another man, one with no land allotted him, and not much to live
on, than be a king over the perished dead.⁴

Neither prior good deeds nor the well-being of one's descendants comforts a person in death. The Homeric worldview has only destiny without significance. Destiny, in Homer, is about "human and personal tragedy built up against this background of meaningless flux."⁵

Vergil's *Aeneid*, on the other hand, demonstrates just as clearly that the Romans had a radically different conception of history — that it has a purpose and a direction. From the very beginning of the poem it is apparent that Vergil is "spreading out his story both in time and space."⁶ In the opening we discover that, as in the *Iliad*, the gods are forces that drive events, but we also see that men think differently now about this driving of events. Aeneas, throughout the book, encourages his band to carry on in the face of hardships; not simply because, as in the *Iliad*, "the Destinies put in mortal men the heart of endurance" (24.49), so that they must carry on with whatever it is that the fates have spun out for them just because that's the way it is, but rather because, as the *Aeneid* says, the gods "shall raise your children to the stars and build an empire out of their city."⁷ All through this work we are reminded of prophecies which must be fulfilled, we hear the constant call of Fate to a direction, to an end (the founding, eventually, of

Rome), which the Trojans must obey over every desire of the present. The concept of duty to posterity, to the future, and to the outworking of prophesied events for the nation, though understandable to us, is a new one in the history of the epic attitude, or at least one that Homer's heroes would not have recognized.

Milton redeems this attitude toward history for his (Christian) purpose. Obviously, Milton participated in the epic tradition in a general way by using the forms and conventions of the epic. He writes his story of the Fall in twelve books, he invokes his Muse (the Holy Spirit) at the beginning, he uses epic similes that run on for so long one almost forgets what is being illustrated by the comparison, and so on. But Milton was able to do much more than simply imitate the structural conventions of the epic; he used for his own purposes that one feature of the *Aeneid* that could only have arisen from Vergil's teleological view of history and that lent itself admirably to telling the Christian story of the future.

In the last half of book six of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is shown the future of his descendants by the spirit of his dead father, Anchises. We have already seen that in Homer, too, there is a visit to the land of the dead, but there the purpose is very different. The spirit of the blind prophet Tiresias is to reveal the future to Odysseus, but it has only to do with his own fate—"the way to go, the stages of your journey, and . . . how to make your way home" (10.539-40). Aeneas, on the other hand, hears from his father that "you will learn of all your race and of the [city] walls that have been given you" (5.971.1-2). This is a long range vision that is to inspire in Aeneas something more than the desire to survive and get home. In the last two books of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the archangel Michael shows (book 11) and narrates (book 12) to Adam a vision of the future of mankind (Adam's descendants) through history to the end of the world, and this vision has the same teleological drive behind it, only on a greater scale.

Because of such elements as 1) the *locations* in which they receive the visions, 2) the *purpose* for which the men are shown the visions, 3) the roles of Aeneas and Adam as *federal heads* for races which partake of a common ethical quality, 4) the central element (the *incarnate hope*) of the visions themselves, and 5) the clear connection between teleological understanding and *ethical behavior*, the last section of *Paradise Lost* parallels marvelously the last half of book six of the *Aeneid*. The parallels are such that Milton, thoroughly versed in Vergil as he was from his school-days, must surely have had this section of the *Aeneid* in mind when he was writing his own vision of the future; and they are a clear illustration of the way in which Milton the Christian uses Vergil's teleological development in the epic to the advance of a new kingdom — that of Christ.

Location

Aeneas, in the *Aeneid*, book 6, is in the underworld — that this is an extraordinary setting is beyond question, and all the narrative leading up to his entry into Pluto's realm is designed to make the audience feel that fact. However, Aeneas is no longer in the place of torment, but in Elysium, the happy half of Hades, and

³ Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Richmond Lattimore, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), 24.525-26.

⁴ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Richmond Lattimore, (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 11.488-92

⁵ Lewis, C.S., *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 31.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁷ Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1971), 3.210-12.

the action has calmed down (from the previous fevered description of souls in torment), so that Aeneas, Anchises, and the Sibyl, the priestess of Apollo, are in the midst of a crowd of the blessed souls moving on their way through peaceful fields toward the upper regions and eventually to reincarnation in the world of living men. In this quieter mood, some of the strangeness of the underworld has been lost. Vergil has a solution, but it comes in the guise of a plausible move. In order better to view the souls moving by, Anchises "gained a vantage from which he could scan / all of the long array that moved toward them" (6.996,997), and then he proceeds to interpret all the figures moving past in terms of the future of Rome. Although Vergil does not make much of Anchises finding a good spot from which to view the passing souls, it is important that Anchises does so, not simply to see better, but to set off what he is doing. He is no longer part of that passing crowd — the phrasing, brief as it is, has separated him, and created (in a minor, understated, way) not the original mood of strangeness but at least an image of separateness fitting for the prophetic role Anchises is about to undertake.

In the analogous portion of *Paradise Lost*, after Michael tells Adam and Eve that they must leave Paradise, he commands Adam to "Ascend / This hill" (11.366,67);⁸ Adam responds, "Ascend, I follow thee, safe guide" (11.371), and then the narrator says, "So both ascend / In the visions of God" (11.376,77). This repetition of "ascend" emphasizes that something extraordinary is happening; we understand that Adam and Michael are going not just to a different location, but, like Aeneas, to a special one. And that place is

... a hill
Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
The hemisphere of earth in clearest ken
Stretched out to amplest reach of prospect lay.
(11.377-80)

This is a vantage point from which Michael can do most appropriately what he has been sent to do. It shows Adam the world geographically, but it also gives the feel of a separated — "consecrated" — place fitting for a supernatural occurrence.

A vision of the future is not an ordinary event, and it does not occur in ordinary ways or places. Not only must the recipient be placed in a special condition physically and spiritually, but the audience must be made to realize that an extraordinary event is taking place. Epic poets are not above giving their audiences clues to the action in their poetry. Not only epic conventions, but any device which the reader can interpret, consciously or not, is useful to the poet in conveying what he wishes to in his art. That is what happens here. Whereas in Vergil, Anchises' simply stated act is our clue, in Milton, it is the repetition that tells us to pay attention, that something unusual is afoot; and the ascent is a movement away from the scene of the previous action and to a separated place.

⁸ Milton, John, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Scott Elledge, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1975).

Purpose

Vergil's purpose for Aeneas' s visit to the underworld is for him to learn what future races and people depend on his continued struggle against the forces Juno throws against him in her hatred of the Trojans and to encourage him in that struggle by a vision of the greatness of some of his descendants. This sort of encouragement could never have happened in Homer, because of the difference in worldviews. Time was no inducement to the Greek heroes. But here in the *Aeneid*, the old household gods that Aeneas brought with him out of burning Troy have appeared to him in a night dream and told him that "we shall raise / your children to the stars" (3.210,211), and the god Apollo himself had given Aeneas hope that a land would be given him in which to settle (3.120-30), so that by now Aeneas knows there is a future and a reason to continue his journey, although up to this point his understanding has been vague. What is necessary now is for him to see more clearly what is to come, and that is father Anchises' job. At each setback Aeneas receives throughout the *Aeneid*, he receives a fresh word from a prophet or a god in order to keep him going. Just when the Trojans' hopes (that the land they were in was the fulfillment of Apollo's prophecy) were being crushed by a plague sweeping through the camp, the household gods had appeared with a reaffirmation of Apollo's message. Later, in book 5, after the Trojan women have burnt their ships in their desperation for a permanent site, Anchises' spirit appears to Aeneas and tells him to come to the underworld to seek him out so that he can "learn of all your race / and of the walls that have been given you" (5.971,72).

When the Sibyl is overcome by Apollo in her cave at Cumae, she tells Aeneas, "Do not relent before distress, but be / far bolder than your fortune would permit" (6.132,33). This is prefatory to Aeneas' journey to Hades and is part of the message of the trip. All of these passages illustrate the fact that Aeneas' s visit to Elysium is designed for his encouragement. Even the Elysian Fields come as a relief to Aeneas after the blow of seeing the infernal side of Hades. There he sees many reminders of his own failures — Dido, who had committed suicide when Aeneas left her at Carthage, and warriors from the Trojan War.

The vagueness of the prophecies to this point is removed when Anchises shows Aeneas exactly what will happen and who his descendants are to be. Every preceding prophecy is elucidated by the Elysium display, and this shows the importance of the event to Aeneas' future endeavors. Furthermore, one of Aeneas' descendants will be the author of a return to a golden age for a war-torn Rome, and were Aeneas to refuse to go on, his descendants would lose the hope of this man. Not only is Aeneas encouraged, therefore, by the hope of descendants, but his knowledge that one in particular will be great is a spur to his courage.

When we turn to Milton, we see a similar purpose of encouragement at work. In *Paradise Lost*, Michael says Adam is to see the future

... thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear

And pious sorrow, equally inured
 By moderation either state to bear,
 Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
 Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
 Thy mortal passage when it comes.
 (11.360-66)

Michael has already told Adam that he has been sent "To show thee what shall come in future days / To thee and to thy offspring" (11.357,58). Thus Michael's purpose is similar to Anchises', in that he is showing the future to encourage Adam to persevere and not to give up in the face of adversity, because there are future generations depending on him, but also because man's entire hope rests on one of Adam's descendants. If Adam does not carry on in spite of the trouble he has brought upon himself, he will prevent the eventual salvation of men. Adam must carry on in his struggle just as Aeneas must. His life will now be both a battle and a journey.

Furthermore, this passage is similar to the above passages from the *Aeneid* in that Michael's appearance with a vision comes after a major setback — the Fall. Adam desperately needs encouragement, for he has experienced the same despair that Aeneas has, wishing for death, although his reaction to that discouragement has, of necessity, been different from Aeneas', because the cause of it is different. Aeneas is buffeted by fate, but Adam is buffeted by his own sin. Nevertheless, Michael tells Adam that he and Eve should go on their way "yet much more cheered / With meditation on the happy end" (12.604-605). The teleological perspective he is giving them is to be an encouragement; they are to locate themselves in creation and (especially here) time in order to live out the remainder of their days aright.

Headship

Milton's Adam and Vergil's Aeneas are very similar in the roles they play as federal heads of their races. Aeneas is the father of the entire Roman race — the gods had said, "we shall raise / your children to the stars" (3.210-211). He is the first Roman man. Adam is the father of a race, too — the entire human race (including Aeneas!). He is the very first man.

In more general ways as well, Milton's description of the future through Michael follows the pattern set by Vergil. For example, Aeneas and Anchises see among their descendants not only good men and leaders, but many who are not what Aeneas might wish in his offspring. Boastful Ancus, the cruel Tarquins, haughty Brutus (1081-1084) — these are in the line of Aeneas' descendants. Worse (in Vergil's eyes), are Caesar and Pompey, descendants of Aeneas and near relatives of each other, who get along so well as mere spirits in the underworld, but will bring war against each other in their day on earth (1095-1104).

Milton has even more material to work after this fashion, for all of Adam's offspring will be tainted by the Fall, and thus evil to some extent. Not only so, but since Milton is not merely concerned with social or political good or evil, as is Vergil, but rather with absolute, spiritual good and evil, everyone, with few exceptions, will fall under the indictment of evil. Thus, whereas in the train of men that Aeneas sees there are few bad men, now

in Michael's display of future men to Adam there are few good men: Abel, Enoch, Noah, the Patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, David, and after Christ, the disciples. From another perspective, Vergil gives us a roll call of many of the great men in Roman history, with only the occasional attack on some bad ruler. Milton also gives a roll call of great men of history, but he emphasizes heavily the predominant evil that will pervade history.

The Incarnate Hope

In both epics, there is a vision of the fulfillment of a promise concerning a great man to come, who will bring his people into a golden age. As Anchises and Aeneas observe the souls passing, they see

the man you heard so often promised —
 Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will
 renew a golden age in Latium,
 in fields where Saturn once was king, and stretch
 his rule beyond the Garamantes and
 the Indians — a land beyond the paths
 of year and sun, beyond the constellations,
 where on his shoulders heaven-holding Atlas
 revolves the axis set with blazing stars.

(6.1048-1056)

Here is a description of a man bringing in a golden age, a man who has been promised for a long time. We know that Vergil was very much the conservative, and as such wished wholeheartedly for the restoration of peace and order that Augustus seemed to promise after the civil wars that had racked the Italian peninsula prior to his reign. But Vergil felt so strongly about this that in his Fourth Eclogue he becomes messianic:

The last age, told by heralds in Cymaeon song,
 Is come! the march of the centuries swings along.
 Returns the Virgin, Saturn is king again,
 A new and better race descends for men.
 But only do, Lucina, deign to smile
 Upon the newborn babe, whose grace shall guile
 Our iron breed at last to cease its pains;
 The age of gold will dawn while Apollo reigns!

The Eclogue speaks in terms of the Golden Age, written about also by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, wherein the earth, under the reign of Saturn before Jove overthrew him, yielded its bounty to man without being plowed or seeded; the animals were tame which now are vicious, and men were peaceable. To all this, Vergil prophesied, the world was returning. Of the subject of the Eclogue, he says, "the world's ponderous sphere bows before thee — earth and the tracts of ocean and the empyreal vault!" The educated medieval and Renaissance world was so taken by this Eclogue that Vergil was widely considered to be a proto-Christian prophet, even though he was a pagan, and Dante chose him for his guide through Hell and Purgatory because of his standing as a prophet.⁹

⁹ "Virgil," *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 5th ed., Margaret Drabble, ed., (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), p. 1031.

Milton uses the basic idea of the promised man in his treatment of the Scriptural theme of Messiah, who would come to put an end to strife in a way that even Augustus himself never could. The messianic theme is the most critical element of Michael's prophecy of the future. The promised man in *Paradise Lost* is of course the "Woman's Seed" (12.327), the Son of God. Michael refers to the prophecies several times; the first follows the appearance of Moses' successor, Joshua, in the wilderness, when he speaks of

... Joshua whom the Gentiles Jesus call,
His name and office bearing, who shall quell
The adversary Serpent, and bring back
Through the world's wilderness long-wandered man
Safe to eternal paradise of rest.

(12.310-314)

This sums up not only the fulfillment of the promised adversary of Satan but also his millennial plans — the restoration of Paradise. Later, when he has foretold the birth of Messiah, Michael says that he shall "bound his reign / With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heavens" (12.370-71); then, in his exposition of the end of all things, he speaks of "him so lately promised to thy aid, / The Woman's Seed, obscurely then foretold" (12.542-43). The promised man is obviously Jesus Christ, the Saviour who has been promised for the deliverance of mankind from the evil effects of the fall of Adam and Eve. He will usher in "ages of endless date / Founded in righteousness and peace and love" (12.549-550). This language is not unlike that used for Augustus, but Milton makes the connection between Vergil's terms and his own Christian ones even clearer in his ode, "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." There he says that if man could but hear the music of the spheres, "Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold" (stanza xiv); in stanzas xvii and xviii we are told that it cannot be so until after the Judgment Day, but it "now begins."¹⁰ This is not only reminiscent of Vergil, but it would be a mistake for the reader not to have Vergil in mind and to be summoning up the sort of images that Vergil and Ovid had when they used the phrase "age of gold." It is that kind of eschatological imagery that is operative for Milton; the truth can be grasped through the images of the poets.

This promise is the key to the vision of the future. If it were not that Someone would come and restore the world and man, there would be no point in showing Adam the vision. The reason for the vision is to show Adam that even in spite of the Fall, not only should he keep living and battling with the Nature that now is turned against him, but God himself will send an answer to the problem that the first couple created. God's answer will be a restoration, through one great man promised from the beginning, of the Paradise they had lost.

Ethical Teleology

We find a marked structural similarity between Aeneas' exit from Elysium and Adam's exit from Para-

dise. Vergil describes the gates through which Aeneas and the Sibyl must pass out of Hades thus:

There are two gates of sleep: the one is said
to be of horn, through it an easy exit
is given to true Shades; the other is made
of polished ivory, perfect, glittering,
but through that way the Spirits send false dreams
into the world above.

(6.1191-96)

And Aeneas and the Sibyl leave through that ivory gate, so that Aeneas can reenter the world of the living and press on to found his city.

The description of the great eastern gate of Paradise in *Paradise Lost* is of

a rock
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from earth, one entrance high;

(4.543-46)

And it is through this gate that Adam and Eve must exit: Michael grabs their hands "and to th' eastern gate / Led them direct, and down the cliff" (12.638,39).

There is only one gate to (or from) Paradise; there are two gates from Hades. Nevertheless, there are strong similarities in the two accounts. First, and least important, the color of the gates is similar — Vergil's is ivory, and Milton's is "alabaster" (white). Second, the gates from Hades are restricted, as is Paradise's. Third, in both cases the leave-taking through the gates comes immediately after the vision of the future, so there is no further revelation, no more questions, no dawdling.

In both stories, the protagonist (Adam and Aeneas) must go out into the world and struggle. The vision of the future — foreknowledge — does not obviate the necessity for the struggle; indeed, it is given in order to hearten them for it, which implies that the struggle is necessary — there is no element of fatalism, or determinism apart from means, here; they each see the future, and must now go and bring it to pass. The vision of the direction of the future, the revelation of design and purpose, is to provoke action — teleological understanding must be ethical, must be acted upon, and cannot be merely intellectual, or it becomes disobedience.

Milton redeems this teleological drive in his epic, given to him by Vergil, in a manner not open to Vergil's ultimately futile outlook. What Vergil's epic, great as it is, could never have consistently supported — true obedience, self-denial, and long-term ethical behavior encouraged by a consideration of future generations — Milton's could, because the One Man who is the center of the vision is the same who in the Gospel removes the obstacles to obedience. Δ

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¹⁰ "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Milton: *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey, (London: Longman, 1971), pp. 107-8.

Christianity in Nineteenth Century American Law

**While strenuously
asserting the value
of religious liberty,
early American
courts
unhesitatingly ap-
pealed to religious
considerations.**

Steven Samson

The religious underpinnings of American political and legal institutions have been duly noted by legal scholars, historians, judges, politicians, and clergymen alike. Church politics provided models not only for colonial civil governments but also for the present constitutional system. R. Kemp Morton summarized some of these influences from a Presbyterian standpoint:

Presbyterians had a more republican system; each congregation was independent of every other congregation in its purely local affairs, but the presbyteries and synods of pre-Revolutionary times exhibited a pattern for a union in a central organization without any loss of fundamental rights. It was from this church structure that the formula coordinating the large and the small states into one union came. The College of Cardinals of the Catholic Church formed the pattern for the Electoral College for electing the President and the Vice-President. The persistent pursuit of religious freedom by these and other dissenting sects had taught their votaries the philosophy of both religious and civil liberty.¹

Other writers have detected Congregationalist, Baptist, Episcopalian, and Jewish contributions to the constitutional framework.²

¹ Morton, R. Kemp, *God in the Constitution* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1933), pp. 82-83.

² See Sweet, William W., *The Story of Religion in America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), pp. 250-73. A thoughtful statement of the nature of the Christian influence on the American constitutional system may be found in the intro-

Christianity as Common Law

Justice Joseph Story and Chancellor James Kent were among many sitting judges during the nineteenth century who cited the maxim that "Christianity is part of the common law." As early as 1764, Thomas Jefferson attributed the phrase to a misinterpretation made by Sir Henry Finch in 1613 that had subsequently been perpetuated by Matthew Hale and William Blackstone. But Justice Story disputed Jefferson's contention that it was a "judicial forgery" and quoted the opinion of Chief Justice Prisot of the Court of Common Pleas, which established the precedent in 1458:

As to those laws, which those of holy church have in ancient scripture, it behooves us to give them credence, for this is common law, upon which all manner of laws are founded; and thus, sir, we are obliged to take notice of their law of holy church; and it seems they are obliged to take notice of our law.³

James McClellan has noted, moreover, that Justice Story was not satisfied simply to base his contention on a single precedent but attempted to prove that the maxim was a general principle of common law. The Presbyterian theologian, Charles Hodge, argued that the moral law of the Bible represents a higher law: "Whatever Protestant Christianity forbids, the law of the land (within its sphere, i.e., within the sphere in which civil authority may appropriately act) forbids."⁴ By implication, then, anything contrary to the principles of "ancient scripture" would violate the common law and the Constitution.⁵

Mark DeWolfe Howe suggests that Thomas Jefferson "had always been uncomfortably aware of the

duction to Verna M. Hall, comp., *The Christian History of the American Revolution: Consider and Ponder* (San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1976), p. xxiv.

³ McClellan, James, *Joseph Story and the American Constitution: A Study in Political and Legal Thought* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), p. 122. Thomas Jefferson developed his views at some length in a letter to Dr. Thomas Cooper dated 10 February 1814; Jefferson, Thomas, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 14 (Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), pp. 85-97. For a detailed critique of Jefferson's complaint, see the opinion of Chief Justice J. M. Clayton of the Delaware Supreme Court in *The State v. Chandler*, 2 Harrington 553 (1837), which includes the following passages at 561-62: "We know, notwithstanding Mr. Jefferson's defiance, that even Finch himself had quoted 8 H.8, 'Ley de Dieu est ley de terre,' the law of God is the law of the land, Doc. & Stud. lib. 1, c. 6, Plowed. 265, to sustain his position that the holy scripture is of sovereign authority, and to show the extent and meaning of the maxim." Perry Miller discovered many complexions to the controversy over whether Christianity was part of the common law. In fact, it might be best characterized as a falling out among Christians over the implications of the statement: that is, what it meant in regard to the establishment or free exercise of religion. See Miller, Perry, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), pp. 186-206.

⁴ Hall, *American Revolution*, p. 156.

⁵ See Corwin, Edward S., *The "Higher Law" Background of American Constitutional Law* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1955), pp. 88-89 and note.

closeness of the affiliation between Christianity and the common law" and "saw the transmitting of the maxim from English to American shores as the transplanting of the seeds of establishment."⁶ The idea that the common law established Christianity remained an important political issue because of the persistence of church establishments in several states. In fact, at the time the Constitution was adopted, five states still maintained formal denominational establishments while others like Massachusetts adopted Protestantism or showed preference to Christianity. Only Virginia and Rhode Island guaranteed full religious liberty.⁷ In all, nine of the thirteen colonies effectively established Protestantism; all favored Christianity in some manner.⁸ Justice Story, a Unitarian, abhorred ecclesiastical establishments but believed Christianity to be the foundation of social order in America. Concerning the First Amendment, he wrote:

Probably at the time of the adoption of the constitution, and of the amendment to it..., the general, if not the universal, sentiment in America was, that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the state, so far as was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience and the freedom of religious worship. An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation. It yet remains a problem to be solved in human affairs, whether any free government can be permanent where the public worship of God, and the support of religion, constitute no part of the policy or duty of the state in any assignable shape.⁹

He agreed with the sentiment that religion should be encouraged by the state but not through compulsion and not by showing sectarian preferences:

⁶ Howe, Mark DeWolfe, *The Garden and the Wilderness: Religion and Government in American Constitutional History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 27, 28.

⁷ Pfeffer, Leo, *Church, State, and Freedom*, revised ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967) p. 118-19; Cobb, Sanford H., *The Rise of Religious Liberty in America: A History* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902; Burt Franklin, 1970), p. 507.

⁸ McClellan, James, "The Making of the Establishment Clause," in *A Blueprint for Judicial Reform*, ed. Patrick B. McGuigan and Randall R. Rader (Washington, D.C.: Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, 1981), p. 307.

⁹ Story, Joseph, *Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States; With a Preliminary Review of the Constitutional History of the Colonies and States, Before the Adoption of the Constitution*, vol. 3 (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1833; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), pp. 726-27. Evidence to support Story's thesis may be gleaned, for example, from Hatch, Nathan O., *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 168: "As intellectual heirs of a tradition which had entwined republicanism and Christian theism, New Englanders in the last two decades of the century were unable to perceive religion as free from matters of civil government. From ancient history they were convinced that 'the state cannot stand without religion' and from their own experience that 'Rational Freedom cannot be preserved without the aid of Christianity.'"

The real object of the amendment was, not to countenance, much less to advance Mahometanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment, which should give to an hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government.¹⁰

Story concluded that, because liberty of conscience is protected and power over religion is left to the state governments, "the Protestant, the Calvinist and the Arminian, the Jew and the Infidel, may sit down at the common table of the national councils, without any inquisition into their faith, or mode of worship."¹¹

Justice Story did not try to make a distinction between the establishment and free exercise clauses. His interpretation, moreover, was echoed by other commentators, such as James Bayard and William Rawle, both of whom noted the evils growing out of the union of church and state. Both also believed religious liberty enabled religion to flourish in greater purity and vigor.¹² Chancellor James Kent of New York indicated that he found no real difference between the federal and state constitutions with regard to religious liberty, except in seven states that still retained religious tests at the time he wrote. He regarded religious liberty as an absolute right and believed it went hand in hand with civil liberty.¹³ Nevertheless, during the 1821 convention to revise the state constitution, he joined with Vice President Daniel Tompkins, Chief Justice Spencer of the New York Supreme Court, and Rufus King in defending the recognition of Christianity as part of the common law and helped turn aside a proposed amendment that "no particular religion shall ever be declared or adjudged to be the law of the land."¹⁴

Near the end of the nineteenth century, Thomas M. Cooley, who publicly opposed Sunday closing laws, strongly reaffirmed the same judicial precepts held by Justice Story and Chancellor Kent:

By establishment of religion is meant the setting up or recognition of a state church, or at least the conferring upon one church of special favors and advantages which are denied to others. It was never intended by the Constitution that the government should be prohibited from recognizing religion, or that religious worship should never be provided for in cases where a proper recognition of Divine Providence in the working of government might seem to require it, and where it might be done without

¹⁰ Story, *Commentaries*, p. 728.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 731.

¹² Morris, B. F., *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States, Developed in the Official and Historical Annals of the Republic* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1864), pp. 259-62.

¹³ Kent, James, *Commentaries on American Law*, ed. O.W. Holmes, Jr., 12th ed., vol. 2 (Boston: Little Brown, and Company, 1873), pp. 34-35 (45). Lieber, Francis, *Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 2: *Contributions to Political Science* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1880), pp. 74-80.

¹⁴ Morris, *Christian Life*, pp. 656-59.

drawing any invidious distinctions between different religious beliefs, organizations, or sects. The Christian religion was always recognized in the administration of the common law; and so far as that law continues to be the law of the land, the fundamental principles of that must continue to be recognized in the same cases and to the same extent as formerly.¹⁵

In a letter to Robert Baird, Henry Wheaton, who then served as an ambassador to the court of Berlin, described a few of the ways Christianity continued to be recognized, encouraged, and protected back home. His examples included laws governing sabbaths, church property, blasphemy, oath taking, and marriage, all of which helped illustrate his point that the church was not viewed as a rival or enemy of the state but as a "co-worker in the religious and moral instruction of the people."¹⁶

State Courts

The extent to which early American law actually incorporated the common law of England is disputed. But Blackstone's commentaries on the common law, which asserted that Christianity is part of the law of the land, exercised a profound influence on the generation that fought the War for Independence. Edmund Burke testified to their acceptance as the popular standard when he remarked: "I hear that they have sold nearly as many of Blackstone's Commentaries in America as in England."¹⁷ Although Blackstone's analysis of offenses against God and religion assumed the existence of an Anglican establishment, he emphasized that revelation is the source of all valid laws and obligations:

This law of nature being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligations to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.¹⁸

This belief that American common law incorporated higher law generally and Christianity specifically persisted well into the present century. For example, the first volume of *American Ruling Cases* (1912) cited a New York decision upholding a Sunday closing law as a

governing precedent. In *Lindenmuller v. People*, 33 Barb. (N.Y.) 548 (1861), the New York Supreme Court based its decision, in part, on the incorporation of English common law:

The common law, as it was in force on the 20th day of April, 1777, subject to such alterations as have been made, from time to time, by the legislature, and except such parts of it as are repugnant to the constitution, is, and ever has been, a part of the law of the state (33 Barb. 548,561; 1 A.R.C. 457).

As in similar cases elsewhere, the Court took care to qualify its acknowledgement of Christianity as part of the common law so as not to imply any ecclesiastical establishment, which would make Christianity a civil or political institution. It declared that even though Christianity is not the legal religion of the state, "this is not inconsistent with the idea that it is, and ever has been, the religion of the people."

As in England, the maxim was most frequently cited in blasphemy cases. In *Updegraph v. The Commonwealth*, 11, S.&R. 384, 401 (1824), the Pennsylvania Supreme Court quoted Lord Mansfield:

There never was a single instance, from the Saxon times down to our own, in which a man was punished for erroneous opinions. For atheism, blasphemy, and reviling the Christian religion, there have been instances of prosecution at the common law; but bare nonconformity is no sin by the common law, and all pains and penalties for nonconformity to the established rites and modes are repealed by the acts of toleration, and dissenters exempted from ecclesiastical censures. What bloodshed and confusion have been occasioned, from the reign of Henry IV, when the first penal statutes were enacted, down to the revolution, by laws made to force conscience. There is certainly nothing more unreasonable, nor inconsistent with the rights of human nature, more contrary to the spirit and precepts of the Christian religion, more iniquitous and unjust, more impolitic, than persecution against natural religion, revealed religion and sound policy.¹⁹

The court indicated that the only interest of temporal courts is to prevent disturbances of the public peace "likely to proceed from the removal of religious and moral restraints; this is the ground of punishment for blasphemous and criminal publications; and without any view to

¹⁵ Cooley, Thomas M., *The General Principles of Constitutional Law in the United States of America*, ed. Andrew C. McLaughlin, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1898), pp.224-25.

¹⁶ Baird, Robert, *Religion in the United States of America* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1969) p. 282.

¹⁷ Thornton, John Wingate, *The Pulpit of the American Revolution: or, The Political Sermons of the Period of 1776*. (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), xxvii.

¹⁸ Blackstone, William, *Commentary on the Laws of England*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1771), p. 41. See Boorstin, Daniel J., *The Mysterious Science of the Law* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), p. 3.

¹⁹ The text of Lord Mansfield's speech in *Chamberlain of London v. Evans*, 2 Burn's Eccles. Law, 218, which was delivered in the House of Lords in 1767, was published in *The Palladium of Conscience; or, the Foundation of Religious Liberty, Displayed, Asserted, and Established, Agreeable to its True and Genuine Principles, Above the Reach of All Petty Tyrants, Who Attempt to Lord it Over the Human Mind*. (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1773; New York: Da Capo Press, 1974), pp. 139-55. Lord Mansfield's speech was also cited on the opposite side of the issue in a *Commonwealth v. Kneeland*, 20 pick. 206. 235-36 (1838), a Massachusetts blasphemy case. Another important blasphemy case of the period was *State v. Chandler*, 2 Harrington 553 (1837), cited in the text below.

spiritual correction of the offender" (11 S. & R. 394, 404). At 405, it added:

Chief Justice *Swift*, in his *System of Laws*, 2 Vol. 825, has some very just reasoning on the subject. He observes, "To prohibit the open, public, and explicit denial of the popular religion of a country, is a necessary measure to preserve the tranquility of a government. Of this, no person in a Christian country can complain; for, admitting him to be an infidel, he must acknowledge that no benefit can be derived from the subversion of a religion which enforces the purest morality." In the Supreme Court of *New York* it was solemnly determined, that Christianity was part of the law of the land, and that to revile the Holy Scriptures was an indictable offence. The case assumes, says Chief Justice *Kent*, that we are a Christian people, and the morality of the country is deeply engrafted on Christianity. Nor are we bound by any expression in the constitution, as some have strangely supposed, not to punish at all, or to punish indiscriminately the like attack upon *Mahomet* or the *Grand Lama*. (*The People v. Ruggles*, 8 Johnston, 290).

Although the Supreme Court of Delaware also upheld a blasphemy conviction in *States v. Chandler*, 2 Harrington 553 (1837), Chief Justice J.M. Clayton similarly made it clear that it was due to a lack of jurisdiction over spiritual offenses, not to a minimizing of their seriousness, that the common law did not punish the violation of every precept of Christianity:

When human justice is rightly administered according to our common law and our constitution, it refuses all jurisdiction over crimes against God, unless they are by necessary consequence crimes against civil society, and known and defined as such by the law of man. It assumes that for sin against our Creator, vengeance is his and he will repay (2 Harrington 553, 571).

The identification of Christianity with the common law was rejected by the Ohio Supreme Court but the reasons it gives are instructive. The three cases that follow suggest it was influenced, at least in part, by a solicitude for religion. In *Bloom v. Richards*, 2 Ohio St. 387, 390 (1853), Chief Justice Allen Thurman affirmed the validity of a Sunday contract despite a statute prohibiting Sunday labor and remarked that "neither Christianity, nor any other system of religion, is a part of the law of this State." Even so, his reasoning was not inconsistent with that of the Pennsylvania and New York opinions:

The Court took care to qualify its acknowledgement of Christianity as part of the common law so as not to imply any ecclesiastical establishment, which would make Christianity a civil or political institution.

We have no union of church and State, nor has our government ever been vested with authority to enforce any religious observance, simply because it is religious. Of course, it is no objection, but, on the contrary, is a high recommendation, to a legislative enactment, based upon justice or public policy, that it is found to coincide with the precepts of a true religion; but the fact is nevertheless true, that the power to make the law rests in the legislative control over things temporal and not over things spiritual. Thus the statute upon which the defendant relies, prohibiting common labor on the Sabbath, could not stand for a moment as a law of this State, if its sole foundation was the Christian duty of keeping that day holy, and its sole motive to enforce the observance of that duty. For no power over things merely spiritual, has ever been delegated to the government....(2 Ohio St. 387, 391).²⁰

The Court cited *Specht v. Commonwealth*, 8 Barr 312 (1848), in which the Pennsylvania Supreme Court states at 323 that, despite the fixing of Sunday as the day of rest, the statute in question "is still, essentially, but a civil regulation made for the government of man as a member of civil society...." It also determined that those states which forbade secular business on Sunday did so through additional statutory provisions. Later, in *McGatrick v. Wason*, 4 Ohio St. 566 (1855), a case involving a freight loading accident on a Sunday, the Court held that the shipping of freight fit into the exempt category of "works of necessity or charity" and sustained a judgment for the injured dockworker against his employer.

In *Board of Education of Cincinnati v. Minor*, 23 Ohio St. 211 (1872), the Ohio Supreme Court upheld — although it did not require — a prohibition on religious instruction by the Cincinnati Board of Education. In a lengthy opinion, Judge John Welch commented that "Legal Christianity is a solecism, a contradiction of terms" (23 Ohio St. 211, 248). He continued:

If Christianity is a *law* of the state, like every other law, it must have a *sanction*. Adequate penalties must be provided to enforce obedience to all its require-

²⁰ Similarly, the Supreme Court of California struck down a Sunday law in *Ex parte Newman*, 9 Cal. 502 (1858), because it was clearly designed as a benefit to religion and not as a civil rule. But Judge Stephen Field's dissent in this case eventually prevailed in *Ex parte Andrews*, 18 Cal. 679 (1861), when the Court upheld a similar law on the grounds that it protected "the moral as well as the physical welfare of the State."

ments and precepts. No one seriously contends for any such doctrine in this country, or, I might almost say, in this age of the world. The only foundation — rather, the only excuse — for the proposition, that Christianity is part of the law of this country, is the fact that it is a Christian country, and that its constitutions and laws are made by a Christian people. And is not the very fact that those laws do not attempt to enforce Christianity, or to place it upon exceptional or vantage ground, itself a strong evidence that they are the laws of a Christian people, and that their religion is the best and purest of religions? It is strong evidence that their religion is indeed a religion “without partiality,” and *therefore* a religion without “hypocrisy” (23 Ohio St. 211, 249).²¹

Such cases as these, which involved blasphemy, Sunday laws, Bible reading in schools, and other clearly religious issues, are illustrative of the depth and detail of the judicial acquaintance with Christian precepts. At the same time, however, each of these cases raised difficult constitutional issues that challenged the ingenuity and logic of the judges. Many of these and later cases mark the trail by which constitutional innovations were introduced. Sunday laws, for example, were usually defended as public health measures and upheld by the courts as a legitimate exercise of the police power. Similarly, in *Donahoe v. Richards*, 38 Me. 376 (1854), the Supreme Court of Maine cited the maxim “salus populi suprema lex” — the health of the people is the supreme law — in defense of a compulsory Bible reading law that allowed the exclusion of the Douay version from the classroom.

There is considerable reason to believe such legislation was tendered in good faith. But in many of these and similar cases, the opposite side of the issue was also argued from a clearly Christian commitment.

²¹ A few of the presuppositions of what the Court called “Christian republicanism” are clearly expressed in this opinion. Referring to article 8, section 3 of the Ohio Constitution of 1802, which was drawn directly from the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the Court stated at 248-49: “The declaration is, not that government is essential to good religion, but that religion is essential to good government. Both propositions are true, but they are true in quite different senses. Good government is essential to religion for the purpose declared elsewhere in the same section of the constitution, for the protection of mere *protection*. But religion, morality, and knowledge are essential to government, in the sense that they have the instrumentalities for *producing and perfecting* a good form of government. On the other hand, no government is all-adapted for producing, perfecting, or propagating a good religion. Religion, in its widest and best sense, has most if not all, the instrumentalities for producing the best form of government. Religion is the parent, and not the offspring, of good government. Its kingdom is to be *first* sought, and good government is one of those things which will be added thereto. True religion is the sun which gives to government all its true lights, while the latter merely acts upon religion by reflection.” The Court reiterated this principle at 253: “Government is an organization for particular purposes. It is not almighty, and we are not to look to it for everything. The great bulk of human affairs and human interests is left free by any free government to individual enterprise and individual action. Religion is eminently one of these interests, lying outside the true and legitimate province of government.”

Theological differences were often reflected by differences of constitutional interpretation. Indeed, the designation “constitutional hermeneutics” was used at the time by Francis Lieber and other commentators, giving the debate a theological cast. Theology was still regarded as first among the sciences. Moreover, judicial articulations of an explicitly Christian perspective on constitutional law transcended narrowly religious issues, challenging the current view that equates secular issues with religious neutrality or irreligion. A case in point is the imaginative blending of legal scholarship and Biblical illustration in several opinions by Samuel E. Perkins, who sat on the bench of the Supreme Court of Indiana from 1846 until 1865, when a Republican slate of judges swept out all the incumbents, then returned in 1877 and served until his death in 1879.

One of the finest examples of Judge Perkins’ judicial writing is his opinion in *Herman v. The State*, 8 Ind. 490 (1855), a case involving a state law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor except by the state for use as a medicine or for sacramental purposes. The case was brought before the Court on a *habeas corpus* obtained by a prisoner who had been arrested and detained for selling liquor. In ruling the law unconstitutional, Judge Perkins noted that “it is not competent for the government to take the business from the people and monopolize it.” Quoting Thomas Say, the political economist, he attacked the law as “an invasion upon the faculties of industry possessed by individuals....” He then traced the history of prohibition and its association with governments that were paternal and absolute in character: “which had no written constitutions limiting their powers....”²²

Such governments as those described, could adopt the maxim quoted by counsel, that the safety of the people is the supreme law, and act upon it; and being severally the sole judges of what their safety, in the countries governed, respectively required, could prescribe what the people should eat and drink, what political, moral and religious creeds they should believe in, and punish heresy by burning at the stake, all for the public good. Even in Great Britain,

²² By 1855, the issue of liquor had become hopelessly tangled in the status politics of which Ann Douglas wrote. Indeed, American religious politics has long shown a penchant for symbolic crusades and quick fixes. Substantive programs of social reconstruction so often either fail to materialize or become dispirited for want of Biblical charity. The good intentions of those whose faith would move mountains need not be doubted to recognize that the wellsprings of human kindness often run dry when the weightier matters of the law are lost in a frenzy of minor doctrinal differences. As Edward Gaffney has remarked: “And who cannot recall the religious enthusiasm of the Womens’ Christian Temperance Union, who gave that cardinal virtue such a bad name, or their spiritual ancestors, the members of the National Temperance Union, who blessed this nation with the ‘Noble Experiment’ of Prohibition, without perhaps intending its regrettable concomitants, organized crime and unlawful governmental electronic surveillance.” Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr., “Biblical Religion and American Politics: Some Historical and Theological Reflections,” *The Journal of Law and Religion*, 1 (Summer 1983); pp. 177-78.

esteemed to have the most liberal constitution in the Eastern continent, *Magna Charta* is not of sufficient potency to restrain the action of Parliament, as the judiciary do not, as a settled rule, bring laws to the test of its provisions. Laws are there overthrown only occasionally by judicial construction. But here, we have written constitutions which are the supreme law, which our legislators are sworn to support, within whose restrictions they must limit their action for the public welfare, and whose barriers they cannot overleap under any pretext of supposed safety of the people; for along with our written constitutions, we have a judiciary whose duty it is, as the only means of securing to the people safety from legislative aggression, to annul all legislative action without the pale of those instruments. This duty of the judicial department in this country, was demonstrated by Chief Justice Marshall in *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cranch, 137, and has since been recognized as settled American law. The maxim above quoted, therefore, as applied to legislative power, is here without meaning (8 Ind. 490, 494-495).

Later in the opinion, Perkins celebrated the benefits of wine and strong drink, quoting the Bible in their defense, then concluded:

It thus appears, if the inspired psalmist is entitled to credit, that man was made to laugh as well as weep, and that these stimulating beverages were created by the Almighty expressed to promote his social hilarity and enjoyment. And for this purpose has the world ever used them, they have ever given, in the language of another passage of scripture, strong drink to him that was weary and wine to those of heavy heart. The first miracle wrought by our Savior, that at Cana of Galilee, the place where he dwelt in his youth, and where he met his followers, after his resurrection, was to supply this article to increase the festivities of a joyous occasion; that he used it himself is evident from the fact that he was called by his enemies a winebibber; and paid it the distinguished honor of being the eternal memorial of his death and man's redemption (8 Ind. 490, 502).

Perkins concluded his rebuttal by dismissing the public health argument for prohibition in some of his saltiest language:

It is based on the principle that a man shall not use at all for enjoyment what his neighbor may abuse, a doctrine that would, if enforced by law in general

practice annihilate society, make eunuchs of all men, or drive them into the cells of the monks, and bring the human race to an end, or continue it under the direction of licensed county agents.

Such, however, is not the principle upon which the almighty governs the world. He made man a free agent, and to give him opportunity to exercise his will, to be virtuous or vicious as he should choose, he placed evil as well as good before him he put the apple into the garden of Eden, and left upon man the

responsibility of his choice, made it a moral question, and left it so. He enacted as to that, a moral, not a physical prohibition. He could have easily enacted a physical prohibitory law by declaring the fatal apple a nuisance and removing it. He did not. His purpose

was otherwise, and he has since declared that the tares and wheat shall grow together to the end of the world. Man cannot, by prohibitory law, be robbed of his free agency (8 Ind. 490, 503-504).

A remarkable feature of the state judiciary during this period was its frequently spirited independence of judgment. In two other cases, the Indiana Supreme Court struck down congressional legislation it regarded as lying outside the constitutional jurisdiction of the federal government. In *Griffin v. Wilcox*, 21 Ind. 370 (1863), the unanimous Court ruled unconstitutional an act of Congress that indemnified federal officers who arrested civilians for selling liquor to soldiers and held that neither President nor Congress could suspend a writ of *habeas corpus* issued by a state court. For the purposes of this case, Judge Perkins conceded the government's right to exercise martial law, but only temporarily and locally in cases of necessity — "where the civil law is expelled" — and as limited by the constitution. Judge James M. Hanna wrote a forceful concurring opinion that conceded even less ground to the federal law. In *Warren v. Paul*, 22 Ind. 276 (1864), a case involving a stamp tax on state legal documents, Judge Perkins commented that Congress "has not a right, by direct or indirect means, to annihilate the functions of the State government" by taxing them.

Two legal tender cases are also worthy of note, especially in the way they reflect the character of the Court's reasoning. In *Reynolds v. The Bank*, 18 Ind. 467 (1862), Judge Perkins dwelt at some length on the absence of either a constitutional or commercial basis for declaring bills of credit to be legal tender, but then held that doubts about the constitutionality of the law must be resolved in its favor until the Supreme Court of the United States ruled otherwise. Judge Hanna dissented,

Judge Story concluded that, because liberty of conscience is protected and power over religion is left to the state governments, "the Protestant, the Calvinist and the Arminian, the Jew and the Infidel, may sit down at the common table of the national councils, without any inquisition into their faith, or mode of worship."

arguing "that by the constitution the right is not vested in Congress to make a paper named a legal tender in payment of private debts" (18 Ind. 467, 475). Two years later, Judge Perkins spoke for a unanimous Court in *Thayer v. Hedges*, 22 Ind. 282 (1864), a case involving a promissory note in which the same legal tender law was at issue. Reverting to the Articles of Confederation, he cataloged the subjects covered by the term "general welfare" and then traced the later development of the constitutional separation of powers between the general government and the states. He cited common commercial practice, political economists, and even Biblical history as evidence of the unconstitutionality of the law: "Coin was the sacred currency as well as profane, of the ancient world. Historically considered, we find that the Almighty, and His Prophets and Apostles, were for a specie basis; that gold and silver were the theme of their constant eulogy" (22 Ind. 282, 304).²³

²³ Bancroft, George, *A Plea for the Constitution of the United States, Wounded in the House of its Guardians* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1886; Sewanee, Tenn.: Spencer Judd, 1982), argued — like Daniel Webster and Joseph Story had before him — that unbacked paper currency was unconstitutional. See Webster's speech, "A Redeemable Paper Currency," delivered on the floor of the Senate, 22 February 1834. Whipple, Edward P., ed., *Great Speeches and Orations of Daniel Webster* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1879), pp. 362-66. The immediate catalyst of Bancroft's appeal was the Supreme Court's decision in *Julliard v. Greenman*, 110 U.S. 421 (1884), upholding — as a power belonging to sovereignty — the issuance of government notes as legal tender in the payment of private debts. Only Justice Stephen Field dissented. An earlier case, *Knox v. Lee*,

As these cases illustrate, it was not uncommon for state courts in the nineteenth century to give special recognition to religious considerations and even appeal to commonly accepted religious considerations as a basis for judgment. This was just as true of secular cases as outwardly religious ones. Indeed, the Bible was regarded as a major sourcebook of constitutional theory and practice. The same courts that strongly asserted the value of religious liberty for all apparently did not perceive any contradiction when they acknowledged the special place of Christianity and the Bible in the life of the republic. Δ

12 Wall. 603 (1870), justified the wartime Legal Tender Acts of 1862-1863 as emergency measures. Charles Warren later discussed the legal tender controversy at considerable length and commented that the *Julliard* decision was "the most sweeping opinion as to the extent of Congressional power which had ever theretofore been rendered...." Warren, Charles, *The Supreme Court in United State History*, vol. 2, revised ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1938), p. 652. See also Swisher, Carl Brent, *Stephen J. Field: Craftsman of the Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930; Phoenix Books, 1969), pp. 166-204; Lundberg, Ferdinand, *Cracks in the Constitution* (Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1980), p. 231.

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An Open Letter to a Morbid Introspectionist

**A stubborn pietism
afflicts not only
personal relation-
ships but the gospel
itself by its subjec-
tive standards, dual-
ism, and unceasing
self-examination.**

Steve Schlissel

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

Ezekiel 13:22

The event which occasioned this letter was my discovery that many members of my congregation had received tracts (of the "Are You Truly Born Again?" variety) from a former member who, though

truly a lover of the Lord, was deeply affected by that pietistic current in Christian thought which I will call "Morbid Introspectionism." The people who received these tracts 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. This open letter is an appeal to have us 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.

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 Timothy 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 (I Pet. 2:21; Mt. 16:24; Heb. 12:2; 11:26; II Cor. 4:17; Mt. 5:11, I 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 in 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 the 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?

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. II 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 your selves, 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 over 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*? (Luke 24:47; Heb. 10:17,18; 1 John 2:12; Acts 10:43; and please see II 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 judgement 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 Thess. 4:3). Our sanctification is by the Word, every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God (John 17:17). As we do God's Word, we find that we are strengthened in our faith (John 7:17).

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies" (Psalm 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 (I 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" (I 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" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NASB).

Pietism is Dualistic

Third, proper place is not accorded to externalization of the Spirit's power. In I 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't (on his principles) ever *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, reveals 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 is pastor of Messiah's Christian Reformed Church in Brooklyn, New York and co-contributor to the recently released book Hal Lindsey and the Restoration of the Jews (*Still Waters Revival Books*).

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Calvin's Doctrine of the Spiritual Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper

While neither turning to Rome, Luther, nor mere symbolism, Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper shaped generations that followed him.

Brian Nicholson

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper is ever in danger of being subverted by either polemic or neglect. One side of the Scriptural teaching may be emphasized to the virtual exclusion of another side. This is especially so with respect to the presence of Christ in the Supper. Even among the Reformed churches, which ostensibly follow the sacramental teaching of the great Genevese John Calvin, there has been disagreement over

the precise import of this doctrine. I contend that if we begin to re-examine Calvin's teaching on this subject we will better appreciate the profundity of the sacrament.

Calvin's Sacramentalism

Calvin regarded the sacraments of the Old and New Testaments as aids for our faith. Moreover, for Calvin, the sacraments are never to be divorced from the Word. The Word sets forth the promises of God, and the sacraments are seals which guarantee the faithfulness of God to his promises. However, the efficacy of the sacraments operates not only for the benefit of our understanding. Just as the Spirit of God operates through the Word to engender faith in the hearts of the elect, so also the Spirit operating through the sacraments accomplishes in reality that which is signified by them but only in the elect. The Spirit only blesses the faithful.

With respect to God's action in the sacraments, sign and reality correspond directly. The sacraments are so adapted by God as to portray in their outward form that which is conferred upon men by him in the spiritual realm. With respect to the manward side, the sacra-

ments serve as a means by which we confess our faith before men.¹

Union With Christ

For Calvin, union with Christ is the most important doctrine to grasp if one would understand the Christian faith properly.² Calvin recognized that the doctrines of imputed righteousness and union with Christ are incomprehensible mysteries. These mysteries are, however, exhibited by the sacraments which are "adapted to our small capacity."³

The benefits of the redemption secured by Christ are communicated to the believer through this union. But the union of believers with their Head has special reference to the human nature of Christ. Christ's human nature was the means by which sacrifice was made, sin was punished and righteousness was secured. Christ accomplishes His redemptive work by uniting Himself to His people. Calvin puts it thus: "...becoming Son of man with us, he has made us sons of God with him; that by his descent to earth, he has prepared an ascent to heaven for us; that by taking on our mortality, he has conferred his immortality upon us..."⁴ Hence, as Calvin says, believers enjoy a "holy brotherhood" with Christ in His incarnation.⁵ The Holy Spirit effects, so to speak, an "exchange of properties between the Son of God and mankind."⁶

As union with Christ depends solely on the work of the Spirit, the sacraments, which are seals of this union, are efficacious only through the sovereign power of the Spirit. Grace is not inseparable from the celebration of the sacraments themselves. Grace is conferred only when God pleases to bestow grace through the sacrament.⁷ The sacraments, according to Calvin, are not to be regarded as automatic dispensers of grace.

The Spiritual Presence

Calvin rejected any notion of a local presence of Christ in the Supper. Labeling the Lutheran notion of the ubiquity of Christ's body a "phantasm," he fully discredited it as a credible way to understand the Supper.⁸ He described the doctrine of transubstantiation with even greater invective, calling it "fictitious" and the work of Satan.

How then is the presence of Christ to be understood? Wallace has observed that Calvin achieved clarity in his treatment of the sacrament not by thinking *through* it but by thinking *around* it.⁹ Calvin acknowl-

¹ This section is a brief summary of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV. 14.

² Wallace, Ronald S., *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953), p. 143.

³ *Inst.* IV. 17.1.

⁴ *Inst.* IV. 17. 2.

⁵ Wallace, *Word and Sacrament*, p. 148. Cf. *Inst.* II.12.2

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁷ *Inst.* IV. 14.7.

⁸ *Inst.* IV. 17.7. Cf. IV. 17.3 0.

⁹ Wallace, *Word and Sacrament*, p. 219.

edged that at the heart of the sacrament there is a miracle and a profound mystery. He never sought to reduce the mystery to reason but rather preserved the mysterious element. We cannot, then, demand a clarity of language such as is set forth by the proponents of opposing theories. Calvin's opponents, Westphal and Tileman Heshusius, accused him of ambiguity and subtlety.¹⁰ They sought a sacramental theory in concrete language but did not find it in Calvin. We must, therefore, in examining Calvin's teaching, appreciate his method and not seek more than a "stammering" definition. Here we move in the realm of mystery.

Calvin avoided the language of "physicality" employed by the Lutherans. Christ's body and blood were to be "understood in terms of Christ's act of reconciliation, not in themselves."¹¹ Although the believer, through the Supper, possesses a true communion with Christ's natural body and blood, it is not in terms of substantiality but rather in terms of the spiritual, redemptive benefits inherent in the resurrected and ascended body of Christ. Hence, for Calvin, a local presence is not necessary. The body of Christ remains in heaven. There is no "descent" of Christ to earth. "Flesh must therefore be flesh; spirit, spirit — each thing in the state and condition wherein God created it. But such is the condition of flesh that it must subsist in one definite place, with its own size and form."¹² The human properties of Christ's body are not impaired. Moreover the elements of the Supper retain their full, substantial identity as bread and wine.

There is however a descent of the Holy Spirit who constitutes the connection between the risen Christ and the souls of believers. "No extent of space interferes with the boundless energy of the Spirit, which transfuses life into us from the flesh of Christ."¹³ "It is certainly a proof of truly divine and incomprehensible power that how remote so ever He may be from us, He infuses life from the substance of His flesh and blood into our souls so that no distance of place can impede the union of head and members."¹⁴ The manner in which Christ's flesh is eaten is spiritual. The Holy Spirit communicates the life-giving benefits of Christ's natural body to us.

Although, on one hand, Calvin denies the descent of Christ's body to us (*absentia localis*), he paradoxically speaks of such a descent by the Holy Spirit as the source of real presence (*praesentia realis*) in the Supper. Calvin would only allow the word "real" (*reali*) to be used if it meant that which was not fallacious and imaginary or the opposite of that which was deceptive and illusory. On the whole he preferred the word "true" (*vero*) to describe Christ's presence. In normal speech "real" connotes something that is existent, objective, and in the external order. When used with reference to the

Supper, "real presence" implies "local presence," and, of course, this is denied by Calvin. So then, Calvin would allow the phrase *praesentia realis* only if "real" was used for "true" as is sometimes the case in common or vulgar parlance.¹⁵ As for the mode of "descent" (*modum descensus*) Calvin maintains that it is the Holy Spirit who descends but not alone. Christ "descends" by His Spirit. But again Calvin employs paradoxical language when he maintains that the manner of descent is that "by which he lifts us up to himself."¹⁶ There is, so to speak, a simultaneous descent and ascent. What is in view, here, is sacramental "proximity" effected by the Spirit upon the ground of the mystical union of Christ and His people.

Calvin maintains that the sacrament's effect is more than a mere stimulation of the intellect, imagination, and emotions at the sight of the portrayal of the spectacle of the Cross. It is this and more. "In participation in the Supper faith connects itself with something outside of itself and other than a mere idea, and, in so doing, effects in the spiritual realm a real communication between itself and the earthly reality such as that figured in the act of eating the bread."¹⁷ Calvin distinguishes between eating and believing. Faith or belief receives Christ and the promises, but eating implies more. Eating is the result or consequence of faith.¹⁸ The spiritual transaction which occurs possesses the nature of nourishment or vivication. "...the flesh of Christ is eaten by believing because it is made ours by faith..."¹⁹ Hence, the eating (nourishment) follows from believing (appropriation). Or, in other words, faith is a vessel that receives something from outside -- the benefits of Christ's flesh and blood which nourish the believer and impart to him eternal life.

Calvin derives his doctrine of the Supper from the accounts of the eucharistic institution in the Gospels as well as from the Pauline words of institution. But the most significant passage for Calvin is John 6:26-65 (The Bread of Life Discourse). He acknowledges that this passage does not have primary reference to the eucharist as some interpreters have understood it.²⁰ However, he also recognizes that the passage here refers to the life-giving properties with which Christ's body is imbued. Commenting on John 6:51 he says, "As this secret power to bestow life, of which he has spoken, might be referred to his Divine essence, he now comes down to the second step, and shows that this life is placed in his flesh, that it may be drawn out of it."²¹ Calvin later speaks of the supper as being the "seal" of the doctrine taught in this passage.²² Calvin recognizes that this vivifying power of the body of Christ, received by faith, is the power communicated in the Supper itself. But further than this

¹⁰ Cf. "Second Defense of the Sacraments" and "True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ" in *Tracts and Treatises*, Vol. II.

¹¹ Berkouwer, G.C., *The Sacraments*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p. 229.

¹² *Inst.* IV. 17. 24.

¹³ *Corpus Reformatorum*, 37:48. Cited by Wallace, p. 206.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9:193. Cited by Wallace, p. 207.

¹⁵ Tylanda, Joseph N., "Calvin and Christ's Presence in the Supper-True or Real," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 27 (1974): pp. 65-75.

¹⁶ *Inst.* IV. 17.16.

¹⁷ Wallace, *Word and Sacrament*, p. 212.

¹⁸ *Corpus Reformatorum*, 9:75 Cf. Wallace, p. 212.

¹⁹ *Inst.* IV. 17.5.

²⁰ *Inst.* IV. 17.4.

²¹ *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, ad loc.

²² *Ibid.*, on 6:56.

he cannot go. "Now, if anyone should ask me how this takes place, I shall not be ashamed to confess that it is a secret too lofty for either my mind to comprehend or my words to declare. And to speak more plainly, I rather experience than understand it."²³

The Decline of Calvin's Eucharistic Teaching in the Reformed Churches

The early English Puritans embraced Calvin's sacramentalism heartily. They had little use for Zwingli's view since he denied that the sacrament increased faith or advanced sanctification. Their eucharistic theology was dominated by a pastoral interest in assurance and sanctification.

Yet theirs was indeed Calvinism with a difference, for Puritan definitions of sacramental benefits represented a departure in tone and emphasis from Calvin. Because they elaborated the dichotomy between flesh and spirit, especially in terms of psychological interiority, the Puritans tended to rely on subjective explanations of sacramental efficacy.²⁴

A certain imprecision entered into Puritan sacramental discourses. The presence of Christ was interpreted in a thoroughly subjectivistic manner. "It will not do to categorize these ministers as either Calvinists or Zwinglians: in the doctrine of the presence, the issues were too blurred."²⁵ Some ministers, however, retained Calvin's understanding of the spiritual presence. Richard Vines and John Owen even went beyond Calvin in stressing the uniqueness of the sacramental presence.²⁶ In codifying the Lord's Supper, the Westminster Assembly approximated Calvin's doctrine. However, the work of the Spirit in the sacrament is not mentioned, and instrumental language, as in the Belgic Confession, is not employed (e.g. faith is the hand and mouth of the soul etc.).

Seventeenth century Reformed dogmatics set forth the axiom, "the finite cannot contain the infinite" (*Finitum non capax infiniti*). As applied to Christology, this principle led to a separation between the human and

divine natures of Christ.²⁷ There could be no confusion of his natures. Francis Turretin developed this principle more clearly in his *Institutio Theologicae Elencticae* (1679-1685). Princeton Seminary transplanted Turretin's continental tradition when it adopted his *Institutio* as its theological textbook. Charles Hodge used this text to instruct large numbers of Presbyterian ministers in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Robert Lewis Dabney also employed *Institutio* at Union Theological Seminary at Richmond. In time, the Reformed rational-

ism and sacramental theology of Turretin permeated the ranks of much of American Presbyterianism. However, at Columbia Theological Seminary in South Carolina, the Professor of Theology, James Henley Thornwell, and the Professor of Church History and Polity, John B. Adger, employed Calvin's *Institutes* as the text for theology and ecclesiology with the result that many Southern ministers were Calvinistic in their sacramental theology.

These two strains of Reformed sacramental theology came into conflict when John Nevin published his controversial *The Mystical Presence* in June 1846. Nevin,

professor of theology of the seminary of the German Reformed Church at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, had been much influenced by German philosophy, especially that of Hegel, and also by the High Church movement of the nineteenth century. Nevin had been a student of Charles Hodge at Princeton but later repudiated Hodge's sacramental theology. He sought to demonstrate the historical decline of the doctrine of the Supper that had occurred in the Reformed churches and also to revive Calvin's doctrine which had been codified in the Belgic Confession, one of the symbols of the German Reformed Church. Hodge responded to Nevin's volume in 1848 in a long article in the *Princeton Review*.²⁸ First, he tried to demonstrate that the symbols of the Reformed churches did not contain the high doctrine of the Supper that was set forth by Calvin in the *Institutes*. Next, he made the incredible assertion that Calvin's true opinion, pertaining to the nature of Christ's presence in the Supper, was to be found not in the *Institutes* but in the *Consensus Tigurinus*, a symbol that was framed for the purpose of uniting the Swiss churches. He implied that the view set forth in the *Institutes* was intended by Calvin to be a

As union with Christ depends solely on the work of the Spirit, the sacraments, which are seals of this union, are efficacious only through the sovereign power of the Spirit. Grace is not inseparable from the celebration of the sacraments themselves.

²³ *Inst.* IV. 17:32.

²⁴ Holifield, E. Brooks, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 53.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-131.

²⁷ Holifield, E. Brooks, "Mercersburg, Princeton, and the South: The Sacramental Controversy in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, 54 (1976), p. 245.

²⁸ Hodge, Charles, "Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Lord's Supper," *The Biblical Repertory and the Princeton Review*, 20 (April 1848): 227-77.

mediating position in order to conciliate the Lutherans. Finally, he refuted Nevin's theory of the Supper with its Hegelian overtones.

Hodge takes exception to Calvin's view that, by virtue of Christ's divine nature, his human nature possessed a certain vivifying efficacy of life-giving power that was communicated to the believer in the Supper. The influence of Turretin is here seen in Hodge's Christology. Christ is present in the Supper, according to Hodge, only in that the benefits of his body and blood, namely forgiveness and imputed righteousness, are applied to believing recipients. Hence, through the Supper, the believer is strengthened and confirmed in faith. It is apparent that the controlling motif of Hodge's theology, federal headship and imputation, is at work in his conception of the sacrament.

Dabney's view of the Supper is identical to that of Hodge. He says of Calvin's view, "it is not only incomprehensible, but impossible."²⁹ He also maintained that the Westminster Assembly modified Calvin's view so as to remove "all that was untenable and

²⁹ Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, (1878, reprinted: Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), p. 811.

unscriptural in it."³⁰

In 1876, John Adger rose to Calvin's defense in an article in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*.³¹ Adger points out that Hodge had caricatured Calvin's view. Nowhere did Calvin ever speak of a vivifying efficacy "emanating" from Christ's glorified body. The life-giving benefits of Christ's flesh are communicated to the believer by the work of the Holy Spirit. Adger goes on to show that Calvin's teaching was incorporated into all of the Reformed symbols. Moreover, he demonstrates that Hodge mistranslated the Latin versions of the *Consensus Tigurinus*. Thus, Adger demonstrated that Hodge's view was out of accord with the prevailing view held in the Reformed churches from the time of Calvin.Δ

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Adger, John, "Calvin Defended Against Drs. Cunningham and Hodge," *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, 27 (1876), pp. 133-166.

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For the Record

This regular feature is an attempt to provide an elementary Biblical analysis of various topics in Christian theology and practice. We anticipate that this and future contributions will be helpful in explaining fundamental theological issues to those who may be relatively unfamiliar with them.

Total Depravity

Douglas Wilson

Pride and Prejudice

Before I came to understand and embrace the Biblical doctrine of resurrecting grace, I was kept away by a combination of factors. One reason, of course, was my own prejudices and ignorance. Certain truths tend to rub our theological fur the wrong way, and they have had that tendency since at least the time of Paul (Rom. 9:19). But there was another reason. I had trouble because my ignorance and prejudices were sometimes reinforced by *how* I heard these issues presented. Consequently, I thought I understood what in fact I did not.

I write on one such topic, therefore, with some trepidation. I have no desire to mislead fellow Christians on such an important issue; our subject is the resurrection to eternal life, therefore, we must

begin the discussion within the framework set by the Word of God.

Biblical Terminology

What is the condition of man prior to regeneration? How may we best describe him? The best place to start is with the Biblical description and the Biblical terms. When the Lord showed the prophet Ezekiel the valley of dry bones, He said, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, 'O Lord God, You know.' Again He said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!' Thus says the Lord God to these bones: 'Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live'" (Ezek. 37:3-5).

Before regeneration, we are nothing but dry bones. Unregenerate man is dead in his transgression and sin (Eph. 2:1-2; Col. 2:3). He is not sick, he is not ailing; he is dead. Now to say that he is dead in this respect is not to assert that he is physically dead, or dead in every aspect of his being. It simply means that he is dead with regard to *spiritual things*. He has no connection with the life of the Spirit, which comes only as a gift from God. Because man is dead, he must be born *again* (John 3:5-7). Because he is dead in sin, he is hostile to God and will not submit to His laws. Even further, he *cannot* submit to His laws (Rom. 8:7-8). The natural man is incapable of understanding spiritual things, and since the gospel is in the front rank of spiritual things which require spiritual understanding, this means the natural man has no ability to *comprehend the gospel* (I Cor. 2:14).

Someone may object here and say that the gospel was designed for unregenerate men; how can we say that unregenerate men cannot understand it? In reply, I agree that the gospel was designed for unregenerate men, but I deny that it was intended to function apart from the resurrection given by the Spirit of God. Unless regeneration occurs, the gospel, like all spiritual things, remains gibberish to the natural man. As Paul says in I Corinthians 1:18, "...the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (also see II Cor. 2:15

and 4:3). Note *what* is foolish to him; it is the message of the cross.

Because man is in this condition, he cannot come to Christ unless he is drawn by the Father (John 6:44,65), by means of the Spirit (John 3:5-8). This means that a Biblical evangelist must preach, like Ezekiel, in a *graveyard*. He is not preaching in a hospital ward, trying to get the patients to take the medicine. Those who preach the gospel are not recruiters; they are heralds and instruments of a God-given resurrection. In accomplishing this, the dead men do not cooperate in their resurrection. The dead men have something they must do (repent and believe), but they do not do it until they are given life.

Another picture used by the Scripture to communicate this truth is the picture of *slavery*. Just as a dead man is not free to walk about, so a slave is not free to walk off. Jesus teaches us that everyone who commits sin is a *slave to sin* (John 8:34). Paul reminds the Roman Christians that they were at one time *slaves* to sin and free from the control of righteousness (Rom. 6:20). In Titus 3:3, he says that we were all at one time foolish and slaves to various passions. Unlike physical slavery, it is impossible to escape from this bondage since the slavemaster is our own twisted nature — our own passions and lusts. Wherever we go, there we are.

Theological Terminology

In discussions such as this, extra-Biblical theological terminology is both a blessing and a hindrance. It is a blessing because it enables us to pin down our definitions with better precision. This is necessary because there are many evangelical Christians who are not willing to submit to certain *truths* of Scripture, but they *are* constrained to agree with the phrases of Scripture. So they would agree, for example, that man is dead in his sins because Ephesians says so. But they would then hasten to add that "dead" doesn't mean *dead* and that we mustn't press such figures of speech too far. As such a discussion progresses, the defender of Biblical truth is constrained to use other words and phrases that will communicate the Scriptural concept.

The hindrance lies in the fact that such extra-Biblical phrases are not inspired and may not always communicate effectively. For example, the doctrine of the total depravity of man sounds like we are asserting the *absolute* depravity of man, i.e. that man is as bad as he could possibly be. This is quite obviously false. Man is constrained and held back from such an absolute depravity by the common grace of God.

The doctrine of total depravity is this: man is totally unable to contribute to his own salvation in any way, because he is dead in his sins. For example, the resurrection of Lazarus was not a joint effort between Christ and Lazarus. Lazarus came forth because he was raised, not in order to be raised.

What Denial Involves

The denial of man's total inability will ultimately undermine our faith in the necessity of the new birth and the evangelical proclamation. How so?

Scripture teaches us that faith is pleasing to God. It also teaches us that we are to live our Christian lives *the same way* we began our Christian lives (Gal. 3:1-6; Col. 2:6). Now if unregenerate men, *on their own*, are capable of saving faith, without having been regenerated by the Spirit of God, then they should be able to continue to exercise that same kind of faith, after they are saved, without any help from the Spirit of God.

If a man can *become* a believer on his own, then he can *continue* to believe on his own. And if he can continue to believe on his own, then what did regeneration accomplish? The Bible teaches us that the Christian life begins with faith, continues in faith, and concludes in faith (Romans 1:17). The foundation of all godliness is faith, and a denial of man's total inability means that unbelievers are capable of laying that foundation for all godliness on their own. Even if one argues that the Holy Spirit regenerates a man after he believes, such a regeneration is superfluous. What is it *for*? What does it do? In this view, it most certainly

does not enable the man to believe or trust God. It hardly does honor to the resurrecting Spirit to say that His job is to tag along.

The apostle Paul rebuked the Galatians when they forgot that they began by hearing with faith and then sought to finish the job by human effort. In considering his response to that error, I doubt he would have thought much of the confusion that reverses the order — beginning by human effort and then finishing by the Spirit.

Put bluntly, it amounts to this: If I am saved, sanctified, and glorified through faith (which the

Before regeneration, we are nothing but dry bones. Unregenerate man is dead in his transgression and sin. He is not sick; he is not ailing; he is dead.

Bible teaches), and faith is possible apart from regeneration (which a denial of total inability asserts), then salvation, sanctification, and glorification are possible without regeneration. And that reasoning undermines the necessity of the everlasting and eternal gospel.

Carts and Horses

God gives eyes, and then we see. God gives life, and then we live. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6).

Contrast this Biblical way of thinking with the alternative. I saw, and so God gave me eyes. I came alive, and so God gave me a resurrection. Light came forth from my heart, so God said, "Let there be light." This is obviously incorrect; it is God, Paul says, who commanded light to come out of darkness. It is God who com-

manded that it shine in our hearts.

Notice the comparison in this passage between the gift of new life and the creation of the material universe. It bears mentioning that the material creation was *ex nihilo* — from nothing. Paul asserts the same about the new creation; it too is *from nothing*.

The creation does not help the Creator out in the work of creation; the Creator acts unilaterally. The dilemma for evangelicals who want to deny total inability is this: either God must begin the resurrecting work of salvation because unsaved men are dead, or unsaved men are capable of beginning the process of their salvation on their own by means of saving faith. If the former, then we say welcome and shake hands. If the latter, then it follows that unsaved men can finish what they began, and we are confronted with a false gospel. In other words, there is no consistent stopping place between Reformed theology on the one hand, and a Pelagian theology on the other. Of course, plenty of evangelicals do not wind up in one camp or the other, but that is to be considered a triumph of inconsistency.

Conclusion

The Bible does not permit us to boast in our salvation at all: "You are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord'" (I Corinthians 1:30-31).

If a man has been raised from the dead, there is much cause for rejoicing; there is no cause for pride. And when all human boasting is removed, what remains? Nothing of ours, but there is an infinite ocean of *grace*. My earnest hope and prayer is that more and more Christians will set out on that ocean, until there is no land in sight. Δ

Douglas Wilson is a Contributing Editor of *Antithesis*.

ISSUE AND INTERCHANGE

The goal of this regular feature is to provide our readers with opposing arguments on topics pertinent to the Christian life. We hope to encourage the reader to focus on the arguments involved in each position rather than on personal factors. The authors selected for the respective sides in the debate are outspoken supporters of their viewpoints.

Kenneth Gentry opens the debate by arguing that Scripture permits

and even, at points, encourages the faithful to drink alcoholic beverages in moderation. Kenneth Gentry, Th.D. (Whitefield Theological Seminary), is pastor of Reedy River Presbyterian Church, Mauldin, South Carolina, and author of numerous published essays and books, including *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages* (Baker, 1986).

Taking an opposing position is Stephen Reynolds Ph.D. (Princeton

University), who served on the translation team for the New International Version of the Bible, and is the author of *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol* (Intern. Soc. of Good Templars, 1989) and *Alcohol and the Bible* (Challenge Press, 1983).

The burden of proof in the interchange is placed on the person opening the discussion, and so Kenneth Gentry will open and close the interchange.

ISSUE: Does Scripture Permit Us to Drink Alcoholic Beverages?

Gentry: Scripture Endorses a Moderate Use of Beverage Alcohol

Few issues have generated more heated debate among Christians than that of the morality of alcohol consumption. The dispute has generated responses ranging from local educational temperance movements to federal amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Certainly there is evidence of widespread abuse of alcoholic beverages today; this few would deny.¹ Furthermore, the Bible clearly condemns all forms of alcohol abuse, by binding precept and by notorious example.² Yet the ethical issue before us is: *Does the Bible allow for a righteous consumption of beverage alcohol?* The fundamental question is ethical, not cultural or demographical; it requires an answer from a Biblical, not an emotional base.

Three Viewpoints

Among evangelicals the fundamental approaches to alcohol use may be distilled (no pun intended) into three basic viewpoints. (1) The

prohibitionist viewpoint universally decries all consumption of beverage alcohol. Adherents to this position do not find any Scriptural warrant for alcohol consumption, even in Biblical times. (2) The abstentionist perspective discourages alcohol use in our modern context, though acknowledging its use in Biblical days. They point to modern cultural differences as justification for the distinction: widespread alcoholism (a contemporary social problem), the higher potency distilled beverages (unknown in Biblical times), and intensified dangers in a technological society (e.g., speeding cars). (3) The moderationist position allows for the righteous consumption of alcoholic beverages. This position, while acknowledging, deploring, and condemning all forms of alcohol abuse and dependency, argues that Scripture allows the partaking of alcoholic beverages in moderation and with circumspection.

The Importance of the Question

Often, non-moderationist argumentation inadvertently and negatively affects certain aspects of the Christian faith. It can undercut the authority of Scripture (in that any universal condemnation of what Scripture allows diminishes the authority of Scripture in Christian thought). It may distort the doctrine of Christ (in that any universal cen-

sure of something Jesus did detracts from His holiness). It adversely affects our apologetic (in that any denunciation of that which Scripture allows sets forth an inconsistent Biblical witness).

My approach to the issue before us involves three presuppositions: (1) The Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Therefore (2) the Bible is the determinative and binding standard for all ethical inquiry. And (3) the Bible condemns all forms of alcohol abuse and dependence. The moderationist viewpoint in no way compromises any of these three fundamental commitments.

The Wine of the Bible

Undoubtedly, the starting point for any rational discussion of the matter must be with the nature of the wine in Scripture. The moderationist position is that the wine righteously employed by and allowed for consumption among God's people in the Bible is a fermented quality, alcoholic content beverage. Consider the evidence for this assertion.

1. *Lexical Consensus.* The leading Old and New Testament lexicons and etymological dictionaries affirm that the major terms used of wine represent a fermented beverage, a "wine", not "grape juice." The most important terms for the debate that are employed in Scripture are

¹ I will leave it to my opponent to document the prevalence of alcohol abuse, if he so desires.

See, for example: Gen. 9:21; 19:32; 1 Sam. 1:14-15; Prov. 23:20, 21, 29-35; Is. 28:1; 29:9; 49:26; 51:21; Jer. 13:13-14; 23:9; 25:27; 51:7; Ezek. 23:28, 33; Hos. 4:11; Joel 1:5; Matt. 24:29; Luke 12:45; 21:34; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Gal. 5:19, 21; Eph. 5:18.

yayin and *shekar* (Hebrew) and *oinos* (Greek).³

2. Translational Consensus.

The major English translations of Scripture translate these words by English equivalents that bespeak alcoholic beverages, rather than terms such as "juice," "grape juice," and so forth. Translations include: "wine," "strong drink," "liquor," and "beer."⁴

3. *Lexical Relationship.* One of the major words in our debate is *shekar* ("strong drink," NASB). It is the noun form of the verb *shakar*, which means "become drunk."⁵ This is evidence of the inebriating capacity of *shekar*.

4. *Contextual Usage.* Many of the verses that condemn drunkenness (see footnote 2) make reference to such beverages as *yayin*, *shekar*, and *oinos*. In addition, *yayin* is said to "make glad the heart" in a

number of places.⁶ This surely has reference to the effect of an alcoholic beverage, when used in moderation.⁷

5. *Descriptive Reference.* In certain places in Scripture the aging of the liquid express of the grape is specifically mentioned (Is. 25:5, 6; Luke 5:39). Aging is an essential factor for wine to be alcoholic.⁸

6. *Circumspection Requirement.* On some occasions, "strong" Christians are instructed to forgo the use of wine (Rom. 14:21), when there is a serious likelihood of "destroying" (Rom 14:15) a "weaker brother" (Rom. 14:1; 15:1). This surely indicates the temporary forgoing of an alcoholic beverage, rather than grape juice.

7. *Ecclesiastical Expectation.* Church officers are required to use wine in moderation (I Tim. 3:8; Tit. 2:3), indicating its fermented quality and intoxicating capacity.

8. *Qualified Silence.* Interestingly, there are no Biblical distinctions between "safe" wines.⁹ Scripture lacks any commendation of "new wine" (fresh grape juice) over and exclusive of "old wine" (fermented beverages). Scripture lacks any commendation of watered wine over undiluted wine (it even disparages water wine, Is. 1:22). Scripture lacks

any encouragement to retarding fermentation, which occurs naturally. Evidence exists that wine was intentionally exposed in order to accelerate the fermentation process (Is. 25:6; Jer. 48:11).

Wine Use in the Bible

Having demonstrated the fermented quality (and consequently the inebriating potential) of the wine of the Bible, I will now set forth several Biblical evidences of its righteous employment.

1. *Righteous Example.* In Genesis 14:18 Melchizedek gave *yayin* to Abraham in righteous circumstances. There is no evidence of any divine disapprobation in this episode. (See also Neh. 5:16-19.)

2. *Sacred Employment.* The Scripture teaches that both *yayin* (Ex. 29:38ff) and *shekar* (Num 28:7) were used for offerings to God. This is important for two reasons: (1) These (alcoholic) beverages had to be produced for worship and (2) they were acceptable as offerings to God. If alcoholic beverages were unsuitable for human consumption, why were they acceptable in divine worship?

3. *Positive Blessing.* God's Law allowed *yayin* and *shekar* to be purchased with the Tithe of Rejoicing and to be drunk before the Lord. "You shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine (*yayin*) or strong drink (*shekar*), for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household" (Deut. 14:26).

In fact, the psalmist attributes to God the production of *yayin*, which makes man's heart glad (Ps. 104:14-15). Surely God's provision has in view a righteous employment of alcoholic beverage. Furthermore, Scripture speaks of the satisfaction of life as illustrated in the eating of bread and drinking of *yayin* with gladness (Eccl. 9:7).

4. *Spiritual Symbolism.* The rich symbolism of God's redemptive revelation makes bold use of fermented beverages. The blessings of salvation are likened to free provision of *yayin*: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and

³ See: Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), pp. 406, 1016. Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), pp. 303, 716. Joseph H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book, 1889), p. 442. W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 564. See the English "wine" in the *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 2:3788. See also such etymological dictionaries as John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Baker, rep. 1969[1887]). Carl Darling Buck, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Elsevier, 1966). Robert K. Barnhart, *The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology* (Bronx, NY: H.W. Wilson, 1988).

⁴ Authorized Version (King James); American Standard Version, Moffatt's Holy Bible; A New Translation; Revised Standard Version; New English Bible; Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech; Williams' In the Language of the People; Beck's In the Language of Today; Amplified Bible; New American Standard Bible; New International Version.

⁵ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Lexicon*, p. 1016.

⁶ Judges 9:13; II Sam. 13:28; Est. 1:10; Ps. 104:14-15; Eccl. 9:7; 10:19; Zech. 9:15; 10:7

⁷ Drunkenness does not 'make glad the heart' and is not spoken of in a righteous context for beverage consumption. Rather, it brings woe and sorrow (Prov. 23:29-35).

⁸ Of Isaiah 25:6, E.J. Young writes: "By means of gradation, Isaiah now characterizes the banquet as one of wine that is matured by resting undisturbed on the lees. A play upon words as well as a gradation appears between *shemanim* (fat things) and *shemanim* (lees). This latter word originally signified holders or preservers and then came to designate the wines that had rested a long time on sediment or dregs, and so had become more valuable. The wine lay on the lees to increase its strength and color." Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), 3:193.

⁹ Please notice that this argument from silence is put last. Nevertheless, it would seem that if there were a prohibition against the consumption of alcoholic beverages, there should be evidence in Scripture of the careful handling and production of grape juice in order to arrest fermentation.

eat. Yes, come buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Is. 55:1).

Kingdom blessings are symbolized by the abundant provision of *yayin*: "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed...; I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; ...they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them" (Amos 9:13-14). Elsewhere we read: "In this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees" (Is. 25:6). Clearly, wine—even carefully aged wine—is viewed as a symbol of God's blessings.

5. *Christ's Witness*. Interestingly, our Lord Jesus Christ miraculously "manufactured" an abundance (John 2:6) of wine [*yayin*] for a marriage feast. This wine was deemed "good" by the headmaster of the feast (John 2:10)—and men prefer "old [i.e. aged, fermented] wine" because it is good (Luke 5:39).

Having "manufactured" wine in His first miracle, it is no surprise

that the Lord publicly drank it. This put a clear distinction between Him and the ascetic John the Baptizer: "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinner!'" (Luke 7:33-35).

6. *Prohibitional Silence*. Scripture nowhere gives a universal command on the order: "take no wine at all". In fact, select groups that forgo wine are worthy of mention as acting differently from accepted Biblical practice, e.g. the Nazarites (Num. 6:2-6) and John the Baptizer (Luke 1:15). Others are forbidden to imbibe wine only during the formal exercise of their specific duties, e.g. priests (Lev. 10:8-11) and kings (Prov. 31:4, 5).

All prohibitions to partaking wine involve prohibitions either to immoderate consumption or to abusers: "Be not drunk with wine" (Eph. 5:18). "Do not be with heavy drinkers" (Prov. 23:20). "Do not be addicted to wine" (1 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 2:3). "Do not linger long over wine" (Prov. 23:30).

Conclusion

When all is said and done, we must distinguish the use of wine from its *abuse*. Sometimes in Scripture gluttonous partaking of food is paralleled with immoderate drinking of wine (Deut. 21:20; Prov. 23:21). But food is not universally prohibited! Sometimes in Scripture sexual perversion is paralleled with drunkenness (Rom. 13:13; 1 Pet. 4:3). But all sexual activity is not condemned! Wealth often becomes a snare to the sinner (1 Tim. 6:9-11), but the Scripture does not universally decry its acquisition (Job 42:10-17)! Each of these factors in life is intended by God to be a blessing for man, when used according to His righteous Law.

It would seem abundantly clear, then, that the *Scriptures do allow the moderate partaking of alcoholic beverages*. There is no hesitancy in Scripture in commending wine, nor embarrassment in portraying its consumption among the righteous of Biblical days. Wine is set before the saints as blessing and gladness (Deut. 14:26; Ps. 104:14-15), even though it may be to the immoderate and wicked a mocker and curse (Prov. 20:1; 23:29ff.).

Reynolds: Scripture Prohibits the Drinking of Alcoholic Beverages

Mr. Gentry argues for what he calls the moderationist view which is that the Bible allows the partaking of alcoholic beverages in moderation and with circumspection.

In the first place, all readers must understand that I present my arguments altogether from the Reformation standpoint that the Bible in its autograph manuscripts in the original languages of inspiration was inerrant. Some copyists made errors, but usually these were of very minor importance, did not affect faith or practice, and in most cases scholars can with some assurance recover what was the original. God never granted inerrancy to copyists and certainly not to translators. Some errors of translators do affect faith and practice and should be corrected. A new translation of both the Old and New Testament is urgently needed. This should be done not so much by consulting Hebrew and Greek dictionaries but by upholding

the unity and harmony of the whole Bible. If the conclusions of any translator, dictionary, writer, commentator or polemicist of any kind damage the unity and harmony of the Bible they should immediately be held up to the closest scrutiny. God is his own interpreter, and He will make all plain. This last statement does not mean that it is necessarily easy to find the plain truth of the Bible on the matter of alcoholic beverages, but the principle is certain, and we must follow it.

In an attempt to give myself credibility to the reader of this critique, I must say that I was trained in the moderationist tradition and lived in it without pangs of conscience for many years. When I broke from it, it was not for what Mr. Gentry calls cultural or demographic reasons, but on the basis of God's Word studied in depth in the original languages. Of course, there were cultural and demographic reasons which came to

my attention, but to my shame as I look back on the past, I accepted the shallow arguments of my mentors.

My education included a degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Princeton University and a long career of teaching Biblical subjects based on the original languages. But for years, I never dug deeply into the meaning of passages touching on beverages, whether alcoholic or nonalcoholic. I was asked and accepted the responsibility of being a member of a translation team working on the New International Version of the Bible, but no passage touching on alcoholic beverages occurred in the part of Scripture on which I worked. I did observe that members of another translation team were following a false tradition touching on what sort of a conscience a Christian ought to have, and I tried to get this team to correct the obvious error but to no avail.

I noticed failures on the part of mentors and my fellow clergymen, who doubtless considered themselves to be moderationists, at least in theory, to use alcoholic beverages in what even impartial observers would call circumspection or moderation. Some of these failures I considered more laughable than sinful, and as such, I could not regard them as sins; so I did not go back to the Bible to see what it really says. I had the tools of training in the Biblical languages, but such is the force of tradition I failed to use them. These sad failures of my own I admit, but I believe they do not harm my credibility as a student of God's Word in the original languages when at last I took up the study of beverages in the Bible.

A careful study of Proverbs 23 in the original freed me forever from my bondage to the moderationist theory. This chapter contains a number of prohibitions addressed to all humanity in the second person singular as are some of the Ten Commandments. They forbid us, each and every human being addressed as an individual, to do certain things such as removing old landmarks (stealing land), withholding correction from a child, envying sinners, being among winebibbers, despising our own mother when she is old and looking at a drink which in Hebrew transliterated is *yayin ki yith'addam*. The word *yayin* is generally translated *wine* in English Bibles. In this passage it is correctly translated wine. It is a beverage we must not look at lustfully. It is alcoholic wine. *Yith'addam* cannot (being *hithpa'el*) mean simply "when it is red." The following words are no doubt put in Holy Writ to distinguish the forbidden *yayin* from other *yayin* which is not forbidden.

This prohibition of looking at this sort of *yayin* establishes a principle, one to which all the rest of the Bible must conform if the Bible is in harmony with itself, which it certainly is.

We can no more look to other passages in the Bible, put our own interpretation on them, and say they negate Proverbs 23:31 than we can find some passage which we can twist to mean that we can despise our mothers when they are old and say that this negates verse 22 of the same chapter.

Someone who objects to taking Proverbs 23:31 in its plain sense has suggested that the entire book of Proverbs is given to us to make us think and contains no firm commands to be obeyed, but this is against II Timothy 3:16. If Proverbs gives a command, that command must be obeyed.

Another who objects to taking Prov. 23:31 as a command to all persons as individuals says it applies only to drunkards. His reason for doing that is that drunkards are mentioned, but drunkards and the ill effects of drinking are there to make clear what sort of *yayin* is prohibited, as there was nonalcoholic *yayin* as well as alcoholic. The idea of this objector is a very improper reason for seeking to avoid a clear command of God, which by reason of its place in the Bible is to be obeyed by all, not merely by drunkards.

That *yayin* in the Bible need not refer to an alcoholic drink is proved by Isaiah 16:10 and Jeremiah 48:33. Here the immediate product of treading grapes is called *yayin*, and yet everyone knows that the immediate product of treading grapes is called in modern (but not 17th century) English: grape juice.

This is all the evidence needed to affirm that *wherever yayin* is praised in the Bible it should be translated "grape juice," as for example when it is said that little children not fully weaned cry for it (Lam. 2:12) or when, in what may be the description of a harvest festival, fresh grape juice is being enjoyed by the happy harvesters and their friends and is called a gift of God from the earth to make glad the heart of man (Ps. 104:15).

One who objects to this suggests that *yayin* is properly translated wine (meaning an alcoholic beverage) in these passages by a figure of speech called *prolepsis*, but the context is altogether against this as can be proved if Mr. Gentry in a reply attempts to use this argument.

It is therefore certain that *yayin* in the Old Testament may be nonalcoholic, as incidentally it can be in modern Hebrew. God used a special phrase, *yayin ki yith'addam* to name the alcoholic kind. Furthermore, to make sure no one misses the point, He described what it does to the user. It bites like a serpent, stings like an adder, affects the vision and the heart

badly, causes a condition like seasickness, insensitivity to pain and is habit forming.

This dangerous beverage is forbidden to be looked at in a series of prohibitions all the rest of which believers have universally accepted as easily understandable. But instead of saying *drink not* the prohibition is *look not*. This obviously does not mean that we can drink without looking. The meaning emphasizes the prohibition of verse 20. That verse commands us not to be among winebibbers. "Bad company corrupts good morals" (I Cor. 15:33 NAS). Verse 30 adds to the prohibition of verse 20 the further restriction that every person is forbidden to look at alcoholic wine lustfully whether in company or alone, because looking may lead to drinking. Drinking even a little of this beverage is a sin because it is forbidden to every individual person. This having been established, the rest of the Bible must be interpreted to harmonize with it, and this is not as difficult as a student untrained in deep study of the original languages may imagine.

I hope Mr. Gentry in reply will demonstrate skill in dealing with grammatical points in Hebrew and Greek and especially in harmonizing passages where the Bible appears to contradict itself. In his opening contribution I believe I see evidence of too much reliance on other writers rather than independent research, or even of proper use of the original. For example, in note 6, he cites Judges 9:13 as an example of where *yayin* is said to make glad the heart of man. This suggests that he was using an English translation, as the word here translated wine is *tiros* and not *yayin*.

Mr. Gentry cites Dr. E.J. Young on the word *shemarim* Isaiah 25:6. I knew the late Dr. Young and honor him greatly. He graciously said an exegetical study I did and which he published was excellent. I do not in any way suggest that my depth of scholarship is in any way equal to his. I must say frankly that he was greater in scholarship than I. Nevertheless his conclusion as to the meaning of this word *shemar* is formed from insufficient evidence. *Shemar* (plural *shemarim*) normally means dregs or lees and appears elsewhere as an unappetizing substance that settles in the bottom of a liquid. *Shemarim* is never presented in a favorable light except here. In Psalm 75:9, the wicked

must drink it as punishment. In Jeremiah 48:11 and Zephaniah 1:12 the word by a figure of speech is associated with men who deserve punishment. It does not support the unity and harmony of the Bible to leap to the conclusion that the meaning "wine on the lees" is attached to this word in Isaiah 25:6 where it appears twice, being used of a delectable substance God will give to all people. Much more should be said to explain this verse, and readers can find more in my *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol* (Minnesota: International Society of Good Templars), but I have touched on it as much as I have in order to show that Mr. Gentry tries to make a point that the beverage at this feast will be "aged wine," therefore fermented. He can find this translation in the NIV but it is only a bad guess. The KJV translates it wine on the lees, but the word for wine does not occur, only the word normally translated as "lees." It is certain that we must dig deeper than either the KJV, the NIV or other translations. If we cannot determine the precise meanings we should be content to translate it simply beverages and in the second occurrence of the word *beverages purged of yeast*. The words *purged of yeast* are derived grammatically and philologically. It is interesting that Martin Luther translates this verse as to be "without yeast," a brilliant insight.

Mr. Gentry writes that the non-moderationist argument may distort the doctrine of Christ "in that any universal censure of something Jesus did distracts from His holiness." In fact, it is the people who say Jesus drank alcoholic beverages and created alcoholic wine in large quantity who make Jesus an object of scorn. A cartoon was published in an atheistic periodical showing Jesus and the wedding party at Cana in an advanced state of drunkenness. If Jesus made a large quantity of alcoholic wine for a wedding party in a small village He was not teaching a lesson in moderation. The atheistic cartoonist was making a reasonable inference from the facts as he understood them, and the moderationist should rethink what he has written so that the holiness of Christ may be vindicated before the reading public. A better Bible translation is needed.

The fact which most scholars choose to ignore is that *oinos* in

Koine Greek could be understood as grape juice. The Septuagint translates the word *yayinas oinos* in Isaiah 16:10 where a substance that could not possibly be alcoholic is mentioned. The Greek of the Septuagint is practically the same as that of the New Testament. This establishes beyond doubt that *oinos* may be unfermented grape juice in the New Testament. Jesus would not tempt people to commit the sin of drunkenness. Therefore, since *oinos* may be grape juice fresh from the press, what Jesus made must have been such a drink.

Of course *oinos* may be alcoholic. The fact that the same word may denote either an alcoholic or a nonalcoholic drink should not be considered incredible. Our English word cider may be either. The English word "wine" in the seventeenth century had both meanings. When the evil nature of the drink (a mocker, poison) is clear, we should understand it as alcoholic. Where it is approved we should understand it to be nonalcoholic. Where the context does not make the distinction apparent, a Bible translator and teacher must use care. In Romans 14:21, which Mr. Gentry cites as evidence that Paul was referring to an alcoholic drink, the weaker brother may have been a Jewish Christian under a Nazarite vow who would be offended if Paul drank grape juice in his presence. Therefore, Paul would abstain for the sake of his brother. Another possibility is that the *oinos* Paul would forgo was alcoholic, but those who suppose he may have drunk it under other conditions do not notice that he did not say that under other conditions he *would* drink it. He simply did not address the question. Other passages Mr. Gentry cites may be treated in the same way. What is certain is that Proverbs 23:31 prohibits alcoholic wine, and no passage in any part of the Bible inspired later can possibly abrogate it, for it is part of God's everlasting moral law. An absolute prohibition is not abrogated by a partial prohibition.

I have not cited many human, uninspired authors. God alone is the certain source of all knowledge. We should go to the Source. The Holy Scriptures in the original languages should be our only rule of faith and practice. We should not be prone to follow human authority even when it is enshrined in tradition. For ex-

ample, Joseph and his brothers are said to have been drunk (Gen. 43:34). The word is *wayyishk^e ru*. The Septuagint, Vulgate, and Luther's German (early translations) rightly say they were drunk.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that later translators were shocked at the forthright way God in his revealed Word described one incident of what was an occasion brought about by God, and over which He bestowed his blessing. Later translators seem to have thought that the word God used in this situation exposed both the substance alcohol and the patriarchs to criticism from which they wished to shield them. They therefore substituted "they were merry" for "they were drunk." God, however, is unsparing in his use of words regarding what is undoubtedly an alcoholic beverage in Proverbs 23. Elsewhere, he calls it a mocker and refers to its poison. God is also unsparing when He describes the sins of good men.

One reason for mentioning the Genesis 43:34 incident is that it shows what every Christian needs to know. This is that when an error is made by respected persons, especially when it tends to make alcohol acceptable, almost all later translators, commentators and dictionary writers accept the error as correct. This tends to make morals decay. It is all the more noteworthy when it is observed that when matters not having to do with human self-indulgence are treated in the Bible, translators readily distinguish different meanings of words, such as *'elohim*, *keleb* and *ro'sh*. But when *yayin* is found, it is regularly translated wine, and wine is understood to be an alcoholic drink. This is true even when it is impossible that *yayin* could be alcoholic. The verb *shakar* is translated *to be merry* in Gen. 43:34 when there is nothing in the Bible to suggest what mood the people at the family reunion may have been in. They were drunk, and as confusion took control of their minds, old resentments may have come up, and they may have engaged in quarrels.

Hebrew had a word for *to be merry* in general circumstances and even expressions meaning to be hilarious because of alcohol, usually leading to death, but these expressions are not used here.

This tendency to make alco-

hol drinking seem better than it is should be diligently examined and exposed by the use of the original languages. Mr. Gentry may be excused for not doing so in depth, but another scholar, whose credentials to work on Hebrew grammar and vocabulary appear to be much better than Mr. Gentry's, does even worse in defending as correct the error of the NIV in Micah 2:11. In this passage the translators of the NIV without warrant from the Hebrew text introduced a word, "plenty" which is not there. This is a very serious wrong, especially as

the word introduced gives quite a different sense to the passage. A limitation of space prevents me from explaining why the NIV is wrong here, but to strengthen my argument that scholars go to extremes to remove the thought that God condemns the use of alcohol even in moderation, I will add that the scholar mentioned above (Prof. Bruce Waltke) uses a grammatical construction, the *constructio praegnans*, to defend the NIV, a defense that is totally inadmissible.

In conclusion, I have to say that I feel called by God to press on to

do all I can with God's help that a new translation be given to suffering mankind. I shall issue a summons to all who understand that mankind has been too long deceived by translators. If any will contribute their skill or some of the financial resources they have as a trust from God to give the people a purified Bible let them come forth as volunteers. I myself, who cannot expect to be given enough time on earth to complete this task, feel moved by God to establish an endowed trust fund. The need is urgent. Are there other volunteers?

Gentry Responds

As I begin my response to my worthy opponent, I must express sincere appreciation for Dr. Reynolds' impressive linguistic credentials and his noteworthy resume, which he has generously shared with us as a major point in his argument. Though I wholeheartedly disagree with him on this issue,¹ I am thankful for this gifted linguist's work in other areas.

A Major Frustration

Despite such credentials, formulating a response to Reynolds is more frustrating than difficult. He holds so tenaciously to his view that he must dispute every major English translation of scripture, discount the value of virtually every major lexicographer, and cast doubt on the majority of modern commentators. He writes: "[A]lmost all later translators, commentators and dictionary writers accept the error as correct." Such plays a large role in his presentation.

Regarding translations: "God never granted inerrancy to... translators."² "A new translation of both the Old and New Testament is urgently needed." A rendering by the NIV translation committee is "only a bad guess." "It is certain that we must dig deeper than either the KJV, the NIV or other translations." "A better Bible translation is needed." While working on the NIV translation, Dr. Reynolds felt obliged to engage an entire "translation team" in debate over what he feels was their "following a false

tradition" regarding a translation relevant to the alcohol question.³ "[T]he error of the NIV..." "[T]he NIV without warrant..." "I feel called by God to press on to do all I can with God's help that a new translation be given to suffering mankind." In short, we need "a purified Bible."

Regarding lexicons: "This should be done not so much by consulting Hebrew and Greek dictionaries..." "[A]lmost all later...dictionary writers accept the error as correct."

Regarding commentators: Of E.J. Young's exegetical conclusions on Isaiah 25:6, we learn that they were based on "insufficient evidence." "[A]lmost all later...commentators...accept the error as correct."

The strong impression is left that as Reynolds cuts himself off from the world of evangelical scholarship, he inadvertently sets himself as the standard of truth: "I have not cited many human uninspired authors." "We should not be prone to follow human authority even when it is enshrined in tradition."⁴

Let us turn now to consider Reynolds' two basic texts.

Proverbs 23:29-35

Reynolds argues that Proverbs 23 forbids "each and every hu-

man being" to partake of wine. He writes that *ki yith'addam*, the words following *yayin* ("wine"), "are no doubt put in Holy Writ to distinguish the forbidden *yayin* from other *yayin* which is not forbidden." This passage is so important that it "establishes a principle, one to which all the rest of the Bible must conform..." "Drinking even a little of this beverage is a sin because it is forbidden to every individual person." "What is certain is that Proverbs 23:31 prohibits alcoholic wine, and no passage in any part of the Bible inspired later can possibly abrogate it"

There are major problems with his employment of this passage. In the first place, what he neglects to tell the reader is that this is *the only place in all of Scripture* that uses the phraseology *yayin ki yith'addam*.⁵ If the Scripture is so unalterably set against the consumption of alcoholic beverage, as Reynolds imagines, why is this phrase not used elsewhere, especially "to distinguish the forbidden *yayin* from other *yayin* which is not forbidden"? I have shown in my first paper that there are ample evidences for the alcoholic content of Biblical "wine."

Second, the text before us clearly issues a warning to a particular class of individuals. These are

¹ In my *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), I interact with Reynolds due to his stature.

² I might add that neither did He do so for independent scholars, such as Dr. Reynolds.

³ He admits the futility of his efforts to alter the translational consensus of these numerous evangelical linguistic scholars: "I tried to get this team to correct the obvious error but to no avail." It is sad that a noteworthy team of evangelical linguists could make such an "obvious" error!

⁴ Thankfully he accepts the "reformed standpoint" (sc., tradition) of the inerrancy of the autographa of Scripture.

⁵ His lexical point, which I grant for sake of argument, is that the *hithpa'el* verbal construction (which is the reflexive of the *pi'el*, having a long [i.e., dagesh bearing] middle root consonant) of *yith'addam* suggests 'makes itself red' more than merely 'when it is red.' This, to Reynolds, is indicative of its alcoholic nature, for alcohol tends to redden the nose and face in an alcoholic.

described as ones who have "woe," "sorrow," "contentions," "wounds without cause," and "redness of eyes" (v.29). These physiological phenomena are not associated with moderate consumption.

In fact, it is expressly stated that they are "those who *linger long over wine*" (v.30), just as those who rise early and linger late merely to drink (Is. 5:11). In both Proverbs 23:30 and Isaiah 5:11 the Hebrew root *achar* is used, which means "to remain, tarry, delay." It is found in the pi'el form in both places, which indicates a more intensive action than the simple qal. Under such conditions, the wine brings on all sorts of alcohol-induced sequelae (vv.33-35).

This explains why there are commands to avoid *inordinate* consumption of wine rather than prohibitions against partaking wine altogether. For instance, I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:3 employ the Greek *paroinos*, which indicates one who sits long beside (*para*) his wine (*oinos*). I Timothy 3:8 reads in the Greek: *me oino pollo prosechontas*. Notice the word *pollo*, which indicates "much" and *prosechontas*, which with the dative here means "occupied with."

Ephesians 5:18 commands: "be not drunk with wine." It does not say: "Do not drink wine." The Greek word is *methuskesthe*, which commonly indicates intoxication. In fact, the intoxicated state, which comes by taking too much wine, is contrasted with another form of intoxication: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be *filled*." The "be filled" here is *plerousthe*, which is in the same verb form as *methuskesthe* (present, passive, imperative). We are, as it were, to be *filled up* with the Spirit, not with wine.

Isaiah 16:10

Isaiah 16:10 is an absolutely crucial passage for Reynolds to use in his attempt to undermine the lexicons, translations, and commentators. He feels this verse proves *yayin* does not have to have alcoholic content: "Here the immediate product of treading grapes is called *yayin*," thus, it must mean "grape juice." Of this verse he adds: "This is all the evidence needed!" Later he adds that *oinos* (the Septuagint rendering of *yayin* here) "could not possibly be alcoholic" and "this establishes beyond doubt" the non-alcoholic content of that beverage.

As usual, his argument here is unconvincing. It is quite clear that Isaiah 16:10 is found in the midst of a poetic passage, with its familiar parallel structure. Poetry often exaggerates for artistic beauty. This is evident in this very passage: The vines of Sibmah are said to reach "as far as Jazer," to "wander to the deserts," and to "pass over the sea" (v.8). The poetry speaks of a weeping that drenches (the Hebrew here means to saturate with moisture) Heshbon and Elealch (v. 9).

So likewise, those who tread the grapes are said to tread out *yayin*. This *yayin* ("wine") is the end product sought in treading. The statement is an *effecto pro causa*, a substituting of the ultimate effect for the cause, which is not uncommon in Hebrew poetry.⁶ In fact, there is probably an indication

⁶ In Job 3:3 a *geber* ("mighty man") is said to be "conceived" in the word. In Job 10:10, Job refers to his father's sperm as if it were Job himself, because he eventually arose from it.

of the failure of the production of *wine* here in the taking away of "the gladness and joy" mentioned in 10a, because *yayin* is associated with "making glad the heart."⁷

Closing Observations

I am almost out of space, but let me quickly mention the following.

Reynolds uses question-begging as a tool for sorting out good (non-alcoholic) from bad (alcoholic) wine: "Wherever *Yayin* is praised in the Bible it should be translated grape juice." "When the evil nature of the drink... is clear we should understand it as alcoholic. Where it is approved we should understand it be nonalcoholic." This is tantamount to arguing: (a) The Bible forbids the drinking of alcoholic *oinos* and *yayin*. (b) We know that *oinos* and *yayin* are alcoholic if they are forbidden.

Elsewhere Reynolds complains "if Jesus made a large quantity of alcoholic wine for a wedding party in a small village He was not teaching a lesson in moderation." (Jesus apparently made about 120 gallons of wine [John 2:6]). How can Reynolds know this was too much wine? How many people were present? We know of Jesus, His mother, the disciples (John 2:1-2), the wedding couple, the servants (v. 5), and the headwaiter (v. 9). Surely there were many more. And how long was this wine to last? Wedding feasts generally lasted a few days. And who says they had to all drink it at that time? Was there never anything left over after a wedding?

⁷ II Sam. 13:28; Est. 1:10; Ps. 104:14-15; Eccl. 9:7; 10:19; Zech. 9:15; 10:7.

Reynolds Responds

In reply to my worthy opponent, Mr. Gentry, I must begin by stating that I must insist that the debate should be decided on the basis of the Bible, the Word of God revealed in the original languages in which God chose to make Himself and His plan for mankind known to our finite minds.

I repeat and insist upon it that no translator subsequent to the closing of the canon of Scripture has been granted the gift of inerrancy, and I am very insistent that I claim no such gift for myself, although Mr.

Gentry seems to suggest that I think of myself as inerrant. My scholarship has many flaws, but when God gives me the ability to see the truth and reject errors I must take my stand as Luther did at Worms. I cannot do otherwise.

Let us honestly and zealously attempt to solve the alcohol problem by searching the Scripture (John 5:39; Acts 17:11). This searching, if it is to be sound and effective, must be done in the original languages. Patient exegesis is the only way, and for this debate to be very meaningful, Mr.

Gentry should seek to destroy my arguments and not waste his readers' time and take up space in *Antithesis* pointing out that my studies may have led me to be innovative. Innovations which attack the unity and harmony of Scripture should be opposed, but mine are based on a sound principle which is to determine what the inspired authors meant readers to understand. As a basis for making a decision, I seek, by using legitimate tools of exegesis, to relieve the reader of the idea that the Bible is a confusing book. As commonly translated,

the Bible in speaking of *yayin* says it is a mocker (Prov. 20:1), is poisonous (Hos. 7:5 if translated correctly) and is not to be so much as looked at. No suggestion is made in these passages that if used in moderation it is an approved drink. The Holy Bible as commonly translated says this same substance may be purchased by a religious person under certain circumstances with the money he would otherwise give as a tithe and that he may give it along with another intoxicating beverage to the fatherless and other needy persons (Deut. 14:26-29). Nothing is said about moderation or withholding the dangerous drug from children. The implication is that they would be invited to drink freely.

What would we think about a mere human teacher who would speak so confusingly? If we did not reject him there would be something seriously wrong with our judgment. I protest that Mr. Gentry's attempt to refute me because I don't follow a well worn but delusive path should be utterly rejected. Innovations are not necessarily evil. If they discover long hidden truths and reveal the Bible's unity and harmony they should be accepted, unless they can be proved to be linguistically and philologically wrong.

Translators, when indulgence in alcohol or being self-indulgent in other ways is not in view, have been very properly willing to translate a word in different ways to uphold the unity and harmony of the Bible. For example, the Hebrew word *'elohim* when used with a singular verb regularly means the one true God, and when used with a plural verb, it usually means pagan, false deities. But in Genesis 20:13 and 35:7, *'elohim* is construed with plural verbs, but translators are united in rendering it as singular. Why do they do so? Apparently in the case of Genesis 20:13 it is more comfortable to assume that Abraham did not deceive Abimelech, a polytheist, by giving the impression that he too was a polytheist. Yet Abraham was not always guiltless of deception. If we did not have Genesis 35:7 and Joshua 24:19, it would be natural to assume that this is another example of Abraham's deception, but since we have these other passages, it is possible to say that what appears to be a rule of Hebrew grammar has a few exceptions. This being established, it is

proper to ignore what otherwise would seem to be a grammatical rule and translate the passage in Genesis 20:13 as "God caused me to wander."

This point is made to show to what lengths translators have gone to preserve the unity and harmony of the Scriptures. They are right in doing so. Many words are translated in different ways when the translator thinks the unity and harmony of the Bible demand it. If grammar can be overlooked for this reason, ought not scholars to admit for the same reason that *yayin*, *shekar*, *tiros*, and *oinos* all have two possible meanings, one a forbidden alcoholic beverage and the other a harmless, permitted drink?

In a prescientific age it would be natural to name drinks from their principal ingredient, regardless of their alcoholic content or lack of it. In English we have an example of this in the word "cider" for apple juice, whether alcoholic or not.

Gentry makes a point of the fact that the phrase *yayin ki yith'addam* is used only once in Scripture. He implies that because it is used only once the prohibition connected with it may be safely ignored. He thus appears to be telling God how to teach. God only needs to command once, and after that one command is given, He expects to be obeyed. An officer in modern warfare may make one rule, perhaps by prohibiting something, and then go on to something else and finally close his instruction without repeating the prohibition. One under his authority cannot disobey the order and then try to shift the blame to his superior saying, *he only said it once*. That one act of disobedience may cause the whole battle plan to fail, and no one is to blame but the one who disobeyed.

Gentry suggests that the prohibition applies only to the winebibbers of verse 20 and the drunkards of verse 29 and 30. But no command at all is given to these winebibbers and drunkards. They are treated as a group. All the prohibitions in this chapter are in the singular. In verse 20 one individual (standing for all mankind as in the Ten Commandments) is prohibited from being in the company of such as are accustomed to drink. Even if he abstains, he is still not to be in their company. We must treat Scripture seriously. Are the winebibbers and drunkards addressed and told not to drink? No; the command not to look

at *yayin ki yith'addam* is addressed to a single person, and he is not included among the drunkards previously mentioned. To mean what Gentry thinks it means, the passage would have to be phrased differently.

The arguments Gentry proposes for translating *yayin* in Isaiah 16:10 as wine are unconvincing. He proposes that as a poetical figure of speech Isaiah was calling grape juice wine as "wine as the product sought in treading." This is an example of making the Bible mean what the interpreter wants it to mean. He cannot know what the Moabites sought. The passage shows that they were starving. There were no grapes to press, but if there had been they would have eaten them at once. Hunger was their problem and even if they were alcoholics they would have to satisfy this need first. Hebrew poetry brings the reader's mind to the current situation in vivid language; it does not distract the mind with an alleged, far-off goal. Mr. Gentry's idea that "joy and gladness" suggests *wine* is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture. Alcoholic wine, a dangerous drug, is painted in Scripture in the darkest colors. In Psalm 104:15, that which causes gladness should be interpreted as a happy grape harvest festival when the *yayin* (grape juice) is drunk by the joyful harvesters as it comes fresh out of the press.

It is not question begging to propose that certain words in the Bible have more than one meaning. If it were, every translator would be guilty.

Gentry seems offended that I am critical of Bruce Waltke for defending the grossly improper rendering of Micah 2:11 in the NIV which introduces a word (plenty) not in the original. Dr. Waltke's defense of this innovation (that it is an example of *constructio praegnans*) is totally without merit, and he has as yet not attempted to defend it in private correspondence with me. Instead of seriously dealing with the problem, Gentry holds me up to contempt for even venturing to be critical of Dr. Waltke. This is not the way a debate ought to be conducted. I believe it is not irreverent for me, a humble servant of Jesus, to quote what He said in John 18:23: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness to the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"

Gentry's Concluding Remarks

I would urge the reader to reread the wide array of evidence for the righteous consumption of alcoholic wine in my first installment. Notice I employ a great many Scriptures and references to the consensus of reputable lexicons and translations to support my view. Reynolds, however, employs only a few verses (primarily Prov. 23:29ff and Is. 16:10) and admits to presenting "innovations...based on sound principle" in an attempt to "discover long hidden truths." His case is that weak.

Despite Reynolds, the wine of the Bible was alcoholic: People could be intoxicated by it (Gen. 9:21; I Sam. 1:14; Is. 28:1; Jer. 23:9). Believers were urged not to linger long over it (Prov. 23:30; Is. 5:11, 22; 28:1, 7; I Tim. 23:3, 8; Tit. 1:7; 2:3). Priests were forbidden wine *when engaging in sacerdotal activities* (Lev. 10:9; Ex. 44:21), because it was alcoholic and could accidentally endanger worship (cf. Lev. 10:1-3). Even our Lord freely made (John 2:9, 10, cf. Luke 5:39) and partook of alcoholic wine, which led the Pharisees to falsely call Him a drunkard (Luke 7:33-35).

The Scriptures even allude to the allowed fermentation of wine "on the lees" and in wine bottles (Job 32:19; Prov. 3:10; Is. 25:6; Jer. 48:11; Zeph. 1:12; Matt. 9:17; Luke 7:37). Consequently, the preferred wine of Scripture is aged, i.e., fermented (e.g., Is. 25:6; Luke 5:39). In fact, Scripture allows the partaking of "all sorts of wines" (Neh. 5:18¹) *when taken in moderation* — for the Bible resolutely condemns all inordinate imbibing which leads to drunkenness (Gen. 19:32; Prov. 23:29-35; Jer. 13:13-14; Ez. 23:28, 33; Hos. 4:11; Matt. 24:29; Luke 12:45; 21:34; Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Gal. 5:19, 21; Eph. 5:18).

A Survey of Reynold's Latest Misinterpretations

Reynolds argues that Proverbs 20:1 and Hosea 7:5 forbid wine

¹ Remember that one allowed alcoholic beverage is *shekar* ("strong drink"), which is a noun related to the

use by calling wine a "mock" and "poisonous." He adds that "no suggestion is made in these passages that if used in moderation it is an approved drink"! But:

(1) The whole Bible is our ethical guide, and in *many* places it forbids immoderate use. I agree with Reynolds that "God only needs to command once and after that...He expects to be obeyed."² Use of wine *must be in moderation*, whether expressed in every context or not, because of the *total Scripture*.

(2) Proverbs 20:1 says: "wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and *whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise*" (NASV). The word translated "intoxicated" is the Hebrew *shagah* ("swerve, meander, reel"). It indicates being under the influence of wine, as in Isaiah 28:7. Wine leads to mockery and brawling when *foolish* men are *intoxicated* by it. Elsewhere wine is a *blessing* for the righteous (Deut. 14:26; Ps. 104:14, 15; Eccl. 9:7; Is. 25:6; 55:1; Amos 9:13-15). Despite Reynolds, *the very verse itself makes a clear "suggestion" of "moderation"* (the same is true of Hos. 7:5).

(3) If the statement "wine is a mocker" prohibits wine, then "knowledge makes arrogant" does the same for knowledge (I Cor. 8:1)! The negative and positive statements regarding the same thing should not surprise us, for good things can be abused, as are sex (Rom. 13:13), food (Prov. 23:20-21), and wealth (I Tim. 6:9-11). But each of these is good (Heb. 13:4; Ps. 104:14-15; Job 42:10).

In Proverbs 23:29-35, Reynolds tries unconvincingly to divorce verses 29-30 from 31-35. He does so on the basis of shift from a plural address ("those") to a singular ("you," i.e. "my son," cf. 23:15; 19:26; 24:13, 21).

Any unbiased reading of the text, however, clearly shows that

verb for *shakar* ("drunk") and also to *shikkar* ("drunkard") and *shikkaron* ("drunkenness"). See Deut. 14:26 and Num. 28:7.

² He misunderstands my argument when he makes this statement, however. See my earlier context to which he refers.

verses 29-30 are quite relevant to the instruction in verses 31-35. In verse 20 the writer warns (in the singular!) of the danger of being with immoderate drinkers; such will lead to "poverty" (v. 21). Then he warns later about those (plural) who "linger long" (v. 29) over wine: such will be led to "woe" (vv. 29-30, cf. v. 21).

Then the reader (singular, Heb.) is warned of that type of wine consumption that comes from running with "heavy drinkers." The writer rhetorically asks, "Who has woe?" He answers, "Those who linger long at the wine." Consequently, after such long lingering he warns his reader (singular): "*at the last*" (i.e., after inordinate long lingering, v. 32) wine bites, stings, and distorts (vv. 32-35). The root of the word "at the last" (Heb., *achar*, v. 32a) is the very one that appears in "linger long" in v. 30! The individual (singular) to whom he speaks must recognize that, and he must not be drawn to lingering long over wine (cf. Is. 5:11, 22).

Conclusion

It is clear that the Scripture allows a moderate, wise partaking of alcoholic beverages. It is just as evident that the Bible prohibits abusive consumption. There should be no confusion or "hidden truth" regarding the word here. All is very clear: "In all things moderation!" Let me close with three Scripture citations.

"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man" (Ps. 104:14-15).

"Thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul desires, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household" (Deut. 14:26).

"And the LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all people on this mountain; an banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine" (Is. 25:6). Δ

Book Review

Fringe Christianity In American Politics

***Under God: Religion and American Politics* by Garry Wills**

Simon and Schuster, 1990, 445 pages, \$24.95

Reviewed by Terry Morin

What do Gary Hart, Michael Dukakis, William Jennings Bryan, R.B. Thieme, Pat Robertson, Hal Lindsey, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Augustine's thoughts on sex and marriage, Mario Cuomo, and Fuller Theological Seminary have in common? Biblical Christianity? Sorry. Fringe Christianity might more accurately characterize these religio-political figures given room in Garry Wills' eight-part survey of the "religious element" in American political life. The survey includes politicians who have either understood and exploited the religious element, e.g. George Bush, William Jennings Bryan; those who ignored the religious element, e.g. Michael Dukakis, or attempted to redefine it, e.g. Gary Hart, and who suffered accordingly. The survey of the political landscape of post-Revolutionary America is complemented by a survey of the religious figures who have contributed to the form, and in most cases, the pathology of the posited "religious element".

In the book's Introduction the author attempts to give evidence for the existence of a "religious element" in the American electorate, and to explain why it continues to either evade or embarrass the learned, the political commentators, and the media. Wills quotes a number of polls and pollsters to the effect that religious preferences are the strongest indicators of political preferences among the indicators available for polling. The author doesn't indicate the specific nature of the correlations, and whether the correlations make sense. As to why the *nomenklatura* of America are routinely surprised by the resilience of the "religious element" to the intellectual imperialism of the Clarence Darrows and Carl Sagans, Wills is incredibly gracious. It so happens, says Wills, that politicians and journalists are *very timid, and very ignorant* about religious matters due to their great respect for the Constitutional separation of church and state. In Wills' view, journalists assume that the Constitution hermetically seals Christianity into a politically-irrelevant ghetto, and that the integrity of the seal

would be violated should the existence of the ghetto be acknowledged, studied, and written about. An interesting hypothesis to be sure, but I can think of simpler, and more personal reasons to explain why men would stop their ears at the mention of certain topics.

Part One, titled "Sin and Secularity," meanders over seven chapters before dropping the reader into something called "innocent secularity," a legitimacy in irreligion which ought to be recognized by all, according to the author. At this point, the epistemologically self-conscious *Antithesis* subscriber picks himself up, wipes himself off, and parts company with author Wills. Book reviewers are not permitted to leave, so on we go. Near the end of Chapter 7, Wills charges that only recently have evangelicals taken to calling innocent secularities by the name of "religion". It is not fair, according to the author, to say that the atheist, card-carrying Greenpeace member is actually committed to a God-hating religion. Why can't they be nice *secular* humanists? Why can't religion just stay in its ghetto? Sorry Mr. Wills, that's not a Biblical option. Two other comments are in order for Part One of the book. First, the author ought to leave Greek word studies to Col. Thieme. Wills' definition of *teleios* leaves, shall we say, something to be desired. Second, Wills sketches the transformation of Gary Hartpence, the Nazarene wonder-boy, to Gary Hart, the libertine and candidate. For students of perfectionist streams in church history, the case of Gary Hart is one more example of latent antinomianism lived out in those who must continually redefine sin for the sake of satisfying their perfectionist ethic. The list of the fallen did not begin with Hart and will not end with him.

Parts Two through Four treat the Scopes "Monkey" trial, premillennial dispensationalist eschatology, and various charismatic leaders. Much of the detail is embarrassing, even if the foibles are those of distant relatives, theologically speaking. Wills' judgment of that part of the ghetto can be summarized by the closing lines of Chapter 14: "The problem with evan-

gelical religion is not (so much) that it encroaches on politics, but that it has so carelessly neglected its own sources of wisdom. It cannot contribute what it no longer possesses." You can almost hear the dirt hit the coffin.

Part Five covers religion in Black America. No such treatment would be complete without a profile of Jesse Jackson. Among other things, Wills makes a case that Jesse Jackson's coalition was a major factor in the defeat of Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court. Part Six continues the debate over the Bork nomination into the discussion of pornography and censorship. Interestingly, Wills defends the Puritans against charges of sexual moronism. He writes, "The Puritans of New England were brutally frank, in ways that would shock people misnamed for them in later ages. Theirs was an open, scriptural morality enforced by literal investigations that would be hard to cover in family newspapers even now." In Wills' view the Puritans were blamed for the labors of Victorians.

Part Seven is titled "Politics and Abortion," and explores the political connections and liabilities associated with abortion. The survey includes Mario Cuomo, the late Francis Schaeffer, and Randall Terry. Again, on the matter of when human life begins, Wills accuses the evangelicals of doing theology on the run. He points to Augustine's confusion on the matter as evidence that Psalm 139 has not, historically, been understood to teach that human life begins at conception. You'll have to read it for yourself.

Part Eight is a paean to the glories of disestablishment; disestablishment of religion, that is. Given Wills' choice of religious figures, we can all thank God for any obstacle keeping any one of them from the exercise of political power. But that's not what Garry Wills is talking about, either here or elsewhere in the book. Wills, as a journalist and representative of the *nomenklatura*, offers to acknowledge the "religious element" represented by evangelical Christianity. What he asks for in return is that evangelical Christianity acknowledge its status as one element among many, and accept the legitimacy of innocent secularity. Looks like a white flag to me. Δ

Terry Morin (Ph.D.; University of Michigan) is a Fellow of History at New St. Andrews College.

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Novelty, Nonsense, and Non-Sequiturs

German Lutheran Church Takes Dramatic Disciplinary Action

The *Christian Observer* reports that:

The German Lutheran provincial church of Thuringa has suspended Pastor Matthias Pohland for baptizing cats at the request of their mostly elderly owners. Church officials called the cat baptisms "theologically highly suspect."

Strike another blow against animal rights.

U.S. Postal Service Gall

Just prior to the recent postage increase, the Postmaster General, Anthony Frank, mailed a little brochure to postal customers to help "make the adjustment to new rates as convenient as possible."

Given that the USPS has a monopolistic/bureaucratic stranglehold on much of the mail delivery service and, therefore, cannot go out of business like any *real* business, the Postmaster audaciously comforts customers by claiming:

Our rates must rise from time to time because, like most corporations, our costs rise too. The Postal Service is self-supporting. We do not use taxes to fund mail service.

We are committed to improving your satisfaction with the postal services...by: Providing consistent, timely delivery service, holding costs below inflation to reduce the frequency and amount of future rate increases, keeping our employees' commitment to quality service.

Your local postmaster and I want you to know that we value your business.

School Bus Schizophrenia

The *Orange Country Register* reports that the California Highway Patrol recently ordered the First Christian Church of Santa Ana to cease using its four buses as a link between its day-care program and nearby schools, since the buses did not meet state school-bus regulations. But the church had already altered the buses to meet state regulations for privately-operated buses:

"The irony of the situation is that we can drive our kids on a field trip to San Diego, but we can't take them around the corner to Santiago Elementary School," said Carrie Nelson, director of the day-care center.

"So, if we take kids out to the local pumpkin patch, we have to cover up the 'school bus' sign and remove the lights."

"Then if we take them from the pumpkin patch to the school, we have to uncover the sign and put the lights back on."

Chic and Trendy Socialism Lives

Rolling Stone economic guru, William Greider, recently asserted that a very important lesson we can learn from the current recession,

is one that America learned before, during the Great Depression, and subsequently brushed aside: A maldistribution of incomes weakens the economy and eventually pulls it down.... I predict that as the current wreckage accumulates, this old forsaken truth taught by New Deal liberals will come back into vogue.... An equitable distribution of incomes is crucial, not just because it is fair, but because it is a pre-requisite for capital investment and healthy growth.

Rolling Stone is not a popular economics text in the East-bloc.

Conservatives Opt for Mega-Government

National Review editor, John O'Sullivan, recently embraced President Bush's "Wilsonian/Rooseveltian" vision of a New World Order:

The Gulf Crisis has been a dry run for a world in which the U.S. would be the dominant power enforcing collective security with the support of allies and the UN's blessing. As this New World Order develops, U.S. allies not giving military help would, in effect, be taxed to pay the costs. Given Uncle Sam's dominance, however, U.S. interests would largely determine the international rules of the game, UN decisions, and what constituted a threat to peace. Highly satisfactory.... If the price of a *pax Americana* is calling it a new world order, conservatives should be prepared to pay it.

Sensitivity as a College Breadth-Requirement

Campus magazine notes that,

Penn State, in a move to promote greater diversity, told incoming freshman that they could not object to being housed with a homosexual room-mate. The school's new policy states that no room changes can be made on the basis of sexual preference. In its attempt to "shape the attitudes about students who are different by virtue of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation," the University also implemented a summer "sensitivity program."

Comrade Big Bird

In a letter to the *Economist*, we learn of genuine change in Poland:

On a recent visit to Warsaw I found that many of the street names had been changed during the past year. Generally, names of various "socialist heroes" have been replaced by those of Polish patriots. A somewhat more creative approach, however, was demonstrated in renaming the former "Street of the Red Army." It is now called "Sesame Street."

We invite readers to submit items for this feature

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Augustine

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