

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

THE BIENNIAL JOURNAL OF THE KUYPER FOUNDATION

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VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 4

OCTOBER, 2004

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Designed and typeset by Avant Books, P. O. Box 2, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4ZD, England.

Printed by SD Print and Design, Kingsdale House, Martinet Road, Old Airfield Industrial Estate, Thornaby, Cleveland TS17 0AS, England.

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Editorial office: *Christianity & Society*, P. O. Box 2, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4ZD, England.
Tel. (01823) 665909 Fax. (01823) 665721
www.kuyper.org/Email: cands@kuyper.org

Subscriptions: two consecutive issues

UK: £16.00

Europe: £20.00 (airmail).

All other subscriptions: £25.00 (airmail).

Payment by cheque: cheques should be in sterling only drawn on a bank in the UK, made payable to "The Kuyper Foundation" and sent to: P. O. Box 2, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4ZD, England.

Credit card payments: Please supply the following information: (1) card number, (2) expiry date, (3), card security code, (4) name of card holder and (5) card statement address (plus delivery name and address if different from card holder and statement address). Credit card information may be sent to the address or fax number above, or emailed to: "cands@kuyper.org" (See the form on p. 64).

EDITORIAL

CHANGES TO THE *Christianity & Society* PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

THIS issue of *Christianity & Society* is a double issue incorporating Vol. xiv, No 4 (October 2004) and what would have been Vol. xv, No 1 (January 2005). The current issue is thus twice the size (64 pages) of previous issues (32 pages). There will be no January 2005 issue. The next issue will be published in April 2005, and from then on the journal will be published twice yearly at twice the previous size (64 pages per issue). The journal will be renumbered as follows. The April 2005 issue will be Volume xv, No. 1 (Summer); the October 2005 issue will be Volume xv, No. 2 (Winter), and likewise with subsequent volumes. Readers will receive exactly the same amount of material as they have always had before. The only difference will be that instead of receiving this material quarterly in four issues it will be received biannually (summer and winter) in two issues of twice the previous size.

Why have we made this change? There are two main reasons. The first ultimately boils down to costs. *Christianity & Society* is heavily subsidised. Income brought in from subscriptions does not enable the journal to break even. It is subsidised heavily by the donations received from those who believe in the cause for which we are working. We also send out a significant number of free subscriptions to people in the Third World and to ministries in the Third and First World who cannot afford to pay Western subscription rates. The Kuyper Foundation is a charitable trust and does not exist to

make a profit but to promote the Christian faith. In principle therefore we are happy to subsidise the journal for the sake of the message. But we have to bring in enough income to make the work we do possible. Our income has remained fairly stable now for many years. With rising costs, however, we need increasing income to keep our service at its present level. Going to two issues per year at 64 pages instead of four at 32 pages will enable us to make some savings on the costs of producing the journal without reducing the amount of material we publish.

Second, and more positively, however, going to 64 pages per issue will provide us with the opportunity to deal in one issue with a wider variety of subject matter, from a wider variety of perspectives, and in more detail. Hopefully this will help to extend the scope of the journal as a forum for debate and discussion of issues relating to the application of the Christian faith to contemporary society, which is the main purpose of the journal.

If your subscription falls due in January 2005 you will receive a renewal notice with this issue (which incorporates what would have been the January 2005 issue on the previous schedule). If your subscription falls due in July 2005, you will receive your renewal notice with the Summer 2005 issue published in April (which will incorporate what would have been the July issue on the previous schedule).

Please continue to subscribe to *C&S* and help us to secure the journal's future. Please also help if you are able by recommending the journal to others and by supporting the Kuyper Foundation regularly with your donations, tithes and offerings (see the notice on the inside back cover for information on how to give money to the Kuyper Foundation). The growth of our work is only possible if we receive increased funding. The limits of our work are set by those who support the ministry of the Foundation. Thank you for subscribing to *Christianity & Society*—SCP *C&S*

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DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN THE "INERRANCY OF THE ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPHS"? OR HAVE YOU STOPPED BEATING YOUR WIFE YET?

by Theodore P. Letis

SOME questions are, by their very nature, what logicians call "loaded" questions. They are structured in such a way as to elicit pre-determined responses. Sometimes they can also be *petito principii*, or what is called "begging the question," that is, *assuming* in the statement or question what really has yet to be proven. "Don't you believe in the 'inerrancy' of the original autographs?" is such a question. It is a loaded question as well as a question-begging question. It can only be answered, really, yes or no; and it assumes the correctness of the language of the phrase prior to establishing whether the language, or the meaning of the phrase, is true.

When asked in a debate on the internet some time ago whether or not I believed in the inerrancy of the original autographs, I replied with a question equally loaded and equally question-begging: I asked the one who posed this question, "have you quit beating your wife yet?" This is an old classic example of this kind of fallacy-use and so no one actually answers this question when used, as I used it, for rhetorical purposes. Yet he felt the need to reply. His answer was: "I have never beaten my wife, hence the question is irrelevant." Yes! My point exactly! If he had been a good logician he would have said, "that is a loaded, question-begging-question." Furthermore, he never grasped what should have been evident to everyone else lurking around during this exchange, namely, the equal fallaciousness and the identical nature of his question. If my question was irrelevant, by exact parallel, so was his. He missed the point.

That is, he felt the need to correct the nature of my question by stating that the assumed premise of the question was wrong, that is, he *never has* beaten his wife. Surely with this response I felt he would see my point regarding the question of the inerrancy of the original autographs. But this was not the case as evidenced by how he followed-up his reply: "There were inerrant autographs . . ." he asserted. At no point did he offer any *proof* for this and so he continued his fallacy of begging the question. Nor did our little exercise help him to see his need to provide such proof *before* putting the question, particularly since he was addressing it to an historian. The problem in this case is (1) that he cannot provide such proof, either by empirical means or by reference to history, and (2) that he cannot prove that this was ever the paradigm that operated within orthodox communities before the nineteenth century. Let me explain what I mean.

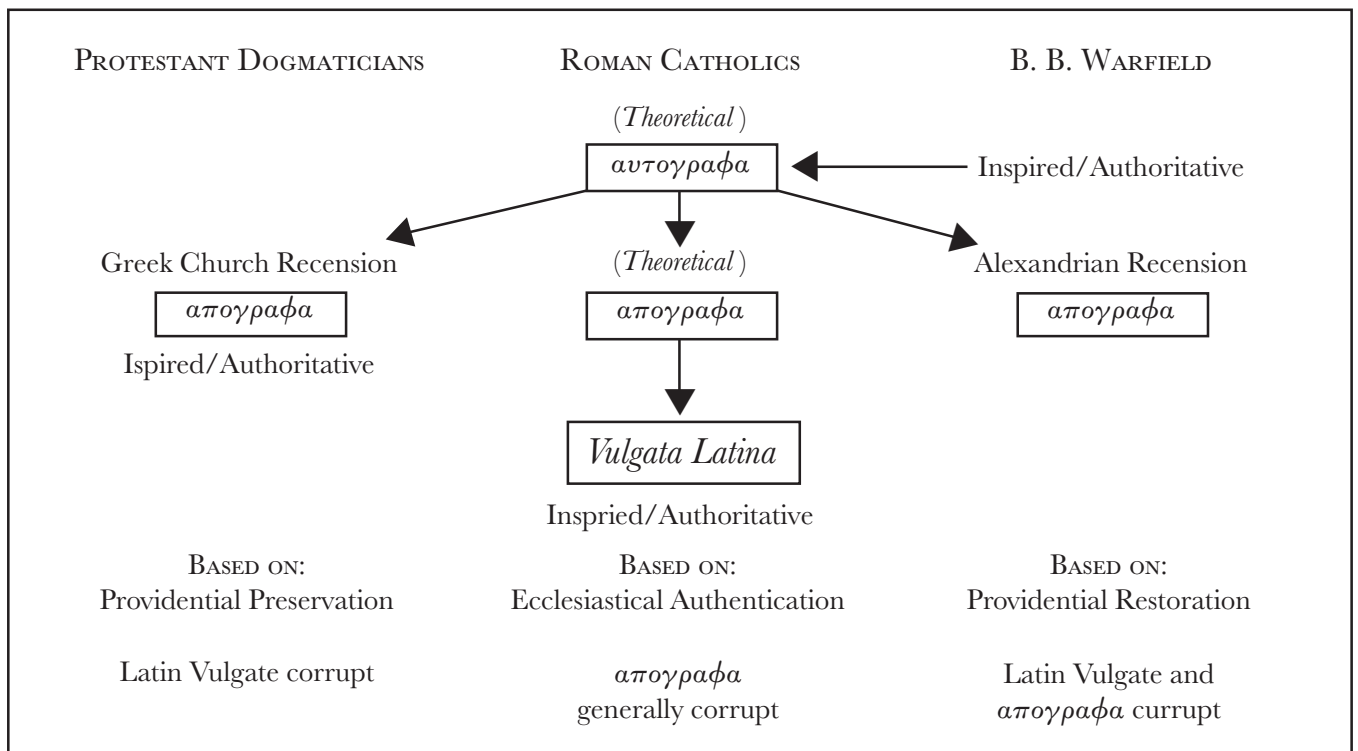
I will attempt to examine the nature of this statement, the "inerrancy of the original autographs" asking of it three

questions, beginning with the most foundational of all: (1) where did it come from? (2) who created it? (3) what do its constituent parts mean, i.e. the words "inerrancy" and "autographs?"

We know that the statement cannot be found before the nineteenth century because that is when the *Oxford English Dictionary* informs us that the word "inerrancy" was first employed for theological purposes. Prior to that it had been a word used within scientific writing, namely, astronomy. It was a term used to describe the path of heavenly bodies. Hence the notion of the inerrancy of the original autographs does not have *history* on its side in this matter. In fact, from the very dawn of the history of the Church, when theologians wanted to discuss the authority of the Bible, they used a Latin term, *infallibilitas*, which in English we know as the word "infallibility." This meant that the Bible was always true in everything it said or addressed, not only in its first, original form, but in the transmitted form, because after about the second century the original copies of the New Testament were most likely already gone. Furthermore, the seventeenth-century orthodox Lutheran theologian, Quenstedt (1617–1688), made this latter point perfectly clear to his Roman Catholic antagonists, who wanted to appeal to the *original writings* as being more authoritative than the *existing copies* in his day, in order to defend the Latin Vulgate Bible, which Catholics believed had been derived "from original autographs" (see the diagram on p. 4): "Our argument runs as follows: every holy Scripture which existed at the time of Paul was *theopneustos* ["divinely inspired"] (2 Tim. 3:16) and authentic. Not the autographic [original] (for they had perished long before), but the apographic [faithful copies of the] writings existed at the time of Paul. Therefore the apographic Scripture also is *theopneustos*."¹

So here we see two elements *assumed* to be correct in his question, which are actually both wrong! "Inerrancy" was never a word the Church used before the nineteenth century, but rather *infallibility* was; and when discussing inspiration the Church never made appeals to the autographic text, but rather, based on Scripture itself, they appealed to *the faithful copies*, the *existing Bible* as inspired! Let's see how these two elements actually worked in the seventeenth century

1. Theodore P. Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text: Text Criticism, Biblical Authority and the Popular Mind* (Philadelphia/Edinburgh: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 1997), p. 38.



[Reproduced from Theodore P. Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text: Text Criticism, Biblical Authority and the Popular Mind* (Philadelphia/Edinburgh: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 1997), p. 58].

Baptist articles of faith written against the Roman Catholic position as well as against the seventeenth century rationalists, the Socinians, that is, the use of the word *infallible* rather than “inerrancy” and the appeal to the *existing, preserved Bible* rather than to the “autographs”: “The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic [no appeal to the autographs] so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal to them [not the autographs] . . . [O]ur full persuasion and assurance of the *infallible truth* and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the holy Spirit . . .” (The Baptist London Confession, 1688)

Let us contrast this with a contemporary creed-like statement made by another group of Baptists, the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, 78th Annual National Meeting, June 9–13, 1998, and their statement on Scripture: “. . . infallibility, inspiration, and inerrancy are posited *only in the autographa and are not to be ascribed to any manuscript . . . of the Holy Scriptures.*”

Again, note by contrast how orthodox believers in the seventeenth century (the era of Bunyan, Milton and Shakespeare) would have replied to this *modern* Baptist statement during the high-water mark era of Protestant orthodoxy:

. . . it is as needless and foolish to suppose that we must have the autographa today as to think that we need the cup from which Christ drank before the Eucharist can be rightly celebrated.²

. . . [it is] the purity of the *present original [language] copies of the Scripture*, or rather copies in the original languages, which the Church of God doth now and hath for many ages enjoyed as her chiefest treasure.³

By “original texts” we do not mean the very autographs from the hands of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, which are known

to be non-existent. *We mean copies which have come in their name because they record for us that Word of God in the same words into which the sacred writers committed it under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit . . . Faithful and accurate copies, not less than autographs, are norms . . .*⁴

And finally, Richard Muller, who is the world’s leading authority on this era, summed up these points in the following manner:

By “original and authentic” text, the Protestant orthodox do not mean the *autographa* which no one can possess but the *apographa* [existing copies] in the original tongue which are the source of all versions . . . The orthodox discussion of *autographa* and *apographa* was designed, therefore, to point toward a continuity of text-tradition between the original authors and the *present-day texts*.⁵

It is evident to anyone who can read these words that there are two distinct positions laid out here side by side, one coming from the Renaissance/Protestant Reformation and post-Reformation eras and the other the contemporary position expressed by the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, which was derived from the nineteenth century, a great period of transition in religion and critical thought in general, and the period that first saw the introduction of the scientific-sounding word, “inerrancy.”

How did this change come about, from defending the *faithful copies of Scripture* always used within the Church from about the fourth century (when persecution had ceased) onward, to defending *only the original autographs*; and what role did the change from the word “infallible” to the word “inerrancy” play in this development?

A professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, B. B. Warfield (1851–1921), was the first to use the phrase “inerrant autographs” with such a distinctive force that it influenced

2. *Ibid.*, p. 39, footnote 14.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

nearly all conservative expressions about Scripture from his day forward. He gave classic expression to this “modern” position in response to his critics at Harvard and Yale who were beginning to do serious biblical criticism at their institutions and who ridiculed Warfield’s rightly held view of verbal inspiration. They did this based on the many textual variations they were discovering by means of textual criticism. So Warfield abandoned defense of the existing manuscripts—all of which displayed such small variations—and strictly in order to win the argument, shifted his defense to *only the original manuscripts* (which were beyond the scrutiny of his critics, you see) and then he used an astronomical term to designate them so as to meet all contemporary scientific measurements of perfection, i.e. purely human and modern criteria suggested by his word “inerrancy.” Hence, in Warfield’s own words, he had no intention of any longer defending the existing Bible as had his forefathers and hence would not, in his own words, “assert that the common text, *but only that the original autographic text* was inspired. No ‘error’ can be asserted, therefore, which cannot be proved to have been aboriginal in the text.”⁶

Furthermore, he now claimed that science, rather than the Church, or the historic orthodox believing communities throughout the ages, would present us, at some future date, with this “original” text: “The inerrant autographs were a fact once; *they may possibly be a fact again*, when textual criticism has said its last word on the Bible text. In proportion as they are approached in the processes of textual criticism, do we have an ever better and better Bible than the one we have now.”⁷

Science will be the means of their “restoration”: “The autographic text of the New Testament is *distinctly within the reach of criticism* in so immensely the greater part of the volumes, that we cannot despair of restoring to ourselves and the Church of God, His Book, word for word, as He gave it by inspiration.”⁸

Furthermore, Warfield’s confidence in science to do this was boundless: “So far from the Bible being less subject to criticism than other books, we are bound to submit its unique claims to a criticism of unique rigor. *Criticism is the mode of procedure by which we assure ourselves that it is what it claims to be.*”⁹

What has become of the inward witness of the Spirit as our ground of certainty, as expressed in the seventeenth century Baptist articles of belief cited earlier?

Hence, once committed to the “scientific method” Warfield could not pull out of the bargain even if he wanted to. He had to abide by what science said. Hence, in order to have his inerrant autographs he was quite willing to give up even portions of the hitherto sanctioned canon of the New Testament, even when it touched on such important theology as the resurrection! Note carefully what he said about the resurrection account at the end of Mark’s Gospel: “We are not to ascribe to these verses [the last twelve verses of Mark’s Gospel] the authority due to God’s word.”¹⁰ This, in spite of the fact that the leading New Testament text critic in America for the past forty years, Bruce Metzger, says of these same verses: “. . . the passage ought to be accepted as part of the canonical text of Mark.”¹¹

If it is not clear by now where Warfield’s love of the word “inerrancy,” a product of the modern world of science, not

of historical theology, took him once committed to the scientific world view, surely his embrace of Darwinian evolution should complete the picture. In Warfield we have the loss of (1) an extant infallible Bible, (2) a key resurrection account, (3) and the biblical doctrine of creationism, all in the name of retaining his formula for non-existent “inerrant autographs!”

So dominant was Warfield’s influence that most contemporary neo-evangelical leaders have accepted his paradigm and his full embrace of criticism as God’s means for restoring the lost New Testament text. Furthermore, they have naively assumed that Warfield’s position was the stance always taken by the Church. This is a clear indication of how very defective and flabby are today’s evangelical scholars. For example, *The Concise Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Harper/Collins, 1993), says: “Biblical inerrancy [in the original autographs] has been the view of the church throughout its history . . . [I]n each period of the church’s history clear affirmations of the doctrine can be found” (p. 62).

We already know, however, that this could not be the case because the word “inerrancy” was never used before the nineteenth century. Furthermore, historians of the history of biblical interpretation say just the opposite of the above assertion. They are able to nail down exactly when such a doctrine arrived on the scene. Again, Professor Richard Muller of Calvin Seminary says the following:

It is important to note that the Reformed orthodox insistence on the identification of the Hebrew and Greek texts as alone authentic *does not demand direct reference to autographa* [the original text] in those languages; the “original and authentic text” of Scripture means, beyond the autograph copies, *the legitimate tradition of Hebrew and Greek apographa* [that is, faithful copies]. The case for Scripture as an infallible rule of faith and practice and the separate arguments for a received text free from major (i.e., non-scribal) errors rests on an examination of apographa *and does not seek the infinite regress of lost autographa as a prop for textual infallibility.*¹²

Here Muller has said quite deliberately that no appeal was made to “inerrant autographs” in the seventeenth century, but to “infallible” apographa [copies of the original]. Moreover, he has quite explicitly and unequivocally stated that Warfield’s platform was *not* the historic orthodox position.

Muller one last time:

. . . Turretin and other high and late orthodox writers argued that the authenticity and infallibility of Scripture must be identified in and of the *apographa* [existing copies], not in and of lost *autographa* [original writings]. The *autographa* figure in Turretin’s argument only insofar as they were written in Hebrew and Greek and are, therefore, best represented *quoad verba* and *quoad res* in the extant Hebrew and Greek *apographa*. The issue raised by the Protestant scholastic discussion of the relationship of the *autographa* and *apographa* is, in other words, one of linguistic continuity rather than one of verbal inerrancy. The orthodox do, of course, assume that the text is free of substantive error and, typically, view textual problems as of scribal origin, but they mount their argument for authenticity and infallibility *without recourse to a logical device like that employed by Hodge and Warfield.*¹³

Here we see the world’s leading authority on this subject actually saying that Warfield’s position of “inerrant autographs” *was not that of historic orthodoxy*, but rather the orthodox position was one of defending *infallible copies*.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 52.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 7

9. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 53, n. 29.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.

But why did Warfield come up with this alteration in the language used to express the Bible's authority? Muller hints at the answer above twice, once when he said that the original defense of Scripture never sought an "infinite regress of lost autographa as a prop for textual infallibility;" and next when he said the historic orthodox "mount their argument for authenticity and infallibility without recourse to a logical device like that employed by Hodge and Warfield." What was this "prop for textual infallibility" and this "logical device . . . employed by Hodge and Warfield"?

This has reference to Warfield's penchant for having to win a debate at any cost. In this case it was his debate with the New England scholars who were claiming that because there were so many textual variants in the existing manuscripts of the New Testament verbal inspiration could not be true. In order to win the argument Warfield abandoned the existing Bible so that he could lay claim to a perfect "inerrant" Bible that did not exist. That is where the language of "inerrancy in the original autographs" came from. What he accomplished, along with his embrace of Darwinism, was the fall of the once orthodox Princeton to twentieth century modernism. This is because his project was in fact a green light to engage in what I call "the quest for the original text," which I maintain is always the precursor to "the quest for the historical Jesus," the ultimate culmination of the scientific method so fulsomely embraced by Warfield and his contemporary advocates. It may not always be immediately apparent that this is what it means to "believe in the inerrancy of the original autographs" because so many of the contemporary advocates of this phrase seem conservative on so many other matters. And yet no one had a higher view of Scripture than Warfield and it was his advocacy of this phrase and his embrace of Darwinism that nearly single-handedly brought

Princeton to the threshold of the modernist movement. In fact, it was precisely *because* he was so conservative in other respects that he was so able to succeed where others with the taint of liberalism might have failed.

In short, the question "Do you believe in the inerrancy of the original autographs?" is both a loaded question and a question-begging question. Hence it is fallacious, as well as a defection from the standards of historic orthodoxy, because it *restricts* the theological notion of inspiration to the lost original autographs alone, thus leaving believing communities without a present infallible Bible. As such the phrase is in contradiction to the expressions of the historic orthodoxy of the past, which spoke in terms of initial inspiration and concomitant *preservation* and expressed this in the language of *the infallibility of the apographs*, rather than in the modernist phrase "inerrancy of the autographs," as clearly outlined above. Furthermore, the phrase "inerrant autographs" *demand*s the use of naturalistic textual criticism to give it reality, which the discipline has never been able to produce in two hundred years of diligent searching, whereas the historic orthodox doctrine of *providential preservation* demands that we believe in the infallibility of the existing texts of the Bible and the present reality of its absolute authority. These two phrases cannot "peacefully co-exist" because they represent two different paradigms, from two different ages, that are mutually exclusive and which actually cancel out each other. Hence one is forced to choose between the *neo*-orthodoxy of Warfieldism and the historic orthodoxy of the Reformation, by way of these theological terms, not unlike how fourth-century Christians were defined by choosing between *Homoousion* (Nicene orthodoxy) and *Homoiousion* (Arianism). In that noble age believers gave up their very lives for the sake of one *iota*. *C&S*

THE ECCLESIASTICAL TEXT: TEXT CRITICISM, BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND THE POPULAR MIND

by *Theodore P. Letis*

The Ecclesiastical Text provides solid documentation illustrating a post-critical revival of interest in the Byzantine text of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Probing the implications of Brevard Childs's "canonical approach" to biblical exegesis, the author suggests ways and a rationale for catholic and confessional communities to rediscover their own textual traditions within their respective ecclesial and historical contexts. It is also a sober study of the multi-dimensional problems that have arisen since the arrival of the corporate boardroom Bibles. These essays address how the "inerrant autographs" theory set evangelicals on a course towards a crippled approach to biblical criticism, while destroying their own Reformation and post-Reformation approach to the sacred tasks of editing and translating Holy Scripture, the latter of which the author advocates should be reclaimed in a post-critical way.

Published by

THE INSTITUTE FOR RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION BIBLICAL STUDIES
2000, paperback (Second Edition), 232 pages, ISBN: 0-9658607-0-1, \$19.95

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CONFESSIONS OF A RECOVERING PRIMITIVIST

by Bruce Dayman

PRIMITIVISM is all around us. As a hippie in the late sixties I was trying to get “back to the Garden” as Joni Mitchell sang in the anthem *Woodstock*. While trying to be a “noble savage” living in a log cabin on a back road in British Columbia, the Lord revealed himself as “the way, the truth, and the life.” I was changed. I naturally connected with the Jesus Movement¹ and unconsciously a new primitivist ideal: to recover the pure fountain of the early New Testament Church. I had exchanged naturalistic primitivism for biblical primitivism. It was out of the Jesus Movement into one of the most extreme forms of primitivism that I emerged. A Latter Rain² Church in the height of the Charismatic revival became my spiritual home for the next 18 years.

In conservative Christianity, primitivism is also known as restorationism. It has diverse meanings depending on its context. It appears in various shades and degrees of intensity. Its historical milieu often causes it to vary from group to group, movement to movement, and culture to culture. Yet the restorationist impulse remains a revolutionary belief system.

In the Latter Rain Model³ based on Dt. 11:10–15, all of history is understood. God gives his promise of early and latter rain to bless the harvest of Israel. While the *literal* fulfillment applies to Israel, the *typological* applies to justification and the Spirit-filled life. The *prophetic* fulfillment is a combination of literal and typological motifs happening simultaneously. A modern example is the close relationship between Zionism and Pentecostalism. Two other Latter Rain passages are Joel 2:33 and Acts 2:16–21, concerning Joel’s prophecy of the “last days.” The early rain was the day of Pentecost and the events that flowed from it to establish the New Testament Church. The latter rain would fall to

ripen the harvest just before the Lord’s return. This worldview pervades the thinking of modern Pentecostals and Charismatics.

In the Restoration model the Church age is divided into four periods: (1) the establishment of the Church; (2) the apostasy of the Church; (3) the reformation of the Church; and (4) the restoration of the Church.

After a glorious beginning, the Church gradually fell into a state of apostasy, beginning shortly after the first century and culminating by the time of Constantine. For centuries it drifted in darkness, hopelessly corrupt. Beginning with Luther, a series of attempts was made to bring reform. Each effort caused great conflict but met with the restoration of another cardinal doctrine. These were seen as showers which would precede the latter rain deluge of God’s sovereign activity at the end of the age . . .⁴

Self-conscious primitivists often attempt to show their model to be normative, and that God has a faithful remnant in every generation who experience restored New Testament Christianity.

The early church was seen as a pattern, “a photograph as it were” of the Latter Rain era. The Acts of the Apostles was the textbook to serve as a pattern of their expectation. The theme of the model was restoration. The five-fold work of Savior, Sanctifier, Baptizer, Healer, and Coming King was proclaimed as the restored full-gospel. These claims to Christ’s work were to be accompanied by mighty “signs and wonders” to authenticate the message to a disbelieving world. Apostolic authority was to be restored through the “Ascension Gift Ministries” of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. Apostolic power was to be restored through the exercise of the nine-fold gifts of the Spirit in body ministry. The consequence of this was that the church itself would be restored to her former glory. This church would not be a reformation of the old, but rather a saved, sanctified, filled people, called out from Babylon in the same manner as the early church had arisen from the ashes of apostate Judaism. The restored church would become visible, united, set in order with Christ as the head, directed by the Spirit, and empowered to proclaim the last great message of the Age.⁵

You will realize by now that much of twentieth-century evangelicalism has been affected by primitivism. The Charismatic movement pushed the envelope further by promot-

1. Samuel S. Hill, Jr., “A Typology of American Restitutionism: From Frontier Revivalism and Mormonism to the Jesus Movement,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44 (March 1976): p. 65ff.

2. Richard M. Riss, *The Latter Rain: The Latter Rain Movement of 1948 and the Mid-Twentieth Century Evangelical Awakening* (P. O. Box 160, Etobicoke, Ontario: Kingdom Flagship Foundation, M9C 4V2, 1987). Riss does an excellent job of showing the worldwide impact of the 1948 North Battleford, Saskatchewan revival. I wrote an essay interviewing many of the original personalities which is available if you contact me at bruce.dayman@icbc.com

3. D. William Faupel, “The Function of ‘Models’ in the Interpretation of Pentecostal Thought,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society of Pentecostal Studies*, (Spring, 1980): pp. 51–71

4. Faupel, p. 57.

5. *Ibid.*, 58f.

ing the restoration of the five-fold ministry and the nine gifts of the Spirit. One of its leaders, Bob Mumford once said, “The Charismatic stream has overflowed its river banks into every denomination and now we have a big, swampy mess.” Yet it is vital to understand that the Charismatic movement was preceded by the Latter Rain movement of 1948 and the Pentecostal movement of 1907. These movements also were preceded by a long litany of “movements” with primitivist underpinnings.

One of the results of making the Restoration model normative is that believers often lose a clear distinction between their own time and primal time. The overwhelming desire to re-enter the primitive Church, to imbibe its energy, to taste its blessings, to walk where Jesus and the Apostles walked, becomes so dominant that a failure to distinguish between present reality and the perceived reality of the early Church ensues.

Each new wave of restoration sees itself as more spiritual than the preceding wave, and the rest of the Church. Primitivism is thus prone to perfectionism. A study of its history will show that this has had serious results.⁶ One leader of the Charismatic movement compared those involved in the “new thing” God is doing as living in Mount Zion while other contented Christians exist in the outer extremities of Jerusalem.⁷ In some cases only those who have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (second blessing theology) constitute the true Church while many argue that the Bride of Christ will be a select company called out of the Church (cf. the parable of the wise virgins/foolish virgins).

Primitivism is highly experiential and therefore elitist (perfectionism). This produces a skewed version of history, especially Church history. It becomes preoccupied with the “new thing” God is restoring. The statements of orthodoxy produced by the blood of martyrs and the labors of the Church fathers are “dead letters.” Tradition is seen to be in opposition to the pure word of God. The emphasis is on inner spiritual experience and religious exercises. Primitivism is pietistic.

Primitivism undergirds a perpetual apocalyptic millenarianism. The millennium therefore is nothing more than the final recovery of the early Church experience. Millenarianism is the *form* while primitivism is the *substance*. The perfectionist refrain is that Jesus will come for a Church “without spot or wrinkle.” Its great hope is nothing more than the finally triumphant reversion to the first great excellence and joy that existed at the New Testament Church font. There is an aversion to anything that has happened since the Day of Pentecost that varies from the primal vision.

As a Charismatic primitivist, I constantly heard the

6. Richard T. Hughes, “Christian Primitivism as Perfectionism: From Anabaptists to Pentecostals” in Stanley Burgess (ed.), *Reaching Beyond: Chapters in the History of Perfectionism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986) pp. 213–255. See also, T. L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb’s War: The Baptist Quaker Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford University Press, 1997). Underwood attempts to show that the fundamental link between Quakers, Baptists, Puritan and Nonconformist traditions was an emphasis on primitive Christianity. In the twentieth century, Pentecostals were very opposed to the Charismatic movement, calling it heretical, etc., etc.

7. Graham Truscott, *The Power of His Presence, The Restoration of the Tabernacle of David* (Burbank California: World Map Press, 1969) The author would say restoration blessings are for all; however, not every-one is willing to partake.

message of restoration of the nine gifts of the Spirit preached. However, prophecy was to be coveted. As one who was raised in a “prophetic” Church, I came to see numerous abuses associated with this gift.⁸ These leaders tend to run their Churches based on the latest “word from the Lord” while downplaying the ethical commands found in Scripture. The prophets become the interpreters of what is and what is not spiritual. The end result of spirituality being reduced to the latest “word from the Lord” is legalism. To question the spirituality of a prophet is considered carnal. To them biblical law is given lip-service as principles but not as absolute commands.⁹ History has shown that whenever the prophets take over a movement, which is often the case, tyranny is the result.¹⁰ When it is mixed with millennial zeal it can become dangerous.¹¹ Primitivist movements are targets for this kind of abuse.

As I became aware of the shared primitivist or restoration motifs of these movements, I realised they also applied in varying degrees to the Vineyard,¹² Methodists, Puritans, Quakers, General and Particular Baptists, Anabaptists, Catharists, Waldenses, Donatists and Montanists to name a few. I am not saying primitivism does not touch the traditionally orthodox. As I said, primitivism is all around us.

The fundamental problem with primitivism is its desire to make early Christianity normative experientially and doctrinally. Any theological development that arose later in Church councils and ecumenical creeds is considered apostate at worst or the traditions of men at best. Interpretation of Scripture is largely left to the individual who is “Spirit-led” or to the local Church. As a result, primitivists cannot respond confidently to the postmodernist challenge, “Well that’s your interpretation, I have my own.” Postmodernists play the historical conditioning card to trump the subjectivism that is endemic to these movements.

On the other hand, orthodoxy has an answer. It is *Ubique, Semper, Ab Omnibus*, which means “everywhere, always, by all” and it affirms the authority of tradition.¹³ Universality (catholicism), antiquity and consensus are the criteria which define orthodox tradition.

8. It is not my purpose to go into the debate of foretelling vs. foretelling. See Ken Gentry’s book, *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy*.

9. In the 1980s I was asked to change the curriculum at a Charismatic Bible college because the college was faltering. I introduced biblical law (Rushdoony), economics (Tom Rose), and civics (Demar) as well as biblical theology (Vos). The response from students was overwhelmingly positive yet only tolerated by the “prophets” because of student response.

10. Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm, A Chapter in the History of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961) This was the case with Montanism and Anabaptism. While there are exceptions to this phenomenon, the movements become known by their highest profile leaders, i.e. the prophets. See also, Kenneth R. Davis, “Anabaptism as a Charismatic Movement,” in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 53, July 1979, 219–234. Davis, who takes a moderate view of Anabaptism, is currently writing a Charismatic Church history beginning with the early Church, Montanism, etc. to the present.

11. Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium, Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London: Granada Publishing Co., 1970).

12. The Vineyard claims to be the Third Wave of the Spirit which shows an open affinity with Pentecostalism (first wave), and Charismaticism (second wave). Some critics say it actually is the fourth wave and that the Latter Rain Movement of 1949, which swept the whole world, is the third.

13. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

Catholicity defined the true Church and true doctrine, both of which could not be separated. The ecumenical councils of Nicea in 325, Constantinople in 381, Ephesus in 431, and Chalcedon in 451 represent the universality and authority of the Church.¹⁴

Consensus was what resulted from these Church councils and was received as equal to Scripture. In fact Gregory saw no difference between the Gospels and the councils—they were the one and same truth of divine revelation.¹⁵

Antiquity referred to the faith once delivered to all the saints down through the ages. This began with the blood of Abel and extended across the ages. “The faith of the Trinity must have been believed not only throughout Christendom but also always throughout the ages before and after Christ.”¹⁶

14. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order, Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church*, (Fairfax, Virginia: Thoburn Press, 1978). I give credit to Rushdoony for awakening me to the importance of creeds in Church history, especially for making me aware that everyone has a creed, whether they are aware of this or not, and also that these creeds have consequences in history.

15. Scripture must be interpreted in a conciliar context. That is why we have confessions. It is not an individual enterprise. Scripture (properly interpreted) is our tradition. The Roman Catholic position pays lip service to this but ends putting Roman Catholic tradition ahead of Scripture.

16. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 336.

Believers in an orthodox consensus considered it absurd that there could be *any* contradiction between Scripture properly interpreted and the traditions of the ancient fathers. In other words, Scripture was correctly interpreted only when it was known to stand in agreement with tradition.¹⁷

What [the apostles] spoke in brief form, that [orthodox theologians of the church] expanded to greater length . . . by gathering together the statements of many who had gone before and expanding these more profoundly in what they added to them.¹⁸

While the apostles had ruled the Church by their doctrine and teaching, others came after them to stand in their place, continuing to rule by the same doctrine and teaching. The succession was uninterrupted and the continuity unbroken. It was this orthodox tradition that the Reformers sought to restore to the Church. It must be ours too. Orthodoxy transcends the Primitivist/Restorationist impulse because it is the Faith of the Ages.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). C&S

17. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

DEALING WITH HERESY¹

by Stephen C. Perks

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf; but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise [crush] Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. (Rom. 16:17–20).

THE sixteenth chapter of Romans deals mainly with personal greeting and information. Before bringing his letter to a close and signing off, however, Paul adds a brief but serious exhortation. It is important that we observe what he says here and act upon it. At this point Paul had not visited the Church at Rome. He did not have first-hand experience of the trials and problems that the Christians in Rome were going through, as he did with the Church at Corinth for example. But he knew well enough the general danger of schism caused by heretics who put themselves before the glory of God and the well-being of the Church. He therefore cautions them about this danger and tells them how to deal with it.

He refers to those who cause divisions and offences contrary to received doctrine. The word translated as “divisions” (διχοστασία) means *a standing apart, dissension or sedition*. It is related to a verb (διχοστατέω) meaning *to stand apart, disagree*.² The term had a strong political character and referred especially to political revolt and party dissension.³ The word translated as “offences” (σκάνδαλον) is the Greek word from which we derive our English term “scandal” and meant originally *a trap or snare laid for an enemy*.⁴ In the New Testament it is used to mean *a stumbling block, what causes one to fall, or an offence*.⁵

Those to whom Paul refers, therefore, are those who cause dissension in the body and put stumbling blocks in the

way of others, and who do this *contrary to received doctrine*. That is, they dissent from sound doctrine and cause the faithful to stumble in their faith, and by these means cause schism.

There are many examples of this kind of thing in the Church today, and the Church has had to deal with such heresy throughout her history. Today we have the Liberals who tell us that there was no virgin birth, that Christ was merely a man, that the Resurrection did not occur, that the Bible cannot be accepted as the infallible word of God, and therefore that we must reject any biblical claims and stories that do not conform entirely to man’s own autonomous judgement of what is reasonable and therefore acceptable as truth. And there are the Liberation Theologians who tell us that Jesus came to establish economic equality and that the kingdom of God is some kind of socialist or communist utopia. And many more there are who work to discredit the teachings of the Bible and seduce the faithful from obedience to God’s word. All these false teachings have come from *within* the Church, from those who claim to speak with authority and who claim to be members of Christ’s body, but whose works show them to be enemies of the faith. And yet they deceive the hearts of the simple and lead them astray.

Paul tells us here how to deal with them. Mark them, note them, and *avoid* them. Why? Because they are not serving the Lord Jesus Christ but rather themselves. Note what Paul says: “by *smooth words and flattering speech* they deceive the hearts of the simple” (v. 18, NKJV). We must be careful because, as Paul makes clear, such people are often excellent and gifted speakers. They have the gift of the gab and people are taken in by their rhetoric (unlike Paul, who was no orator of great repute and who was regarded as a poor speaker by many in the Churches—see 2 Cor. 10:10, which gives evidence of the low opinion people had of Paul’s speaking ability. His authority was not in his own personality or the power of his speaking style, but rather in the content, the message, he preached). The result of such rhetoric, however, is not the edification of the faithful and the building up of God’s kingdom, but the glorification of heretics who love to be put on a pedestal and admired by all. They love the accolades and kudos of celebrity and put this before the cause

1. The essay is based on a sermon preached at West Buckland, Taunton, Somerset, on 15th August 2004.

2. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek English Lexicon* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901), p. 379a.

3. Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), Vol. I, p. 514.

4. Liddell and Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 1393a.

5. “Before and alongside the bibl[ical] use σκάνδαλον occurs only in popular and special use and is thus rare . . . There is no intellectual or abstract extension of the meaning of σκάνδαλον outside the Jewish-Chr[istian] sphere” Kittel, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, 340. The word was used in the LXX to translate words with verbal stems meaning *to strike, to trap* and also *to stumble*, i.e. “an obstacle on the path over which one falls” (*ibid.*, p. 340f).

of Christ and truth. This is what Paul means by saying that their god is their belly—i.e. they live for themselves, to serve their own interests; they pursue their own personal aggrandizement before the glory of Christ and his kingdom.

Heresy—the Catalyst for Doctrinal Development

But it should be no surprise to us that the Church is troubled by such heresy and schism. In New Testament times and all throughout Church history, down to and including of course our own age, the Church has had and continues to have these problems. And she always will. Not only that, but such heresy is essential to the Church's growth in understanding the faith and essential to the formulation of correct doctrine. Why is this?

Because such heresy is the catalyst for doctrinal development, i.e. the growth of doctrine and its correct formulation. Paul teaches this himself. He writes to the Corinthians: "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies⁶ among you, *that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*" (1 Cor. 11:19). Thus, heresy in the Church is the catalyst for doctrinal development. This has always been the case. God has ordained it this way. Orthodox doctrine develops in response to heretical teaching. This is why it is fatal to the health of the Church for us to refuse to deal with heresy, to pretend it does not exist or matter, or to think we are above dealing with it or that it does not need to be answered.

Furthermore, Christ taught us that the Holy Spirit would lead his Church into all truth (Jn 16:13). If we take this statement together with Paul's statement concerning the role of heresy in the Church (1 Cor. 11:19) we see how this has worked out in the history of the Church. The development of creeds and confessions has been the Church's way of answering doctrinal errors and heresies that spring up to trouble the Church. The creeds and confessions of the Church are there to assert the truth over against error by developing biblical doctrine in response to heresy. This is one of the ways in which God has providentially governed affairs in Church history and led the Church into truth in fulfilment of what Jesus taught in Jn 16:13. We must not neglect or play down the importance of the Church's role in

6. The word *αἵρεσις*, from which we get our English word "heresy," means 1. a seizure, capture (e.g. of a city), 2. a choosing, choice, and 3. that which is chosen, hence, an opinion (G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon on the New Testament* [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1986], p. 13). "From this there develops in Hellenism the predominant objective use of the term to indicate a. 'doctrine' and especially b. 'school' [of thought—SCP]" (Kittel, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 181). According to Heinrich Schlier "The basis of the Christian concept of *αἵρεσις* is to be found in the new situation created by the introduction of the Christian *ἐκκλησία*. *ἐκκλησία* and *αἵρεσις* are material opposites. The latter cannot accept the former; the former excludes the latter. . . *αἵρεσις* affect the foundation of the Church in doctrine (2 Pt. 2:1), and they do so in such a fundamental way as to give rise to a new society alongside the *ἐκκλησία*. This the Church cannot accept, since as the lawful public assembly of the whole people of God the Church embraces this people exclusively and comprehensively. By its very nature, however, *αἵρεσις* is a private magnitude with a limited validity. It is, in fact, a school or party. If the Church accedes to *αἵρεσις*, it will itself become a *αἵρεσις* and thus destroy its comprehensive 'political' claim; the concept of party—to mention a close analogy—necessarily excludes that of the people or state" ("*αἵρεσις* in the NT," in *ibid.*, p. 182f). On *ἐκκλησία* as a political term see Stephen C. Perks, "Christianity as a Political Faith," in *Christianity & Society*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 2004), pp. 16–24.

developing doctrinal truth in this way, because this is how the Church counters the heresy that would otherwise threaten to destroy her. The creeds and confessions of the Church are important and they are there to help protect us from error and from apostasy.

Now of course, the creeds and confessions of the Church are not infallible, and we must not treat them as the final arbiters of truth. Our attitude to them should be neither slavish nor disrespectful. We are to see them as helps to our understanding of the faith. They are always the writings of men in a particular age. And therefore they need to be revised, amended and enlarged. They are not infallible and they are not to be equated with Scripture. Only Scripture is the irreducible dogma. Therefore, as the Westminster Confession teaches "All synods and councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but are to be used as an *help* in both" (XXXI.iv). This is because "The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture" (Westminster Confession of Faith, I.x).

Incidentally, this means that the requirement of strict subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is a common practice among Presbyterians, is, ironically, unconfessional—i.e. contrary to the plain teaching of the Confession itself.⁷ The claim by many Presbyterians that this confession is a *subordinate* standard is vain to say the least, since it is treated as the absolute standard by which all controversies are settled. I heard one Presbyterian minister claim that no one was permitted to teach anything contrary to the Westminster Confession in his Church because the Westminster Confession of Faith is the constitution of the Church, not the Bible. This is idolatry.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that creeds and confessions are not important, that they can be of no help to us and do not have an important place in the life of the Church. They do. And the Westminster Confession is a particularly good one, despite its need of modernisation. Creeds and confessions are not infallible but God has given the Church the task of doctrinal development and the creeds and confession of the Church are one of the most important products of this task. Otherwise why has Christ instituted the office of teacher in the Church? Teachers are not infallible, but God has given them an important role to play in the edification of the Church and the equipment of the saints for service in the kingdom of God. But this is a process of development, of unfolding the meaning of the truth revealed in Scripture in the light of the changing social conditions in which the Church finds herself throughout history, not a process of revolution in which the Church abandons the truth of Scripture, and it is precisely such an attitude, i.e. revolution,

7. Another irony lost on many strict subscriptionist Presbyterians is the fact that the Westminster Confession is an Anglican confession, largely incorporating the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Irish Articles. It cannot even be claimed that the Westminster Assembly was a Presbyterian council, merely that Presbyterianism was strongly represented by a minority of the delegates, as was Independency, the majority being moderate Episcopalians. See Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the "Grand Debate"* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1985).

rejection of the doctrines taught in Scripture, that Paul here criticises in Rom. 16:17f. Those who cause sedition and dissension in the Church contrary to received biblical doctrine are to be avoided.

Moreover, the Church is not to go backwards in her understanding of the faith. We must take seriously the fact of doctrinal development because it is the promise of Christ to his Church. The growth of the kingdom of God and the progress of the gospel in the world involve and require doctrinal development. The extension of the Christian faith throughout the world is not helped by the Church's going backwards in her understanding of the faith. The errors of the past have been the catalyst for the Church's development of doctrinal orthodoxy, and this is important in enabling Christians to understand what it means practically in their own age to live a faithful and obedient life of service in the kingdom of God. None of us learns everything about the faith the instant we become Christians. We learn piecemeal, over the years, as we seek to work out in practice what it means to live the Christian life. And so it has been with the Church as a whole throughout history. The Church has grown in her understanding of the faith. It is foolish to take a dismissive attitude to the creeds and confessions of the Church. It is also foolish to idolise them and think we should not or cannot go beyond them to formulate creeds that address the heresies of our own age. If we adopt either of these attitudes we shall become backward-looking instead of forward-looking and as a result we shall fail to deal decisively with the issues that confront us and we shall fail to formulate correct doctrinal responses, based on the truth revealed in Scripture, to the errors of our own age.

THE LOST MESSAGE OF JESUS AND EVANGELICAL HERESY

It is not only the Liberal and Liberation Theologians that we must mark and avoid, however. Evangelicalism has its own heretics and the errors that would subvert the faith are as likely to come from within modern evangelicalism as anywhere else. Evangelicals tend to have a rosy picture of their own party. There is a common view among evangelicals that only those who embrace evangelical beliefs⁸ can be truly Christian. Not only is this not true, but the opposite is often true; that is, evangelicalism is seriously astray in many respects. Modern evangelicalism, in fact, often bears very little resemblance to the evangelical faith of previous generations.⁹ It is important, therefore, that Christians are as vigilant with regard to their own traditions and denomination as they are towards those who represent traditions different from their own.

A good example of such heresy and error coming from within modern evangelicalism is a book published recently

8. I am using the term "evangelical" here not in a biblical sense to mean those who embrace the good news of the gospel of God, but in the sense that the term is used as a contemporary party label, i.e. the evangelical party or wing of the modern Church. It is unfortunate that the term "evangelical" has been so closely identified with a particular party (indeed one could legitimately describe this party as a particular *αἵρεσις*) within the modern Church. The term "evangelical" properly understood applies to all Christians.

9. For more on the apostate nature of modern evangelicalism see Stephen C. Perks, "Baal Worship Ancient and Modern" in *Christianity & Society*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (October 2001), pp.12–21.

by Zondervan called *The Lost Message of Jesus* by Steve Chalke and Alan Mann. Steve Chalke is a well-known British evangelical media personality. He is a Baptist minister and widely recognised and respected as an evangelical leader. Yet he has now criticised the three foundational biblical doctrines of the Christian faith: Creation, Fall and Redemption. These three doctrines stand or fall together. The rejection of the doctrine of Creation must, logically, lead to the rejection of the doctrine of the Fall, and with the doctrines of Creation and the Fall gone nothing biblical remains of the doctrine of Redemption since the presuppositions on which the biblical doctrine is predicated are no longer there; i.e. it is no longer the same redemption and has been turned into something else. All three doctrines are an offence to the non-believer. If we wish to fashion a version of Christianity that is acceptable to the non-believer we must remove the biblical content of all three doctrines and we must set at naught the doctrinal formulations that the Church has developed over history in opposition to the heresies that have attacked the received faith. But what is left when this has been done? Not the historic faith of the Church but mere lifestyle Christianity. The gospel is no longer the good news of our deliverance from sin but a lifestyle choice. It would seem that this is the message of *The Lost Message of Jesus*. Referring to Christ's resurrection the book tells us that "its message is that you can trust Jesus with your life. You can put his philosophy for life up against any other the world has to offer because *it works*."¹⁰ There you have it. Christianity works. That is its appeal to the world. But in order to arrive at an appealing lifestyle version of Christianity that is acceptable to the world the historical faith of the Bible and the Church throughout history has had to be thrown away. Let us look more closely now at what lies behind this version of Christianity.

1. *The Doctrine of Six-Day Creation*

First, the biblical doctrine of Creation has been rejected. Steve Chalke is the founding director of the Oasis Trust, an organisation that is planning to open one of the Labour government's 200 new academy schools. According to Chalke "This is a wonderful opportunity for Oasis to demonstrate that the heart of the Christian faith is the imperative to serve others."¹¹ When asked if the school would be teaching creationism he replied: "My personal belief is that . . . those who wish to read into Genesis chapter one that God has made the world in six days . . . are not being honest and scholarly. It won't be taught in the school because I think it's rubbish. It's a bizarre thing to claim the Bible suggests that. Genesis is saying that behind creation [there] is a good God."¹²

Quite apart from the fact that Steve Chalke has here rejected one of the foundational doctrines of the Bible and the Christian faith, we must ask if anyone who claims the Bible does not teach the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days, regardless of whether he believes the Bible to be the word of God or not, can be considered an honest scholar. It is simply dishonest to claim that the Bible does not

10. Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003), p. 193, my emphasis.

11. Cited in Andrew Clark, "Christian Charity answers Government calls for new Academies," (http://www.christianitytoday.com/templates/news_views.htm?id=66&code=soc), posted Thursday July 15th, 2004.

12. *Ibid.*

teach this. One may disagree with the teaching but it is patently false to claim that the Bible does not teach it. But it is interesting to observe how such heresy is promoted, Truth is mixed with error. “Genesis is saying that behind creation [there] is a good God.” Of course it is. But it is saying this by teaching that God created the heavens and the earth in six days, thereby setting a pattern for mankind to follow. The six days of creation cannot be separated from God’s goodness. But this is unacceptable to modern sinners, therefore it must go if Christianity is to be thoroughly modern and up to date.

2. *The Doctrine of the Fall into Original Sin*

But what happens to the Fall now that Creation in six days has gone? If mankind fell, what did he fall into and what did he fall from? Evolution teaches that man evolves. He has evolved out of an animal into a man. If he is now a spiritual and moral being where does this spirituality and morality come from? Has he evolved into a moral being? In that case he cannot have fallen from a state of moral perfection into a state of immorality but must have rather evolved out of a state of *a*-morality. But this is the complete polar opposite of what the Bible teaches and what the Church has maintained for two thousand years. Man was created perfect, but fell into a state of sinfulness. But such a Fall necessitates the biblical account of Creation, and if this has already been rejected because it is “rubbish” what are we to make of the biblical teaching on the Fall of man and the Church’s doctrine of original sin? The only answer to this dilemma that is consistent with the rejection of the biblical account of Creation is the rejection of the doctrine of original sin.

Second, therefore, this version of Christianity must logically reject the idea of original sin. And this is precisely what Steve Chalke and Alan Mann do in their book *The Lost Message of Jesus*. This is what they tell us about the doctrine of original sin:

Too often we fail to look at others through the eyes of Jesus. While we have spent centuries arguing over the doctrine of *original sin*, pouring [*sic*] over the Bible and huge theological tomes to prove the inherent sinfulness of all humankind, we have missed a startling point: Jesus believed in *original goodness*! God declared that all his creation, including humankind, was very good. And it’s this original goodness that Jesus seeks out in us. That’s not to suggest that Jesus is denying that our relationship with God is in need of reconciliation, but that he is rejecting any idea that we are, someone, beyond the pale. To see humanity as inherently evil and steeped in *original sin* instead of inherently made in God’s image and so bathed in *original goodness*, however hidden it may have become, is a serious mistake. It is this grave error that has dogged the Church in the West for centuries.¹³

Here we see again how such heresy is made attractive to the simple. Truth is mixed with error. God did create mankind originally good and perfect. We are created in God’s image and that image has not been totally obliterated by the Fall. If it had been we could no longer be held responsible for our sin. But Chalke and Mann miss out the Fall altogether and assert that Jesus comes to seek out this original goodness in us, which is now merely hidden. They describe the doctrine of original sin as a “grave error.” Mankind is not “beyond the pale.” Furthermore, the book

misrepresents those who accept the doctrine of original sin as not believing that man was created in God’s image. This is simply not true. The doctrine of original sin and the doctrine of the creation of man in God’s image are not mutually exclusive as *The Lost Message of Jesus* implies. The Church throughout history has maintained *both* doctrines, as the authors of this book should well know, since one them is an ordained minister of the gospel. Why then is such a misrepresentation perpetrated? *Cui bono*? Who stands to gain from this misrepresentation? Does such a misrepresentation serve the cause of truth? In no way. But it does serve the cause of the errors perpetrated by Steve Chalke and Alan Mann. Besides being erroneous the book is deceitful in the way that it misrepresents those who hold views it wishes to criticise.

Well then, let us look at what the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* assert about how Jesus viewed the moral condition of mankind. There are two points that need to be considered here: (1) are they correct in saying that the doctrine of original sin misrepresents what Jesus actually taught? Has the Church been wrong all along? Did Jesus reject the idea that mankind is inherently evil and teach instead the idea that men are “bathed in original goodness”? The question must be honestly faced and answered. This is what Jesus says:

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being *evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Mt. 7:9–11, cf. Lk. 11:13).

Jesus does not say here “If you, being *bathed in original goodness*, know how to give good gifts . . .” No. He recognises the basic condition of mankind since the Fall, which Chalke and Mann reject outright, namely that man is *evil*, subject to original sin.

Further on in the same Gospel the rich young ruler comes to Jesus and says: “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Jesus answers him unequivocally: “Why callest thou me good? there is *none* good but one, that is God” (Mt. 19:17). Jesus does not say “seek out the original goodness in yourself.” He told him that no one is good but God. Man is by nature since the Fall subject to the dominion of sin.

Add to this the quotations from the Old Testament that Paul lists in Rom. 3:10–18: “There is none righteous, no, not one . . . there is none that doeth good . . .” etc. Then there is God’s judgement on the antediluvian world in which we are told “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). David declares “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5), and Job declares “What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?” (Job. 15:14).

The assertions of Chalke and Mann are plainly contradicted by these passages of Scripture. So where did they get the idea that men are inherently good from? Not the Bible. Yes, the Bible teaches that man was created good, but also that he fell into a state of original sin. But the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* reject this latter doctrine.

(2) It is also stated that Jesus rejected the idea that mankind is someone “beyond the pale.” We must also ask if

13. *The Lost Message of Jesus*, p. 67.

this is a fair representation of what Jesus thought about the condition of mankind. But we must first ask what “beyond the pale” means? This is a difficult question because the phrase could mean whatever one wants it to mean. It is an a-theological phrase, and one wonders why such a phrase is used in this context. The only reasonable way to proceed is to interpret this phrase in the light of what else the authors say in the book. It seems to me that in the overall context of *The Lost Message of Jesus* this phrase can only reasonably mean that the state in which man finds himself before being reconciled to God in Christ is one that is not hopeless, that man is not totally lost, that there is hope for him *because* his condition is *not* all that bad, he is *not* totally depraved, *not* in the grip of original sin, indeed, as the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* put it, he is “bathed in original goodness.” Man’s condition is remediable *because* he is *not* a slave to sin and is *not* inherently evil; in other words he does not need to be delivered from the dominion of sin, but merely needs to have his inherent goodness brought out by God’s love. The plight of man is not hopeless from man’s point of view. Man has already within him what he needs to mend his broken relationship with God. Salvation is not about being delivered from bondage to sin and the condemnation of God’s law but about man’s finding his hidden goodness and his way to God. The role that Jesus plays in this is to be an example and show him the way. This is an interpretation of what I have read in *The Lost Message of Jesus*. But I think it is a fair interpretation. I think it is certainly the logical implication of their words since their outlook seems to be thoroughly Pelagian and anti-Augustinian in emphasis. For example, the authors state:

In the fourth century Augustine developed his influential theology that the material world and everything in it was inherently evil and corrupt. This “fallenness” he said, was like a virus, and in humans was passed on through the act of sexual intercourse and conception. So from the seeds of Augustine’s thinking, the doctrine of original sin was born. However, the Eastern Church instead followed the teaching of Irenaeus, who believed that all people were God’s image bearers and though flawed were, as he put it, like flowers in bud—slowly coaxed into full bloom by God’s love.¹⁴

I do not know which edition of Augustine’s works the authors of this book used in their “research,” but it is not one I have ever seen. What is said here is a misrepresentation of Augustine’s views. Augustine did *not* believe that the material world and everything in it is inherently evil. One must seriously wonder if the authors of this piece of dishonest scholarship have ever read a word of Augustine’s works. The following quotation from Augustine shows clearly just how wrong the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* are in attributing this error to Augustine:

There is no need, therefore, that in our sins and vices we accuse the nature of the flesh to the injury of the Creator, for in its own kind and degree the flesh is good; but to desert the Creator good, and live according to the created good, is not good, whether a man choose to live according to the flesh, or according to the soul, or according to the whole human nature, which is composed of flesh and soul, and which is therefore spoken of either by the name flesh alone, or by the name soul alone. For he who extols the nature of the soul as the chief good, and condemns the nature of the flesh as if it were evil,

assuredly is fleshly both in his love of the soul and hatred of the flesh; for these his feelings arise from human fancy, not from divine truth.¹⁵

For Augustine the problem confronting mankind was not the physical nature of the body or the material world, but the fallen nature of the human will.¹⁶ “Our first parents” he says “fell into open disobedience because already they were secretly corrupted; for the evil act had never been done had not an evil will preceded it.”¹⁷ But man was created originally perfect and good by his Creator. “For God, the author of natures, not vices, created man upright; but man, being of his own will corrupted, and justly condemned, begot corrupted and condemned children. For we all were in that one man, since we all were that one man who fell into sin by the woman who was made from him before the sin. For not yet was the particular form created and distributed to us, in which we as individuals were to live, but already the seminal nature was there from which we were to be propagated; and this being vitiated by sin, and bound by the chain of death, and justly condemned, man could not be born of man in any other state.”¹⁸ For Augustine, therefore, man’s fallen condition is *not* a consequence of the material world being inherently evil and corrupt, as the authors of *The Lost Message of*

15. *The City of God*, xiv.5 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1872, Marcus Dods trans.), Vol. II, p. 8.

16. In his study on the body and society in early Christianity Peter Brown writes of Augustine’s view of man’s predicament: “The catastrophe that needed to be explained was not the fact of human society, where men and women married, made love and begot children. That would have happened had Adam and Eve not fallen. What remained a dark enigma to him was the distortion of the will of those who made up society. The twisted human will, not marriage, not even the sexual drive, was what was new in the human condition after Adam’s Fall. The fallen will subjected the original, God-given bonds of human society—friendship, marriage and paternal command—to sickening shocks of willfulness, that caused these to sway, to fissure, and to change their nature. It was the present twisted will that had led to the development of slavery and to the sinister emergence of the state as the necessary agent of coercion. The social institutions within which an unfallen human race might have unfolded to form a mighty commonwealth . . . had become harsh prison walls that now merely confined the worse excesses of the egoism, violence, and self-destructiveness of a fallen humanity. Men and women had not fallen ‘into’ society from an angelic state of Paradise; they had swept even society into their fall: ‘Man has . . . become antisocial by inner corrosion.’ So tragic a distortion of the will could no longer be ascribed to the mere fact of possessing a body. Augustine refused to believe that Adam and Eve had fallen from an angelic into a physical state. He did not see human beings as essentially spiritual creatures, to whom physical, sexual and social needs had once been irrelevant. Adam and Eve had originally enjoyed a harmonious unity of body and soul. Their bodies had followed the dictates of their wills with the same loving and familiar concord as they themselves had followed the will of God. The evident misery of the human race consisted in an awareness that such harmony no longer existed on any level. For this reason, death always remained for Augustine the most bitter sign of human frailty. For death frustrated the soul’s deepest wish, which was to live at peace with its beloved, the body. Death could never be welcome as the freeing of the soul from a body to which it had been joined by accident. It was an unnatural occurrence. Its frightening wrench revealed the strength of the ‘binding force’ associated with the ‘sweet marriage-bond of body and soul.’ Even the most courageous and otherworldly Christians must wish that this disruption would not happen. Only the burning love of His commands, granted by Christ to the martyrs, could overcome so deep, and so natural, an affection” (*The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* [London: Faber and Faber, 1989], p. 404f.). I am grateful to Colin Wright for this reference.

17. *The City of God*, xiv.13, Vol. II, p. 25.

18. *Ibid.*, xiii.14, Vol. I, p. 534f.

14. *Ibid.*

Jesus incorrectly assert, but rather the consequence of the bad use of Adam's free will: "And thus, from the bad use of free will, there originated the whole train of evil, which, with its concatenation of miseries, convoys the human race from its depraved origin, as from a corrupt root, on to the destruction of the second death, which has no end, those only being excepted who are freed by the grace of God."¹⁹

This is Augustine's doctrine of original sin. It bears no relation to the distorted ideas wrongly attributed to Augustine in *The Lost Message of Jesus*. Furthermore, the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* again misstate Augustine's doctrine of original sin in such a way as to imply that he did not believe that people are created in the image of God by falsely contrasting Augustine's view of original sin with Irenaeus' view of man's creation in God's image, as if these were mutually exclusive. They are not. This is a false and misleading comparison and therefore a false and misleading argument. Augustine states clearly that "God, then, made man in His own image"²⁰ and "Whereas, then, the omnipotent God, who is also good and just and merciful, who made all things . . . made also man after His own image, in order that, as He Himself, in virtue of His omnipotence, presides over universal creation, so man, in virtue of that intelligence of his by which he comes to know even his Creator and worships Him, might preside over all the living creatures of earth."²¹

Steve Chalke and Alan Mann are at liberty to disagree with Augustine or anyone else about the doctrine of original sin, or any other doctrine. But they are not at liberty morally to misrepresent Augustine's views in the way that they have done. Such misrepresentation serves only to mislead their readers. It is incumbent upon all scholars, and especially Christian scholars, to represent the views of those with whom they enter into debate accurately. But it is doubly incumbent upon those who choose to criticise the honesty of other people's scholarship to be meticulously honest in their own. In this matter, as in the matter of the teaching of Genesis chapter one on the six days of Creation (see above), the "scholarship" of the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* is neither honest nor Christian.

Nevertheless, let us return to the question in hand. The authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* claim that mankind is not beyond the pale—taking this phrase in the sense in which it was discussed above. But this is not what the Bible teaches. Rather, its answer to this question is yes, man is most definitely beyond the pale with regard to his relationship with God. He is completely lost and unable to ingratiate himself with the God he has offended. Jesus told his disciples that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." When they heard this they were astonished and asked "Who then can be saved?" Jesus' answer to this was that "With men this is impossible." Man is so far from God, his sin is so great, that the rupture cannot be mended from man's side. Nothing that man can do, and nothing latent in him, *nothing* that he is inherently, no inherent, hidden goodness in him,—and this is the point that I want to stress in relation to the claims made in *The Lost Message of Jesus*—is of any avail for his salvation. Only when Jesus had made this clear to his disciples did he then go on to say "But with God all things are

possible" (Mt. 19:24–26).²² And it is this point that the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* do not seem to me to have grasped at all. Without Christ's sacrificial atoning work on the cross mankind is without hope. Only Christ, by bearing the penalty and curse of God's law against sin on the cross, thereby discharging the debt that we owed but could never have paid, and by living a life of perfect righteousness in our place, thereby providing us with a righteousness that is acceptable in God's sight, could save us from our sin and reconcile us to God. But this necessitates a particular understanding of the atonement and unfortunately this is also rejected by the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus*.

3. *The Doctrine of Redemption*

Therefore, third, we must look at what the book teaches about Christ's work on the cross. According to *The Lost Message of Jesus* "Without the resurrection the cross is impotent, a symbol of failure and defeat. Before the resurrection Jesus was just another victim of the ultimate method of exclusion—death. Before the resurrection, Jesus' Messiah-project had quite simply run out of road."²³

Now it is true that without the Resurrection there is no salvation. Indeed Paul says Christ was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25). But the point here is that for the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* the cross itself seems to have no real meaning beyond the idea of God's identifying with human suffering—indeed they seem to be enamoured of Jürgen Moltmann²⁴ and the theology of his book *The Crucified God*, which presents an unorthodox view of the question of divine impassibility—or possibly the notion of a ransom paid to Satan to secure the release of the souls of sinners held captive by him in hell (see the comments on *Christus Victor* below). According to Steve Chalke and Alan Mann the purpose of Christ's death on the cross was *not* to bear the full weight of God's wrath against sin, thereby discharging the debt that we owed. They recoil at the very idea of such a meaning. Here is what they say:

John's Gospel famously declares, "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). How then,

22. For a more detailed exposition of this text see Stephen C. Perks, "Wealth, Poverty and the Rich Young Ruler," Appendix E in *The Political Economy of A Christian Society* (Taunton: The Kuyper Foundation, 2001), pp. 310–327.

23. *The Lost Message of Jesus*, p. 192.

24. David Chilton made the following interesting comment on the theology of Jürgen Moltmann: "The primary, immediate theological source for liberation theology is to be found in the writings of the German Marxist theologian Jürgen Moltmann, creator of the so-called 'theology of hope.' Robert Walton's penetrating analysis of Moltmann's influence on the liberationist movement reveals a deeper source, however, in an occult theosophical tradition which goes back for centuries: he shows the numerous parallels between Moltmann's thought and that of the medieval heretics . . . Frederick Engels wrote a book about the bloodthirsty Thomas Müntzer and his revolution, pointing to the anabaptist radicals and mass murderers as forerunners of Marxism . . . Moltmann's theology and ecclesiology are squarely in the heretical tradition, and are 'essentially totalitarian and murderous.' There is a direct line from Müntzer to Moltmann to Miranda—and to the rotting bodies of Miskito Indians in the jungles of Nicaragua. The call for mass murder is not an aberration of certain extremists; it is central to the 'Christian socialist' heritage. *The end of all heresy is the sword*" (*Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators* [Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985 (1981)], p. 307f, cited in Owen Fourie, "Black Theology in South Africa," in *Calvinism Today*, Vol. 1, No. 2 [April, 1991], p. 15a).

19. *Ibid.*, XIII.14, Vol. I, p. 535.

20. *Ibid.*, XII.23, Vol. I, p. 515.

21. *Treatise on the Catechising of the Uninstructed*, XVIII.29 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1873, trans. F. S. Shaw), p. 307f.

have we come to believe that at the cross this God of love suddenly decides to vent his anger and wrath upon his own Son? The fact is that the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse—a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith. Deeper than that, however, is that such a concept stands in total contradiction to the statement "God is love." If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil.²⁵

In defence of this statement after being criticised for it Steve Chalke made the following comments:

"Christus Victor," the image of atonement predominant in the Early Church, is for me the centre point of this biblical mosaic. This sees Christ's death and resurrection as his victory over all the forces of evil and sin, including the earthly and spiritual powers that oppress people... C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, although obviously not a theological textbook, is a great starting point for anyone wanting to get a better understanding of the Christus Victor model. But for a deeper theological insight read Gustav Aulen's [sic] classic work "*Christus Victor*"... In my view however, the real problem with penal substitution (a theory rooted in violence and retributive notions of justice) is its incompatibility, at least as currently taught and understood, with any authentically Christian understanding of the character of God or genuinely Christocentric worldview—given, for instance, Jesus own non-violent, "do not return evil for evil," approach to life. Hence my comment, in *The Lost Message of Jesus*, about the tragedy of reducing God to a "cosmic child abuser."²⁶

The orthodox Protestant doctrine of the atonement is here reduced to a concept of "cosmic child abuse." Instead of this doctrine Steve Chalke recommends the interpretation of the atonement put forward in Gustaf Aulén's book *Christus Victor*, which was a restatement of the view held by some in the early centuries of the Church's history, particularly Origen and Gregory of Nyssa.²⁷ This doctrine of the atonement views Christ's death and resurrection as his victory over Satan and the forces of evil and death. The death of Christ on the cross is seen as a trap in which God deceives Satan and plunders his house. The image of God catching the Devil on a fishing line, with Christ, his Son, as the bait was used as an allegory to explain this view. This theory presupposes, however, that Satan had a legitimate claim over the souls of sinners predicated on their apostasy. The death of Christ on the cross was seen as a ransom paid to Satan in order to secure

the release of the souls held by him in hell. Thinking he would get something of infinitely greater value in the soul of Christ than all the souls of miserable sinners the Devil bought the idea lock, stock and barrel, only to be cheated when he found he could not hold Christ captive, thus losing not only the souls of the saints but that of Christ also. The meaning of the cross is seen as being a ransom, but a ransom paid to Satan for the souls of men. This idea found expression in an age when the perception of spiritual evil was far more demonic, indeed when much of the world was in the grip of religions governed by what Christians consider to be demonic forces (although it should also be said that this theory of the atonement was never held universally by the early Church and was challenged by some of the Church Fathers²⁸).

This is also the view of the atonement that underpins C. S. Lewis' allegory *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, which Steve Chalke recommends as a good starting point for anyone wanting to get a better understanding of the *Christus Victor* theory. In Lewis' novel the witch explains: "You at least know the Magic which the Emperor put into Narnia at the very beginning. You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a Kill."²⁹ In other words, every sinner belongs lawfully to Satan, who has the right to his soul, and this is according to justice as God established it at the beginning. Aslan, as an innocent willing victim, is killed in place of a traitor, i.e. his death is a payment made to and claimed by the witch in place of a traitor, Edmund. The witch, while taking Aslan's life, is unaware of the deeper magic, namely that the taking of a willing victim's life who had committed no treachery would overcome the power of death. In other words, to follow the allegory, in his greed to get Christ's soul as a ransom for the souls of sinners Satan was deceived and beaten. The theory of atonement underpinning the allegory is that of a ransom to Satan.

This view of the atonement is preferable to Steve Chalke because it avoids what he calls the "cosmic child abuse" theory. Although he accepts the *Christus Victor* view of the atonement and recommends C. S. Lewis' allegory *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as a good starting point for anyone wanting to get a better understanding of this model, and the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* include a quotation from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as part of their explanation of the meaning of the cross, they do not spell out the full details of what is involved in this theory, i.e. that Christ's death is seen as a ransom paid to Satan to secure the release of the souls held by him in hell. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to know exactly what the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* are getting at. Besides arguing that by his death and resurrection Christ conquers the forces of Satan and evil we find statements such as "The cross is a vivid statement of the powerlessness of love,"³⁰ which seems to contradict the *Christus Victor* model. *The Lost Message of Jesus* also makes vague statements about the purpose of the cross and the

25. *The Lost Message of Jesus*, p. 182f.

26. Steve Chalke, "Redeeming the Cross: The Lost Message of Jesus and the Cross of Christ" (distributed on the internet).

27. See Robert S. Paul, *The Atonement and the Sacraments: The Relation of the Atonement to the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961), pp. 47–64; on Gustaf Aulén see p. 254ff. R. S. Paul attributes the origin of this ransom theory to Irenaeus, but it is far from explicit in the references he cites and must be inferred. James Orr thought that the doctrine has been unfairly attributed to Irenaeus, that too much has been made of it in the case of Origen, though he admits the doctrine is present in Origen in germ form, and that it was far from being the only or even the prevailing theory in the early Church (James Orr, *The Progress of Dogma* [London: James Clarke, (1901)], p. 214ff). The doctrine is explicit, however, in Gregory of Nyssa (see *The Great Catechism*, chapters xxii–xxvi), and according to Orr it was through Gregory of Nyssa that the doctrine found its way into mediaeval theology.

28. Gregory of Nazianzus, for example, takes issue with the idea and asks "Was the ransom then paid to the evil one? It is a monstrous thought. If to the evil one—what an outrage! Then the robber receives a ransom, not only from God, but one that consists of God Himself" (*Oration*, xlv.22, cited in R. S. Paul, *The Atonement and the Sacraments*, p. 57).

29. C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Fontana Lions), p. 128.

30. *The Lost Message of Jesus*, p. 183

resurrection. For example, we are told that “If the resurrection is about the vindication of Jesus, it is self-evident that this also vindicates his message.”³¹ But the question is: *How* does it vindicate Jesus and his message? Similarly we are told that “the resurrection is the declaration that Jesus is right. The Kingdom of God is truly for those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, who are the peacemakers and who are persecuted. It underlines and authenticates the message that God’s shalom is for all those from whom it has so long been withheld.”³² But again, the question is: *How* does this declaration that Jesus is right save these people from the power of evil and oppression? These questions are neither asked nor answered. The specific details of *how* Christ saves sinners from the power of Satan and evil are not explained.

Even in a section of the book with the title “Why Die Upon a Cross?” there is no satisfactory explanation of *how* the cross saves sinners from the power of death, sin and evil, just a lot of waffle about Jesus’ non-violent approach to evil, although in fact the Bible shows that even in his earthly ministry Jesus did *not* adopt a completely non-violent approach to evil, since he used violence to drive the money changers out of the temple (Jn 2:13–17), an act that contradicts the pacifist view of Jesus presented in *The Lost Message of Jesus*. According to Steve Chalke and Alan Mann:

Jesus was willing to take several blows to show that he would not strike back, but nor would he be turned aside. And in doing so he was calling on something in human nature, something that would cause his enemies’ hatred of him to decrease and their respect for him to increase. Just as a lightning-conductor soaks up powerful and destructive bolts of electricity, so Jesus, as he hung on that cross, soaked up all the forces of hate, rejection, pain and alienation all around him. Jesus wasn’t failing as the Messiah; he was succeeding. The Kingdom does not come and cannot be maintained by military force. God’s Kingdom is established by God’s means—self-giving love.³³

But neither does this explain *how* Jesus saves people from oppression and the power of Satan, evil and death. Jesus was not the first nor the last person to suffer unjust violence and death at the hands of men. He was not the first or last to suffer in this way on a cross. This in itself does not save men from their sin nor from the power of evil. Something else happened at the cross. What was it? *The Lost Message of Jesus* never explains. But the *Christus Victor* model of the atonement is held up by Steve Chalke as “the centre point of this biblical mosaic” and *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* is recommended as “a great starting point for anyone wanting to gain a better understanding of the Christus Victor model.”³⁴

It seems to me that the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* do not really know what to think of Christ’s death and resurrection and are groping around for an explanation. But they are sure of one thing, namely, that it has nothing to do with a penal substitution or a satisfaction theory of the atonement. They seem ready to accept anything except this and try to explain the cross in ways that avoid any implication of penal substitution and satisfaction, even if their alternative explanations contradict each other. Their statements on the purpose of Christ’s death and resurrection are at best vague and at worst revive the *Christus Victor* theory of the atonement.

THE GOD OF JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Steve Chalke says he rejects the idea of God’s pouring out his wrath against sin on the cross and embraces the *Christus Victor* theory of the atonement because he is concerned about consistency with the idea that God defines himself as a God of love. But what about God’s justice? Is the God of the Bible not also a God of justice? Can we really define God in such a way that we divorce his love from his justice? Is not the real meaning of the cross that *both* God’s love and his justice are manifested supremely in the one event? A God who has no concern for justice is not the God of the Bible. Observe the words in italics in the following quotations:

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right* [justice]? (Gen. 18:25)

He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are *judgement*: a God of truth and without iniquity, *just* and right is he. (Dt. 32:4)

For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne *judging right* [i.e. doing justice]. (Ps. 9:4)

For the Lord loveth *judgement* [justice], and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. (Ps. 37:28)

Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; *a just God and a Saviour*; there is none beside me. (Is. 45:21)

Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and *judgement* are the *habitation of his throne*. (Ps. 97:2)

For I the Lord love judgement [justice], I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. (Is. 61:3)

All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord, *the habitation of justice*, even the Lord, the hope of their fathers. (Jer. 50:7)

The *just* Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his *judgement* to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. (Zeph. 3:5)

Furthermore, we must recognise that the Hebrew word *tsedeq* and the Greek word *dikaïosune*, which are both usually translated as “righteousness,” mean *justice*,³⁵ and the Bible defines God as a *righteous* God. The God of the Bible and the Christian faith is a God of *justice* as well as a God of love. He is defined by justice no less than love and there is no contradiction between these attributes in the nature of God. Indeed if God were not a God of justice he could not be a God of *mercy* either. Mercy is meaningless unless it finds its context in justice. And the God of the Bible is supremely a God of mercy. The Psalmist says “*Justice and judgement are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face*” (Ps. 89:14). To define God as love without regard to his other attributes, e.g. justice and mercy, is to make a god in our own

31. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

34. Steve Chalke, “Redeeming the Cross: The Lost Message of Jesus and the Cross of Christ.”

35. Gesenius’s *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (London: Bagster, 1859), p. 702b; Liddell and Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 371b.

fallen image. We cannot set God's attributes against each other and define him in terms of one at the expense of the others without changing the nature of the attribute we choose to define him in terms of and therefore without making an idol of our own imagination.

Referring to God's pouring out his wrath against sin on his Son at the cross the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* say "Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith." But does *anyone* really want to believe in a God who is not concerned about *justice*? I suspect that even Steve Chalke's trendy non-believing friends would find that a hard pill to swallow, at least when considering the injustices done to themselves. The truth is that sinners want to be excused their own faults, but they are ever eager to insist that the injustices done to themselves are put right—surely this is precisely the point of the Golden Rule. If we would only do unto others as we would have others do unto us we should not sin, "for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Mt. 7:12). Even non-believers have no trouble recognising sin when they are the injured party. It is when we want to sin against God and against our neighbour that we have trouble with a God of justice. What is acceptable to those inside and outside the Church is far more complex than Steve Chalke seems to realise, and in reality is very much governed by the sinful nature of mankind that the Bible and the orthodox teaching of the Church affirm but that Steve Chalke denies. It is naïve to think that all we need to do to make Christianity attractive to the world is to abandon or redefine in more acceptable terms those teachings that non-believers find unacceptable, which it seems to me is the real thrust of *The Lost Message of Jesus*. What we end up with is a different gospel.

The concept of love that Steve Chalke chooses to define God in terms of is not the biblical concept of love that is attributed to God. How can God's love be set in opposition to God's justice? To set aside justice, to wink at sin, is not love, but indulgence. This is *not* the concept of love that is used to define the nature of God in the Bible nor in the orthodox theological expressions of the Church throughout history. The kind of love that Chalke uses to define God is the kind of "love" that one finds in foolish parents who indulge their children and refuse to discipline them and chastise them when they misbehave. And this is the idiotic kind of "love" that we are increasingly encouraged to show towards others in our society, with the result that criminals go unpunished and therefore terrorise our society. It is this indulgent notion of love, not a biblical notion of love, that the authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* use to define God. They seem oblivious to any idea that a God of love that is not also a God of justice is absurd, indeed *perverse*, and certainly not the God of the Bible. They use an indulgent, faulty definition of love that is acceptable to the world to define God. But love and justice cannot be separated in this way. Such a view of love is a false view of love and a God defined by such an indulgent view of love is a false God, an idol made in men's own image, not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both God's love *and* his justice meet at the cross. Sin is not indulged and overlooked but dealt with completely in such a way that satisfaction is made to God's justice. If satisfaction is not made the guilt of sin remains (i.e. the objective fact of guilt, not the psychological feeling of guilt), and without the removal of the guilt of sin man cannot be reconciled to God.

Yet because Christ did make satisfaction, bearing our sin in his own flesh on the cross as our substitute and representative, we are delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin and reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18–19; Col. 1:21–22; Heb. 2:17). This is the supreme manifestation of God's love and mercy, but it is meaningless unless it finds its context in God's absolute justice.

The Church, following the lead give by Anselm in his treatise on the meaning of the atonement *Cur Deus Homo* ("Why the God-Man?") decisively rejected Gregory of Nyssa's ransom to Satan theory of the atonement a thousand years ago and developed a doctrine of the atonement governed by biblical images of satisfaction and propitiation. This is why I mentioned the need for the Church not to go backwards. Doctrinal development has brought us on from this primitive and unbiblical teaching. It makes no sense to go backwards in this way. The process of doctrinal development has shown its incompatibility with Scripture.

ANIMISTIC THINKING IN THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

As already mentioned, the ransom to Satan theory of Gregory of Nyssa was a view of the atonement that found expression in an age dominated by animistic religions. Unfortunately, in the present climate of the revival of paganism in the West and the triumph of New Age ideas, many Christians have unwittingly imbibed an understanding of Christianity that borrows heavily from the general world-view of animism and New Age thinking. The portal through which this thinking has come has been the charismatic movement with its heavy accent on demonic deliverance. Indeed, this has become an obsession among many Christians who see the world as being controlled by demons. It would not be going too far to describe their world-view as a kind of animistic Christianity, or Christianised animism, so obsessed are they with devils and demons and deliverance ministries that claim to protect them from demons that are attacking them through hereditary ancestral curses etc. This is a false view of the world and a false view of Christianity. Demons do not own or control this world. God does. And demons have no power other than that given them by God (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6). We are commanded to fear God not the demons. But the charismatic movement has, unfortunately, promoted this animistic view of the world in the Church. It is interesting, however, that in this climate we now have a revival of interest in the old ransom to Satan theory of the atonement that the Church set aside as inadequate and unbiblical a thousand years ago. I have come across this view of the atonement in charismatic circles before. Its revival is not unique to *The Lost Message of Jesus*. Both the animistic world-view of the charismatic movement and the revival of Gregory of Nyssa's ransom theory of the atonement indicate a disturbing trend backwards doctrinally, a regression to a more primitive world-view and an abandonment of sound doctrine by the Church in an age of general apostasy and neo-paganism. The climate of extreme anti-intellectualism in the Church and the rejection of theology and the correct formulation of doctrine as an essential, or even a valid, task of the Church has opened up the minds of Christians to a primitive and backward-looking world-view that is not only unbiblical but dangerous and damaging to the lives of Christians.

Such a pagan, animistic, world-view is not Christian.

Jesus becomes a superstitious talisman to protect us from our demons, imagined or real, rather than a life-giving Saviour who delivers us from the guilt, penalty and dominion of sin, thereby restoring us to fellowship with God and enabling us to work for the extension of his Kingdom on *earth*, which is our mission field. It is interesting to observe among charismatics obsessed with this outlook just how many of the problems besetting their own lives and troubling society generally are attributed to such demonic activity and how little is attributed to sin, disobedience to God. The remedy therefore is not seen as repentance, but deliverance ministry. This leads to a stunted growth in the faith and the pursuit of spiritual immaturity as a Christian ideal.

Against this dubious revival we need to stress the fact that Christ did not come to ransom us from the Devil. The Devil has no rightful claim on the souls of men and God was under no obligation to pay him off for those who are redeemed. The Devil is a liar and the father of lies (Jn 8:44). We are to believe nothing he says and give no credit to any of his claims. He does not control this world. God does (Mt. 4:8–11).

Of course, I am *not* saying here that Christ did not triumph over evil. I am not claiming that Christ did not deliver us from the power of Satan and the forces of evil. On the contrary, his life, death on the cross and resurrection have decisively broken the power of Satan and evil. But not by providing a ransom to pay off Satan. The idea is grotesque. Christ delivered us from the power of Satan, demons and evil by making satisfaction to God for our sins, bearing the wrath of God in our place, and providing a perfect life of righteousness that is acceptable to God in the place of our own life of sin, thus reconciling us to God. He came to save us from our *sin*, and it is this salvation from sin that brings us into a new relationship with God in which the power of evil is broken and we are enabled, with God's help, to resist the temptations of sin.

The point I want to stress here is that the view of the atonement recommended by Steve Chalke is a view that the Church has rejected and moved beyond. Doctrinal development has occurred. The Holy Spirit has led the Church into the truth, into a more biblical understanding of the atonement, as Christ promised he would. What is the point in going backwards in our understanding of the faith? In an age of apostasy such as the present, when the Church seems to be regressing into a darker climate of superstition and demonic bondage, it is folly to revive such a discredited and unbiblical view of the atonement, and its revival will only serve to strengthen the animistic world-view that so many Christians have already unwittingly imbibed through their involvement with the charismatic movement. We need to remember that it is Christianity alone that has freed so much of the world from the debilitating and oppressive effects of the animistic world-view, and that it is deliverance from this unbiblical world-view that has made so much human progress and social amelioration possible in the world.

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

Let us look more closely now at the biblical doctrine of the atonement. The authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* object to the idea of God's pouring out his wrath against sin on Christ and ask: "How then, have we come to believe that at the cross

this God of love suddenly decides to vent his anger and wrath upon his own Son?" Quite simply because this is what the Bible teaches, though there was nothing sudden about it—it was predestined before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3–7; 2:13–16) and it was for this purpose that Christ came into the world (Lk. 9:10; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Jn 3:5) and to which he self-consciously pressed forward throughout his earthly ministry (Lk. 9:51). The Bible does not present us with a God who is soft on sin, but with a righteous God who punishes transgression. But God's justice is not incompatible with his love. The Bible does teach that God poured out his wrath against sin on his Son, and that Jesus made satisfaction, expiation, propitiation, for that sin, thereby redeeming the elect from their sin. And it teaches that this satisfaction was made to *God*. It was God's justice that was vindicated by Christ's death on the cross and his love is demonstrated in his acceptance of Jesus' death in the place of ours. Observe the words in italics in the following Scripture quotations:

For the *wrath of God is revealed from heaven* against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of *men*, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. (Rom. 1:18)

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of *wrath* and revelation of the *righteous judgement of God*. (Rom. 2:5)

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the *Lord* hath laid on *him* the *iniquity of us all*. (Is. 53:6)

Yet it pleased the *Lord* to *bruise him*; he hath put him to *grief*; when *thou* shalt make his soul an *offering for sin*, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper his hand. (Is. 53:10)

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: *How much more* shall the *blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without *spot* to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:13–14)

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an *offering* and a *sacrifice to God* for a sweetsmelling savour. (Eph. 5:2)

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom *God hath set forth to be a propitiation* through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. 3:24–26)

These Scriptures teach plainly that Christ offered his life to God in satisfaction for our sin and bore the wrath of God against sin on our behalf. If this is not the case, and Christ was not offered up in satisfaction for our sin, did not bear the wrath of God against sin, what do the sacrificial rituals of the Old Testament mean? To what do they point? What is their antitype? A sacrifice made to Satan? Are we really to understand all the Old Testament sacrificial rituals as a means of placating the Devil? The idea is grotesque and would make the divinely revealed religion of the Old Testament no different from the animistic religions of the ancient world. Yet, given the *Christus Victor* theory of the atonement, this would be the necessary logical conclusion if they are to have any meaning as types that point to the atoning work of

Christ on the cross. The sacrificial rituals of the Old Testament cultus were types that pointed to Christ and his expiatory work on the cross. The word translated as “propitiation” (*ἱλαστήριον*) in Rom. 3:25 is the word used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew word *kapporeth*,³⁶ the mercy-seat above the ark of the covenant on which the blood of atonement was sprinkled before God³⁷ (from *kaphar*, meaning *to cover, expiate*³⁸). Paul identifies what Christ did on the cross as the antitype and therefore the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial ritual of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy-seat to make expiation for sin before God. This demonstrates the *expiatory* nature of the work of Christ before God on the cross.³⁹

The authors of *The Lost Message of Jesus* do not seem to understand what the Bible teaches about the creation of man, the fallen condition of man or the redemption of man. Creation, Fall, Redemption—these all stand or fall together. Without the biblical doctrine of the Fall, redemption loses its meaning. Without the doctrine of the Creation the doctrine of the Fall loses its meaning. Ultimately, if the Creation is rejected the Fall will be rejected, and without the Fall the doctrine of Redemption has no meaning. What we are left with when these doctrines have been rejected may be a lifestyle with some nice platitudes and ideas, but it is not Christianity. Once these doctrines have been rejected we have truly lost the message of Jesus. The gospel is emptied of its content and meaning. Steve Chalke has rejected all three doctrines as stated biblically and formulated by the Church over history for liberal pap that he seems to think will appeal to the world.

The Church must use this opportunity to restate the truth and formulate doctrine that is based on Scripture and consistent with the orthodox creeds and confessions of the Church in order to help the faithful resist the errors and heresies of our own age. This is an important task for the Church. The issue is as relevant for us today as it was for Paul in the first century and succeeding generations of Christians. Seditious and dissension caused by heretics who reject the

doctrines of Scripture and overturn the witness of the Church throughout history cause people to stumble in the faith and make shipwreck of their Christian lives. We must reject and renounce such error, expose it for what it is, mark those who engage in such sedition and avoid them.

The Crushing of Satan under Believers' Feet

Paul does not leave it here though. He acknowledges the obedience of the Romans, which, he says, has become known to all. Obedience to what? Obedience to the doctrines of the faith that they had received (v. 17) and that Paul expounds to them in his letter. Paul censures those who reject sound doctrine and commends those who submit obediently to it. The obedience of the Romans is in stark contrast to the sedition and dissension caused by those who reject the doctrines of the faith and put stumbling blocks in the way of others. But he also wants them to be wise and so encourages them to pursue wisdom. What is this wisdom?

Wisdom is not some magical gift that we either have or do not have. Wisdom is something all believers should have. It is something that is *learned* in an attitude of submission to God's word. But what is it? Wisdom is *skill, sound judgement, insight, prudence*. In terms of the Christian life wisdom is the ability to recognise how the principles of truth revealed in Scripture apply to life, the ability to understand how we are to live in conformity with God's word. It is not merely knowing the doctrine, but knowing how to live it out. We learn this wisdom by submitting our minds and lives to God's word, even when we do not like what it teaches, believing and affirming what it teaches to be true regardless of how unpleasant this might be to our own natural⁴⁰ sensibilities, and by seeking to direct our lives according to its light. Wisdom is the practical outworking of a biblical world-view. This is not something that comes all at once in one easy lesson. It is something that we have to learn over time. It is available to all who seek it (James 1:5). But we must pursue it. Our *mind*, the way we think, and the *behaviour* produced by the way we think are both involved in the pursuit of wisdom. This wisdom is essential if we are to live the Christian life effectively.

The combination of obedience to the faith and wisdom leads to the crushing of Satan under our feet (v. 20). Thus, if we wish to defeat Satan this is what we must do: we must be obedient to the doctrines of the faith, submit our minds to them, believe them, affirm them, and we must live them out practically in our lives (wisdom). This is what produces victory in the Christian life. Satan is not crushed under our feet by an endless stream of miraculous events in our lives. Even if we were to experience constant miraculous interventions in our lives this would not enable us to resist the temptation of sin and overcome Satan. If we wish to live victorious Christian lives and overcome Satan it is no good looking to miracles, to exorcisms and the latest deliverance ministry (Mt. 12:43–35), or to phenomena such as tongues and prophecies. The defeat of Satan does not come through these things; rather, it comes through obedience to the doctrines of the faith once received and through the practice

36. Kittel, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 318–323.

37. Gesenius's *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, p. 412a.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 411bf.

39. “[T]he theological root of Paul's view of *ἱλαστήριον* is clear. For Paul *ἱλαστήριον* is not something which makes God gracious. The expiation for human sin presupposes the grace of God. For Paul even those who fall victim to the wrath of God are also set under His patience, kindness and long-suffering, R[om]. 2:4. The *ἱλαστήριον* serves the revelation or the righteousness of God, cf. vv. 25, 26 . . . But revelation and substitution are not antithetical. Revelation comes to men as substitution is made. God in His righteousness reveals more than a patience which leaves sin unpunished, v. 26. He also reveals a holiness which is at one and the same time both grace and judgment, which brings him to a faith that is also repentance, i.e., self-judgment and true conversion. The revelation of grace which is also judgment, and which establishes a faith that is also repentance, is no mere declaration of a transcendent attitude of God. It is a real fulfilment of grace and judgment on the human race. This demands, not only One to reveal God to the race, but also One to represent the race to God, to bear the divine judgement vicariously in order that the race might be brought thereby to self-judgment. A revelation without representation would be no more effective than the Law in terms of judgment. Hence it could not bring men true *ἀπολύτρωσις* [redemption, i.e. release effected by payment of a ransom—SCP]. In this unity of the revelation of God to men and the representation of men before God, which really frees men from sin by self-release, redemption, and the union with God, Jesus is *ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι* [“a mercy-seat through faith in his blood”];” Friedrich Büchsel, “*ἱλαστήριον*,” in Kittel, *op. cit.*, Vol., III, p. 322f.

40. By the word “natural” here I refer not to man's original state prior to his fall into sin, but to the natural state into which all men are born since the Fall, i.e. a state of alienation from and enmity towards God (Eph. 2:12; 4:18; Col. 1:21; Rom. 8:7).

of wisdom, i.e. by the skillful, practical outworking of those doctrines in our lives, by the exercise of prudence and sound judgement in accordance with the teachings of God's word. It is the daily exercise of obedience to God's word and the pursuit of biblical wisdom in this way that produces the slow but steady victory in our Christian lives that overcomes the world (1 Jn 5:4) and has a preserving effect upon society. Quick miraculous fixes are not the way to victory over sin in our lives or the crushing of Satan under our feet. Daily obedience to the doctrines of the faith and the practice of wisdom are the means of advancing the Christian faith in our own lives and, through our witness, in the world at large, which is our mission field.

Therefore, do not undo by rash acts of foolishness what has taken years of faithful obedience and the daily practice of biblical wisdom to establish in your own lives and in the world by means of your consistent witness. It is easy to undo what has taken many years, even a lifetime, to build. We must always be on our guard against those errors of doctrine and practice that would make shipwreck of our faith and vitiate our witness. Satan is overcome and the Christian faith is extended throughout the world not by compromise in doctrine or practice, e.g. by seeking to make Christianity more appealing to the world on its own terms, but by daily

obedience to the doctrines of the faith and the practice of wisdom in the living out of our Christian lives, which thus bear witness before the world to our profession of faith. It is this consistent practice of and witness to the faith in the whole of our lives that will lead to the crushing of Satan under our feet and the extension of God's kingdom on the earth.

CONCLUSION

As the Church seeks to live out the faith in this way the Holy Spirit will guide and lead her into truth. She will be able to answer and confound the heresies and errors that trouble her and the sedition and dissension that threaten to destroy her peace. Errors, heresies, and schisms will come. They must do in order that the truth might be vindicated and the Church prevail over error. And it is true that the Church finds herself today in the midst of an age of apostasy, with all kinds of heresies and errors raging around her and causing many to stumble. But the answer is always the same: obedience to the doctrines of the faith once received and the practical outworking of those doctrines in the whole of life, i.e. the practice of bible-based Christian wisdom. This is how Satan is crushed under our feet. *C&S*



EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE AND THEORETICAL THOUGHT AS TRUTH¹

by Colin Wright

Des Cartes, Malebranche, and Locke, have all employed their genius and skill to prove the existence of a material world; and with very bad success. Poor untaught mortals believe undoubtedly that there is a sun, moon, and stars; an earth, which we inhabit; country, friends, and relations, which we enjoy; land, houses, and moveables, which we possess. But philosophers, pitying the credulity of the vulgar, resolve to have no faith but what is founded upon reason. They apply to philosophy to furnish them with reasons for the belief of those things which all mankind have believed, without being able to give any reason for it.

Thomas Reid, 1764²

Why are so many people dissatisfied with what they can see and feel? Why do they look for surprises behind events? Why do they believe that, taken together, these surprises form an entire world, and why, most strangely, do they take it for granted that this hidden world is more solid, more trustworthy, more “real” than the world from which they started? The search for surprises is natural; after all, what looked like one thing often turns out to be another. But why assume that all phenomena deceive and that (as Democritus claimed) “truth lies hidden in the abyss”?

Paul K. Feyerabend, 1995³

In this essay I want to speak of two ways of experiencing the world. Notice I do not say two ways of *thinking* about the world, but two ways of *experiencing* it. And then I want to deliver a verdict on which of the two is the most important in terms of giving us truth about the world. These two ways of experiencing the world are, first, *everyday experience* or what is technically termed *naïve experience*, and secondly, *theoretical thought*.

What do we mean by the terms *naïve experience* and *theoretical thought*, and in what *sense* or *senses* does the former have priority over the latter?

Naïve experience is the term we use to describe that interaction we have with the world that is familiar to all of us from the moment we are born. It is, one might say, the experience

of the ordinary man, not the specialist. Think about what we mean by the word *naïve*. The word *naïve* is often used in a derogatory sense. We call someone naïve when they display a lack of sophistication, when they fail to recognise the full import of a word or action. But this is not its original sense. To be naïve is to take things as they come, to regard things as being *exactly what they appear to be, and no more*. In naïve experience, then, we experience the world in its *wholeness*, that is, exactly as it is given to us; we do not experience mere aspects of things. So when I see a table, or perhaps crash into it, what I experience is what is really there—the table—and not an illusion that masks another but hidden reality. It may seem strange to most people that I should suggest that the table could be viewed in any other way but, as we shall see, a different view is quite common.

Theoretical thought, on the other hand, is a quite different matter. It does not take things as they appear to be. Quite the contrary. It does not look at things in their wholeness, but only examines aspects of things. For instance, arithmetic is theoretical thought, for it examines only the numerical aspect of things. It examines nothing other than the idea of how-muchness of things in the world. Every other property of things is discarded and ignored. The oneness of an apple is totally indistinguishable from the oneness of an orange. So, although arithmetic can say that without exception 1 and 1

1. This essay is based on a talk given at the Kuyper Foundation Fellowship Weekend on Friday 3rd October 2003.

2. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 1983) p. 5. Thomas Reid (1710–1796) developed his Common-Sense Philosophy at Glasgow on the foundations of a Calvinistic worldview. It has naturally not the sophistication of the later philosophy of a Herman Dooyeweerd or Cornelius Van Til, but it is wrong to suppose that therefore it ought to be neglected or despised, as it has by and large. It has still a great deal to teach us.

3. *Killing Time—The Autobiography of Paul Feyerabend* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1995) pp. 163–4.

is always 2, when asked what one apple and one orange add up to, it is unable to give any answer. In this context, the equation $1 + 1 = 2$ is not just untrue, it is meaningless.

Theoretical thought, then, does not concern itself with the things of the world; it concerns itself only with *abstracted* properties of things, that is, properties that have been wrenched out of their true context in the real world. As a summary, then, we might say that naïve experience experiences the world directly as it really is, while by means of theoretical thought we experience the world by experiencing mere abstractions from the world.

Now, this sharp division between the two ways of experiencing the world has been severely criticised in many quarters, not least by John Frame in his scurrilous attack on the Amsterdam Philosophy. He says:

Dooyeweerd and the other Amsterdam thinkers clearly want to draw a *sharp* distinction between pre-theoretical or naïve experience on the one hand, and theoretical thought on the other. Sharp, that is, in the sense that every human thought must be classifiable, in principle, as *either* naïve or theoretical. There is no third category, and there is no overlap.⁴

Frame rants on for a few more pages in this style. His view of Dooyeweerd is quite jaundiced. He attributes to him ideas and conclusions that are patently untrue and plainly contradicted by actual and clear statements in Dooyeweerd's magnum opus, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*—a book Frame gives no evidence of having read when he wrote those things.⁵ Dooyeweerd never held, for example, as Frame maintains, that “every human thought must be classifiable, in principle, as *either* naïve or theoretical.” Frame's criticism is not only unfair at this point; it is frightfully muddled. What he has to say is akin to arguing that there is no sharp distinction between water and soil, simply because there is a lot of mud around. Human thoughts *cannot* be classifiable as *either* purely naïve or purely theoretical. Just as mud is a mixture containing two quite distinct elements, so each *actual* act of thinking can contain elements that are naïve and elements that are theoretical.⁶

But it is not simply a matter of Frame engaging in muddled thinking. He does that indeed, but a far more serious problem undergirds his attack. And he is altogether unaware of this problem. Frame has accepted and taken for granted one of the basic tenets of our secular humanistic culture. This states that at worst ordinary experience—naïve experience—is a total illusion. At best it is a fuddled or unsystematic way of thinking about the world. Science, or theoretical thought, on the other hand consists of clear and

distinct ideas about the world—it is a highly organised and systematic way of thinking about the world. In this thinking the abstractions we make in theoretical thought become transformed into real objects; in fact they are transformed into the *only* real objects. The conclusion is evident: theoretical thought, and theoretical thought alone, gives us the truth about the world.

This is one of the oldest con-tricks in the intellectuals' book. So convincing have they made it in fact that they themselves are also totally convinced of it. They, and they alone, know the truth. The so-called ‘knowledge’ possessed by the common herd is not knowledge at all. Our everyday experience of things, that is, our naïve experience of them, is not the truth about them; it is a mere *illusion*.

Let me quote you some extracts from one of the most famous statements of this tenet. It dates from 1927 and appeared in Professor A. S. Eddington's Introduction to his book *The Nature of the Physical World*:

I have settled down to the task of writing these lectures and have drawn up my chairs to my two tables. Two tables! Yes; there are duplicates of every object about me—two tables, two chairs, two pens . . . One of them has been familiar to me from earliest years. It is a commonplace object of that environment which I call the world. How shall I describe it? It has extension; it is comparatively permanent; it is coloured; above all it is *substantial* . . .

Table No. 2 is my scientific table. It is a more recent acquaintance and I do not feel so familiar with it. It does not belong to the world previously mentioned—that world which spontaneously appears around me when I open my eyes, though how much of it is objective and how much subjective I do not here consider. It is part of a world which in more devious ways has forced itself on my attention. My scientific table is mostly emptiness. Sparsely scattered in that emptiness are numerous electric charges rushing about with great speed; but their combined bulk amounts to less than a billionth of the bulk of the table itself. Notwithstanding its strange construction it turns out to be an entirely efficient table. It supports my writing paper as satisfactorily as table No. 1; for when I lay the paper on it the little electric particles with their headlong speed keep on hitting the underside, so that the paper is maintained in shuttlecock fashion at a nearly steady level. If I lean upon this table I shall not go through; or, to be strictly accurate, the chance of my scientific elbow going through my scientific table is so excessively small that it can be neglected in practical life . . . There is nothing *substantial* about my second table. It is nearly all empty space.⁷

Am I unfair to Eddington here? Does he not speak of *two* tables? And does he not refer to the table of everyday experience as *substantial*? Well, yes, he does. But it becomes clear as you read through his Introduction that he is convinced that there really is only *one* table, and that is the scientific one. Clearly he has problems with this. He struggles desperately against the consequences. But at the end of the day, one table there is and one alone, and it's not the one most people know: “I need not tell you that modern physics has by delicate test and remorseless logic assured me that my second scientific table is the only one which is really there . . . substance is one of the greatest of our illusions.”⁸

The context makes it pretty clear, I think, what Eddington meant by *substance* here: “By substantial,” he says, “I do not merely mean that it [a table] does not collapse when I lean on it; I mean that it is constituted of ‘substance’ and by that

4. John M. Frame and Leonard J. Coppes, *The Amsterdam Philosophy: A preliminary critique*, (published without date or publisher name) p. 6.

5. I can find only one brief reference to the *New Critique* (p. 16, n. 1). The bulk of the argument is based on a reading of Spier's more popular introduction to Dooyeweerd's philosophical system (*An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*). The long footnote on pp. 20–21 with its questions relating to, and critical of, Dooyeweerd's own thought would have been easily answered had Frame bothered to read the first few pages of the second volume of the *New Critique*. We understand that in recent years Frame has taken a much less abrasive stance vis-à-vis Amsterdam philosophy.

6. Cf. N. R. Hanson, ‘Hypotheses Fingo’ in Robert E. Butts and John W. Davis (eds), *The Methodological Heritage of Newton* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1970) pp. 22–23, where he demonstrates the need to conceptually distinguish “observation statements” from “theoretical statements” in principle.

7. A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (University Press, Cambridge, 1929) pp. xi–xii. 8. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

I am trying to convey to you something of its intrinsic nature. It is a *thing*; not like space, which is a mere negation; nor like time, which is—Heaven knows what! . . . I do not think substantiality can be described better than by saying that it is the kind of nature exemplified by an ordinary table.”⁹ In other words, that “ordinary table”—the one you see or crash into—and all other such objects are an illusion.

It is difficult to see how the modern scientist could come to any other conclusion. Once admit a realist position regarding elementary particles (atoms, neutrons, protons, electrons, etc.), that they really exist (that is, they are as most people conceive real tables and real chairs to be—things you can crash into) rather than as theoretical *fictions*,¹⁰ and it is very problematic how all these disparate bits of matter can be regarded as cohering in a single entity like a table. There just is no real object; what is seen as such disappears as soon as one has eyesight keen enough to distinguish all the individual elements. Significantly there does not seem to have been any serious attempt to account for this discrepancy among those who hold a realist position. They tend to take Eddington’s way out, and regard the naïve experience as a pure illusion.

Compare these statements with the following, taken from an earlier—if faulty—*Christian* critic of modern science:

Look! Are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul? . . . How vivid and radiant is the lustre of the fixed stars! How magnificent and rich that negligent profusion, with which they appear to be scattered throughout the whole azure vault! . . . Is not the whole system immense, beautiful, glorious beyond expression and beyond thought? What treatment then do those philosophers deserve, who would deprive these noble and delightful scenes of all reality? How should those principles be entertained, that lead us to think all the visible beauty of the creation a false imaginary glare?¹¹

How indeed! But entertained they are. Above, I said that Eddington’s scientific table was not the one most people know. Tragically that is not strictly true. And it is far less true than when Eddington wrote his book three generations ago. Science now exercises a tyranny over us.

It demands that we forget everything we experience if we wish to understand the world. Science alone gives us the truth, for scientific thinking is the only valid way to think. And this is true of both the realist and anti-realist camps. Even if scientific theories are viewed as *mere fictions* (Hertz), *likely stories* (Plato), *mere conjectures* (Popper), nevertheless this is regarded simply as a failure of science to attain the truth behind the illusion of everyday experience.

9. *Ibid.*, p.vii. 10. See Heinrich Hertz, *The Principles of Mechanics* (New York, Dover Publications, 1956). See especially the Introduction, in which Hertz outlines his philosophy and sets out his plan to develop mechanics *without any notion of force or inertia*.

11. Bishop Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, II. Berkeley is generally misrepresented as the originator of a highly idealistic theory that states that the existence of anything depends upon its being perceived by someone. But Berkeley was passionate about defending what we have referred to as naïve experience against the scientists who wanted to replace this reality with their theories. If Berkeley did not give as clear a Christian answer to the scientism of his day as one could wish, we must remember that he did not have the deep Calvinist background accorded to his slightly later, and much more Christian, counterpart in Scotland, Thomas Reid.

Yet our senses tell us we sit on a real chair, we sit by a real table, we eat real food, we read real books. Science tells us all these things are illusions. All that exists are atoms, tiny particles of we know not what, that hurtle through space at vast distances from one another, giving the mere *impression* or *illusion* of a substantial object.

Our senses tell us that we stand on solid earth that shows no sign of being in motion, whilst a whole universe is seen to move around us day by day.¹² Science tells us we must ignore our senses. It knows that things are not so. Indeed, Galileo made a virtue out of science’s denigration of ordinary experience and its elevation of rationality at the expense of that experience:

Nor can I ever sufficiently admire the outstanding acumen of those who have taken hold of this opinion [Pythagorean heliocentrism—CW] and accepted it as true; they have through sheer force of intellect done such violence to their own senses as to prefer what reason told them over that which sensible experience plainly showed them to the contrary. For the arguments against the whirling earth which we have already examined are very plausible, as we have seen; and the fact that the Ptolemaics and Aristotelians and all their disciples took them to be conclusive is indeed a strong argument of their effectiveness. But the experiences which overtly contradict the annual movement [of the earth around the sun, as opposed to the diurnal rotation in the previous sentence—CW] are indeed so much greater in their apparent force that, I repeat, there is no limit to my astonishment when I reflect that Aristarchus¹³ and Copernicus¹⁴ were able to make reason so conquer sense that, in defiance of the latter, the former became mistress of their belief.¹⁵

There are two specific problems in this passage that need to be addressed at this juncture. I will call the first the *methodological* problem and the second I will call the *psychological* problem.

The methodological problem relates to the way in which we are to perceive the world if we wish to understand it. Galileo insists that the popular method—the empirical evidence of our senses—is inadequate to give truth about our world. It gives us no more than an illusion; it is not the truth about the world, however plausible it might be, however convincing it might be. He demonstrates this quite clearly a little later in the *Dialogue*. When he mentions “experiences which overtly contradict” he is referring to a number of very effective arguments against heliocentrism that are based on the empirical evidence. He says:

A while ago I sketched for you an outline of the Copernican system, against the truth of which the planet Mars launches a ferocious

12. Modern science has abjectly failed to detect *any* absolute motion of the earth and, in fact, in its latest fad—Einstein’s two theories of Relativity—clearly proclaims in its first postulate that such detection is in principle impossible anyway. To circumvent this problem and thus retain the earth’s absolute motion through space it introduces its second postulate to the effect that *the velocity of light in free space is the same for all observers, independent of the relative velocity of the source of light and the observer* (italics are a direct quote from Richard C. Tolman, *Relativity Thermodynamics and Cosmology* [New York: Dover Publications, 1987], p. 15).

13. Aristarchus of Samos (c. 310–230 B.C.) taught at Alexandria in Egypt.

14. Nicolas Copernicus (1473–1543) was the canon of the (Roman Catholic) cathedral in Frauenburg in the former East Prussia (now Frombork in Poland, about 40 miles east of Gdansk).

15. Galileo Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, translated by Stillman Drake (New York, Random House Inc/Modern Library Series, 2001) p. 381.

attack. For if it were true that the distances of Mars from the earth varied as much from minimum to maximum as twice the distance from the earth to the sun, then when it is closest to us its disc would have to be sixty times as large as when it is most distant. *Yet no such difference is to be seen.* Rather, when it is in opposition to the sun and close to us, it shows itself as only four or five times as large as when, at conjunction, it becomes hidden behind the rays of the sun. Another and greater difficulty is made for us by Venus, which, if it circulates around the sun as Copernicus says, would be now beyond it and now on this side of it, receding from and approaching toward us by as much as the diameter of the circle it describes. Then when it is beneath the sun and very close to us, its disc ought to appear to us a little less than forty times as large as when it is beyond the sun and near conjunction. *Yet the difference is almost imperceptible.*¹⁶

Galileo is not even interested, in his scientific theory, in “saving the phenomena,” that is, in accounting for the observable facts. Facts will be defined in terms of the theory and not vice versa. This is a highly significant phenomenon itself in the development of theoretical science. The theory becomes the manifold, or sieve, through which “facts” are filtered and so assigned their status. One might almost say the theory determines what the facts are; the facts do not determine what the theory is. The history of science is littered with examples that one could quote in addition to the one above from Galileo’s *Dialogue*. Consider the following from much nearer our time. In her *Reminiscences of Conversation with Einstein*, his student Ilse Rosenthal-Schneider wrote:

Once when I was with Einstein in order to read with him a work that contained many objections to his theory. . . he suddenly interrupted the discussion of the book, reached for a telegram that was lying on the windowsill, and handed it to me with the words, “Here, this will perhaps interest you,” It was Eddington’s cable with the results of measurement of the eclipse expedition [1919]. When I was giving expression to my joy that the results coincided with his calculations, he said quite unmoved, “But I knew that the theory is correct”; and when I asked, what if there had been no confirmation of his prediction, he countered: “Then I would have been sorry for the dear Lord¹⁷—the theory *is* correct.”¹⁸

If the reader wants further evidence he should read the account of how Bohr’s theory of the atom triumphed not only without experimental evidence but in flagrant disregard of the experimental evidence that refuted it.¹⁹

Let us now turn to the second problem that the quotation from Galileo raises; the *psychological* problem. This is not so obvious from the text. For Galileo does not draw attention to what he is doing here. He performs an exceptionally subtle shift in the meaning of his terms without any explanation of what he is doing, and with no thought of justifying it. The shift is quite tyrannical in its demands on the reader’s psyche, and quite unscientific in its method. I doubt even Galileo was aware he had made such a momentous move. What Galileo has done is introduce a *radically new idea of rationality*. I call this a psychological problem because it is not so much a shift in

scientific methodology—though his new methodology requires it—but rather a shift in the way the human thought process is to be understood. Reason, or rationality, is now taken to be the method of abstract or theoretical ratiocination . . . *and no more*. It is the method of severe logical calculation that relies only upon its own inherent laws, laws that are regarded as abstract, universal and eternal. The qualification “and no more” is vitally important; the process Galileo wants to use is no doubt a valid one. Our problem with it is that Galileo wants it to be the *exclusive* method for truth-finding. In Galileo’s thought our naïve or everyday experience has been drained of all rationality, or as I would prefer to say, *reasonableness*. The modern distinction between *rationality* and *reasonableness* (at least in the English-speaking world) is the baneful legacy of Galileo’s shift. For Galileo, it is not reasonable—that is, not rational—to accept the clear evidence of our senses. For Galileo, we do not use reason when we experience Eddington’s table No. 1, only when we conceptualise his table No. 2. This is a profound shift in meaning, and a profound claim regarding human experience. It ought not to have been made in such a covert manner. It requires justification; something it has never received. Galileo’s idea of rationality has become axiomatic in modern thought, that is, it is regarded as fundamental and beyond dispute; it is the starting point that is prior to all discussion.

This is a tyrannical cultural situation. None dare question the dictates of the scientist, and none actually do so with impunity. Even the non-Christian must now live in a world defined by the scientist; a world which is at odds with all he experiences with his senses.

If this view of science and of theoretical thought were correct, then indeed we would be forced to acquiesce in its conclusions and submit to its demands. If this view were correct, then indeed we would have to accept that it promoted the true view of the world, and that all we experienced in everyday life was at best problematic and at worst false. But this view of science and theoretical thought is not correct, and we must vigorously oppose it.

Theoretical thought concerns itself with analysing the world by studying aspects of it. It wrenches these aspects one at a time from their true context. It seeks to understand something of the structure of reality by examining these aspects *in isolation*. It does not look at the big picture. It discounts the vast bulk of reality in favour of the one aspect it has under consideration. And so it cannot possibly provide a coherent and total vision of the world as it really is. The nature and purpose of theoretical thought is totally misconstrued by modern man.

Nevertheless, in the last analysis theoretical thought has to presuppose the integral world of naïve experience. It is the real world of everyday experience that alone provides the material for it to work with. If all our senses provide us with were illusion, what material would the scientist have to work with? This is his great dilemma. He has to assert and demand that reality is as the ordinary man experiences it, before he can transform it into something else.²⁰

So you see, I hope, that unless we take naïve experience

16. *Ibid.*, p. 388. Italics are mine—CW.

17. Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington (1882–1944). Knighted in 1930, Eddington never in fact became a Lord.

18. Quoted in Gerald Holton, *Thematic Origins of Scientific Thought: Kepler to Einstein* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 236.

19. See Imre Lakatos, “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes” in Alan Musgrave & Imre Lakatos (eds), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977), pp. 147–149.

20. This, too, is why he always has to insist that he derives his scientific theories from experimental research, despite the fact that any experimental undertaking in which he does engage is *already determined* by theory and the facts which that theory allows.

to be fundamental, there can be no science, no theoretical thought. We cannot abstract from, or build on, an illusion. Theoretical thought relies on the validity of our everyday naïve experience as its starting point.²¹ Indeed this point was not lost on Democritus (c. 460–370 B.C.). Whilst insisting that “bitter and sweet are only opinions, colour is only an opinion. In fact all that exists are atoms and the void (vacuum, empty space),” he went on to acknowledge: “Miserable mind, you get your evidence from us, and do you try to overthrow us? That overthrow will be your downfall.”²² The problem is still recognised. Feyerabend quotes Einstein to the effect that “For us who are convinced physicists the distinction between past, present, and future has no other meaning than that of an illusion, though a tenacious one.” He then comments: “The trouble is that Einstein was also an empiricist. But how can experiments, which are temporal processes and, therefore, ‘illusions,’ inform us about the nature of an illusion-free ‘real’ world?” He adds:

Max Planck noticed the problem. “The two statements,” he writes, “‘There exists a real external world that is independent of us’ and ‘This world cannot be known directly’ together form the basis of all physics. However, they are in conflict and thereby reveal the irrational element inherent in physics and in every other science.”²³

This is no mere academic dispute. Its consequences impinge on our lives at the deepest levels. In the first place modern scientism, with its idea of truth as embedded in theoretical thought alone, puts us at odds with the world we experience. This is a serious problem. How can man live in a world that he is convinced is nothing but an illusion? How can he live when all his energies are given to denying the reality of everything he experiences? The consequences are bound to be dire, both in respect of his physical and his mental health.²⁴

Secondly, modern scientism puts us at odds with divine revelation. I do not mean simply that it leads us to deny the reality of that revelation. For some—unbelievers—it does this. But it is a serious problem for Christians too. What do they make of this Book now? Most Christians of my ac-

quaintance live in a schizophrenic world. There is the world of the Bible and the world of science, and ne’er the twain shall meet. They accept the truth (as they see it) of the Bible, but they accept the truth too of modern science. This would allow them to sleep peacefully if it were the case that there are two distinct sources of truth which do not clash, if the world were such that religious truth could be derived from revelation and natural truth from scientific investigation. During the heyday of Roman Catholic political power such a situation could be maintained to a large extent. The Church was able to enforce through political means its doctrine regarding the relation between spiritual and secular learning. This stated that the right application of reason in secular matters would always lead to conclusions that were in accord with, or at least not antagonistic to, divine learning. It could safely insist that secular learning could gain access to truth without revelation because it could rely on the political powers to punish those who drew the “wrong” conclusions. Christians still want to adopt this philosophical position. Nevertheless, the situation has changed. Political power no longer enforces the conformance of secular learning to theological doctrine.²⁵ Either scientific conclusions—that is, scientific truth—must be denied, or the conflict with Holy Writ must be recognised and dealt with in another way.

But in principle the truth of secular science has already been admitted. The Christian in this situation is compelled to resort to the accommodation of Holy Writ. Thus the very antithesis of the Church’s previous position is now admitted: whereas previously all good science would be found to conform to Scripture, now all sound theology is by definition that which conforms to the truth of modern science.

This switch can only be maintained by a violent misconstrual of the *evident* meaning of Scripture. What Scripture evidently says—what I would call its *naïve interpretation*—has now to be denied as untrue. If biblical inspiration or infallibility is to be maintained, the Bible’s message must be discovered elsewhere. This requires the adoption of alien principles of interpretation that find the truth of Holy Writ not in its plain meaning but in some hidden underlying subtext. Like the natural scientists, the theologians now discover a world in this subtext that is both true and in violent opposition to the illusory “truth” of the text itself. And just as man can no longer understand the created order without the mediation of the experts’ theories, so no longer can he hear the Voice of God except through the mediation of the theologians’ theories either. That the “high priests” of both natural science and theological science now claim this mediatorial role, without which the rest of us cannot understand the will of God or his creation, ought to raise suspicion in every one’s mind as to the validity of these claims and the nature of the knowledge that is disseminated under them.

CONCLUSION

Theoretical thought has its place in the cultural life of man. But this place is not to act as the source of truth. It is right and proper to examine the created order and to analyse its multi-faceted structure. Theoretical thought—even in its proper role—does not provide a better, more accurate vision of

21. Eddington denies that this is any longer the case. He states: “The physicist used to borrow the raw material of his world from the familiar world, but he does so no longer. His raw materials are aether, electrons, quanta, potentials, Hamiltonian functions, etc., and he is nowadays scrupulously careful to guard these from contamination by conceptions borrowed from the other world” (*Ibid.* p. xv). However, whether he can consistently do this, or do it at all, is highly debatable.

22. Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1996 [1948]), p. 104. This is a translation of all the fragments as found in the classic work *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* of Herman Diels. It is often forgotten that for Democritus “atoms” (indivisibles) were definitely not the smallest units of matter as in modern science but mental entities that he described as forms (Gk: *ideai*), *ibid.*, p. 105. “The atoms are nothing but minimal geometric forms or elements . . . They are not sensible but intelligible.”—Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, III, p. 8.

23. Paul K. Feyerabend, *Conquest of Abundance: A Tale of Abstraction versus the Richness of Being* (London/Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001) p. 11, n. 16. This (posthumous) work engages in a brilliant critique of the problem we have raised in this essay, but from the perspective of a non-Christian.

24. See especially Jan Marejko, *Dix Meditations sur l’Espace et le Mouvement* (Lausanne: L’Age d’Homme, 1994). This is not an easy book but Marejko’s analysis of modern insanity, and the role modern views of space play in it, is worthy of careful consideration.

25. In fact, the reverse is now the case. Theological truth must conform to scientific truth. This too is Galileo’s legacy.

reality. It ought to enhance the vision we already have in our valid—and *accurate*—naïve experience.

To this end we need, from a Christian perspective, to develop a truly biblical philosophy of the sciences. Two thousand years of following the latest non-Christian fashions, and thus avoiding the scandal of the Cross, must be replaced by a programme genuinely committed to understanding our world in terms of him of whom Holy Scripture says that “all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things *cohere* [AV: consist]”—Col. 1:16–17. That is to say, Galileo was wrong—and unbiblical—to assert that the coherence of the universe could be found in mathematics. The same can be said of all modern secular science. Neither can that coherence be found in any other aspect of the created order. That coherence must be sought, and sought alone, in him who created all things out of nothing—Christ himself. All natural science finds its starting point in him and his relationship to the created order as it is taught in Holy Writ. Any other science, any other knowledge, is a lie.

This fact—that the Creator is the sole means of coherence of his creation—has an important corollary. It is that insofar as there is system or structure in the created order, it is God’s system or structure. This system far transcends any human system, which can only be defined in terms of aspects of the created order itself, such as logic (Bertrand Russell) or mathematics (Galileo Galilei). That is to say, the universe is not self-explanatory in any way. Only God himself is self-explanatory. And as Holy Scripture records:

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.²⁶

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!²⁷

Too often we take these passages to be no more than expressions of wonder or degree. But the differences envisaged are essentially *qualitative*. God’s knowledge is not simply greater than ours; it actually transcends it. It is of a wholly different order or type. The richness and diversity of creation, its structure, order and system, are beyond human comprehension. For man to enquire into the ways of God in creation²⁸ is one thing, to insist that man can understand them as God understands them is to claim divinity. The world is as God made it. It is given to us as we experience it, and that is how we are primarily to receive it.

Finally, the reader should be aware that I draw a clear distinction not only between naïve experience and theoretical thought, but also another between theoretical thought (science, if you will) and technology. These latter ideas are thoroughly confused in modern thought. But while it is perfectly valid to use terms as one wishes, provided their meaning is made clear, it is not valid to confuse the ideas that lie behind them. The confusion serves modern science well, for through this confusion it hopes to establish the (quite

unfounded) fact that it is the science that has provided the technology. Nothing could be further from the truth, though the issue is too large to engage in this essay. However a few examples will indicate this.

For instance, the telescope was never the result of scientific research, that is, the outcome of theory.²⁹ Indeed, it was well beyond Galileo’s ability to explain it and well beyond his lifetime before any consensus could be reached on how it worked. And even this was only an explanation in terms of a theory of light that itself has not altogether stood the test of time. In more modern times NASA not only undertakes its space travel programmes in terms of the now outdated and superseded Newtonian theory but also calculates on the basis of a geocentric rather than a heliocentric perspective as, I have been led to understand, does all naval and aeronautical navigation.

The reader should also be aware that this essay, while critical of specific theoretical programmes, is not directly concerned with any of them. Rather it is concerned with the relative importance of our naïve or everyday experience as the primary means of validly understanding our world, and of the invalidity of the claims of the scientific communities (natural and theological) to make theoretical thought the benchmark for all truth claims. With particular theories—for example, heliocentricity and the ensuing Relativity and Quantum theories, and atomic theory—I have grave difficulties, but they are only raised in this essay as examples of what I consider much more fundamental and significant problems: the source of truth and the validity of everyday (naïve) experience.

One last point. The reader should be aware that the extensive footnotes to this essay are an integral part of it and should not be neglected if he wishes to understand what I am attempting to say. They are kept out of the main text for the sole purpose of not disturbing the main flow of argument. C&S

29. Galileo once claimed that he developed his telescope “through the deep study of the theory of refraction” but he never was able to give a satisfactory account of this and he was, to put it mildly, embellishing the truth. See a fuller account in Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: Verso, 1993) chapter 8.

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SCIENCE AND RELIGION
by Colin Wright

THE LOST MEANING OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
by Matthew Wright

26. Isaiah 55:8–9.

27. Romans 11:33.

28. *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* Psalm 111:2. This statement does not refer directly to theoretical thought at all, but I do believe that indirectly it should be included.

ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE: THE SHINING LIGHT OF SCOTLAND

by David Estrada

When the dead speak

THE dead are not always silent in the grave. Many are the servants of God who after leaving this earthly tabernacle and after their lips have long in silence hung, continue speaking to us through their lives and writings. The impressions of their works on our souls seem to defy impassibly the eroding effects of time and remain present in us with all the freshness of their original inspiration. Deeply moved by the reading of Richard Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, in 1838 Robert Murray M'Cheyne wrote:

Though Baxter's lips have long in silence hung,
And death long hush'd that sinner-wakening tongue,
Yet still, though dead, he speaks aloud to all,
And from the grave still issues forth his "Call":
Like some loud angel-voice from Zion hill,
The mighty echo rolls and rumbles still.
Oh grant that we, when sleeping in the dust,
May thus speak forth the wisdom of the just!

M'Cheyne could hardly have suspected when he wrote this beautiful poem that he himself would be numbered among those who while "sleeping in the dust would still speak aloud to us all the wisdom of the just." When on March 25, 1843, R. M. M'Cheyne died at the age of thirty, his blessed ministry was not ended: it continued through posterity on the lives of many people that read his sermons and were inspired by the portrait of his exemplary life—beautifully depicted in the *Memoir* of his friend Andrew Bonar in 1844.

I count myself among those that have been blessed with M'Cheyne's continued ministry. The *Memoir and Remains R. M. M'Cheyne* fell into my hands in my early days as a student at Westminster Theological Seminary. It had been recommended to me by one of my class-mates who, according to his own testimony, went into the ministry after reading M'Cheyne's sermons and experiencing the impact of his consecrated life. Years later, on my return to Spain, I strongly recommended Mr. Jack Collum, of the Banner of Truth Trust, to undertake the publishing of M'Cheyne's sermons in the Spanish language. He graciously complied with my request, and in 1961 the Banner edition of M'Cheyne's sermons appeared in the language of Cervantes. Several reprints of this book have been sold in Spanish speaking countries and it continues to be a blessing to many of its readers.

Ever since it appeared in 1844, the *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* has remained a spiritual and devotional classic among evangelicals of many languages and countries. The English copy of Bonar's *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne* in my possession is the Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier edition published at Edinburgh and London in 1894.¹ In the first page of this centenary copy, and in beautiful handwriting, there is a dedication from an anonymous giver of the book to the recipient of the same, which, in M'Cheyne's own words, expresses the very essence of an ideal ministry: "It is not great talent God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."² These words indeed give us the clue to M'Cheyne's successful ministry: *likeness to Jesus*. In writing this article I wish to share with my readers some thoughts and impressions that a recent reading of Bonar's *Memoir and Remains of Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne*—and other "remains" and notes in my possession—have left in my mind.

When a short life is long

The life of Robert Murray M'Cheyne was *short*. So was his ministry: six years and four months! He was barely thirty years of age when he died. If his life and work was *short*, his influence has been *long*. Born on May 21, 1813, at Edinburgh, he was the youngest child of a prosperous middle class family. His father was in the legal profession and a member of the Court of Session, Scotland's highest judicial institution. Robert had two brothers, David Thomas and William Oswald Hunter, who was to become a medical doctor, and one sister, Elizabeth, who accompanied Robert in St Peter's manse. Elizabeth lived until she was 88, outliving her brother Robert by 43 years. Robert was eighteen years old when his brother David—a brilliant classical scholar—died. He looked upon the death of his eldest brother, who was his senior by

1. All the original manuscripts of M'Cheyne's sermons and articles are kept at the New College library in Edinburgh. *The Memoir and Remains of Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne* by Andrew A. Bonar has been republished in different editions: Chicago: Moody Press, 1953; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1960, 1962. The number of articles written on M'Cheyne has been numerous, especially in the last decades. In 1957 David V. Yeaworth wrote his PhD thesis for the University of Edinburgh on M'Cheyne. It is a well documented work which includes 300 letters, 400 MS sermons and some 16 notebooks and diaries.

eight years, as the event that brought the first beam of divine light into his soul. Every year he marked the day of this event as one to be remembered, as for instance when he wrote: “This day eleven years ago, I lost my loved and loving brother, and began to seek a Brother who cannot die.”

In 1827 he entered the University of Edinburgh, and four years later he commenced his theological studies in the Divinity Hall. It was here that he met his mentor, Dr. Thomas Chalmers, Professor of Divinity, and who was to have a strong influence in his ministerial and spiritual life. In July, 1835, the Presbytery of Annan licensed him to preach the gospel. He began preaching at Larbert and Dunipace. Larbert had been one of the places where “in other days, that holy man of God, Robert Bruce, had laboured and prayed.” In November 1836 he was ordained and appointed minister of the Church of St Peter’s, Dundee.

At that time Dundee had a population of about 51,000, and was a growing industrial city. The steam engine had transformed old mills into new factories where linen, rope and jute were manufactured. Many of the factories were unsafe and unhealthy, and women and children were employed as well as men. M’Cheyne’s first impressions of Dundee were severe: “A city given to idolatry and hardness of heart.” His first sermon at St Peter’s Church, Dundee, was on Isaiah 61:1–3: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . .*”—of which he writes: “May it be prophetic of the object of my coming here!” And truly it was so: that very sermon was the means of awakening souls, as he afterwards learnt. Right from the start he undertook an active programme of ministerial activities. Notes were kept of all his pastoral visits—with dates, descriptions and a record of the passage of Scripture read.³ M’Cheyne’s ministry coincided with the ten year conflict the Church maintained against the Erastian claims of the State to have the last word on the placement and discipline of ministers in their Churches, and on other matters. The conflict ended when 451 ministers relinquished the Church’s temporalities, and in the General Assembly of May, 1843, under the moderatorship of Dr. Chalmers, constituted the Free Church of Scotland. This ecclesial decision, later known as the *Disruption*, took place only two months after M’Cheyne’s death. As a committed Presbyterian and strong defender of the absolute lordship of Christ over his Church, M’Cheyne fervently pleaded the cause of the Free Church.⁴

As a pastor he set a remarkable example of dedication and activity. He imbued a high sense of responsibility on his deacons and elders and made the presbytery of St Peter’s a most useful instrument of pastoral assistance. He instituted a group of tract distributors and established a system of deaconesses whose job was to help with the visitation. Besides the usual Sunday services there was a Bible study on Thursday evening. A church library was started to encourage reading and learning. He felt so strongly about private and family worship that in order to encourage the members of his congregation to achieve a comprehensive knowledge of the whole Bible, he prepared for them a calendar for reading through the Word of God in a year—the Old Testament once and the New Testament and Psalms twice. This calendar—or *Daily Bread*, as he called it—is still in use

by many believers today.⁵ He regarded all the posterior blessings experienced at St Peter’s as a result of the Thursday evening prayer meetings that were started after his ordination. His concern for the Bible teaching of children was notorious. He sought to encourage Sabbath schools in all the districts of his parish. Some of his sweetest tracts were written for these schools, and so was his hymn *Oil for the lamp*.

During his absence from St Peter’s, because of his sickness and on account of his trip to the Holy Land, he wrote ten pastoral letters to the congregation. This he regarded as an essential part of his ministry: “I feel it is another gift of grace that I am suffered to write to you. You remember how often the apostles cheered and strengthened the disciples, when absent from them. What a precious legacy of the church in all ages have these epistles been! You remember how holy Samuel Rutherford, and many of our persecuted forefathers in the Church of Scotland, kept the flame of grace in their deserted parishes by sending them words of counsel, warning, and encouragement, testifying, not face to face, but with ink and pen, the gospel of the grace of God. I do feel it is a great privilege that this door is open to me, and that, even when absent, I can yet speak to you of the things pertaining to the kingdom.”⁶

M’Cheyne’s health had always been delicate and often he was subject to attacks of fever and violent palpitations. After some months of continuous and strenuous ministerial activities he began to feel the effects of unremitting labour and ceaseless hours of pastoral work. Alarmed by the signs of fast deterioration of his physical condition, his medical advisers insisted on total cessation of his activities. With deep sadness and regret Robert left Dundee and sought rest at his parents’ home at Edinburgh.

Shortly after his leave, in a pastoral letter to his congregation, he wrote: “Ministers are God’s tools for building up the gospel temple. Now you know well that every wise workman takes his tools away from the work from time to time, that they may be ground and sharpened. So does the only-wise Jehovah take his ministers oftentimes away into darkness and loneliness and trouble, that He may sharpen and prepare them for harder work in his service. Pray that it may be so with your own pastor.”⁷ While still convalescing, he learned that the General Assembly of 1839 had decided to appoint a committee to examine the state of the Jews in Palestine and throughout Europe, and that he had been nominated a member of that commission. In a letter to his congregation written from Edinburgh on March 6, 1839, he wrote: “The General Assembly’s Committee on the Jews have this day resolved that your pastor, accompanied by Dr. Black of Aberdeen, and my beloved friend Andrew Bonar of Collace, should travel for the next six months, to make personal inquiry after the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They propose that we should go without delay to the Holy Land—that we should then return by Smyrna, Constantinople, Poland, Germany, and Holland. Now I did not seek this appointment—I never dreamed of such a thing. ‘But He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth,’ He has thrown open this door to me, while He keeps the door of return to you still shut.

2. *Memoir*, 241.

3. *Ibid.*, 62.

4. For detailed information on the *Disruption*, see Thomas Brown, *Annals of the Disruption* (Edinburgh: MacNiven & Wallace, 1893).

5. This calendar for Scripture reading is found in pages 563–569 of Bonar’s *Memoir*.

6. Second Letter, Edinburgh, February 6, 1839; *ibid.*, 186.

7. Edinburgh, January 30, 1839, *Ibid.*, 182.

My medical men are agreed that it is the likeliest method of restoring my broken health, and that I have strength enough for the journey. You know how my heart is engaged in the cause of Israel, and how the very sight of Immanuel's land will revive my fainting spirit." On March 27, 1839, they sailed from London.

During the course of their six months journey their letters home were published in the national and foreign press and were later recorded in book form in the *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland*. This is indeed a valuable document of nineteenth century missionary enterprise. During his absence, William C. Burns occupied the pulpit at St Peter's, and shortly after a revival broke out. Later Wm. Burns went to China as missionary where he exercised a lasting influence on Hudson Taylor.⁸ Did his missionary trip to the Jews redound in the recovery of Robert's health? We do not believe so. Travelling in those days was extremely stressful and full of physical inconveniences and dangers of all sorts—as we can graphically gather from M'Cheyne's own letters. Just before leaving the Holy Land, he wrote to his congregation: "God laid me down under a burning fever, bringing me to the very gates of death. Indeed, my dear people, I feel like Lazarus, whom the Lord Jesus raised from the tomb . . . Sailing to Smyrna, your pastor was brought low indeed, insomuch that I never thought to see you again; yet He sent his word and healed me."⁹

When gifts are many

M'Cheyne was a very gifted man endowed with a remarkable intellectual capacity. Already from an early age he showed an eager desire to gain knowledge in all fields of culture. While attending the usual literary and philosophical courses at Edinburgh, he found time to study geology, natural history, and the classics; and before entering Divinity Hall he had already acquired high proficiency in Hebrew and *koine* Greek. Among the first theological authors he gained familiarity with were Martin Luther, Robert Bruce, Samuel Rutherford, John Bunyan, Richard Baxter, Jonathan Edwards, Edward Fisher, and Thomas Boston. He was very proficient in music and sang beautifully. He wrote little. His only published book was *The Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews*, in co-authorship with Andrew Bonar. In his literary remains, however, we find ample evidence of his aesthetic talent. The hymns he wrote are evidence of having a refined poetical vein. Some of these hymns have become an ageless patrimony of spirituality: *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet*, *The Sea of Galilee*, *They sing the song of Moses*, *To yonder side*, *Oil for the lamp*, *I am a debtor* and *Jehovah Tzikenu*. Stanzas 1 and 3 of *I am a debtor* are an eloquent example of unsurpassed spiritual beauty:

When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.

8. *Ibid.*, 202–203. For a biographical sketch of W. C. Burns, see the Banner of Truth publication: *Five Pioneer Missionaries—David Brainerd, William C. Burns, John Eliot, Henry Martyn, and John G. Paton*.

9. *Ibid.*, 217, 218.

When I stand before the throne
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.

But, doubtless, the chosen jewel of his poetical production is *Jehovah Tzikenu*—"The Lord our Righteousness"—"the Watchword of the Reformers." Here are stanzas 1, 4 and 7 of this famous hymn:

I once was a stranger to grace and to God,
I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;
Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,
Jehovah Tzikenu was nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me, by light from on high,
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;
No refuge, no safety in self could I see—
Jehovah Tzikenu my Saviour must be.

Even treading the valley, the shadow of death,
This "watchword" shall rally my faltering breath,
For while from life's fever my God sets me free,
Jehovah Tzikenu my death-song shall be.

Some of the descriptions of his trip to the Holy Land—the landscapes, the desert, the biblical sites, and even the peculiarities of the camel and the life and the vegetation of the biblical regions, are of an exquisite beauty. From Mount Zion he wrote to a friend in Scotland: "Now we are in the most wonderful spot in all this world—where Jesus lived and walked, and prayed and died, and will come again." After a visit to Sychar, he penned on a leaf of his note-book a brief poem—summary of his thoughts and feelings as he travelled following the *map* of the Bible:

Sweet record of the past, to faith's glad eyes
Sweet promiser of glories yet to rise!

The conjunction of biblical references with the description of the local places visited in the journey constitutes a priceless narrative. In arriving at Jerusalem he wrote: "I left my camel and went before, hurrying over the burning rocks. In about half an hour Jerusalem came in sight. 'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!' Is this the perfection of beauty? 'How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger!' Read the two first chapters of Lamentations, and you have a vivid picture of our first sight of Jerusalem."

He was specially attracted by the silence of the desert: "It is a remarkable feeling to be quite alone in a desert place; it gives similar feelings to fasting; it brings God near. Living in tents, and moving among such lonely scenes for many days, awaken many new ideas. It is a strange life we lead in the wilderness.

Also in his sermons we find moving specimens of literary exaltation: "There was once a time when time was not—when there was no earth, neither sun, nor moon, nor star; a time when you might have wandered through all space, and never found a resting place to the sole of your foot—when you would have found no creatures anywhere, but God everywhere—where there were no angels with golden harps hymning celestial praises, but God alone was all in all. Where

was Jesus then? He was with God. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.'¹⁰

When holiness has a face

The portrait of his life depicted by Andrew Bonar in the *Memoir* reveals the outstanding traits of an extraordinary personality. His whole character irradiated purity of conduct and genuineness of motives. In the words of his biographer: "His eminently holy walk and conversation, combined with the deep solemnity of his preaching, was specially felt. Holiness in him was manifested, not by efforts to perform duty, but in a way so natural, that you recognized therein the easy outflowing of the indwelling Spirit. He lived in the blessed consciousness that he was a child of God, humble and meek . . . Many often felt that in prayer the name 'Holy Father' was breathed with peculiar tenderness and solemnity from his lips." "He could not neglect fellowship with God before entering the congregation. He needed to be bathed in the love of God. His ministry was so much a bringing out of views that had first sanctified his own soul, that the healthiness of his soul was absolutely needful to the vigour and power of his ministrations." M'Cheyne often said: "We must not only speak faithfully to our people in our sermons, but live faithfully for them too." Communion with Christ was for him the true secret of holiness: "A living Christ is the spring of holiness to all his members. As long as we hold Him, and do not let Him go, our holiness is secure. He is engaged to keep us from falling. He loves us too well to let us fall under the reigning power of sin."

For Robert the secret of *happiness* and *joy* was holiness. In a letter to his congregation, before his trip to Palestine, he wrote: "God wants you to think that the only end of a gospel ministry is that you may be holy. Believe me, God himself could not make you happy except you be holy . . . I am persuaded that God's happiness is inseparably linked in with his holiness. Holiness and happiness are light and heat. God never tasted one of the pleasures of sin." He constantly stressed the note of *joy* as a blessed possession of the believer: "Some people are afraid of anything like joy in religion. They have none themselves, and they do not love to see it in others. Their religion is something like the stars, very high, and very clear, but very cold. When they see tears of anxiety, or tears of joy, they cry out, Enthusiasm, enthusiasm! Well, then, to the law, and to the testimony. 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight' (*Song of Songs*, 2:3). Is this enthusiasm? O Lord, evermore give us this enthusiasm! May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing! If it be really in sitting under the shadow of Christ, let there be no bounds to your joy. Oh, if God would but open your eyes, and give you simple, childlike faith, to look to Jesus, to sit under his shadow, then would songs of joy rise from all our dwellings. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!"¹¹ The life of holiness is not free from temptation. "All believers, he said in one of his sermons, are a tempted people. Every day they have their trials; every time is to them a time of need. The unconverted are little tempted; they are not in trouble as others, neither are they plagued like other men. They do not feel temptations rising in their heart; nor do they know the power of Satan. Before conversion, a man believes as

little in the devil as he believes in Christ. But when a man comes to Christ, then he becomes a tempted soul, 'poor and needy, seeking water and there is none'.¹²

When preaching is preaching

"His delight in preaching"—writes Bonar, "was very great. He himself used to say that he could scarcely ever resist an invitation to preach. And this did not arise from the natural excitement there is in commanding the attention of thousands; for he was equally ready to proclaim Christ to small country flocks." Regardless of the Scripture verse chosen for his sermon, or the topic of his meditation, the Christocentric character of his preaching was always absolute. Quoting again his biographer, "M'Cheyne preached all the doctrines of Scripture as understood by our Confession of Faith, dwelling upon ruin by the Fall, and recovery by the Mediator . . . Still it was not *doctrine* alone that he preached; it was *Christ*, from whom all doctrine shoots forth as rays from a centre. He used to say: "Ministers are but the pole; it is to the brazen serpent you are to look." Toward the end of his ministry, he became peculiarly jealous of becoming an idol to his people, for he was loved and revered by many who gave no evidence of love to Christ. This often pained him much—remarks Bonar.¹³

His preaching and all other activities were preceded by long periods of prayer. He kept by this rule: "that he must first see the face of God before he could undertake any duty." "I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner." Both in his preaching and teaching he was very much concerned with feeding the congregation with the "whole counsel of God." He earnestly sought to proclaim the biblical message in a harmonious gathering of spiritual lessons from all the books of the Bible. He never lost sight of the Pauline principle that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect." Of the twenty-six sermons included by Bonar in his *Memoir*, the Scripture texts of five of them are taken from the *Song of Songs*. In his opinion: "There is no book of the Bible which affords a better test of the depth of a man's Christianity than the Song of Solomon."¹⁴ These are some distinguishing marks of his preaching:

1. *Experiential apprehension of doctrine*

M'Cheyne was well grounded in the doctrines of the Bible and often stressed the importance of sound teaching in the proclamation of the word and in the up-building of the Church; but he was equally firm on the importance of apprehending *experientially* the theological contents of the Christian faith. According to Bonar: "It appears that he learnt the way of salvation *experimentally*, ere he knew it accurately by theory and system; and thus no doubt it was that his whole ministry was little else than a giving out of his own inward life." To one of his young parishioners, M'Cheyne wrote: "You read your Bible regularly, of course; but do try

10. *Ibid.*, 102; 98, 109, 302.

11. *Ibid.*, 164, 101, 150, 61, 82, 407, 95, 159, 312.

12. "Christ a merciful High Priest," *Ibid.*, 351.

13. *Ibid.*, 142, 73, 163.

14. "The Voice of my Beloved," Sermon, *op. cit.*, 431.

and understand it. And still more, to *feel* it.” In order to preserve the flame of experience alive he followed an extemporaneous delivery from the pulpit. He dreaded cold preaching, cold doctrine and dry teaching. From the very beginning of his ministry, writes Bonar, he reprobated the custom of reading sermons, believing that to do so does exceedingly weaken the freedom and natural fervour of the messenger in delivering his message. But his custom was to impress on his memory the substance of what he had beforehand carefully written, and then to speak as he found liberty.¹⁵

2. *Sweetness and tenderness*

In his letters and sermons we are overwhelmed by the loving and tender disposition toward his readers. Yet, according to Bonar, “it is difficult to convey to those who never knew him a correct idea of the sweetness and holy unction of his preaching. Some of his printed sermons may convey a correct idea of his style and mode of preaching doctrine. But there are no notes that give any true idea of his affectionate appeals to the heart and searching applications. These he seldom wrote; they were poured forth at the moment when his heart filled with his subject; for his rule was to set before his hearers a body of truth first—and there always was a vast amount of Bible truth in his discourses, and then urge home the application. His exhortations flowed from the doctrine, and thus had both variety and power.”

In one of his sermons he made this moving remark: “All the words of men and angels cannot describe the dreadful-ness of being Christless; and yet, it is to be feared, we do not speak to those who are so with anything like sufficient plainness, frequency, and urgency . . . Many of those who deal faithfully, yet do not deal *tenderly*. We have more of the bitterness of man than of the tenderness of God. We do not *yearn over* men in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote of ‘the enemies of the cross of Christ’ with tears in his eyes! There is little of his weeping among ministers now. ‘Knowing the terrors of the Lord,’ Paul persuaded men. There is little of this persuading spirit among ministers now. How can we wonder that the dry bones are very dry—that God is a stranger in the land?” Bonar writes: “I remember on one occasion, when we met, he asked what my last Sabbath’s subject had been. It had been, ‘The wicked shall be turned into hell.’ On hearing this awful text, he asked, ‘Were you able to preach it *with tenderness*?’ . . . It is not saying hard things that pierces the conscience of our people; it is the voice of divine love heard amid the thunder. The sharpest point of the two-edged sword is not *death* but *life*.” According to Bonar, “The calm, holy, tenderly affectionate style of his letters reminds us of Samuel Rutherford, whose works he delighted to read.”¹⁶

3. *Assurance*

As an enlightened and consecrated pastor M’Cheyne was a sure guide in the cure of souls. He knew that many young believers could not enter into full fruition of the joys of the gospel for lack of assurance of salvation. Hence in his preaching he stressed with force and urgency the note of confidence and certainty in the actual possession of the blessings of salvation. He insisted on the fact that “*a sense of*

forgiveness does not proceed from marks seen in myself, but from a discovery of the beauty, worth, and freeness of Christ.” Referring to Song of Songs 6:3, “My beloved is mine,” he wrote: “This is the faith of assurance: a complete, unhesitating embracing of Christ as my righteousness and my strength and my all. A common mistake is, that this clear conviction that Christ is mine is an attainment far on the divine life, and that it springs from evidences seen in my heart. When I see myself a new creature, Christ on the throne in my heart, love to the brethren, etc., it is often thought that I may begin then to say, ‘My beloved is mine.’ How different this passage! The moment Jesus comes down into the garden to the beds of spices—the moment He reveals himself, the soul cries out, ‘My beloved is mine!’ So saith Thomas (Jn 20:27, 28). The moment Jesus came in and revealed his wounds, Thomas cried out, ‘My Lord and my God.’ He did not look to see if he was believing, or if the graces of love and humility were reigning; but all he saw and thought of was Jesus and Him crucified and risen.” “When we preach that the glad tidings *were intended to impart immediate assurance of eternal life to every sinner that believes them*, we strike deeper upon the proud enmity of the world to God, than when we show the eternal curse and the second death.”¹⁷

4. *Unconditional freeness*

No shadow of hyper-Calvinism ever tinged M’Cheyne’s preaching. Unconditional free grace overflowed with joyful tones his proclamation of the gospel. In M’Cheyne’s sermons the Arminian caricature of Calvinism finds a demolishing refutation. As he says; “There is no subject more misunderstood by unconverted souls than the unconditional freeness of Christ. So little idea have we naturally of free grace, that we cannot believe that God can offer a Saviour to us, while we are in a wicked, hell-deserving condition. Oh, it is sad to think how men argue against their own happiness, and will not believe the word of God! . . . ‘If I knew I were one of the elect, I would come; but I fear I am not.’ To you I answer: nobody ever came to Christ because they knew themselves to be of the elect. It is quite true that God has of his mere good pleasure elected some to everlasting life, but they never knew it till they came to Christ. Christ nowhere invites the elect to come to Him. The question for you is not, Am I one of the elect? But, Am I of the human race? . . . Oh, brethren, you are without excuse in the sight of God, if you go home unsaved this day! You are always poor and needy. And God intends it should be so, to give you constant errands to go to Jesus.” As Bonar writes: “He saw no inconsistency in preaching an electing God, who ‘calleth whom he will,’ and a salvation free to ‘whomsoever will;’ nor in declaring the absolute sovereignty of God, and yet the unimpaired responsibility of man. He preached Christ as a gift laid down by the Father for every sinner freely to take.”

Although he saw in the proclamation of the *holy law* a divine means to bring sinners to conviction of sin, he regarded the free offer of salvation as an even higher means of awakening souls: “It is commonly thought that preaching *the holy law* is the most awakening truth in the Bible—that by it the mouth is stopped, and all the world becomes guilty before God; and, indeed, I believe this is the most ordinary means which God makes use of. And yet to me there is

15. *Ibid.*, 38, 58, 48.

16. *Ibid.*, 73, 534, 52, 138, 138.

17. *Ibid.*, 85, 52.

something far more awakening in the sight of a Divine Saviour freely offering himself to every one of the human race. There is something that might pierce the heart that is like a stone in that cry: 'Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man'.¹⁸ To someone he had never seen, but whose case was laid before him by a friend, he wrote: "*To be awakened*, you need to know your own heart. Look in at your own heart, if you wish to know your lost condition. See the pollution that is there—forgetfulness of God, deadness, insensibility to his love. If you are judged as you are in yourself, you will be lost. *To be saved*, you need to know the heart of God and of Christ. The four Gospels are a narrative of the heart of Christ. They show his compassion to sinners and his glorious work in their stead. If you only knew that heart as it is, you would lay your weary head with John in his bosom. Do not take up your time so much with studying your own heart as with studying *Christ's heart*. 'For one look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ!' . . . You fear that your convictions of sin have not been deep enough. This is no reason for keeping way from Christ. You will never get a truly broken heart till you are really *in Christ*."¹⁹

5. *Urgency: dying to dying*

In reading his diary, his sermons, and his letters we are deeply struck by the force of his urgent plea to sinners to close with Christ. In entreating sinners to repent and accept the free offer of the gospel—in the very instant of its proclamation, M'Cheyne sets for us a remarkable example of "sanctified spiritual compelling violence." In an entry of his diary, we read: "Lord, teach me to be always speaking as dying to dying." Duncan Matheson, the Scottish Evangelist, an eyewitness of M'Cheyne's preaching, said: "He preached with eternity stamped on his brow." In his estimation a fault in the preaching of his beloved Scotland was this: "Most ministers are accustomed to set Christ before the people. They lay down the gospel clearly and beautifully, but they do not urge men to enter in. Now God says, Exhort—beseech men, persuade men; not only point to the open door, but compel them to come in. Oh to be more merciful to souls, that we would lay hands on men and draw them in to the Lord Jesus! . . . Oh for a pastor who unites the deep knowledge of Edwards, the vast statements of Owen, and the vehement appeals of Richard Baxter!" In one of his manuscripts, we read: "As I was walking in the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power, that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell. Oh, how I wished that I had a tongue like thunder, that I might make all hear; or that I had a frame like iron, that I might visit every one, and say: 'escape for thy life!' Ah, sinners! You little know how I fear that you will lay the blame of your damnation at my door."²⁰ To someone inquiring after Jesus but who was delaying his coming to Jesus, he wrote: "Remember, if you are not saved, I will be a witness against you in the judgment-day." He urged him to come to Jesus with the solemn invitation of Joseph Hart's hymn:

Come ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,

You will never come at all.

Not the righteous—sinners Jesus came to call.

Not only adults and young people were the subjects of his "entreating urgent appeals" to close with Christ, but also little children—"the lambs of the flock," were invited to flee to the Saviour: "Some people say, you are too young to be converted and saved. But Samuel was not too young. Christ can open the eyes of a child as easily as of an old man. Yea, youth is the best time to be saved in. You are not too young to die, not too young to be judged, and therefore not too young to be brought to Christ. Do not be contented to hear about Christ from your teachers; pray that He would *reveal himself* to you." In consonance with his stand on the urgent appeals of the gospel invitation, he defended the reasonableness of expecting *sudden conversions*. In one of his articles in the *Christian Herald* he maintained that the whole tone of Scripture teaching justifies such type of conversion. Furthermore, a blessed crop of conversions was for him a necessary consequence of sound preaching. In a charge to a minister, he said: "*Do not rest without success in your ministry*. Success is the rule under a living ministry; want of success is the exception."²¹

M'Cheyne regarded *Church discipline* as another form of preaching. In a service of ordination of elders at St Peter's, he said: "When I first entered upon the work of the ministry among you, I was exceedingly ignorant of the vast importance of church discipline. I thought that my great and almost only work was to pray and preach. When cases of discipline were brought before me, and the elders, I regarded them with something like abhorrence. It was a duty I shrank from; and I may truly say it nearly drove me from the work of the ministry among you altogether. But it pleased God, who teaches his servants in another way than man teaches, to bless some of the cases of discipline to the manifest and undeniable conversion of the souls of those under our care; and from that hour a new light broke in upon my mind, and I saw that if preaching be an ordinance of Christ, so is church discipline. Now I feel very deeply persuaded that both are of God—that two keys are committed to us by Christ: the one the key of doctrine, by means of which we unlock the treasures of the Bible; the other the key of discipline, by which we open or shut the way to the sealing ordinances of faith. Both are Christ's gift, and neither is to be resigned without sin."²²

When revival breaks out

Whilst he was in Israel, revival broke out in St Peter's under the ministry of William Chalmers Burns, and on his return from Palestine M'Cheyne became a direct witness of its manifestations. During the revival both public and private prayer meetings were started on impulse, even the children conducted their own prayer meetings. Prayer groups proliferated in the city and in the factories. Night after night St Peter's would be packed to the extent that many had to stand in the aisles and sit on the pulpit steps while the crowd outside was unable to gain entry. In order to accommodate the crowds it became necessary to hold services in the open air. In one of M'Cheyne's note-books there are at least *four*

18. "Unto you, oh men, I call. . ." Proverbs 7, Sermon; *op. cit.*, 324, 325, 84, 322–323.

19. *Op. cit.*, 238–239.

20. *Op. cit.*, 54; 358, 359, sermon; 153; 278.

21. "To the lambs of the flock," *Ibid.*, 558–559; Ordination Sermon, 361.

22. *Ibid.*, 81.

hundred visits recorded, made to him by inquiring souls during the revival. Bonar writes: “Never, perhaps, was there one placed in better circumstances for testing the revival impartially, and seldom has any revival been more fully tested.” M’Cheyne observed that those who had been believers formerly had got their hearts enlarged, and were greatly established; and that some seemed able to feed upon the truth in a new manner. At the same time he saw backslidings, and false professions of salvation. Observing also that some were influenced more by feelings of strong attachment to their pastor personally than by the power of the truths he preached, he became more reserved in his dealings with them.²³

Revivals are not always well received; quite often they are looked upon with scepticism and suspicion. The first instance of negative reaction to revival is found in Acts 2, when some of the people present reacted in bewilderment and accused those being touched by the Spirit of being drunk. Even in Dundee, writes Bonar, “many believers doubted, and the ungodly raged.” It is for these considerations that M’Cheyne’s evaluation of the revivals that took place in Dundee is so important. In his report to the Presbytery of Aberdeen, which appointed a committee to inquire into the revivals that were taking place at that time in different places, M’Cheyne’s testimony is clear and revealing. According to him, the revival he witnessed was a glorious work of God:

“Many hundreds, under deep concern for their souls, have come, from first to last, to converse with the ministers; so that I am deeply persuaded, the number of those who have received saving benefits is greater than any one will know till the judgement-day. I believe that, at that remarkable season in 1839, there were very few persons who attended the meetings without being more or less affected. It pleased God at that time to bring an awfully solemn sense of divine things over the minds of men. It was, indeed, the day of our merciful visitation. On one occasion, for instance, when the minister was speaking tenderly on the words, ‘He is altogether lovely,’ almost every sentence was responded to by cries of the bitterest agony. At such times I have seen persons so overcome, that they could not walk or stand alone. I have known cases in which believers have been similarly affected through the fullness of their joy. I have often known such awakenings to issue in what I believe to be real conversion. I could name many of the humblest, meekest believers, who at one time cried out in the church under deep agony. I have also met with cases where the sight of souls thus pierced has been blessed by God to awaken careless sinners who had come to mock. I am far from believing that these signs of deep alarm always issue in conversion, or that the Spirit of God does not often work in a more quiet manner. I do entirely and solemnly approve of such meetings, because I believe them to be in accordance with the word of God, to be pervaded by the spirit of Christ, and to be of times the birthplaces of precious, never-dying souls. It is my earnest prayer that we may yet see greater things than these in all parts of Scotland. I do not know of anything in the ministration of those who have occupied my pulpit that may with propriety be called peculiar, or that is different from what I conceive ought to characterize the services of all true ministers of Christ. They have preached, so far as I can judge, nothing but the pure

gospel of the grace of God. So far as I am aware, no unscriptural doctrines have been taught, nor has there been a keeping back of any part of ‘the whole counsel of God.’”

He further observed: “None of the ministers who have been engaged in the work of God here have ever used the name ‘Revival meeting;’ nor do they approve of its use. It will not be maintained by any one, that the meetings in the sanctuary every Lord’s day are intended for any other purpose than the revival of genuine godliness, through the conversion of sinners and the edification of the saints. All the meetings in this place were held, I believe, with a single eye to the same object. It is true, indeed, that on week evenings there is not generally the same formality as on Sabbaths; the congregations are commonly dressed in their working clothes, and the minister speaks with less regular preparation.”²⁴

When the Sabbath is a holy recreation

As a true Scottish Presbyterian, M’Cheyne was a strong defender of the Sabbath as the Lord’s appointed day of rest and blessing. In a letter to his congregation written from Leghorn, Italy, in May 1839, he wrote: “I cannot tell how I longed for the peace of a Scottish Sabbath.” In December 1841 his famous tract *I love the Lord’s Day* was published and immediately reached wide circulation. The writing of this tract was prompted by “the daring attack” made by some of the directors of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway in their proposal to circulate their trains on the Sabbath Day.

The Christian, reaffirms M’Cheyne, is a lover of the Lord’s Day. “We love the Lord’s Day, because it is the Lord’s Day. ‘This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice, and be glad.’ (Ps. 118:24). It is the day on which He rested from his amazing work of redemption. Just as God rested on the seventh day from all his works, wherefore God blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it, so the Lord Jesus rested on this day from all his agony and pain, and humiliation. We love the Lord’s Day, because it is a relic of Paradise and a type of heaven. A well spent Sabbath we feel to be a day of heaven upon earth. We love the Lord’s Day, because it is a day of blessing. When God instituted the Sabbath in paradise, it is said: ‘God blessed the Sabbath-day, and sanctified it.’” Besides, he adds in one of his sermons: “The Sabbath is the great day for gathering in souls—it is Christ’s market-day. It is the great harvest-day of souls.”

His principle was that the Lord’s Day was to be spent wholly in the enjoyment of that sweet privilege. On one occasion someone consulted him on a point of sabbatical casuistry. The question was, whether or not it was sinful to spend time in registering meteorological observations on the Sabbaths. His reply was the following: “I love the Lord’s day too well to be marking down the height of the thermometer and barometer every hour. I have other work to do, higher and better, and more like that of angels above . . . My conscience is not the rule of another man. One thing we may learn from these men of science, namely, to be careful in marking the changes and progress of our own spirit, as they are in marking the changes of the weather. An hour should never pass without our looking up to God for forgiveness and peace. This is the noblest science, to know how to live in hourly communion with God in Christ.”²⁵

23. *Ibid.*, 123, 127, 129.

24. *Ibid.*, 488, 489, 490, 491, 493, 494, 95.

25. *Ibid.*, 212; 537–544; 530; 246.

When the “other” is my brother

Although a strict Presbyterian, M'Cheyne showed an open and sympathetic attitude towards all those of different denominations that professed a living faith in the Lord Jesus and held the basic tenets of Christianity. In a letter to the editor of the *Dundee Warder*, he wrote: “I have no doubt from Scripture that, where we have good reason for regarding a man as a child of God, we are permitted and commanded to treat him as a brother; and, as the most sacred pledge of heavenly friendship, to sit down freely at the table of our common Lord, to eat bread and drink wine together in remembrance of Christ.” The Scriptural rule, he adds, “appears to be simple enough—that, where any minister of any denomination holds the Head, is sound in doctrine and blameless in life, preaches Christ and him crucified as the only way of pardon and the only source of holiness, especially if he has been owned of God in the conversion of souls and up-building of saints, we are bound to hold ministerial communion with him, whenever Providence opens the way. What are we that we should shut our pulpits against such a man?” He quotes the words of a Scottish minister who had invited Whitfield to preach in his Church: “There is no law of Christ, no Act of Assembly, prohibiting me to give my pulpit to an Episcopal, Independent, or Baptist minister, *if of sound principles in the fundamentals of religion, and of sober life*. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Let us do our part towards our dissenting brethren according to the Scriptures.”²⁶

When the parish is the world

As we shall see—especially in an article on David Livingstone that we are preparing—Scotland was a country of missionaries and of missionary-minded people. And of this R. M. M'Cheyne was a distinguished exponent. Interest in missions was for him a natural expression of a true believer's faith: “The redeemed on earth are peculiarly interested in unconverted souls. They pray for them night and day, many of them with tears; many a child of God wets his pillow with tears in behalf of perishing souls.” As Secretary of the Association for Church Extension he was active in the founding of new parishes and new places of worship. M'Cheyne was always anxious to receive first hand information from missionaries who laboured in foreign lands. This was the case, for instance, with Dr. Alexander Duff (1806–1878), the first Church of Scotland missionary who, during his return from India in 1835, began to stir up enthusiasm for missions in his homeland. One of M'Cheyne's friends, the Rev. Irving Hetherington (1809–1875), went to Australia as a missionary after he felt his call to the mission field confirmed when he heard M'Cheyne preach at St Peter's on Jesus' words: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Another of M'Cheyne's close friends, and a classmate of his at high school and at Divinity Hall, Edinburgh, was Alexander Neil Somerville (1813–1889). Although minister of a large congregation at Glasgow, Somerville shared M'Cheyne's interest in missions, and preached the gospel in India, Russia, Spain and among the Jews of Eastern Europe. M'Cheyne was therefore immersed

in a wide circle of missionary concerned people. “The missionary feeling in his soul—writes Bonar, continued all his life. One of the last notes he wrote was to the Secretary of the Association for Church Extension in Edinburgh, expressing his unabated interest in their prosperity.”²⁷

But deep in his heart, and nourished by special biblical reasons, M'Cheyne's missionary interest was centred on the Jewish people. After his return trip from Palestine, he travelled extensively through Scotland to make known the spiritual needs of the Jews and the importance of preaching the Gospel “To the Jew first.” As he clearly stated: “To seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel is an object very near to my heart, as my people know it has ever been. Such an enterprise may probably draw down unspeakable blessing on the Church of Scotland, according to the promise, ‘They shall prosper who love thee’.” In his estimation, the love for the chosen people is a peculiar sign of sharing the mind of God: “When you look in your Bible, and see the promises that are awaiting to be fulfilled to them, how does the heart fill towards them! God will gather them one by one. Pray still for their in-bringing. It is not easy to pray really for Israel; it needs you to have much of the peculiar mind of God.” The publication in 1842 of the *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland* increased greatly the missionary interest in the Jews, and led to the sending of Daniel Edwards as a missionary to the Jews in Poland, followed by “Rabbi” John Duncan to the Jews in Hungary. Among the famous converts in this country were Alfred Edersheim and Adolph Sapphir.²⁸

M'Cheyne's love for the Jewish cause led him to establish unreserved parallels between Scotland and the Holy Land. He had travelled through many lands and seen many countries; but in his estimation no region could surpass the spiritual and geographical charms of his beloved Scotland. He was convinced that “Scotland is the likeliest of all lands to God's ancient Israel. How wonderfully has God planted and maintained godly ministers in his land, from the time of Knox to the present day! He has divided the whole land into parishes; even on the barren hills of our country He has planted the choicest vine. Hundreds of godly labourers He has sent to gather out the stones of it.” “In many respects, Scotland may be called God's second Israel. No other land has its Sabbath as Scotland has; no other land has the Bible as Scotland has; no other land has the gospel preached, free as the air we breath, fresh as the stream from the everlasting hills.”²⁹ His personal impressions of the Holy Land were exultant: “Of the Holy Land, I can only say, like the Queen of Sheba, ‘that the half was not told me.’ It is far more wonderful than I could have believed. I shall always reckon it one of the greatest temporal blessings of my lot, that I have been led to wander over its mountains with the Bible in my hand, to sit by its wells, and to meditate among its ruined cities. Not a single day did we spend there without reading, in the land itself, the most wonderful traces of God's anger and of his love. Several times we went to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane, to the Pool of Siloam, and to the village of Bethany, and every stone seemed to speak of the love of God to sinners. These places are probably very little

27. *Ibid.*, 417, 50, 38.

28. *Ibid.*, 95; 232, letter to the Rev. R. Macdonald, Mount Carmel, June 26, 1839.

29. Letter to his congregation; Edinburgh, February 27, 1839. *ibid.*, p.197; *Our Duty to Israel*, sermon XXV, 442.

26. *Ibid.*, “Communion with brethren of other denominations.” 549; 549, 551, 553.

altered from what they were in the days when Jesus tabernacled among men, and they all seem to say, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us.'³⁰

When prophecy becomes debatable

In M'Cheyne's times Scotland was very much agitated with prophetic questions related to Israel and their relevance for the Church. This interest was also enthusiastically shared by M'Cheyne. On this issue we believe that our beloved pastor perhaps became too involved in doubtful prophetic interpretations.

Although several factors accounted for the incipient fires of the prophetic fervour that arose in many congregations of the Kirk of Scotland, it was through the teaching of Edward Irving that the flames reached incendiary proportions. The great interest in prophetic and apocalyptic questions regarding premillennialism, the return of Christ, and the "rapture," can be largely attributed to Irving. In many respects he was also the forerunner of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.³¹

Through the *Morning Watch—A Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, and other writings, this controversial minister of the Scottish congregation of Regent Square, London, reached a wide audience in Christian circles. John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Brethren, was among the numerous Christian leaders influenced by Irving's premillennial interpretations. In an alarming prophetic treatise entitled *Babylon and infidelity foredoomed by God* (1826), Irving foretold the second coming of Christ—with the subsequent inauguration of the millennium—for the year 1864. For his millenarian ideas he drew extensively from a book written by the Chilean Roman Catholic theologian Manuel Lacunza (1731–1801). Irving was so taken up by Lacunza's views that he decided to learn Spanish in order to translate and publish the work into English. His recasting of the ex-Jesuit's work *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, with a 200-page introduction of his own, appeared in 1827.³² With the pretension of restoring pure Christianity, he laid the founding principles of what after his death would be known as the Catholic Apostolic Church, which proposed, among other doctrines, the restoration of the apostleship, the charismatic gifts, and the premillennial advent. In 1830 Irving was excommunicated by the London presbytery on charges of "gross heresy" for his views on the Incarnation: he spoke of Christ's body as

having a "sinful substance." And in 1833 he was deposed from the ministry by the Church of Scotland.³³

Between 1828 and 1830 Irving conducted several tours through Scotland. His premillennial views found an enthusiastic reception on the part of many ministers. Andrew Bonar was one of the hearers that followed with fervour his premillennial teaching at Divinity Hall, Edinburgh. In his *Diary* of May 24, 1829, he wrote: "Have been hearing Mr. Irving's lectures all the week, and am persuaded now that his views of the Coming of Christ are truth." In the entry of October 3, 1831, he added: "More and more convinced that the time of Christ's Coming is before the thousand years; often grieved by hearing opposition to this."

Bonar's premillennial expectations are contained in several of his writings, specially the essays entitled: *Redemption drawing nigh: a defence of the premillennial advent*; *The Development of the Antichrist*; and *The Hope of the Lord's Return*. Andrew's brother Horatius—"the prince of Scottish hymn writers"—held similar views. A good example of Horatius' premillennial position are his treatises entitled *Prophetic Landmarks*, *The Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, and his articles in the *Journal of Prophecy*, which he edited in 1828.³⁴ Horatius' premillennial expectations are summarised in the words of a hymn he wrote in 1846:

Come, Lord, and tarry not;
Bring the long looked-for day;
O why these years of waiting here,
These ages of delay?
Come, and make all things new;
Build up this ruined earth;
Restore our faded Paradise,
Creation's second birth.
Come, and begin Thy reign
Of everlasting peace;
Come, take the kingdom to Thyself,
Great King of Righteousness.

Another of M'Cheyne's friends who shared the same views and wrote important treatises on the prophetic question and on the return of the Jews to the Holy Land was Dr. Alexander Keith (1791–1880). Dr. Keith had been one of the three Church of Scotland ministers who in 1839 accom-

30. *Ibid.*, 219, letter to his congregation, October 16, 1839.

31. Ref.: Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving: The Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983). Gordon Strachan, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* (Peabody, Massachusetts, 1973). Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1971). Joseph M. Canfield, *The Incredible Scofield and His Book* (Vallecito, Cal.: Ross House, 1988).

32. London, L. B. Seeley & Sons, 1827. Lacunza wrote his book under the pseudonym of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, allegedly a converted Jew. He left his work unpublished, although several manuscript copies of it—even a Latin translation—circulated all over Europe. The two more reliable copies of the original manuscript are kept in the Biblioteca Nacional of Chile. The first edition of Lacunza's *La Venida del Mesias* ("The coming of the Messiah"), appeared in London in 1816. In 1826, also in London, appeared the Ackermann edition of Lacunza's original manuscript. In 1824 the Roman Catholic Church placed Lacunza's work on the *Index* of forbidden books (*Prohibitum quocumque idiomate*), and in July 1944 the Sacred Congregation stated that "mitigated millenarianism can not be safely taught" in the Catholic Church.

33. Since some women of Irving's congregation took a leading part in speaking in tongues and prophesying on millennial events, he unhesitatingly admitted them also into the ministry. Irving also believed in divine healing and that sickness was caused by sin. Three of his four children died very young, unattended by physicians. He himself died of consumption on December 7, 1834, in Strathclyde, Glasgow. He was interred in the crypt of Glasgow Cathedral.

34. In 1850 Horatius Bonar wrote a thirty one page preface to a second edition of Irving's *The Last Days*, sixteen years after his death. Among his concluding remarks, Bonar stated: "My sympathies are strongly with the author, and, in the main, with his sentiments and expositions; at least those bearing upon prophecy, and relating to the characteristics of the last days. . . . It is a work of power, but not of effort, giving evidence of a gifted mind, and an observant eye. . . . Thus, 'he being dead yet speaketh.' He speaks to the Church. He speaks to the kingdom. He speaks as a minister of the gospel. He speaks as an ambassador of Christ, and as a witness for his speedy coming. He speaks as a watchman, set by his commander on the tower of some beleaguered fortress, and he speaks as a soldier, cheering on his comrades in the day of sore and weary battle. He speaks as a patriot, in the fulness of his yearning heart,—a patriot of the ancient type and time, uncorrupted, undegenerated, single-eyed, and fearless,—a patriot of the truest stock, and noblest blood, that Scotland ever bore, or England reared."

panied M'Cheyne on the Mission of Inquiry to Palestine. Dr. Keith was a prolific writer. His most important work was *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy; particularly as illustrated by the History of the Jews, and by the Discoveries of Recent Travellers*.³⁵ The fondness of M'Cheyne and his friends for Irving's personality and premillennialism teaching was above doctrinal orthodoxy. In spite of the fact that Irving had held erroneous views on Christology and ecclesiology, which led the Church of Scotland to depose him from the ministry, M'Cheyne's eulogies of him were indeed high. In his *Diary* of November 9, 1834, he wrote: "Heard of Edward Irving's death. I look back upon him with awe, as one of the saints and martyrs of old. A holy man in spite of all his delusions and errors. He is now with His God and Saviour, whom he wronged so much, yet, I am persuaded, loved so sincerely. How should we lean for wisdom, not on ourselves, but on the God of all grace!"³⁶

When the godly cease and the faithful fail

In March 1843 M'Cheyne contracted typhus whilst visiting in the Hawkhill area of his parish. After two weeks' illness he became worse. In the days of his departure his sister repeated to him several hymns. The last words he heard, and the last he seemed to understand, were those of William Cowper's hymn *Sometimes the light surprises the Christian as he sings*. On the morning of March 25, 1843 he lifted up his hands as if in the attitude of pronouncing the blessing, and then sank down, and his soul was at rest.

"That same afternoon"—writes Bonar, "while preparing for Sabbath duties, the tidings reached me. I hastened down, though scarce knowing why I went. His people were that evening met together in the church, and such a sense of sorrow has not often been witnessed in Scotland. Perhaps, never was the death of one, whose whole occupation had been preaching the everlasting gospel, more felt by all the saints of God in Scotland. On the day of his burial, business was quite suspended in the parish. The streets, and every window, from the house to the grave, were crowded with those who felt that a prince in Israel had fallen. Altogether, not fewer than six or seven thousand people must have assembled. The grave was dug near the south-west corner of the church, and within a few yards of the pulpit from which

35. All subsequent publications of his deal with the same question and enlarge some of the prophecies related to Israel: *Signs of the Times, as Denoted by the Fulfilment of Historical Predictions, Traced Down from the Babylonian Captivity to the Present Time* (Edinburgh, 1832); *The Harmony of Prophecy; or Scriptural Illustrations of the Apocalypse* (Edinburgh, 1851); *The History and Destiny of the World and of the Church according to Scripture* (London, 1861).

36. *Memoir*, 37. Bonar's date of this entry is not correct. Irving died on 7 December 1834. M'Cheyne's reference to Irving's death had to be 9 December, and not November. M'Cheyne's advice to those interested in the subject of prophecy was this: "Begin with fulfilled prophecy: you will thus gain an intimate acquaintance with the language and manner of the prophetic writings. Then advance to the marks of unfulfilled prophecy, and cautiously and prayerfully to those parts that are obviously unfulfilled. This would be a most interesting course, and, if humbly followed out, cannot but give you great light and interest in the cause of Israel, and the world's conversion. For fulfilled prophecy you might follow the guidance of Alexander Keith on *Fulfilled Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy*, or Bishop Thomas Newton's *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy*, or both." Letter to George Shaw, Belfast, September 16, 1840; *Ibid.*, 251.

he so often and so faithfully proclaimed the word of life; and in this his lowly resting place all that is mortal of him was deposited, amid the tears and sobs of the crowd."

An imposing monument was erected on the grave. Among the many tributes to his memory which appeared at the time of his decease, Bonar cites the testimony of the Rev. J. Roxburgh, pastor also at Dundee, who, after a brief review of M'Cheyne's life, concluded with these words: "He was the most faultless and attractive exhibition of the true Christian which they had ever seen embodied in a living form. His great study was to be Christ-like. He was a man of remarkable singleness of heart. He lived but for one object: the glory of the Redeemer in connection with the salvation of immortal souls."³⁷

Epilogue

Robert M'Cheyne was the minister of St. Peter's Church from November 1836 until his death in March 1843. At that time St Peter's was able to seat over one thousand people. In the 1860s, as the gospel testimony expanded, the congregation decided to open a mission station not far from its grounds. This led to the building of "St. Peter's McCheyne Memorial Church of Scotland," inaugurated in 1870. Charles Haddon Spurgeon took a leading part in the opening service. During several decades nearly two thousand people attended the two churches. By the late 1980s, however, due to falling church attendance, St Peter's came near to being closed and turned into apartments, shops or even a nightclub. Thankfully that did not happen and the church is now once again a centre of gospel preaching, with an average attendance of one hundred people at the Sunday morning services. The building of St. Peter's M'Cheyne Memorial Church was used as a place of worship until autumn 1999 when, empty and disused, the building was put up for sale. According to a recent note in the *Dundee Courier* it is now to be turned into a pub. C&S

37. Bonar's "Concluding Memorials," *ibid.*, 593 ff.

Articles coming soon in *Christianity & Society*

IMMANENT DANGER
by A. B. Dayman

WHAT HAS JERUSALEM (OR RAMALLAH)
GOT TO DO WITH GENEVA?
by Esmond Birnie

DEW ON THE GRASS
by Nock Holloway

LAW AND APOSTASY IN ISLAM
by Christine Schirmacher

AN INTERVIEW WITH ESMOND BIRNIE

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL VISION OF FRIEDRICH JULIUS STAHL

by *Ruben Alvarado*

translation by *Ruben Alvarado*

[FRIEDRICH JULIUS STAHL (1802–1861) was one of the greatest statesmen of the nineteenth century. As one would expect, he has been completely overlooked by later historians. This may be because his efforts to merge divine-right monarchy with popular consent came to grief with the emergence of Otto von Bismarck, who took Prussia down the path of power worship. But his ideas lived on, in the work of the Dutch statesmen Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper, originators of the Dutch Anti-Revolutionary Party, both of whom recognised in Stahl the original anti-revolutionary.

Stahl was the brains behind the monarchy of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the “incurable romantic” who struggled to maintain “throne and altar” in the 1840s and 1850s in the face of advancing liberalism and Germanic nationalism. Both Friedrich Wilhelm and Stahl recognised acutely what Prussia and Germany were facing in the challenge of the age: the dethronement of the Christian revelation as the source of law, and the enthronement of autonomous man. Such is what came about with the establishment of the *Kaiserreich* of Friedrich Wilhelm’s son, Wilhelm I.

What follows are excerpts from Stahl’s magnum opus, *The Philosophy of Law*, which was published in two volumes, the first covering the history of legal philosophy, the second outlining a “Doctrine of Law and State on the Basis of the Christian World-View.”

The selections are taken from the first part of the second volume, covering general principles and private law. What is interesting right at the outset is his defence of his Christian presuppositionalism, Stahl arguing that all science presupposes some or other world-view. Stahl thus had already anticipated Kuyper’s presuppositionalism, the defining characteristic of Dutch Reformed theology and philosophy of the twentieth century.

Furthermore, Stahl’s analysis of the concepts of liberty, equality, and rights are outstanding examples of Christian scholarship. His recognition and fusion of the two great principles underlying true social order, the rights of man and the fear of God—giving both their due—form a dearly needed counterweight to the contemporary lopsided focus on human rights. As these selections demonstrate, Stahl is

well worth reading today. And not least by confessing Christians.—RA]

* * *

THE standards of law and the institutions of the State differ across different countries and times and, being the work of man, everywhere and of necessity contain evil as well as good. There is however something higher, something universal, at work in all creations of law and the State, which intends to be consummated in all of these, the consummation or lack thereof being what constitutes their superiority or poverty, and that is the inward unchanging essence of law and State. Now jurisprudence is simply the science of law and the State as it exists in a particular time under a particular people. From this stems the requirement of a higher science having as its object this inner unchanging essence of law and the State, which may be called the *doctrine of law and the State*.

The task of this science is firstly that deeper scientific knowledge itself. In consequence, however, it is also to serve practical ends, the purer application of law, the appraisal of existing legal institutions, the standard for their development.

Law and the State rest on the one hand on natural laws, the external conditions of human existence. From this perspective the doctrine of law and the State is the doctrine of *the State as a natural condition*. On the other hand, law and the State rest on ethical demands, and from this perspective the doctrine of law and the State forms part of ethics, the character of which is completely opposed to the natural sciences. Ethics has to do with laws found only in the will; the given [*gegeben*] material—law and the State in their factual existence as they have developed through human choice—is not, as with the natural sciences, its unconditional standard and archetype; in part it is concerned with material that is not even extant, with law and the State such as it ought to be shaped by man, as history would form it [*die Geschichte sie gestalten werde*]. The source of knowledge of this ethical dimension is however a dual one: actual legal structures and

their historical development external to us, which is how that essence of law must of necessity make itself known; and the ethical standard within us.

The doctrine of law and the State cannot be dissociated from positive legal science. Much rather, the latter cannot truly scientifically be pursued without becoming legal doctrine [*Rechtslehre*] in one degree or another, i.e., without penetrating into the inner universal nature of legal institutions, while the former cannot recognise the inner universal nature of legal institutions apart from determinate positive, albeit varying, legal institutions. To the degree that the doctrine of law and the State is obliged to take its cue from positive legal institutions, it may make use of this or that particular example as the basis and goal of its considerations; and for this purpose it is entitled and even called to select for its subject matter its own times and its own fatherland.

The goal of the enquiry into the nature of law and the State may be of a deeper or shallower degree of penetration. If it goes so far as to bring law and the State into connection with the highest cause and the final goal of all existence, it is *legal philosophy*. The doctrine of law and the State is not usually considered to have to go this deep; there is thus a doctrine of law and the State as a science over and above positive jurisprudence, which for all that is free of all philosophical admixture. On the other hand, legal philosophy cannot be of the sort that derives its entire content from those highest relations. There is too much human freedom and earthly contingency—perhaps, one dare add, divine positivity—to keep us from fathoming the borderlines and connections between reality and eternal principles. The highest that human science may hope to achieve is therefore simply *a doctrine of law and the State on the basis of philosophy*.

The conception of things in their all-encompassing interconnection according to their highest cause and their final goal is what we term world-view. Every philosophical system produces such a world-view. Every religion, and certainly the Christian, contains such a world-view, though not always with the same degree of realisation. We base the doctrine of law and the State upon the Christian religion. Right from the start we are justified in this by the external legitimation that nearly all European States, and especially Germany, have this religion as their factual foundation, and that the majority of persons, even those having rejected the Christian confession, still have not broken in any way with the Christian world-view. The inner justification, however, the one that tips the scales of scientific proof, will be provided, we hope, by this presentation. The scientific confirmation of the Christian world-view cannot extend so far, however, as to make faith optional for its acceptance. Science can only make room for faith, not render faith superfluous. Only keep this in mind, that such is no less the case with every other world-view as well, even those schools of current philosophy that oppose Christianity. Every philosophical system of whatever name in the final analysis rests on a foundational presupposition that is nothing more than faith, no matter what claim it may make to so-called scientific certainty. Even unbelief is a faith—one cannot reason from naked doubt. We have no immediate or homogeneous view of the highest principles of things and thus absolutely no certainty; therefore for philosophical systems a purely objective knowledge independent of all personal judgement, such as mathematics, the natural sciences or even the positive sciences, is ruled out.

Accordingly I cannot refute the charge that the philosophical foundations contained in the first book of this work will in part remain unacceptable to those who categorically reject the Christian revelation; I may however respond in the same way regarding every other philosophical exposition. On the other hand, in that it deals with immediately present, observable things I do make a claim to objectivity regarding the subsequent exposition of the doctrine of law and the State, because through the internally consistent explanation of the subject matter it makes its results scientifically certain.

* * *

BEING an inseparable attribute of personality, *freedom* is a basic right of man. Its extent is discerned from its proper understanding.

The essence of freedom is this, *to be determined only by oneself*. Inner moral freedom is to make one's own decisions, while external legal freedom is for one to determine one's own actions in human community. The former is freedom of the will in the strict sense, the latter freedom of action.

The innermost being of man is however a *determinate ethical essence*; it is *consciousness* of the same and the decisive exclusion of what is opposed to it; it is *individuality*, thus unending [*unendliche*] creative choice as manifestation of individuality (Book I section 39). Inner moral freedom thus does not exist where man cannot act according to his moral essence and in consciousness of that essence and according to his individuality. Man, determined by sin and the passions, submitting to the flesh rather than to the spirit, is not free, but unfree; because sin and the passions are not the essence of man, but a power standing in opposition to his essence. A child that obeys before being fully cognisant of commands is at the least less free. However, man is still not free when in religion he stands under the law, in morality under the maxim, in art under a style, rather than under grace, love, creative conviction; because although law, maxims and rules do not stand in opposition to his moral essence they do restrict his individuality.

Therefore *choice* most certainly forms part of moral freedom. Moral freedom does not mean being bound to an exhaustive blueprint that alone and thus completely and positively determines our actions; that subordinates man only to that which is the common equal essence of all men, leaving no room for individuality, which belongs to the individual alone and is the source of his productivity. Man is not free when he fulfills his duties as son, father, relative, citizen, in thoughtless imitation rather than in his own special way. Only this release from strictures, this choice, must always be based on necessity and constraint. Choice in terms of the good belongs to moral freedom, not the choice between good and evil. The choice between good and evil which actually faces man is a consequence of a division of his being, the consequence of being ruled, tempted, by a power alien to his essence—evil—and it is not freedom but disturbance. It is an attack on his freedom. The more perfect the character, the higher the level of freedom. The less of a choice between good and evil, the less possibility of evil, ignoble, dishonorable decisions.

Will the man who considers whether or not to steal, to lie, to flee as a soldier, be considered freer, or the one for whom there is no possibility of stealing, of lying, of fleeing his

duty, that can act only according to conscience and honour? It is not the vacillating character, still in a position to choose between good and evil, that is free, but the steadfast character that has become a law of unavoidable nature and necessity (Book I section 40).

In God, the highest personality, the aspects of freedom are present absolutely: an absolute immutable essence, which is God's holiness and wisdom—the absolute conscious exclusion of everything ungodly, unholy—absolute boundless, immeasurable individuality and creative power, all in complete harmony. Human freedom on the other hand needs to advance and is called to advance in all its aspects, and considering that the essence of man is permeated with sin, it is divided and contradictory in all its aspects. Man is to advance by gaining in consciousness and in resolution in excluding that which is contrary to his essence, which is evil. Therefore the one who through reflection has succeeded in gaining this advancement occupies a higher level and is freer than the naive and childlike man; the attainment of this resolution is the reason God allowed and allows temptation. At the same time man is to advance to a greater expression and freer revelation of individuality; he is called to greater creativity.

But while the essence of man is not divine and holy but is capable of providing a basis for an existence separated from God, a basis for self-seeking—for this reason the consciousness of the contradictions in his moral essence became a temptation to him and brought him to a fall; and after having fallen, the free revelation of his individuality also became a burgeoning revelation of this sin and the advance and confirmation of the same. Therefore a conflict arises among the relations of human freedom, with the preservation of man's moral essence threatened by the advance of consciousness and individuality. The advance of consciousness threatens innocence and purity, and the advance of individuality (in the particular sense of Christian freedom) threatens the strictness of laws and adherence to duty. The advancement [*Führung*] of the human race and the moral development of each individual progresses through these hurdles.

External legal freedom concerns external actions in social life, determined not by other persons, in particular the arbitrary will of the government, but by one's self. It is therefore characterised by these elements: that this order to which we are subordinated be in accordance with our true inner self, which is the truly moral, reasonable life-order; that insight into its laws and its foundations be accessible to us so that we can consciously obey it; that it provide our individuality with all the room it needs. We are not free in the legal sense under immoral, unreasonable laws, nor where law remains the secret of a certain class, nor where otherwise reasonable laws through obsolescence cease to allow room for our individuality, either by suppressing our national individuality or restricting our personal individuality. Finally, in the legal sense we are totally unfree where a tyrannical government simultaneously suppresses that order which accords with our moral essence and our individuality as well.

The first condition of legal freedom is thus the reasonableness of laws. The unreasonableness and thus immorality of laws is the first suppression of freedom. Against this, the maintenance of a public order for living among the people and this order's restriction of our actions is not as such a

reduction of our freedom but rather a postulate of it. When this order truly is morally reasonable, it sets us not against our actual self but in accordance with it. When we are required by the law-order not to divorce arbitrarily, to obey our elders, to provide for and educate our children etc., all of this is only the condition of our true inner self. And vice versa, if a law-order loses sight of all of this, we have not gained anything in freedom because we dare make any use of such latitude; for our actions we are left with only the support of our own moral essence, so losing a support of our freedom. This leads to the collapse of morals among the masses, uncertain of their own moral essence, as well as in the rising generation. Thus we have gained unfreedom.

But there is more! The moral life-order of a people is simultaneously the general valuation of our own moral essence in the external world and the highest guarantee of our freedom. This is because that which is in the highest degree my freedom is realised when my moral essence and fibre, thus my inner self, my true will striving for realisation and dominion, finds expression not simply in my own actions but also in the condition of the nation, and it is a violation of my freedom when contrary actions take away the aspect and impression of a morally ordered common life—one might say the moral atmosphere is removed; when I have to tolerate what violates my moral or religious sensibility; when public institutions neglect what this sensibility requires. Therefore the freedom of each entails the right to the existence of such a life-order where the family is maintained in its moral shape, the Church in its purity of faith, the entirety of public life in discipline and honour and unto the glory of God. It is not a violation of freedom to forbid and punish public disrespect, blasphemy, convenience divorce, but rather its establishment, not the maintenance of Church confessions, Church discipline and the setting apart of Sunday which violate freedom but rather their abandonment, not Church marriage but civil marriage.

No less however is the full expression of our individuality a demand of freedom. The maintenance of such a morally reasonable life-order among the people should not go so far as to cut this off. Partly it must not encroach upon the sphere to which our innermost personality or the creative use of our God-given gifts belongs. Partly it must progressively leave more and more room to individual decision in such areas as choice of occupation, choice of spouse, choice of faith, free scientific research and dissemination, free political endeavour. Therefore choice is also an indispensable element of legal freedom. In fact it is the blossoming of freedom, because choice is the expression of individuality. Even so, in legal freedom as well this choice must have a basis in moral necessity. Just as the ethical essence of man forms the basis for inner moral freedom, the ethical life-order of a people forms the basis for external legal freedom.

The ethical life-order of the people and the free manifestation of individuality permeate each other without observing a determinate borderline, with the result that with the latter a conflict arises for external freedom (as it does in the former case with internal freedom) in that the strictness of the people's ethical life-order—especially since it is in the hand of human and thus imperfect magistrates—may prejudice true ethical individuality, and vice versa: the full development of individuality may prejudice the ethical life-order. Therefore true legal freedom must rest on both bases, with

the point being to bring them into harmony in the most appropriate way and in line with circumstances.

Calvin's order in Geneva preserved a high degree of freedom for the believing congregation, because it expressed and put into practice to a high degree its innermost self, a truly religious, and more to the point a specific religious conviction; tolerance of libertinism lost its freedom. Considered in itself however this order restricted the expression of individuality, the more so as it was not without a heavy addition of human one-sidedness and narrowness, and thus did not entirely answer to the general human essence. Against this, the other extreme is to drop ethics from legislation as occurred at the end of the eighteenth century. This is not freedom but the abolition of freedom.

The fundamental error in this age's claim to freedom lies in the fact that it sees freedom as an empty moral possibility without content or goal, without a distinct moral essence. Accordingly, a person appears to be morally the freer the greater the choice he has between good and evil, the more his consciousness becomes a *tabula rasa*, until, finally reaching the zero point, where he is bound and determined by nothing, a person decides whether to become the most repulsive cad or the most elevated wise man. Thus legally a person appears the freer the more the public order allows all conceivable options, including the most repulsive, to be displayed before him: God-denying confession, an unrestrained press, riotous unions, frivolous parties, the ruinous pursuit of acquisition.

* * *

EQUALITY is one of man's original rights, though in definite measure, according to a definite relation. It does not exclude distinctions and rank, the inequality of actual rights, the inequality even of the capacity for rights. Abstract and unconditioned equality ("égalité") is by no means an original right of man.

In fact, the essence of man as person demands the equality of rights: what the one can lay claim to because he is a person (image of God), the other must also be able to lay claim to. But the plan of the ethical world demands inequality of rights. Because this plan gives people differing positions and tasks, they must also have different rights. As a person, man is an absolute totality for himself; this is the basis of the equality of rights. However, man is also a part and member of organic connections and institutions, and no organism is composed of equal members; this is the basis of the inequality of rights.

The considerations decisive to inequality are: the *diversity of people's natural characteristics*, the diversity of vocation, the diversity of previous deeds, and fate. Inequality of rights is grounded above all in the natural diversity of people: sex, age, health, even education. Inequality upon this basis is still seldom disputed even though examples are not lacking of philosophers, consistently carrying out the concept of equality, declaring the exclusion of women from public offices and legislative bodies to be a violation of human rights. Even rights that otherwise must be accorded generally can be denied on the grounds of natural hindrances such as insanity.

Inequality of rights is also grounded in the *diversity of vocations* and the characteristics, both natural and civil, that

are concerned with those vocations. The law involved in the relevant relationships provides each with the measure of his rights according to his position in those relationships. This is the case with the family; husband, wife, and children, each with their own tasks and their own rights—this is disputed by no one.

It is no less the case, however, with State and Church. Inequality in the State is not simply connected to the diversity of intellectual gifts, something which even the French Revolution recognized, but to the difference of every other quality decisive to the proper ordering of the public condition. The essential character of the State rather than the rights of personality is decisive for the question whether this inequality consists in a simple function or an enduring right, whether it is personal or hereditary. So for example it is part of the essential character of the State whether participation in its confession of faith is required for participation in its administration; whether real estate, namely landholding, is required to take up a position in the representative body; noble birth to inherit the crown, etc. Just as people are not mere means for the State, the State is not merely a means for people: participation in its administration must not be motivated by honour, income, enjoyment of ruling etc. nor by the sense of equality as such.

Inequality on this basis is therefore to be related to political rights per se, not to private law and not to class-based occupations and branches of industry, except where these are inseparably associated with political institutions. And they must not extend beyond the limits of the vocation. An inequality of rights, thus a preference, which is not grounded in any vocation, is a *privilege* [*privilegium*]. This is an unfair relation, or where it is grounded in historical progression and thus justified, nevertheless necessarily a restricted relation.

So for example it is no privilege that a large landowner should have a dominant share in a country's representative body, but it is a privilege when he is exempt from quartering soldiers or hypothecation or when his sons have exclusive qualification for State offices. To eliminate privileges is natural progress, to eliminate class rights [*Standesrechte*] is a disturbance contrary to nature.

Finally, inequality of rights is grounded in the *differences in the acts and occurrences of previous generations* and the *rights acquired* through these. When someone gets a wife and raises a son, he has a family-right over them that a bachelor does not have. It is the same when property is acquired or inherited. It is the same when a class, a city, or a family has acquired political rights in the previous history of the country.

All these inequalities must however preserve as their basis the essential equality of rights residing in the essence of the person. This is the element of truth in the error of the Revolution. There is a general civil right and honour which must be the substance of the legal condition. Inequalities must only be accidental to this, just as personality and its essence is the substance of man and the variety of vocations only the accident.

So for example where in their previous condition the Jews, and indeed often Christian confessions, were refused religious exercise, human existence atrophied. This essential equality was contradicted by gradations in penal law, where violations against nobles were punished more strictly than violations against commoners, or where one class was sub-

ject to corporal punishment while another was not. Thus it is a proper progression in equality that commoners can attain to estates and attendant positions in the representative body and that public offices in civil and military service be open to all.

In the area of ethics such an essential equality should also exist; this is an advance of the times; nevertheless, differences ought not to cease to exist: the elderly are entitled to a different sort of honour than the youth, as are the upper classes and the authorities [*Obrigkei*]. The task of this age does not lie in the elimination of distinctions, the leveling of political conditions, as the Revolution would have it, but in the *recovery of essential equality in the maintenance of grounded distinctions*. As in the Middle Ages chivalry and the law of knighthood formed the common substance (albeit for a restricted circle) in the light of which distinctions became less significant, and even the humblest knight was considered the equal of the king regardless of superiority and inferiority, regardless of the deep subjection to the power of kingship—this is Burke's impassioned description—so in our time (and for society as a whole) the concepts of human rights and human worth function in the same way.

Equality before the law is a truth and an advance of the times when understood as this essential citizenship common to all; it is an error and worthless notion when it is made to mean the abolition of legal distinctions, in particular distinctions of class.

The false concept of equality has been the major destructive force since the end of the last century. It entails unconditionally the impermissibility of kingship, of State religion, of political rights of landholders, and everything of this sort. It entails the abolition of the organic construction of the State. The most foolish effort along these lines was the effort to carry through this equality not simply in the area of law but also in the area of morals, to achieve through laws or moral coercion the fully equal treatment of the "citizen general" and the "citizen barbarian."

* * *

Protection of acquired rights is an original right of man. Acquired rights, as the name itself suggests, are not coeval with the existence of the person, but presuppose certain actions or occurrences and conditions [*lagen*], and thus do not form part of the rights of personality. What does form part of the rights of personality is the inviolable maintenance of acquired rights *after* they have been acquired. The rights acquired by individuals stand in opposition to natural rights, but the protection of acquired rights is itself a natural right. The complete worth of man as a person is found only in this stability of all legally acquired rights. This is because it is part of the essence of the person to be active for its condition and to be certain of its condition. The person is an *acting subject*; if therefore man is a person, his *deeds* must be recognised, and thus also the *rights that arise from those deeds*. The legal condition of people should not simply be the result of their being viewed in terms of *personality as concept*; it must also be, to some extent, their *own work*, the result of their *actions* and the related actions of other persons. And as in the existing order these are appropriately (legally) grounded or have been gained through achievement, so they must remain inviolable as an expansion of their being, as their world, over which their will

is established for the present and future. Otherwise they are not truly treated as a person but simply as a concept or object upon which certain actions necessarily occur. Thus the most masculine, powerful peoples hold acquired rights in the highest honour: the Romans, the Germans, and—in particular up until the present age—the English; and where this high honour does not exist, as with the Orientals and the Greeks, there it is that this full depth and strength of personality is lacking.

It is therefore a great error of the Revolution—and by extension [*annähernd*] the natural law theory—that when it protects, even imposes, what flows from the concept of man it believes that it is upholding man and his rights; but it refuses to recognise the result of his actions, *acquired rights*. It thus removes from him his self-causality and refuses him the certainty of his legal sphere; it preserves for him only what at any given moment others regard as his right, not what is his right in an unambiguous objective order. This is not the restoration but the destruction of the rights of man.

As already indicated in previous sections, here lies a further ground for legal equality in addition to that contained in the organic nature of legal institutions, especially the State. From here arise distinctions in wealth in the private sphere; should one, presumably in accordance with the nature of man, wish not to recognise acquired rights but rather the equality of possessions—the goal of the Communists—it would mean the dissolution of society.

However, political positions are also acquired as rights in this manner, partly as the individual historical formation of an organic position grounded in the essence of the State (e.g. rights of English peerage), partly however as truly accidental rights without any inner ground in the essence of the State. It should be said however that the legal situation is not perfect, nor even appropriate, in which these accidental political rights and inequalities can arise; nevertheless, once having arisen in a legal manner they must be held in regard and protected on the strength of the right of the person.

This is especially true for so-called feudal rights. Their appropriateness to times past or present is irrelevant. One may dispute that and come to a differing judgment for differing rights. Their legality in former times is beyond doubt, and since then they are equal to all other acquired rights. No age is called to pass judgment over the past and to recognise or to abolish rights arising in the past according to its view of their appropriateness.

Like all human freedom and action, acquired rights are bounded in their validity by that which the idea of the common condition and the legal order, or their natural progression, promotes or excludes with unavoidable necessity. From this follows:

1. Acquired rights cannot be considered inviolable to the degree that they eliminate another's right of personality, e.g. the slave trader appeals in vain to his *jus quaesitum*. It is similar to the way the freedom of the one cannot be allowed to violate the integrity of another.
2. In developed State constitutions, in which each member is allotted his position on behalf of [*für*] the whole, no new political rights can be acquired *for the future* and no place can be made for inequality through simple incidental actions of individual participants.
3. In the overarching world-historical development of the public condition in its entirety, acquired rights of indi-

vidual persons or classes in the final analysis must give way because they are in constant relation to the entirety and only derive their protection from that entirety. They can be changed, even absorbed. However, even then they must, give place *as rights* and be *recognised as such* where the public well-being no longer can support them, and in the most considerate manner, if at all possible with compensation. The violent abolition of acquired rights out of political considerations is not a progressive and regular function of the State organism but the work of extraordinary times, and therefore is better viewed as a world-historical than a juridical phenomenon.

The newer school culminating in the French Revolution does not recognise the concept of acquired rights. For this school rights arise at any moment, like new from top to bottom, through reason and the popular will. This is the view not only regarding specifically political rights (rights to rulership) but also regarding all rights of acquisition and capital as far as they are, or appear to be, involved with a political institution—for example, so-called feudal rights, toll and trade rights, immunities and the like. This school only recognises the concept of acquired rights as regarding pure private property, which is a right that completely isolates the one against the other; and it does so inconsistently, because if the present is at all called to judge the past and to investigate the title of rights derived from the past, then this calling holds for all rights without distinction, and this great investigation must concern itself not only with the rationality of feudal rights but also with the rationality of property.

Since it does not go this far, the newer school (liberalism) does recognise acquired rights. It justifies their abolition by way of exception, in terms of the undeniable admissibility of what is required to maintain the public condition. Even here, however, it by far exceeds the true principle in terms of kind and of measure. It considers abolition to be justified for the common good (*salus publica, bien publique*), by which it does not understand *public necessity*, which is the irrefutable need for healthy, salutary continuity and organic development, but simply *bare utility (lucrum)*, and often by this utility intending the utility of the *majority*, thus the people over against the higher classes, rather than the well-being [*wohlbestand*] of the whole.

There are however no legal grounds for removing the rights or possessions of individuals or minorities because it is *advantageous* to someone else, or the majority, or even the State. And then it is often a simply imaginary utility, a mere doctrinaire ideal for which acquired rights are violated, as for example with the so-called liberation of landed property. Furthermore, these rights are not yielded up as rights, as in the case of conflict between the development of the public condition and individual rights, with the latter considered inferior. These individual rights are not even recognised where they are, or appear to be, an affront to the common existence. It wipes them out at once as something unlawful.

This entire approach led to the more or less inconsiderate and unjustified abolition of acquired rights, in the end leading to the radical destruction of the legal situation and the refusal of compensation. Taking the lead in Europe in this regard was the notorious night of Aug. 4th 1789 (“the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of property”). The recognition of this fact cannot be denied out of consideration of the motive of personal sacrifice for the public welfare, nor from

the fact that multiple legal institutions (serfdom, incidental tribute and the like) needed to be abolished or changed. Apart from the degree to which terrorism, false sentimentality and womanising vanity determined actions, this abolition of existing rights in individual cases was often entirely unfounded and even partly chimerical . . . and as a whole was carried out in such excess and upheaval of social conditions and gave such a shock to legal principles that it could not have been guided by true political or economic utility. The *Declaration Of The Rights Of Man* in the same year constituted the fulfillment of the announcements made that night, and by way of completion the matter was closed through the law of July 17th 1793, which abolished all feudal rights without compensation.

In Germany, such a radical implementation of these false principles did not take place because the Revolution did not there become fully realised. On the other hand, such was at least contemplated and announced in 1848, in the “basic rights” of the German national assembly, and was realised in at least a few acts, such as the abolition of all rights of previously entitled orders, the knighthood and the Prussian hunting law. Even after 1848, the oft unfounded abolition of rights was proclaimed either with insufficient compensation or none at all. The worst example of this was the intervention in the property rights of the Church; the grossest irony is that this was viewed as taking place out of a supreme consideration for the public welfare (*salus publica suprema lex esto*) when in fact the majesty and security of Church property was sacrificed for the benefit of certain individuals.

While all this forms part and parcel of a volatile period, it continues to be the widespread opinion that every forced renunciation of acquired rights for the true or alleged improvement of the public condition is justified, especially where money compensation is offered. The most extreme and factually unrealisable exaggeration from the opposite end of the spectrum is that of the Haller school, which considers rights once they have arisen to be absolutely inviolable for all eternity. This makes the rights of man just as much an exclusive principle as does the liberal theory. It is the consequence of the private-law absolute isolation of rights.

* * *

THE image of God in man is the final ground of the right of the person. In it lies the obligation on the civil order not only to preserve the rights necessary merely for the existence of the person, but also to elevate him to an ever higher level of entitlement, freedom and gratification, which we described above as the original right. It is this power which motivates our times at its deepest level.

Among the many partly true, partly misunderstood efforts of these times, one appears in full clarity: the recognition of the rights of man. This does not belong simply to the area of law. More deeply comprehended, it is the principle of humanity: the idea that the well-being, the right, the honor of every individual, even the most humble, is the occupation of the community, which views each person in accordance with his individuality, which protects, honours, improves without respect to descent, class, race, gift, as long as he has a human face. This is the characteristic principle of the times and what constitutes its true worth. From it stems

the abolition of serfdom, torture, the toleration of deviant religious confessions, the elevation of lower classes to equal civil honour, the many philanthropic pursuits, the effort to provide a satisfactory existence for the starving masses. This principle was alien to previous times, even that of the Reformation. Certainly, where Christian faith exists, neighborly love and thus humanity is of necessity the motivation of life.

However, this neighborly love in the past only concerned corporal and spiritual well-being, not entitlement, freedom or the honour of men, and only provided the motivation for personal action, not the civil order. The outlook of improving entire classes out of a motivation of humanity, of spiritual individuality, of recognising the honour of each person, did not inspire any institution in those times. Only in the most recent period has humanity in its full concept become an energetic virtue, the principle determining the entire society.

On the other hand, earlier periods of European Christianity had the fear of God as the motivation for the public order, the unconditional devotion to God's command and ordinances and the zeal to glorify God. Recent times, prior to the revival of Christian faith (that is the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century), had eliminated this motivation. Every trace of the recognition of an unconditional divine command, every obligation to fulfill the will of the living God disappeared from it. Only the recognition of men and their convictions and opinions, and the care for men, remained as guideline.

Thus in the area of religion only tolerance remained a recognised and praised motivation, not however the zeal for God's word and God's honour, that previously was the only such recognised motivation. Tolerance has no boundaries, all religious or much rather irreligious doctrines are to have equal rights and equal honour, and even deistic and pantheistic doctrine of every stripe is to be recognised as Christian and as a Church as long as it considers itself to be so. On the other hand, fidelity to divine truth, to maintain the true revelation of God, finds no consideration when it maintains its true measure, much less so when it in any way oversteps its boundaries.

It is the same in the political area. The State is based solely on human rights, not on higher goals; this is the sympathy for all opposition against all authority; it lacks the recognition of unconditional commands for the legal order. From this springs opposition to the death penalty and in fact to any sort of punishment. In the absence of a higher command that the criminal must be punished, that where blood is spilled, blood must be spilled, this becomes an institution for improving the criminal or a means of providing for the security of others. From this springs the claim for unconditional divorce, making the happiness of the spouses, their sense of what is agreeable, the decisive concern and not the higher, unconditional command that what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. From this everywhere stems the revolt against all discipline, against all restrictions meant to fulfill a higher order of life.

The fear of God and integral humanity [*die volle*

Menschlichkeit] are the twin poles of the ethical world order. The fear of God puts the seal of majesty on the individual man and the public condition. This majesty consists in being fully subsumed in the will of God and therefore in the unconditional fulfillment of higher commands without regard either for one's own life and well-being or the life and well-being of others. It elevates man above himself and all the powers and frailties of the earthly world.

A picture of such majesty and unconditional devotion to God, in which, at least in accordance with our knowledge and our standard, motivation out of humanity is virtually absent, is found in the colossal appearance of Samuel in the Old Testament. Similar character, perhaps tempered by the spirit of the New Covenant, ran through the great men of the Puritan Church. Humanity however is what provides the stamp of beauty, love and kindness, the final consummation. The fear of God everywhere in dignity is the highest, in time the first. It begets humanity from itself. This is the eternal law, the course of history. Upon reaching maturity, however, it dare not close itself off, for in that case it becomes rotten and kills, it becomes Pharisaism in its manner of thinking, in institutions becomes a despotic and grotesque oppression.

On the other hand, humanity dare not free itself from this, its true root. Otherwise it softens into the weakness of mutual permissiveness, into mutual interest merely regarding corporal, earthly existence, the momentary indulgence of other persons to one's own enduring damage as well as to the collective. Thus, love becomes the practice of sensual well-being, freedom the recognition of arbitrariness. As Kant put it, it is false humanity to make the man of appearance (*homo phenomenon*) the linchpin rather than man as he truly is (*homo noumenon*). For the public order, however, humanity freed from the fear of God leads on the one hand to fanaticism, as in the Revolution when the rights of man were imposed through the guillotine, and on the other hand, because human society can only be held together through God's ordinances, first to the loosening and then the dissolution of society.

This is therefore the shadowy side of recent times along with its higher worth: that it only seeks man while being loosed from what stands above man. Of the two parts through which the law is fulfilled—you shall love the Lord your God above all things, and your neighbor as yourself—it has arbitrarily picked out the second while ignoring the first, it has demolished the first of the two tables of the law while proposing to establish only the second.

This is however contrary to the eternal ordinance. No building can stand when one removes the foundation, no tree can live when one lays the axe to the roots. The task of the times is therefore not the ongoing one-sided advance of humanity and the rights of man, but the restoration of the fear of God as the energetic principle in both hearts and public institutions, while in it and through it preserving humanity and the rights of man. This is the union of the truth of former times with contemporary times. It gives the testimonies of the one and the other principle their pure shape and their complete meaning and value. C&S

REDEMPTION VERSUS THE FALL

by Derek Carlsen

THE impact of Adam and Eve's rebellion had universal consequences, bringing death, destruction and suffering to every aspect of life in this world—nothing was unaffected by the Fall. Every part of man's being was polluted and corrupted, though this doesn't mean that all people are as depraved as they could possibly become or that they will follow after and commit every possible sin—God in his Sovereign goodness prevents this from happening so that life can be sustained and his work in the world can go forward. Nevertheless, Scripture tells us that not just mankind, but the whole of the created realm was affected by the Fall and the effects of this are clearly visible both within us and around us.¹ Rather than changing his purpose for creation or mankind's role in it after the Fall, God continued right on with the same plan.² It is obvious that God has always been concerned about the whole of his creation, for example, he didn't just protect people from destruction in the world-wide flood in Noah's time, but animals too and his commands show his consideration for the whole of creation, including animals and vegetation.³ God doesn't deal with mankind in isolation from the rest of creation—ever!

THE SCOPE OF REDEMPTION

All that God created had one original purpose—to glorify himself and the reason why God continues to love our broken world is because his intentions for it have never changed. Reconciliation with God, through Christ, has never been restricted to only certain areas, but has always included the whole of life—all is to glorify him, for this is why everything was created in the first place.⁴ We are told that God so loved the *world*, that he sent his Son to pay the price of redemption for the whole *world*.⁵ The word "world" in Scripture has a number of meanings and can refer to: people, the earth, that which is hostile to God, the universe (i.e. everything that has been created, as well as the ordered system existing within the universe), the sum total of something as well as life with its joys and sufferings. It is the context that enables us to determine how an author is using a particular word.

God created a world with order and structure and he put humans in charge of it to govern it for his glory.⁶ It was due

to the then still future sacrifice of Christ that the world, together with mankind, were not destroyed when Adam and Eve rebelled (Gen. 3:14, 15). God's plan was that Christ's sacrifice would not only deal with the consequences of moral pollution in humans, but make possible the correct ordering of the whole of creation through his redeemed servants. It was the world and its whole system that God originally created for his glory (Col. 1:16), and it is the world and its whole system that is expected to glorify God as a result of Christ's completed work on Calvary. This is confirmed by the fact that Christ told his followers to make disciples of the *nations* and teach the *nations* everything he had commanded (Mt. 28:19, 20). While this includes individuals, its focus is upon groups of people united by a bond and structure that makes them into an identifiable people, group or nation. The structure includes everything that is necessary for making a nation a nation, i.e. law, justice, courts, economic system, business, education, the arts, police, military, politics, etc.—all of these aspects are to be included in the Great *Discipling* Commission given in Matthew 28. Christ is concerned with nothing less than the restoration of people within the whole ordered structure of their existence—he doesn't redeem only some aspects within their existence. It is man within the whole created world structure that Christ came to redeem and restore, which includes every aspect of life that contributes towards shaping individuals into nations or people groups—i.e. the *whole* world is in view.⁷ An important meaning of the verbal form of "world" is, "put in order or adorn."⁸ God's redeemed children are still expected to exercise authority, under God, over the whole of creation and to put it in order, i.e. rule it for his glory. It is God who applies Christ's work of redemption to the elect, but it is also God who applies these benefits to creation in general and he does this when his servants live in faithful submission to his every word (Dt. 28)—this is how they *adorn* the world. Sin and its effects in the rest of creation are eradicated by obedience to God's every word—the obedience of Christ and of his redeemed servants, who walk in the power of the Spirit by his grace. Why then are we to instruct the nations to observe everything that Christ has commanded? Because God has given to Christ all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18–20) and a dominion and kingdom that all nations should serve him (Dan. 7:14; Ps. 2).

All things in this world belong to God's children, i.e. Christians (1 Cor. 3:21, 22) and thus are to be used by them

1. Gen. 3:17–19; Rom. 8:20–22.

2. Gen. 1:28; 8:17; 9:1, 7; Ps. 8; Heb. 2:5–8.

3. Gen. 33:13, 14; Dt. 20:19; 22:6, 7; 25:4; Pr. 12:10.

4. Pr. 16:4; Isa. 43:7; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16; Heb. 2:10.

5. John 3:16, 17, 19. 6. Gen. 1:26: 2:15, 19.

7. John 1:29; 3:16, 17; 4:42; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Jn 4:14.

8. Lk. 11:25; Rev. 21:2.

in a way that glorifies the Lord, who is the ultimate owner and ruler.⁹ Everything that exists should manifest and exude godliness (2 Cor. 2:14). If it doesn't, it is because it is not subject to the will of the Lord.¹⁰ But God's goal is to bring everything into complete subjection to his word, for his glory—it was for this purpose that Christ took upon himself human flesh (Jn 1:14; 1 Jn 3:8). The only way any aspect of God's creation glorifies him, is when it functions or is used in the way he commands and sufficient instruction has been given so that we might know what does and what does not glorify him (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). The starting place for glorifying the Lord is redemption and the only basis for redemption is Christ's one sacrifice (Heb. 10:12, 13). The effects of Christ's redemption reach as far as the effects of Adam's rebellion (Rom. 5:16, 17)—this is a vital pillar in the Christian's world- and life-view.

Adam's rebellion affected everything in the world and thus Christ came into the world to deal with the effects of rebellion in every area. In principle, Christ's work has destroyed the dominion of sin and rebellion in all of life, however, it is God's plan to apply this victory gradually to all of life,¹¹ through his redeemed servants when they live by every word from his mouth—Kingdom influence grows together with the sanctification (i.e. obedience) of Christ's followers. As those who have been born from above apply God's truth, in the power of the Spirit, to their own lives and all of life around themselves, God's Kingdom advances and his name is glorified. God is glorified when his followers faithfully do all that he has said, in contrast to Adam who refused to live by God's word in this world, but sought to live according to his own word and wisdom. Just as Adam's rebellion affected all of life, so too Christ's obedience affects all of life, making possible the fulfilment of God's original plan for his creation—a plan that is to be carried out by his faithful servants living in total dependence upon and in complete submission to Christ. True faith is not demonstrated by our professions of love or faithfulness (Pr. 20:6), but by our faithful obedience to God's every word while we serve him in his world.¹² The single purpose behind God's words is so that the whole of his creation will glorify him (Rom. 11:36)—which is achieved when every part functions in accordance with his revealed will for it.¹³

Many other passages in Scripture also lead us to the conclusion that Christ's redemptive work touches *every aspect* of life in this world rather than just people's "souls." While the redeemed continue to live in a world that is fallen, they are told not to succumb to the way the unredeemed think and behave (Rom. 12:1, 2), and the renewing of their minds includes reshaping the way they think about everything (2 Cor. 10:4, 5). Bearing in mind these verses that tell us how we ought to think about all things, when we are told that Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth,¹⁴ how ought they to rule—according to their own whims or according to the wishes of the Creator, Redeemer and Lord? Christ addresses every area of life so that we can glorify him in all areas (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), for example: we are told what responsibilities God has delegated to the State and what duties citizens have

towards their leaders;¹⁵ we are told about our family and broader social responsibilities;¹⁶ we are told about righteous economic/business dealings and the justice of individuals owning property¹⁷ etc. Living in obedience to God's word in all the different areas of life results in God's blessings upon these areas, whereas disobedience results in further judgement upon these same areas (Dt. 8 and 28). The earth is the Lord's and everything in it and he shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, for all things were made through him and for him.¹⁸

CREATION RECLAIMED

God's opinion about his completed work of creation was, "indeed, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). This statement of extreme satisfaction applied to everything—the visible as well as the invisible aspects of his work (Col. 1:16). A great obstacle in the thinking of many people arises from their misunderstanding about sin and thus they fail to distinguish between the evil that they see in the world and God's original creation, which was very good. The mistake is that instead of seeing sin and corruption as something alien to God's original work, they identify it with some aspect of his creation. Wrong thinking here then affects the way these believers behave. When people equate some aspect of the created order with sin, they tend to think that that aspect is the *source* of sin. This false perception results in them separating themselves and their Christian witness from that area or aspect of life, believing that in so doing, they are separating themselves from sin. However, such behaviour breeds more sin and a greater manifestation of evil in that particular area from where the light and salt have been withdrawn.

When we identify something that is part of God's original creation as the *source* of sin, rather than as something good that has been contaminated by the effects of sin, we will have a perverted view of the Kingdom and what our responsibilities are in the Kingdom. Sin flows from the human heart and is a wilful act of rebellion against God's law (1 Jn 3:4). The Shorter Catechism answers question 14 by saying, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." Sin is wanting to exert your own wishes and will by functioning within God's creation in accordance with your own wisdom, rather than in submission to God's revelation. The consequences of refusing to live by every word from God's mouth (Mt. 4:4), will be corruption and evil dominating the different areas of life. God created each area of life to function in an ordered way that brings blessings upon his servants and glory to his name. When people refuse to bow to God's revelation with respect to how a particular area of life should function, the fruit within that area will be corruption and evil. It is madness for people to then look at the

15. 1 Kings 10:9; Ps. 82:1–4; Jer. 5:28; 22:3; Dan. 4:27; Rom. 13:1–4; 1 Tim. 1:8–10; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13–17.

16. Ps. 82:3, 4; 146:3; Pr. 14:21; Isa. 1:17; Micah 6:8; Zech. 7:9, 10; 8:16, 17; Mt. 5:13–16, 43, 44; 25:38–40; Lk. 14:13; Rom. 13:8; 15:26; 2 Cor. 12:14; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 5:22–33; 6:1–9; Col. 3:18–21; 1 Tim. 5:8; 6:17, 18.

17. Ex. 20:15; Lev. 19:13–15, 35, 36; Dt. 25:13–15; Pr. 11:1; Isa. 1:22; Ezk. 22:12, 13; Amos 8:4–6; Mt. 20:15; Acts 5:4; 1 Tim. 5:18.

18. Ps. 24:1; 72:8; Col. 1:16, see too, comments on Jn 7:38, 39; 12:31–33; 18:37, in Derek Carlsen, *That You May Believe: Commentary on John's Gospel* (Cape Town: Christian Liberty Books, 2001).

9. Dt. 10:14; Ps. 22:28; 24:1; 50:12; Acts 17:26; 1 Cor. 10:26.

10. Mt. 4:4; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2 Cor. 10:5.

11. Ex. 23:29, 30; Dt. 7:22; Dan. 2:31–35; Mt. 13:31–33; Mk. 4:26–29.

12. Mt. 4:4; Jn 14:15; 1 John 5:2, 3.

13. Jn 15:7–11; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 13:21.

14. Ps. 2:10–12; 72:11; Pr. 8:15, 16; Dan. 7:14; Rev. 1:5; 11:15.

corruption in a particular area and say that aspect of God's creation is the source of evil and so we must withdraw ourselves and our influence from that area of life if we want to be holy unto the Lord. Yet this is what many who call on the Lord's name have been doing and continue to do. For example, they say, "As Christians we mustn't be involved in politics, because politics is so corrupt." Yet politics is one of the areas of government that has been ordained by God (Rom. 13:1) and thus ought to glorify him. The corruption that is so prevalent in politics today is a result of man's wilful rebellion against doing what God has revealed about that area and it is made worse when the light is withdrawn even more from that realm in the name of "spirituality" or "holy living."

Holiness is not separating ourselves from life in this world, but separating ourselves from sin, and sin is any action that is not in submission to God's word—this means we are expected to do everything in the way God has commanded. Remember, God has spoken about all of life so that we might do good works for his glory in every area of life (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). To turn this on its head and deny that God has spoken about all of life and insist that holiness means separating ourselves from some aspect of God's original creation, is to take sides with the devil. To refuse to be involved with Christ in the work of re-creation is to oppose his purposes in this world—which is rebellion and rebellion is no different to witchcraft or the occult.¹⁹ Christ did not come to remove people from the created world, but to deliver them from sin so that they could glorify him in this world by obediently labouring with him for the re-creation of all things. Christ's atonement frees us from the bondage of sin so that we can do his will in this world, for his glory.²⁰ Christ became *flesh* so that he could redeem the whole of our being in order for us to be able to faithfully serve him in the whole of his creation—for the whole of his creation is meant to glorify him. Our call to rule under God cannot be separated from the responsibility to work for the advancing of life *in this world*—i.e. advancing civilisation.

Sin (which is an act of wilful rebellion against God's law), is an intrusion into and not a part of God's original creation order. If we don't keep a clear distinction between God's good, original creation and sin (the alien that has intruded into and perverted God's good creation), then we will relinquish God's creation to the devil (by withdrawing our influence from certain or all areas of life) and refuse to be involved with Christ in his work of re-creation. The purpose of Christ's coming was to deal with this alien so that Christ's name might be glorified in the whole world and he is glorified when his will is done in all areas of life.²¹ That is why Paul's desire for the Colossians was that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work (Col. 1:9, 10). By knowing and doing the Lord's will in everything, the Colossians would live lives well pleasing to God and their labour would be fruitful in the Kingdom. Christ calls us to be involved in his work, but sin says no, man must be about his own work, which is to be defined by his own word (Gen. 3:5,

6). Many Christians who live according to their own law-word say it is sinful to be involved in re-creation, since holiness means separating oneself from the contamination in this world by separating oneself from many of the affairs of life. "Holiness," according to this perverted thinking, is striving to have as little as possible to do with the structures and functionings of ordered society in this world. However, it is sin, not any aspect of God's creation, that is bad. Adam and Eve introduced sin into the human race when they refused to function within God's creation in accordance with his revelation. They didn't regard creation as something made to glorify God alone—by every aspect of life functioning in obedience to his will. They felt they had just as much right as God had to determine how things should be ordered in the world and so they decided to operate in accordance with their own wisdom and for their own exaltation. The result of this was corruption and bondage bursting forth in all of life. Nothing about God and his purposes have changed since then—all of life is still meant to glorify him and this still requires that his servants obediently do all things in this world in submission to his revelation, for this alone is the source of blessing and liberty.²² The Scriptures tell us that liberty is being conformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:17, 18). To be like Christ means doing everything in obedience to God's revelation.²³ Corruption is a result of sin and sin is any act of rebellion against the law-word of God. Rebellion is living in this world, in any area of life, according to principles other than God's clear and specific instructions.

We must not think God's purpose for creating changed when sin entered his creation. Mankind's authority over all things (though under God) was not cancelled after the fall²⁴ and the clear testimony of Scripture shows that those who obey the Lord are blessed and those who rebel against his ways are cursed. Every aspect of this world was created for man's benefit and for God's glory, thus we must never separate our glorifying the Lord from the whole of creation glorifying him.

This means we must not restrict Kingdom only work to isolated aspects of life and think God is truly glorified if we just focus all our attention upon these. The reason God created people in his own image (distinguishing them from the rest of his creation) was so that they had the ability to fulfil their responsibility to rule, as God's vice-regents, over every part of creation. We are not only to live in submission to the Lord in every area of our own personal lives, but we have a responsibility to bring every area of life into submission to the Lord's will, for this is what glorifies him. Adam and Eve were created as mature adults and capable of exercising God-glorifying dominion over the whole earth. This means that mankind, from the beginning, had the capacity and knowledge, under God, to make every aspect of life and culture reflect God's wisdom and receive his blessing.

Primitiveness, on the other hand, is a consequence of sin and rebellion against God—it is a consequence of God's curse. Every people-group descends directly from Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5) and thus it is from wilfully suppressing the truth in unrighteousness that people-groups end up living in darkness and oppression. It is/was their refusal to glorify the Lord by the way they live on

19. 1 Sam. 15:23, see too, Derek Carlsen, *Muse Time* papers: Dualism; Christ and Politics; and Self-Made Religion, (Reason of Hope Ministries, Mutare, Zimbabwe), 2000, 2001.

20. Jn 8:31, 32; Rom. 8:21; Jam. 1:25. 21. Mt. 6:10; 28:19, 20.

22. Ps. 19:10, 11; 106:3; 119:2, 3.

23. Jn 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10, 24; 2 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:10.

24. Gen. 1:26–28; 9:1–3.

earth that makes them reap the consequences of rebellion in their personal, cultural and national lives—they knew the truth and rebelled against it, choosing rather to live according to human wisdom in all the different aspects of life. Our evangelism, missions and acts of mercy must acknowledge that different societies are in various stages of coming out of or going back into primitiveness due to either their obedience to, or wilful rebellion against, the Creator and Lord of the universe (Dt. 28).

MAKING THINGS NEW

The words in the Scriptures that talk about the free gift of salvation found in Christ all have the sense of restoring and renovating. The emphasis is upon being made new, or renewed. Thus Jesus talked with Nicodemus about being *born again* (John 3:3–5); the prophets about having a *new heart* (Ezk. 36:26); and Paul about having a *renewed mind* (Rom. 12:2). All of these emphasise a regaining of health and returning to vitality. Hebrews tells us that Christ's coming will be a time of *reformation* (Heb. 9:8–10).²⁵ Only by suppressing the truth is it possible to restrict this restoration to only the hearts or souls of individuals (whatever that means). Why do so many people accept that the fall had consequences for all of life, but reject the possibility that man's redemption from the bondage of sin touches all of life? I believe it was Jay Adams who asked whether we thought the effects of Adam's disobedience were more comprehensive than the effects of Christ's perfect obedience and sacrifice? How can the first Adam's rebellion be more powerful than the last Adam's obedience?²⁶ In other words, when placed opposite one another, how can the rebellion of a man counter the obedience of the God-Man?

There is no biblical basis for limiting Christ's work of restoration to only *some* areas of life in this world! God created all that exists for the sole purpose of glorifying himself. The whole reason Christ came to earth, took upon himself human flesh (Jn 1:14) and died for the whole world (Jn 3:16), was to "make new again," that is, restore, the whole world to health and wholeness. Jesus said he came so that we might have life and have it more abundantly (Jn 10:10). Those who say Christ is not wanting to renew all things have to tell us which areas of life in this world he does not want to renew. Where is the justification for claiming that some aspects within Christ's creation shouldn't bring glory to him and that he has therefore cut them off from his renewing power? Was the death of God's Son only able to redeem some parts of God's creation and structure? If so, what is it going to cost him to redeem all of life? When the pollution of sin touched all things because of Adam's sin, did God then give up, as a lost cause, the most fundamental reason for his creative work—that all things glorify him? No, he immediately implemented his eternal plan of sending his Son into the world to bring about the reconciliation of all things (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). It was right after the fall that we learn of the

25. On the word "reformation" in vs. 10, B. F. Westcott said, "The word *διόρθωσις* is not found elsewhere in biblical Greek. It is used in late Greek writers for the reformation of *laws, institutions, states* [emphasis added—DC]. . . Under different aspects this 'reformation' is spoken of as a 'restitution' (Acts 3:21) . . . and a 'regeneration' (Mt. 19:28)" *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, (London: Macmillan and Co, 1920), p. 256.

26. Rom. 5:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:45–49.

promised Seed who would crush the head (authority and dominion) of the evil one (Gen. 3:15).

The truth is, because of what Christ has *already* accomplished, he expects everything in all of creation to be salvaged, redeemed, restored and renovated by his power and for his glory. The extent of God's reconciliation in Christ is with "all things" (Col. 1:19, 20) and Christ completed the work his Father sent him to do and that is why he said, as he died, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30).

THE VICTORIOUS MESSIAH

Psalm 1 is an introduction to the whole book of Psalms and it contrasts the blessing of the righteous with the utter destruction and blowing away of the wicked. Psalm 2 then shows this contrast much more distinctly and reveals who the source of both the blessing and cursing is—the Anointed One, the Christ. Psalm 2 was universally regarded by the ancient Jews as foretelling the Messiah's work. In Acts 4:25, 26 the whole company of apostles quote from the first 2 verses of this Psalm and apply them to Jesus, believing this to be a direct prediction of him. Paul in Acts 13:33 and the writer to the Hebrews (1:5; 5:5) used this Psalm to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, saying this is the Christ whom we preach to you—the nation conquering King! Psalm 110 talks about an illustrious King who is exalted to sit on the throne with God and reigns over all his enemies and suppresses all their resistance.

Jesus took it for granted that Psalm 110 referred to the Messiah and the Pharisees didn't challenge his interpretation (cf. Mt. 22:41–46). The New Testament quotes from this Psalm more than from any other passage in the Older Testament. It is said that the Christian writers, in the first century after Christ, also quoted from this Psalm more than any other passage.

J. A. Alexander says, Psalm 110 is the counterpart to Psalm 2 and completes the prophetic picture of the conquering Messiah.²⁷ It begins with the kingship of the Messiah, but the heart and focus is found in vs. 4, showing that his priesthood is inseparable from his kingship. Melchizedek is the great prophetic character that is both king and priest at the same time—Sacrificial Lamb and Reigning King (people usually can't include both in their thinking). The prophet Zechariah says that the Messiah "shall be a priest on his throne" (Zech. 6:13). The Messiah is clearly both King and High Priest on one and the same throne—his atonement *and* rule are inseparable.

Daniel, in a vision, actually foresaw Christ's enthronement as the promised King (Dan. 7:13, 14). This is not a picture of the second coming, for Christ was seen going *up* to the Ancient of Days, *not* coming from him. This is a prediction by Daniel of the climax of the first advent, in which, after atoning for sins and defeating death and Satan, the Lord ascended on the clouds of heaven to be seated on his glorious throne at his Father's right hand. This was a prophecy teaching that at Christ's ascension he would be exalted to the place of supreme power—Christ is reigning now!

Peter in Acts 2 says Christ is already at the right hand of God's power. He has already attained this supreme position.

27. J. A. Alexander, *Commentary on Psalms*. (Kregel Publications, Michigan, 1991), p. 464.

Peter then tells us through the inspiration of the holy Spirit, that Pentecost was God's sign or proof that Christ has all power now. In Acts 2:33 Peter says, "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God . . . he poured out this which you now see and hear." Peter says that Christ is Lord of Lords and King of kings now, that he is on the throne already, that he is at the place of supreme authority and power in the universe from where he already rules, and the proof for all of this is Pentecost. Christ is reigning over everything now. His rule and his Kingdom are sovereign. Satan is still alive, but he is not well. This is what the Scriptures clearly tell us.

DESTROYING SATAN'S KINGDOM

From the very beginning of his ministry Christ set about destroying Satan's kingdom and building his Kingdom on its ruins. Satan had tried to destroy Christ as a child (Mt. 2:13) and he had tried to overthrow him through the temptations in the wilderness (Mt. 4:1–11), but he had failed every time. At the beginning of Christ's ministry he began plundering Satan's kingdom and even Christ's disciples were trampling upon the powers of darkness. In Lk. 10:17 the 70 said to Jesus, "Even the demons are subject to us in your name." Jesus explained that Satan's power, kingdom and ascendancy had been broken—there was a new master on the block. He also said that there had been a dramatic fall in the power of Satan—like a flash of lightning—such was the rapid decline. Satan's kingdom had been served a fatal blow by the incarnation, unsuccessful temptations and exorcising power of Christ.²⁸

When Jesus was plundering Satan's kingdom, he explained to his audience that he was able to do this because the Kingdom of God had come upon them. He went on to tell them that it would be impossible for him to do this if he had not *already* bound the strong man—Satan (Mt. 12:29). Satan's dominance has been destroyed. Not his influence, but his dominion. Jesus said in John 12:31, "Now is the judgement of this rebellious world order. Now the prince of the sinful world will be cast out."²⁹

Paul used military imagery to explain this in Col. 2:15: "Having disarmed principalities and powers, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." Heb. 2:14 teaches that through Christ's bursting the bonds of death, Satan was rendered powerless. In 1 John 3:8 we are told that "the Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the Devil." Gen. 3:15 prophesied that the Messiah would be wounded, however, this wound would result in the serpent's head being *crushed*—this happened at Calvary. Satan's most powerful weapon (death), was used by Christ as an instrument to destroy Satan and his dominion. Satan has already been judged (Jn 16:11) and believers are reminded that Christ who dwells in them is far greater than the devil (1 Jn 4:4). Thus they must expect Satan to be bruised under their feet (Rom. 16:20) and that he will flee from them when they resist him (James 4:7)—this is reality whether Satan likes it or not and the just must live by

faith, faithfully serving the King in accordance with this reality by exposing and pushing back the works of darkness wherever they are found.³⁰

It is wrong to underestimate the universal impact that sin had upon all of life, but it is even worse to underestimate the universal impact that Christ's redemption has upon all of life. The extent of redemption is as wide as the extent of the fall. As the great hymn writer Isaac Watts expressed in his hymn, *Joy to the World*: "He comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found." The effects of the fall, in every aspect of reality, have in principle, been dealt with by the death and resurrection of Christ. Legally, there is nothing more to do to break the grasp sin had upon all things—Christ has fully accomplished everything that was required to break its dominion in every area of life.³¹

It was through one man's disobedience that sin entered into the whole world and contaminated every aspect of it. This rebellion against God is continued by every sinner—Satan rules through those who serve him and therefore he is called "the god of this world" (i.e. he rules those who are living in rebellion against the true God). Remember, anyone who is not self-consciously serving Christ, is serving Satan—nothing remains undisputed because there is no such thing as neutrality in any area of life. The Scriptures tell us, however, that through one man's obedience (Christ's), righteousness has been restored to the world (Rom. 5:19). Christ's reign, though, is manifested through the lives of his faithful servants. As the fruit of sin is advanced through the efforts of Satan's servants, so too, the fruit of righteousness is advanced through the efforts of Christ's servants. How do we know who someone is serving? They are serving whoever they are obeying.³² Christ has shown us what good works are in every area of life (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) and the devil's servants oppose Christ's instructions in all these areas, seeking to live by any word other than God's. As the sinner seeks to pervert and destroy all things, the child of God works for the restoration of all things—this is the great distinction between the Kingdom of life and the kingdom of death. Christ came to restore abundant *life* (Jn 10:10). Christ is the King and his Kingdom refers to him exercising his rule over everything in his Kingdom (it all belongs to him).³³ Those who deny Christ's rule in some area of life are no different to the servants in Christ's parable who said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Lk. 19:14).

The whole conflict that exists in history has to do with the creature resisting God's purposes for his creation—people want to run the affairs of this world according to *their* principles, not God's. The reason the Father sent Christ to die for the sins of the world, was so that the whole of creation would glorify him. When a child of God refuses to bring God's light and truth to bear upon some aspect of life in God's creation, whose glory are they seeking? Is God glorified by darkness and the reign of evil, or by the bringing in of light, liberty and life where there was darkness, bondage and death?³⁴ The comprehensive Fall (i.e. it touches every aspect of life) has been comprehensively overcome by the completed work of Christ (Rom. 5:15–21), the giver of life (1

28. Dr. Greg Bahnsen, *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, 1:2, 1974, p. 35.

29. See the comments on this verse in Derek Carlsen, *That You May Believe: Commentary on John's Gospel*. (Christian Liberty Books, Cape Town), 2001.

30. Mk 6:17,18; Lk. 3:19; Eph. 5:11.

31. See comments on John 7:38, 39, Derek Carlsen, *ibid.*

32. Rom. 6:13, 16; 2 Pet. 2:19.

33. Ex. 19:5; Dt. 10:14; Ps. 24:1; 1 Cor. 10:26.

34. Mt. 4:16; 5:13–16; Lk. 1:77–79; 4:18, 19; Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:11, 13.

Cor.15:45). As well as making atonement, Christ poured out an abundance of the Holy Spirit upon his Church so that his redeemed servants can be co-labourers with him in the work of bringing every aspect of life into submission to him.³⁵ We overcome the rebellion in the world by our faith (1 Jn 5:3–

5)—faith that Christ’s work of redemption applies to all of life, and faith to live by his word alone in every area of life, not fearing those who hate and oppose the light (Rev. 12:11).

It is a sign of faithlessness when those who call on the name of the Lord continue to act as though the effects of the Fall are greater than the effects of Christ’s redemption and thus do not press the crown rights of King Jesus into every area of life. *C&S*

35. Mt. 28:18–20; Lk. 24:46–49; Acts 1:8.

THE MURDER OF CHRISTIANS IN PAKISTAN—THREE CASE STUDIES

In my Editorial for the July 2004 issue of *Christianity & Society* (Vol. xiv, No. 3), “From Jihad to Great Commission,” I made reference to the persecution and murder of Christians in Pakistan by Muslims (p. 4a). Since the publication of that issue I have been sent more detailed information on how Christians are persecuted and murdered in Pakistan by Muslims and on how Islamic law in Pakistan affords them no protection against such persecution and murder.

Sharia law is based not merely upon the Koran, but equally upon Hadiths (traditional sayings of the Prophet). Abbas Zaidi, writing from Pakistan in the Spring 2000 issue of *The Salisbury Review* says “In many countries, like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, the hadiths are taken to be on a par with the Koran and along with the Koran have been made into the supreme source of Muslim law. Also, in many cases the Koranic injunctions have been put aside in favour of the hadiths. The Talibans and the Wahabis never allow the Koran to be read in a local language; but the hadiths are always available in local languages. Why? Because you can justify anything from the hadiths: from the honour killing of women to the killing of Shias, Ahmedis and Christians. The Islamic jurists say that any Muslim who turns apostate [i.e. abandons the Islamic faith—SCP] must be killed ‘in accordance with the Islamic law,’ but in the Koran, Allah explicitly says that if anyone becomes an apostate it is ‘between him and Me’ and that such a person will be dealt with on the Day of Judgement. Interestingly, those Muslim intellectuals who have, now or in the past, pleaded against the validity of the hadiths have been declared non-Muslims by the Saudi-funded Islamic inquisition.”¹

A well-attested Hadith of the Muslim prophet states: “I am commanded to fight against men until they bear witness that there is no God but Allāh, and that Muhammad is God’s messenger; only by pronouncing these words can they make their property and blood secure from me.”² It is clear from this that Islam has no concept of common law. Those who are not Muslims can expect no protection from the law in an

Islamic State. To be a Christian in a Muslim State is to be beyond the protection of the law. This is the condition of non-Muslims under *Sharia* law.

The following three case studies demonstrate the gruesome reality of life under *Sharia* law for Christians in Pakistan and other Islamic State.³ They were sent to me by Nasir Saeed, coordinator of the Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS), and appeared originally as press releases. For more information contact the Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS), P. O. Box 81, Southall, Middlesex, UB2 5YQ England. Tel. 020 8867 9180/07000 780 466. Fax. 202 8867 7422, Email: asint@lineone.net. Website: www.cltf.org.uk.—SCP

1. *Samuel Masih, allegedly charged under the blasphemy law, then murdered by the police*

Samuel Masih, a 32 year-old Pakistani Christian, while accused of blasphemy under Section 295 of the Pakistan Penal Code, was murdered on Saturday 28th May 2004 by the police. The killer said that his faith compelled him to try and kill Samuel. “I have offered my religious duty for killing the man. I’m spiritually satisfied and ready to face the consequences” he is reported to have said.

Samuel was accused of throwing waste against the wall of a mosque. He was beaten up by a Muslim prayer leader and others, then handed over to the police. He was arrested on August 23rd, 2003 and was remanded in custody in Lahore Central Jail, where he remained until 22nd May 2004. He was then transferred to Gulab Devi Hospital, suffering with tuberculosis. A police guard was provided for his security in the hospital, but on May 24th at 4.30 a.m. a police constable allegedly attacked him with a brick cutter. After the attack Samuel went into a coma with serious head injuries.

Mr Shaheryar Shergill, a CLAAS Research Officer, was left to look into Samuel’s condition but when he reached the hospital the situation was very critical. No one was allowed

1. *The Salisbury Review* (Spring 2000), Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 40.

2. *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. 1, Bk 2, no. 24; Bk 8, no. 387; Vol. 4, Bk 52, no. 196; Vol. 9, Bk 84, no. 59; *Sunan Abu-Dawud*, Bk 14, no. 2635; Bk 19, no. 3061.

3. For information on the situation in Africa see *Christianity & Society*, Vol. xii, No. 1 (Jan. 2002).

to get inside the ward except hospital staff. Mr Joseph Francis (Coordinator of CLAAS-PK), Mr Akbar Munawar Durrani (Solicitor for CLAAS) and Mr Younis Alam (Director of Minority Rights Commission of Pakistan) also reached the hospital and found that the hospital ward was surrounded by police. The police neither allowed them to see Samuel nor gave them any information about his condition. The team was asked to contact the Home Department as it was dealing with this case they (the police) were only answerable to the Home Department. The doctor on duty, Mr Sikandar and the other hospital staff also refused to cooperate and told the team to consult the police or the Home Department, as they were involved with the case.

Samuel was in General Hospital, Ward 18, bed no. 1 and he was imprisoned in Central Jail Lahore under charges of committing blasphemy. The team remained there until 2.00 a.m., at which point there had still been no news about Samuel's condition. Somehow the team requested one Christian nurse to check his condition and were told that there was a pulse, but no blood pressure and that he was not breathing (almost dead). He was being given oxygen through machines and in a comatose state.

CLAAS-PK has filed a written petition against this incident and sent it to the Deputy Inspector General Prison, Punjab, the Home Secretary Punjab, Superintendent Jail Kot Lakhpat, Lahore, Superintendent jail Camp Jail, Lahore and the Chief Executive of General Hospital.

Mr Nasir Saeed, the coordinator of CLAAS-UK said that persecution against Christians and religious intolerance has increased. Christians have no religious freedom and are living under constant fear of their lives. Mr Saeed said further that Pakistani Christians are suffering because of the blasphemy law and other Islamic discriminatory laws.

CLAAS has raised this matter with the Pakistani government and have also brought this matter to the attention of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, European parliamentarians, British MPs, UNO and other international human rights forums.

Samuel Masih is not the first person charged with blasphemy who has been murdered without trial. Tahir Iqbal, a Christian converted from Islam was poisoned to death in jail. Niamat Ahmer, a teacher, poet and writer, was murdered by extremists in 1992, accused of blasphemy. Bantu Masih, aged 80, was stabbed and killed in the presence of the police in 1992. Mukhtar Masih, aged 50, was tortured to death in police custody and in 1994 Manzoor Masih, aged 37, was shot dead outside the high court in Lahore.

2. *Javaid Anjum, died from wounds inflicted by torture*

Javaid Anjum, a 19 year-old Bachelor of Commerce student, was abducted on 17th April 2004 and taken to the *Madressah* (seminary) of *Maulvi* Ghulam Rasool while on his way to his grandfather's house after visiting his aunt in Toba Tek Singh. He was continuously tortured for five days and nights for no other reason that that he was a Christian and drank water from a tap at the *Madressah*. He was given electric shocks and compelled to deny Christ. His right arm and fingers had been broken, both his kidneys were in failure, his nails had been pulled out, his feet were swollen due to beating and pus was gushing out from different parts of his body. He was also forced to recite the *Kalima* (the Muslim creed) and to embrace Islam, but he never gave up

and remained faithful to the Lord (Rev. 2:10) despite being ferociously traumatised.

After five days of a sanguinary torture he was handed over to the police with an allegation of theft. The police, seeing that his was in a critical condition, handed him over to his family and he was then taken to hospital, but did not survive, leaving his family to sackcloth and ashes.

After getting the news from a local newspaper on 3rd May 2004 two members of CLAAS, Mr Shaheryar Shergill and Mr Shahid Anthony, went to meet the mourning family and to inquire about the incident.

Pervaiz Masih, the victim's father, told CLAAS members that Javaid along with his sister and mother had come to Gojra to visit their grandfather on 16th April 2004. The next day they went to visit their aunt living in Toba Tek Singh at a distance of about 25km from Gojra and while on his way home to Gojra Javaid disappeared. Pervaiz was informed that his son was missing. The next day he went to Gojra and started his search. He disseminated the information about his absence through the cable TV and he reported it to the police, but to no avail.

On 22nd April his family was informed by the police that Javaid had been caught on theft charges. But when they reached the police station they found him in a critical condition and took him to a hospital in Gojra. The doctors referred him to Allied Hospital Faisalabad, where he went through several dialyses, since both his kidneys had failed, but he did not survive and died on 2nd Mat 2004 at 3.00 a.m. in the morning.

3. *Nasir Masih, tortured to death by the police*

Nasir Masih, a 26 year-old Christian was tortured to death by police in Pakistan on 19th August 2004. Nasir was picked up by some Muslims for celebration of the Pakistani Independence Day on 14th August 2004, who later brought false theft charges against him. B Division Police arrested Nasir and handed him over to the Saddar police station where he was tied up and continuously tortured by five policemen for three days to confess the crime, which he never committed.

On August 16th he was presented in the Magistrates Court for remand but the court denied his remand and sent him to jail. Instead of being provided with proper medical treatment in jail he was admitted into a general ward and on August 19th Nasir died from his serious injuries. This is not an isolated case of extra judicial killing. There are several other bad examples such as Sunil Samuel, Samuel Masih and Baba Barkat, but unfortunately justice has never been done. The post-mortem report witnesses twenty-one injuries on Nasir's body and when local Christians and community leaders protested against the brutal death of Nasir and demanded the registration of the case and the arrest of the culprits the police arrested 250 Christians under 16MPO (a military court order) who later bailed out.

Mr Nasir Saeed, coordinator of CLAAS-UK has said that the police are biased against Christians and fair treatment is impossible. Persecution and religious intolerance have increased and Christians are living in constant fear for their lives. Mr Saeed has expressed grave concern over the death of Nasir Masih in his letter to the Pakistani government official and has demanded immediate justice and compensation. C&S

Book Reviews

FAITH AND HOPE IN TECHNOLOGY
BY EGBERT SCHURMAN

Toronto, Canada, Clements Publishing, 2003,
213 pages, paperback, ISBN 1-894667-28-X

REVIEWED BY COLIN WRIGHT

EGBERT SCHURMAN is an engineer and a reformationist philosopher of science, two good reasons to be attracted to his book dealing with the relationship between Christianity and technology.

As an aspiring engineer at University in the Sixties I was often the object of puzzled expressions: why did I not have oil on my hands and grease under my fingernails? It hurt somewhat to be treated so disparagingly. No doubt today such treatment would be regarded as politically incorrect; engineers are people too, to be treated with the dignity already accorded to other disadvantaged minority groups. But mostly I suppose it bred a reaction in me to regard these “pure” scientists as beneath my dignity and crank up the status of engineers a few notches, at least in my own mind.

As for *reformationalists*, I early on supposed that this meant they were philosophers of the Reformed tradition. I had good cause to do so as far as I could see. The man they all looked up to, Herman Dooyeweerd, was not only trying to reform philosophy along Christian lines but he was also a Dutch Calvinist and seemingly proud of it. The society of Christian philosophers that he and his brother-in-law, Dr Dirk Vollenhoven, set up in Holland was originally called the *Association of Calvinistic Philosophy* (see *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, I, 524. I understand it is now called the *Association of Reformational Philosophy*). Alas, the dream was soon shattered. It transpired that the term *reformational* (the “R” seems to have early degenerated into an “r”) referred solely to the agenda to reform philosophy. And even if this reform was meant to be from a Christian perspective, it quickly became clear that this did not imply that the Bible had much if anything to say about it. Somehow or other, philosophers (and scientists) are driven by “Scriptural motives” in this reforming process, but the motives are not susceptible of articulation. The result, as far as I can see, is that most reformationist thought is humanist thought with a Christian tincture. Thus reformationalists by and large seem to follow the modern secular world in its Gadarene rush to political and scientific correctness. They have their own versions of evolution (but they call it creation!), they support homosexual behaviour, feminism and socialism and

an ethics that has little relation to the Ten Words. This is an over-simplification no doubt, but a simplification not a false description; the varieties are manifold. I expect to get some stick over this, but I can only add that it is the perception I have obtained from forty years of reading their material.

Schuurman’s original Dutch edition was entitled *Geloven in wetenschap en techniek—Hoop voor de toekomst*. That is, *Faith in science and technology—Hope for the future*. I mention it only because here *science* as well as *technology* are under scrutiny. I do not understand why the English edition wants to hide this fact. The book is about how the application of science to all of life is both wrong and destructive.

The relationship between science and technology is a fascinating one. At present I do not feel competent to pronounce on it. But I do believe there is considerable evidence to suggest that science—that is the system of theories regarding nature—has little if anything to do with technology. The two are often confused but I am fairly convinced that this is a case of the wish willing the event. Most things scientific are not so at all; they are merely better organised. As the aforesaid engineering student I was confronted with Frederick Taylor’s famous book on *Scientific Management*.¹ There is nothing really scientific about this either. Using a large shovel to move very light coke, and using a small one to move heavy coal is plain, old-fashioned common-sense. And plain, old-fashioned common-sense is so novel in industry (even 40 years later) that it looks scientific. It is developed technique or, as we say, technology.

But it is important to modern secular humanism. It provides a justification for its science as the genuine foundation of all authentic knowledge and, as such, a tool to beat Christianity. The ever-changing nature of those theories and my own experiences as an engineer leads me to suppose that things are other than we have been taught.

To return to Schuurman: in his preface he makes an interesting point. He believes that “more attention needs to be paid to the fact that our technological culture is at the same time a *secularized* culture” (my italics, CW). He adds that “the prevalent spirit in our culture is technicistic, which is to say that the spirit of technology pervades the whole of culture.” He wants to change this view of culture. “The prevalent scientific picture of culture,” he says, “must make way for the picture of the earth as a garden to be developed or cultivated so that it blooms.” These theses raise some quite profound issues about culture and the way we should view it.

1. Frederick W. Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper Bros., 1911). It is currently available from Dover Books, reprinted from the 1911 edition.

They also raise legitimate suspicions, I believe, about the true origins of Schuurman's own vision of culture. These suspicions will have to be tested against the ensuing chapters of the book.

The first chapter—*Faith and Science in the Context of a Technical Culture*—gets off to a reasonably good start. But while it presents a clear and unambiguous case reassessing some of our modern views of science and religion, it seems to fall down on the level of justification. That is, while it presents an analysis of our cultural situation in terms of *assertions*, it rarely provides adequate justification for these assertions. Of course, that would make it a much bigger book by far, but it is both intriguing and frustrating that the author leaves out so much of the detailed case. It is almost as if he were talking solely to the reformationalist *cognoscenti*, rather than making a case for the newcomer.

The second chapter—*The Influence of Technical Thinking*—is very interesting though it is far more concerned with science than technology. Schuurman's use of *technicism* gives us the clue: for him it is largely about the view that science is to be a controlling knowledge, a knowledge that leads to power.

Schuurman's analysis of scientific knowledge and its relationship to naïve experience is helpful and I believe, biblical. He recognises the limits and provisional character of theory whilst acknowledging the richness of our everyday (naïve) experience. The following is a very lucid and helpful statement:

Scientific knowledge is relative, which is to say open and provisional in *character*. Through science we cannot fully fathom reality. Even the sum of many forms, even all possible forms of scientific knowledge, does not enable us to grasp reality as having been created by, through, and for God. Scientific knowledge as *universal* knowledge—its strength!—is always at the same time *restricted, reduced, functional* knowledge. As such scientific knowledge is poor by comparison with the unfathomable depth of the mystery that created reality is. The insight that scientific knowledge is grounded in a reality that cannot be plumbed to its full depth arises from the realization and recognition of faith that reality (*creatura*) is not grounded in itself but is a creation of God (*creatio*). (p. 48)

In a later chapter he adds: "Reality is scientized; that is to say, the abstractions of science become characteristics of reality, and the richness and scope of reality in its fullness is reduced" (p. 97).

But the chapter is largely concerned with the evolution-creation debate. Schuurman has some excellent things to say on this debate though, disappointingly, he fails to make his position crystal clear. This is my usual frustration with reformationalist types. He attacks *evolutionism*, not *evolution*. Is there a difference? Schuurman says there is; *evolutionism*, he says, is a totality-concept and operates as a full-blown world-and-life view. "In that case the origin and development of life, the development from animal to human, and so forth, is interpreted in terms of evolution . . . There are no arguments which prescribe evolution as a necessary explanation for a wide variety of developments in the existing world. Macro-evolution is a construct" (p. 38). But we are left completely in the dark about what evolution could be from Schuurman's perspective. And even though I would be sympathetic to some use of the word (in contexts where it was not misleading), I would nevertheless want to clearly and unambiguously define what I meant by it,

especially in the context of an ideological debate. Conditions may lead various animals to develop or adapt to those conditions. Darwin noted the way chaffinch beaks were modified depending on their staple diet. Humans in Western Europe are generally taller than a century ago, probably due to greater exposure to light thanks to the invention of the electric light bulb. But these facts never imply that a bird can become a giraffe, or a monkey a man. I am suspicious on this point for a very good reason: I find that when pushed many reformationalists do believe in evolution up to a point, and drag God in to do the remarkable bits that avoid the need to accept the evident consequences of evolution. Perhaps the most amazing example of this is in Dirk Stafleu's article in *Philosophia Reformata* (vol. 67. no. 1, 2002)—"Evolution, History, and the Individual Character of a Person." Stafleu has swallowed modern science whole but because he is a Christian he has difficulties with modern science's ideas of the emergence of life and, even more seriously, its idea of the emergence of man. These ideas sound the death-knell for Christianity. Stafleu has a cunning plan! Put those "events" beyond the pale of scientific investigation and even beyond the horizon of human experience:

This universal law [all life originates from life] prevents a biological explanation of the emergence of the first living things. The actual beginning of life lies behind the biological horizon of experience. However, because this emergence remains within the astrophysical horizon, one cannot exclude a natural explanation, even if it is not available at present. From a Christian point of view, this means no less than the acknowledgement, that the possibility of the emergence of living beings is laid down in creation.

I do not see how this can mean anything less than that life could emerge in a natural, that is, non-supernatural, way from a non-life universe. But this is what Stafleu understands by holding to the Christian doctrine of *creation*. So you see my problem with Schuurman. Nevertheless, this chapter is well worth engaging with. The assault on evolutionism is followed by a critical look at what he calls *scientific* creationism. This is largely an attack on the creationist movement in America and has, I believe, some justification.

Still, I do not understand Schuurman's insistence that no facts for science can be drawn from Scripture. He regards this as unwarranted positivism. In an important passage he says:

That is a philosophy which proceeds from the given facts alone and rejects all speculation. Facts, to creationists, include not only empirically observable facts but also biblical facts. When in building a scientific edifice justice is done to both kinds of facts, it will be evident that there is harmony between the Bible and science. Or, as I once heard a creationist say, the Bible is true, so scientific results must be in harmony with it. In the end this view makes clear that scientific creationists want to defend scientifically that the Bible is reliable. In other words the Bible furnishes a framework containing decisive information for science, while scientific facts confirm biblical truth in harmony with this framework. (p. 52)

Sure, there are some who want to argue to the truth of Bible from their science rather than vice versa but I do not think this position is logically entailed in the insistence that scientific facts must conform to Scripture. This implication is wholly unwarranted. Schuurman himself is not beyond treating some biblical facts as scientific facts, the Noachian flood, for example (p. 58). That event, he says, is historical

data that *must* be incorporated in the geologists' hypotheses. And he cannot understand how Christian biologists and geologists can deny the historicity of that event. So I wonder why he finds Genesis One such a problem. (p. 55). For him the days just cannot be "ordinary days of 24 hours as we experience them, but creation days on which God created." This is gobbledegook. God says they are days, days of evening and morning. There is nothing to indicate that they are anything else. Neither does holding them to be periods of 24 hours in any way deny that what God did on those days is far beyond all human comprehension and experience. The fact is, like most Christians, Schuurman really does believe modern science is right and that it has the right to dictate to us what we can and cannot accept in the biblical narrative.

It is all the more surprising therefore when he concludes that "I am opposed to the practice of theologians who, under the influence of the 'success' of the natural sciences, read into Genesis 1 what it does not say. Genesis 1 has normative power: it is definitive for the role and boundaries of our thinking and hence also for the objectives of science." I could not agree more. But neither may we refuse to read *out* of Genesis 1 that which is contained in it. Before Schuurman or anyone else can pontificate on these Six Days, I for one demand that they back up their assertions with evidence, *and evidence from Scripture at that*. Why is it that, of all the books ever written, the Bible is the only one man will not accept as meaning what it says? It is not good enough simply to assert these are some sort of weird "creation" days—whatever *that* means—without demonstrating what these days are, and precisely why the ordinary everyday meaning of the words just cannot be right.

Neither is the resort to terming passages of Holy Writ *poetry* or *apocalyptic*—whatever *they* mean—any more satisfactory. Who or what, in any case, gives such assertors the right to foist these ideas upon us? They act as if they and they alone know what God means, forever insisting too that he rarely, if ever, means what he says. They are the new mediators between God and man. Sometimes they themselves, especially from the pulpit, as good as say so quite explicitly. As with so many others who pursue this argument against Scripture, much of Schuurman's case rests on *non sequiturs*: he assumes that the opposite position requires assumptions and consequences, totally without warrant.

The remainder of the book is basically a long diatribe against modern technology. Schuurman would like to embrace technology itself but is convinced it was as bad a move for mankind as coming down out of the trees. He rarely sees it outside of the context of its abuse as *technicism*, that is, as a universal control tool. Thus his arguments are pretty weak; he concentrates rather on the hand-wringing approach—whine about how bad it all is in practice. There are of course some very rich seams of thought here, but the continual whining instead of developing a positive Christian alternative masks everything. Much of the narrative would be equally at home in the publications of Greenpeace or some other environmentalist or anti-technology or anti-capitalist literature. Schuurman has missed a great opportunity to show what Christianity could offer as an alternative. Even what alternatives he does offer have little Christian foundation and are rarely based on an analysis of the text of Scripture. But how could they be? He has already tied his own hands behind his back when he decided Scripture could

not possibly mean what it said, and certainly contained no facts that could be incorporated into the sciences.

So as a source of much useful information and light on developing a Christian perspective on science and technology I do not see this volume as having a successful future. Nevertheless, the reader could do worse than give it a thorough and critical review. Sometimes one can learn as much from what an author does not say as from what he does. There can be no doubt that Schuurman's most fundamental thesis in this book—that Western society is sick, that its approach to science is the cause of much of this sickness, and that only Christianity can offer a viable alternative and cure—is one I would wholly endorse and recommend to my readers. *C&S*

NO OTHER GOD:
A RESPONSE TO OPEN THEISM
BY JOHN M. FRAME

Presbyterian and Reformed, 2001, 235 pages,
ISBN: 0-87552-185-1

MOST MOVED MOVER:
A THEOLOGY OF GOD'S OPENNESS
BY CLARK H. PINNOCK

Baker and Paternoster Press, 2001 xiii plus 202 pages,
ISBN: 1-84227-014-1

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN J. HAYHOW

OPEN THEISM is about the doctrine of God, it's about who God is and what he is like—in his sovereignty, his unchangeability, and especially *how* he stands and interacts with his Creation, in time and space. There are passages in the Scripture which affirm God's unchanging nature and purposes. For example:

Of old You laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
They will perish, but You will endure;
Yes, they will all grow old like a garment;
Like a cloak You will change them,
And they will be changed.
But You are the same,
And Your years will have no end. (Ps.102:25–27)

For I am the LORD, I do not change;
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. (Mal. 3:6)

And of course there are many more besides. But then there are passages that say that God does change in some way (e.g. 1 Sam. 15:35); that God grieves; that He changes His mind, and so on.

So the question is then, which set of passages "leads" in the interpretation of the other set? Do we affirm the unchangeability of God, and *therefore* conclude that God cannot *really* grieve, change or repent? Or do we start with the passages that say that God changes, grieves, has emotions etc. and interpret the unchangeability, impassibility of

God in the light of these passages? Of course there is the danger of rationalism in both directions. This is where the whole Open Theism debate begins.

Open Theism claims to be a “new perspective on God” (Clark p. x.) and it is gaining acceptance in Evangelical churches and amongst evangelical theologians. The leading spokesman for Open Theism is Clark Pinnock, Professor of Christian Interpretation at McMaster Divinity School, Ontario, Canada. Pinnock says that Open Theism “asks us to imagine a response-able and self-sacrificing God of changeable faithfulness and vulnerable power . . . Love is God’s essence and power only an attribute.” Pinnock is open in presenting Open Theism as a *new* position, which he expected might provoke discussion. So what are the main features of this new theology? Citing John Sanders, Pinnock delineates four:

First, God loves us and desires for us to enter into reciprocal relations with him and with our fellow creatures. The divine intention in creating us was for us to experience the triune love and respond to it with love of our own. In this, we would freely come to collaborate with God toward the achievement of God’s goals. Second, God has sovereignly decided to make some of his actions contingent on our requests and actions. God establishes the project and elicits our collaboration in it. Hence there is a conditionality in God, in that he truly responds to what we do. Third, God chooses to exercise a general rather than a meticulous providence, allowing space for us to operate and God to be resourceful in working with it. Fourth, God granted us the libertarian freedom necessary for personal relationships of love to develop. God freely enters into give and take relations with us which are genuine and which entail risk-taking on his part because we are capable of letting God down. (Pinnock, p. 5)

Open Theism represents a new view of God’s sovereignty—a participatory one. God does not absolutely, from all eternity plan and govern all things. Rather He works with His creatures to achieve His purposes. God always however achieve His ultimate purposes around the big goals, because He is smart enough to be able to overcome man’s purposes, without ever violating man’s “libertarian freedom.” God can never control men because men have created libertarian freedom. Now of course this raises a whole set of problems:

First, this implies that there might be sin in the Consummation State—after all if God can never violate our freedom, then maybe we might choose to sin? Pinnock allows that this might be the case. But he also says that “It may be that in heaven, the purpose of our probation having been fulfilled, freedom may be withdrawn” (p. 31). On the other hand “One may envisage a process of transformation that results in such a confirmation of character in which we will not be able to sin” (p. 31). How this process of transformation works in heaven is unclear. Does this mean we sin for a while, but grow out of it? Is there progressive sanctification in heaven, in the Final State?

Secondly, this means that God’s knowledge is actually limited—because it excludes a certain knowledge of the future. Again, Pinnock says, “Though God knows all there is to know about the world, there are aspects about the future that even God does not know. Though unchangeable with respect to his character and the steadfastness of his purposes, God changes in the light of what happens by interacting with the world” (Pinnock, p. 32).

Thirdly, there are clearly implications for the doctrine of

biblical inerrancy and infallibility. After all, if God cannot absolutely control all things, then how can He guarantee an infallible Word through fallible men? Pinnock does not directly address this here.

Fourthly, the Open Theism view of God fits nicely with the egalitarianism that is modernism. He is a more approachable, less hierarchical, more interactive (Clark, p. 32), one who is vulnerable and a more responsive God—one who does not exercise His absolute authority, a more dynamic and “involved” God. This sounds too much like the modern construction on human freedom, interaction and value.

Fifthly, the net result is that God’s foreknowledge is “open”—if God does not sovereignly control all things, then how can he know infallibly the future? Thus the future is truly “open,” according to Open Theism. Pinnock, in facts, says:

Risk is a function of the fact that God has limited the degree of his control over the world in granting the creature genuine freedom, and this is not without pain to himself. (p. 38)

How history will go on is not a foregone conclusion, even to God because he is free to strike in new directions as may be appropriate. If we take divine repentance language seriously, it suggests that God does not work with a plan fixed in every detail but with general goals that can be fulfilled in different ways. God is faithful to these goals but flexible as to how to fulfill them. (p. 43)

God can respond in creative ways to everything that happens in the world. But no being, not even God, can know in advance precisely what free agents will do, even though he may predict it with great accuracy. (p. 100)

Of course, God has the power to deal with every circumstance that arises but he cannot have, and does not need, total knowledge in advance of every detail. (p. 100)

John M. Frame has given us a thorough and thoughtful reply to Open Theism in *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism*. Frame deals with a whole stack of issues that naturally arise from the Open Theism position. He rightly questions whether “love” is the most important attribute of God; he attacks the idea that God’s sovereignty can be diminished in the way that Open Theism wants to reduce it, and still be faithful to scriptural teaching. He defends the genuine freedom of man as God’s creation, over and against the “libertarian freedom” that Pinnock advocates. Frame carefully unravels God’s relationship to time and eternity and demonstrates how precise our thoughts need to be at this point. He concludes: “So God is temporal after all, but not merely temporal. He really exists in time, but he also transcends time in such a way as to exist outside it. He is both inside and outside of the temporal box—a box that can neither confine him nor keep him out. That is the model that does most justice to the biblical data” (Frame, p. 159).

Frame explores what the Bible means when it speaks of God suffering, changing or grieving or feeling. Regarding the changeability of God, he concludes: “So God does change in his immanent, temporal relations with creation. But that fact does not detract in the least from his overall sovereignty. All these changes are the result of his eternal decree, which brings all things to pass, according to his will” (p. 178).

Similarly with the claim that God suffers, Frame exercises the same judicious and careful reasoning. God is invulnerable and “*God’s suffering love in Christ, therefore, does not cast doubt upon his aseity and unchangeability. It is however, ground for rejoicing.*” (p. 189)

Frame upholds the sovereignty and therefore the absolute foreknowledge of the Triune God. In conclusion, he raises issues such as biblical infallibility, sin, assurance and guidance as a menu of items that Open Theism needs to openly answer.

Open Theism is a lesson in the danger of the “either or”—our urge to hold either one or other position and not to see that the Truth is richer and fuller, and that our theology must be able to encompass all of the data of Holy Scripture. *C&S*

BODY, SOUL AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING

BY JOHN W. COOPER

Eerdmans/Apollos, 2000,
240 pages + xxviii, ISBN: 0-85111-474-1,

REVIEWED BY JOHN PECK

HERE is a very substantial book written by the professor of philosophical theology at Calvin College, Michigan, US, to defend and establish one specific view of the nature of human beings: viz., that they are individually two distinct substances, viz. body and soul or self, functioning as one organism. The defence is mounted against a monistic view of human nature prevalent among modern scholars. After a brief excursion into traditional views on the afterlife the book describes the classical Christian anthropology, which Cooper calls “dualistic holism,” as expounded by Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin and Descartes. Anti-dualistic views are then surveyed, citing Spinoza and Hobbes in particular, with some reference to the idea that the classical tradition suffered from a Platonic tendency to reify abstractions—in this case, two aspects of human experience, spiritual and physical.

The debate is then pursued in real earnest dealing with Old Testament holistic language, but showing that it is not as exclusively monistic as many modern scholars want to insist, particularly in relation to the afterlife. Turning to the New Testament the writer first of all examines the intertestamental witness on the subject as the source for most New Testament imagery. Eschatology, which has previously lurked in the background, now comes to the fore and the book well shows that it is virtually impossible to hold a biblical view of the afterlife without some kind of dualism. By this point, Cooper has fairly well demonstrated a dualistic view as pretty conclusively biblical, but he goes on to establish its theological and philosophical credentials. Dualism, he maintains, ought to be believed because it is a correct understanding of biblical teaching, and is philosophically and scientifically acceptable.

The reasoning of the book is dense, meticulously fair, and to the mind of this reviewer completely compelling. One might have expected a little more stress on the phenomenon of self-transcendence; it is after all an inescapable characteristic of human experience that however much we may engage in introspection, there is always an “I” which stands

outside to engage in it and talk about it. Perhaps more might be made of the monistic dilemma requiring commitment to either a materialist or idealist view of human nature, both leading to an unsatisfactory orthopraxis. And biblical references to angels would supply useful evidence for beings that do not need physical bodies, or brains, to have personal experience in a discarnate state. It is quite possible for us to conceive of angels whose natural condition is spirit, but who can adopt, temporarily, a physical body, and conversely of humans, whose natural condition is incarnate, but who can function, temporarily, without a body. Sometimes the book would have gained much from a little more appeal to imagination. Logic does not always reach the heart.

Body, Soul and the Life Everlasting is not easy reading, and it will be an almost encyclopedic textbook for any involved directly in the debate. The layout is excellent; with no misprints, and, apart from some irritating uses of “she” and “her” as concessions to feminist political correctness, stylistically straightforward. And there are three indices, with a thorough contents analysis and useful introductory material.

But maybe I was not the right person to review this book; for all the time I was saying to myself, “But what *practical difference* does it make?” At the end, dualism’s only significance is that it is correct. It doesn’t entail the practical objections levelled against it; but it doesn’t seem to offer anything positive and distinctive, either. So we dualists are right. So what? I may be mistaken, but it seems uncomfortably like a sledgehammer to crack a nut. *C&S*

MAKING IRELAND BRITISH, 1580–1650

BY NICHOLAS CANNY

Oxford University Press, 2001, hardback, xvi plus 633
pages, ISBN: 0198200919, #55

REVIEWED BY CRAWFORD GRIBBEN

NICHOLAS CANNY, Professor of History at the National University of Ireland, Galway, is widely recognised as one of the leading historians of early modern Ireland. Readers turning to his latest study will find little to dispel that reputation.

Making Ireland British is a mammoth book. Its length seems justified in the light of Canny’s lifetime commitment to this subject, and its material certainly offers one of the clearest and most detailed descriptions of the flawed colonisation of Ireland. One of the factors that makes Canny’s work unusual is his blurring of the boundaries between literary and historical studies. His first chapter is a contextualisation of the work of Edmund Spenser, whose fame for composing *The Faerie Queene* is increasingly being balanced by a growing awareness of the darkly racial and economically unjust programme for plantation and conquest outlined in his *View of the Present State of Ireland*. Canny draws upon Spenser’s theories as a basic manifesto for the repeated attempts at making Ireland British, and argues a basic continuity of colonial strategy from the Elizabethans to the Cromwellians. The programme of the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland, Canny argues, did not differ significantly from that of its English monarchist predecessors.

Canny's survey of colonial techniques offers a view of the emergence of a richly complex Irish society. In Ulster in particular, he argues, the colonial project attempted to create a "little Britain," where planters from various parts of England, Scotland and Wales were to develop socially alongside the native Irish. This experiment in social engineering proved a costly failure. It was impossible to eclipse the economic and social tensions between the planter groups, and the native Irish rarely welcomed increased competition for their island's limited natural resources. The ultimate failure of early plantation attempts was noted in the 1641 rebellion. In its early stages, Canny records, the insurgents distinguished between Scots and English settlers, by-passing the one to attack the other, and found that many Scots joined their ranks to plunder the English wealth. As the rising took on a more sectarian dimension, however, Canny records the mutual demonisation of Irish Catholics and British Protestants—those Scots who had retained Catholic allegiances were left uncomfortably in the middle—and Canny plunders the depositions to provide a formidable portrait of the kinds of atrocities that were committed. Concluding chapters on the Cromwellian invasion argue his case that its methods of warfare—which, he notes were strictly legal according to the standards of the age—were not qualitatively different from those pursued in earlier stages of the plantation project.

There is a great deal of valuable information in *Making Ireland British*. General readers interested in Irish history will discover much that is of particular profit in Canny's elaboration of the 1641 rebellion. This is a fitting climax to a lifetime of work on this topic. *C&S*

THE IRISH PURITANS:
JAMES USSHER AND THE REFORMATION
OF THE CHURCH
BY CRAWFORD GRIBBON

Evangelical press 2003, 160 pages (including indices),
ISBN: 0852345364

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN J. HAYHOW

JAMES USSHER, the lesser known Anglican, Puritan and Archbishop of Armagh, influenced the formation of the Westminster Confession of Faith through his Irish Articles and worked for the reformation of the Church in Ireland. But for all that, he is largely remembered for his work on biblical chronology and his calculation that the creation of the world took place in 4004 B.C.

Dr Gribbon has given us a enthusiastic account of the Reformation Church in Ireland—an area that has not seen much attention from evangelical authors. Ussher's name was associated with his role in developing Trinity College, Dublin. Established in 1592, the college had become a centre of Puritan theology and reformation and the college was to play a pivotal role in the progress of the Puritan faith thereafter. Ussher's commitment to it was such that his personal ten thousand volume library formed the basis for the college's own library.

Dr Gribbon recalls the formation of the people of

Ireland, their beginnings and the mixed faith of the pre-Reformation period. He describes the Reformation and its impact on Ireland, and then the Puritan period and Cromwell's role in Ireland. There are a few points to note:

Firstly, the misuse of political power and influence in religious and Church affairs often prejudiced the progress of the gospel. For example the way in which the inflicting of Reformation Protestantism on the people was more of a political goal than a spiritual one and served to turn the people away from the truth.

Secondly, the interference of the English Church also impeded the Reformation in Ireland. First there were the control and constraints that King James placed on the Irish Church, and then the insidious influence of Archbishop Laud (1573–1645), whose strategy was to promote Arminianism in the Churches and universities.

Thirdly, during the period there was a time of revival—notably under the preaching of John Livingstone at Shotts in 1630. Livingstone was invited to preach in Ireland and accepted the offer. Strange phenomenon attended his preaching—which I will not attempt to explain!

Fourthly, Ussher lived and ministered through the period of the Civil Wars. Dr Gribbon takes the view that Cromwell was responsible for the massacre at Drogheda. But, Dr Gribbon also sets this in the context of the hideous treatment of the Protestants by the Catholics previous to that. The treatment of Protestants by Catholics was appalling and cruel beyond words. However, recently, the extent of the Cromwell's activities and whether the massacres were real has been questioned by Tom Reilly in "*Cromwell: An Honourable Enemy—The Untold Story of the Cromwellian Invasion of Ireland.*"

This book will give a perspective on a neglected part of Reformation history. Its style and length will hopefully earn it the wide audience it deserves. *C&S*

BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE:
EVANGELICAL MISSION ENTERING THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
EDITED BY JONATHAN J. BONK

Evangelical Missiological Society Series Number 10,
William Carey Library, Pasadena, CA, 2003, \$14.99

REVIEWED BY DOUG P. BAKER

How has international mission changed in the past century? What is different about how we now see the purpose of the Church's outreach? Are these differences to be seen as growth or as failure? How should mission outreach be conducted as we move into the new millennium?

Between Past and Future considers the lessons of the past, focusing mostly on the past century, as it considers the future of missionary outreach. The twentieth century saw profound changes, not only in technology, but also in the way that we see our place in this world. In 1900 the idea that we would "civilise and Christianise" the world presented no tension to the prevalent mindset. Now the colonial attitude has waned and fallen into disfavor and we have begun to see some of the damage done by that ideal. We see Americani-

sation everywhere in the world, and it is rarely a cause for rejoicing. With greater clarity than in 1900 we are now able to see that as we have exported Christ, we have exported our Western culture and have given the world much bitter along with the sweet.

With passion and insight the authors in this volume consider what we should have learned by now. The answers are not always as easy to see as the problems. One small example of this is seen in how fixing one problem caused another.

The old system was one in which the Churches sending a missionary paternally considered themselves to be the parent Church and sought to maintain control over their children. Authority was exercised and decisions made from a distance and with the ignorance of thousands of miles. The missionary was liaison between ruler and ruled. As attitudes began to change, mission agencies moved to adopt postures relating to mission Churches not as parent-to-child but as Church-to-Church, as equals.

This was growth toward a new and fuller understanding of our brothers and sisters from all cultures being our equals before Christ. God was working. But this growth did not come without its own problems. “The major focus was now church-to-church relationships instead of mission to the unreached.” Here we had a “massive theological shift in the understanding of mission” which “radically undercut the traditional goal of mission as world evangelisation.” This shift even reached the point that one denomination refused to send missionaries except at the request of the national Church of an area. “This eliminated areas and people groups where no national church existed.” But were the only relational options parent-to-child or equal-to-equal?

Between Present and Future is a well balanced look at the major trends in mission planning. As it considers the contributions and liabilities of such trends as the ecumenical movement, the 10/40 window model of unreached people groups, and domestic/social gospel missions, the authors always bear in mind that “all models for mission have strengths and all have weaknesses. None are wholly good, none without drawbacks, none are neutral, and none are wholly adapted to the purposes at hand.”

The major lesson of *Between Past and Future* is that none of our logistics in mission planning is wholly neutral. Even the smallest question is vitally important and must be taken to the light of Scripture to be analysed if we want Christ’s Gospel to go out with clarity and power, unencumbered by our cultural baggage, which only distorts God’s truth.

I was delighted to find that, although it is written by great scholars who have devoted their lives to missions and mission planning, the book exhibits considerable humility to God’s working by his own means. “We are properly humbled, furthermore, by the dawning awareness that we (the Western mission establishment) have tended to attribute too much of the success to our missiological strategies and expatriate personnel.” In all of God’s dealings with us, “we are humbled to be reminded that we must always be open to the Spirit’s freedom to work through obviously flawed instruments.” That is the history of missions, the history of the Church, God’s Spirit working through obviously flawed instruments.

Contributors to this volume are: Dwight P. Baker, Jonathan J. Bonk, Luis Bush, Bruce K. Camp, Charles L. Chaney, Michael Jaffarian, Todd M. Johnson, Gary B.

McGee, John Moldovan, Paul E. Pierson, and John Mark Terry. *C&S*

NATURAL LAW AND CALVINIST POLITICAL THEORY

BY L. S. KOETSIER

Victoria, Canada, Trafford Publishing, 2003, 216 pages,
paperback, ISBN: 1412007380

REVIEWED BY COLIN WRIGHT

THIS book is the author’s dissertation for a Master’s degree at Cameron University of Lawton, Oklahoma. It ought to have remained such. Masters’ dissertations are normally meant to be a long essay reviewing the literature on a particular topic. The student is required to read broadly but not to think particularly deeply. Truly original work is reserved for doctoral dissertations. Also, this is generally the first piece of work a young graduate produces after that first degree. So the student is still highly inexperienced and little able to begin instructing others. The modern emphasis on youth culture denies this but the facts will be as they are: real knowledge takes time to gain and even longer to assimilate. Book writing needs to be the preserve of those who really know, those who have been through the mill, as we say. Not so long ago a famous boy soprano in the UK wrote his autobiography—at fourteen years of age!

Unfortunately Ms Koetsier has been wrongly advised to publish this essay. It lacks all the hallmarks of even a second-rate treatment of the topic it sets out to teach us about. That’s why I say it is fine as a school exercise but has no place on the bookshelves. Modern desktop publishing techniques unfortunately make it all too easy to venture into this field and foist all manner of stuff on the book-buying public. Even in this field this volume is an aesthetic nightmare. No attention whatsoever has been paid to appearance or presentation. It has almost a cynical disregard for good taste. Even a cursory glance at the way in which professionals put together a volume would give directions to make the volume at least presentable. But the cover really plumbs the depths: it is constructed of Microsoft clipart. Enough said.

Our readers are entitled to the foregoing warning. The subject is a very interesting one and should attract a lot of attention. It is a subject that has received far too little serious attention from our constituency and one we should be better informed on. The problem with books is that it is generally difficult to know if they are any good until bought and paid for and read. Only then does the extent of wasted time and money become apparent. Part of the service offered by book reviews is to obviate such bitter experiences.

Still, we must provide some justification for such a negative attitude.

The basic thesis of the essay is clearly set out in the Preface: “Natural law is the foundation of Calvinist political theory, analyzed in terms of theology, humanism, and philosophy.”

Furthermore, Koetsier sets out to “focus upon the similarities between Calvin and Locke in regard to their political theory based upon natural law.” She maintains that “Calvin

used the Christian conception of natural law as the foundation for his political theory whereas Locke borrowed the Christian conception of natural law to contribute to Calvinist political theory.” So these theses form the basis of what we should expect to see developed in the ensuing chapters.

The strategy pans out something like this: first, address the development of natural law theory; second, address Calvin’s role in the development of Calvinist political theory; third, examine Calvin’s influence on Locke, particularly by comparing their statements on natural law.

I am not a fan of Alister McGrath by any means but I have to admit that in the first volume of his *Scientific Theology* he goes to a great deal of trouble to grapple with the vexing problematics of the seemingly simple idea of *nature*. Ms Koetsier on the other hand cannot even sort the terminology out: how she gets to conceive the Greek word *apeiron* to mean *nature* (p. 10) is anyone’s guess. This does not inspire confidence in her analytical processes or conclusions. Indeed, throughout the book there is this taking for granted of the meaning of terms and even more seriously, of the universal acceptance of this one meaning. No-one has demonstrated more clearly than Herman Dooyeweerd how technical terms such as *nature*, *substance*, *rationality* and a host of others, can only be understood in terms of the religious presuppositions that undergird them in the various cultures in which they have been used. Significantly McGrath, in the book already alluded to, never takes the same care over the word *theology*. And no wonder: his definition and Calvin’s differ as light from darkness. And just because Koetsier treats the meaning of words so naively it is hardly surprising that in the end she finds herself attributing to Calvin the development of a concept of human rights. Modern Enlightenment ideas are read back into history simply on the basis of the seeming similarity of words.

This is the really big problem I have with her book; all other problems are mere incidentals. There is no adequate perception of what the terminology she is investigating is really saying. And until that is sorted out the conclusions are not just false but meaningless.

Let me demonstrate one example of the totally unwarranted way in which conclusions are drawn in this book. In the section on the development of the Christian conception of natural law (as opposed to the classical Greek and Roman conception) she says (p. 17):

[Paul] encountered the Stoics on Mars Hill. During their discussion, Paul reiterated the Stoic belief that men’s consciences prompt them to know natural law. Paul chose to use specific Stoic terms *according to nature* and *against nature* instead of using the biblical term of sin . . . Paul recorded this discussion in the first two chapters of Romans. Therefore, the earliest Christian conception of natural law adopted the Stoic belief that man could perceive universal moral laws through human reason, a gift from a rational God.

First, it is clear from even a cursory glance at Luke’s narration of the Mars Hill incident in Acts chapter 17 that Paul had no intention of declaring the gospel in any other than biblical terms. Even the quotation of one of their own poets (For we are his offspring—Aratus of Tarsus in his poem *Phaenomena*) concedes no ground on this. Incidentally, Luke does not pick out the Stoics as the target of Paul’s speech; he says simply that it was a group of Epicureans and Stoics who introduced him to the Areopagite court on Mars Hill.

Evidently aware of this gaff, Koetsier presses on with a

cover-up: Ignore what Paul *actually* said on Mars Hill as reported by Luke. Instead make out that what he *really* said is contained in the first two chapters of his letter to the Roman Church, even though there is no evidence here that Paul intended any such thing. How can we be sure he did intend this? Well, she insists, he uses distinctively Stoic phrases—*according to nature* and *against nature*. Fine. But are these really distinctively Stoic phrases? Koetsier herself unfortunately has shown throughout the preceding pages that they were the common stock-in-trade of every Greek thinker for centuries, whatever their particular brand of philosophy.

This really is an attempt to force the recalcitrant facts of history onto the Procrustean bed of her own fancies. *Romans* does not give us a Christian conception of natural law, let alone one adopted from Stoic philosophy. One shudders at the thought that serious Christians could even entertain the idea. Where were the poor girl’s supervisors while she was writing up this stuff?

One could go on. But I think this one case is sufficient to make the point, for the rest of the book is in the same vein. We still await definitive treatments from a Christian perspective of the ideas of natural law and political theory. Until that time, I suggest going back to a good old-fashioned book that provides some real insights that have never been improved on: E. L. Hebdgen Taylor’s magnum opus *The Christian Philosophy of Law, Politics and the State* (Craig Press, New Jersey, 1966). C&S

THE FREE PRESS: AN ESSAY ON THE
MANIPULATION OF NEWS AND OPINION
AND HOW TO COUNTER IT

BY HILAIRE BELLOC

Independent Publishers, Group Paperback
2002 £10.50

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN J. HAYHOW

BELLOC’s defence of the Free Press is especially important for us in the age of the internet, in which the free press has a new opportunity. The standard papers, the broadsheets, are now noted for their dumbing down—the *Times* and others regularly have pictures of celebrities on the front pages, something unknown about ten years ago. All of this cries out for a new press, a new source of information. Belloc’s basic point is that the capitalist press magnates arose to control the news media. They created papers and journals that cover vast areas, even whole nations. In time they come to depend upon other aspects of big business for their funding, e.g. advertising, which enabled them to offer their papers at low prices for mass appeal. Because of their influence they also aligned themselves with the political rulers of the day and the business power base. These two factors made it impossible for the papers to assume an objective or critical stance towards the establishment or the ruling elite.

The result? The media became bland and failed to provoke the people, us, to think, challenge or investigate. Investigative journalism started to fade, and a distinctive stance was blurred away. The papers all looked the same.

But along comes the free press which has no such ties—it can criticise who it will. Usually its readers are *readers* who really pay attention. But there are downsides too. The free press because it is not as global in reach tends to be cranky, odd and obscure. Therefore it requires discernment. One has to dig, sift and be selective. But that's the whole point. The established press behaves as one source of truth—its very form denies the need for readers to be discerning or thoughtful.

Applying Belloc's many points to the internet age is important. It means there is now a new opportunity for the free press. The internet is enabling a host of new media sources to appear from which we can derive our information and form our own views and opinions. These are low cost, hard to govern and control, and don't usually depend on the establishment or big business funding. They are free to criticise. This is basic to freedom. *C&S*

BOOK NOTICES

THE following books have been received for review. If you would like to review a book please send an email requesting the book you would like to review along with your address (books will be allotted on a first come first served basis). Reviews should interact with the material in the book, not merely describe the contents, and should ideally be between 3000 and 7000 words (though we will accept shorter reviews and run longer reviews as review articles). Please include all publisher information. Reviews should be completed within a year of receiving the book.

Matthew Scully, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals and the Call to Mercy* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2002), paperback, 434 pages.

Bruno Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul: Justice, Democracy and*

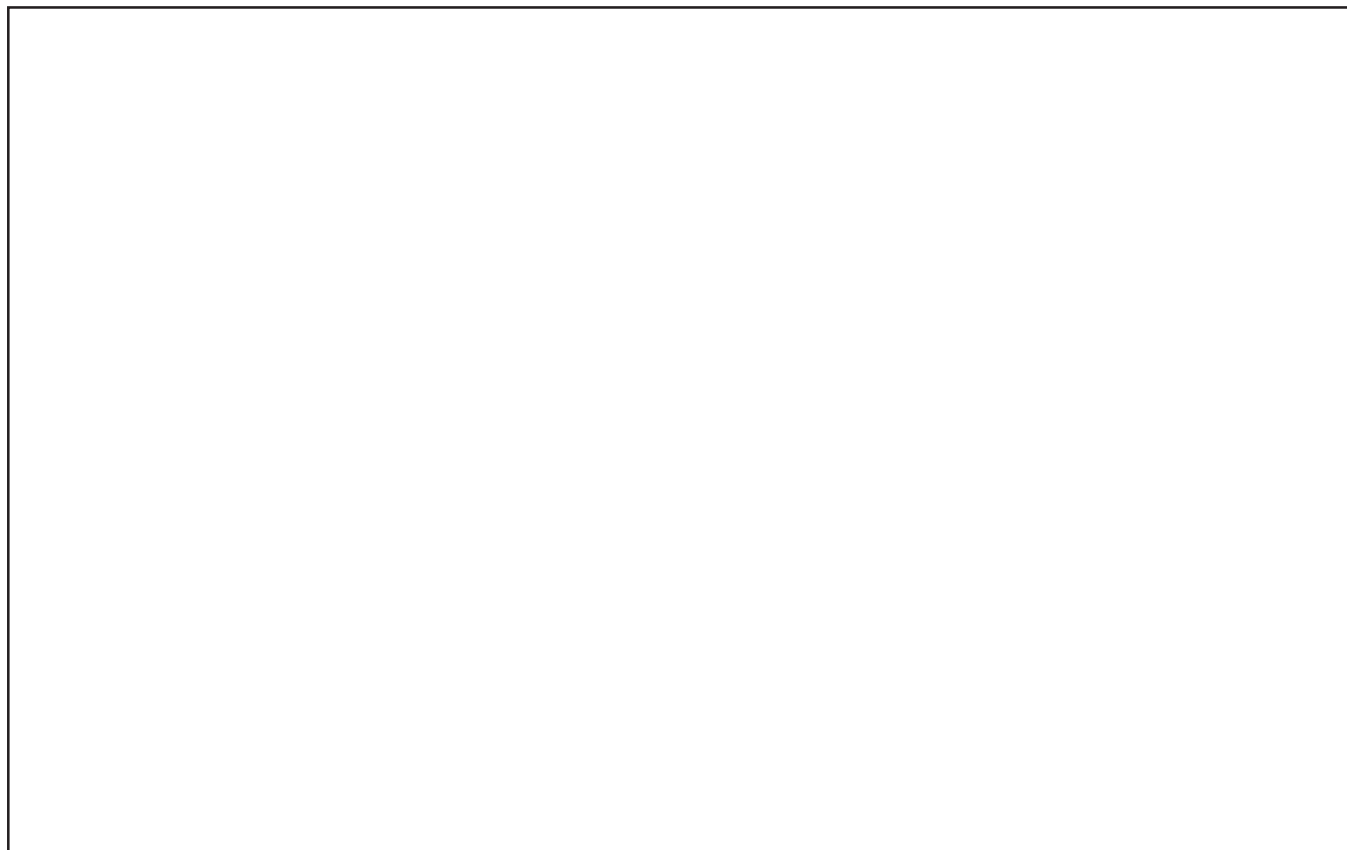
Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework (T. and T. Clark International, 2003), paperback, 507 pages.

Christopher J. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), hardback, 520 pages.

Vera Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2004), hardback, 358 pages.

Michelle Slee, *The Church in Antioch in the First Century* (London and New York: T. and T. Clark, 2003), paperback, 214 pages.

Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins and Stephen J. Stein (eds), *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (New York and London: Continuum, 2003), hardback, 672 pages.



Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

In the April issue I was very pleased to note that you published David Estrada's essay ["Calvinism versus Constantinianism," Vol. XIV, No. 2]. However, his treatment of Calvin in the Servetus case made Calvin the only *bête noire* in the tragic charade. Personally, I believe a few more details should be added to this.

In Geneva during Calvin's time Servetus was the only person burned for heresy; even then Calvin tried to have the penalty changed to decapitation. This request was refused by a city council determined that Calvin should have no standing at all in the decision of the court. In fairness it should be pointed out that Calvin's influence and security during this time had fallen to a new low. The elections had just gone to the Libertines, whose aim was to have Calvin banished if possible. Because of Calvin's preaching the brothels had been closed. It was the Libertines intention to have them opened again if only they could get rid of Calvin.

In light of this it is little wonder Calvin thought Servetus was brought to Geneva to help in his overthrow. The truth of the matter is that Calvin had no power to burn or execute anybody. Calvin's role throughout the whole trial was that of theological prosecutor. In the whole affair one could easily conclude that it was Servetus who made a concerted effort to attack Calvin, seek him out and have him destroyed. One historian even goes so far as to say that the Libertines had no interest in Servetus or his doctrines save as a means of embarrassing Calvin.

In 1531 Servetus published a book titled *Seven Errors About the Trinity*. Dr. Jerome Friedman, author of several works on Servetus, says that the latter repeated Jewish criticisms of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, that Christianity was "polytheistic," that Jesus Christ was not the Eternal Son of God and likened the Trinity to a "chimera" (one third lion, one third goat and one third dragon). Servetus saw himself in another role, that of the Archangel Michael coming down from heaven to lead in the battle against the teaching of the Antichrist, which, of course, would have been the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity amongst others. (See "Michael Servetus: The Case for a Jewish Christianity" by Jerome Friedman, *Sixteenth Century Journal* IV.1, 1973, *passim*.) This, of course, by the standards of the day, was more than enough to convict Servetus of both heresy and blasphemy in any court in Europe.

For many years Servetus practised medicine incognito in Vienne under the name of Villeneuve while at the same time engaging Calvin in an epistolary controversy. He even challenged Calvin to a theological debate in Geneva and asked for Calvin's assurance in providing safe conduct. Calvin replied that he had no authority to give such an

assurance. The correspondence of Servetus was issued anonymously, but finally Calvin's friends in Geneva recognised Servetus' style. One of these notified a cousin in Vienne who reported to the authorities that Villeneuve was in fact the arch heretic Servetus. The authorities asked for proof, which was sent from Geneva by Guillaume de Trie with the accompanying letter which ran as follows: "I tell you one thing: I had the greatest difficulty getting them out of M. Calvin. Not that he wants such execrable blasphemies to go unproved, but because it seems to him that his duty, as one who does not bear the sword of justice, is to convict heresies by doctrine rather than pursuing them with the sword." Due to these documents Servetus was arrested, tried and imprisoned after much prevarication about his identity and other matters.

However, while awaiting sentence in Vienne he escaped. On June 17, 1553, the Vienne tribunal sentenced Servetus in absence to "be burned alive in a slow fire until his body become ashes. For the present the sentence is to be carried out in effigy and his books are to be burnt." Unfortunately it is hardly ever mentioned that Servetus was a convicted criminal when he arrived in Geneva to challenge Calvin.

Servetus, now with both French and Spanish warrants out, wandered aimlessly for about three months; he finally decided to flee to Naples where he would have less chance of being detected. For some unknown reason he decided to go by way of Geneva. There does not seem to be any explanation for this moth to candle flame syndrome. On August 13, 1553 he attended St Peter's to hear Calvin preach and he was recognised, accused by Calvin, arrested and imprisoned.

While awaiting trial Servetus was allowed paper and ink and all the books he cared to buy. Calvin even lent him some of his own in order that he might prepare his defense. Calvin drew up an indictment of thirty-eight articles supported by quotations from Servetus' writings. The judges in the case were for the most part supporters of the Libertine party and held long technical discussions to avoid recognising Calvin and his fellow ministers.

On September 3, 1553 two more of Calvin's enemies were appointed to the court and immediately began to argue with him. Inside the larger General Council the Libertine members vehemently raged against Calvin rather than Servetus. During the trial Servetus became very abusive questioning Calvin's right to be there, calling him a disciple of the criminal Simon Magus and hurling such invectives as "liar," "impostor," "hypocrite" and "miserable wretch." On one occasion the court gave Servetus the option of continuing the trial or being sent back to Vienne. His response was that "He threw himself on the ground, begging with tears to

be judged here, and let Messiers do with him what they would, but not let him be sent back here.” The Council did not wish to pronounce final sentence until it had received the judgement of the magistrates of Zurich, Bern, Basel and Schaffhausen. They all, however, gave their verdict that Servetus ought be put to death. In the end the verdict was unanimous.

Servetus was found guilty of spreading heresy and was sentenced to death by burning. Both Calvin and Farel met with Servetus and petitioned him to retract his heresies. He adamantly and stubbornly refused. However, Calvin and the other ministers did agree to take up Servetus’ request for the quicker and less painful death by beheading, but the Council refused. Calvin was even charged with being too soft on such a blasphemous heretic. Calvin later fully acknowledged his part in pressing the charges against Servetus and his prosecution of him, adding, however: “I never moved to have him punished with death.” This may be literally true, but he did certainly hope that he would get the death penalty. For his own personal observations one can read his *Defense of the Orthodox Faith*. Here he maintains that in the case of such heresy and blasphemy as that of Servetus the glory of God must be upheld.

I trust that this brief and hurried summary may be of some help in throwing more light on the subject.

Hugh Flemming

Dear Sir,

I fear that your article [“Christianity as a Political Faith,” April 2004, Vol. XIV, No. 2] will be misunderstood, if only because of its choice of words and your usage of the words of the Great Commission. In speaking (or appearing to speak) of disciplining the nations (as distinct from disciplining the individual people who make up the nations) you expose yourself to the charge of endorsing the mediaeval practice of first converting the rulers, who then impose Christianity on the people at large.

Now it cannot be denied that in the chaotic state of affairs that accompanied the downfall of the Roman Empire a strong hand or two was needed, if only to bring some kind of civic order. Without a doubt the sword of Charles Martel was needed to halt the scimitar of Abd-ur Rahman and the Islam that followed in his train. Nor can it be denied that for all its formalism and corruption mediaeval Christianity did serve a providential purpose in weaning people away from the grosser forms of heathenism.

On the other hand, it may be asked whether or not these forms simply lingered on (and possibly still do so) in a Christian disguise. This is always the danger inherent in a Constantinian format; you get a motley mass of what are little more than practical heathens mixed in with a far smaller number of practising Christians. With the best will in the world you simply cannot, in such a situation, prevent things getting progressively worse until what little light is shed by the truly regenerate is finally extinguished. While we would hope, for their own sakes, that those emperors (and, after them, the various rulers of the Europe that developed after the fall of the Roman Empire) were Christians we must surely hope, for the sake of the good name of Christianity, that they were not. In short, it would have probably been

better for the spiritual well-being of Christianity if it had made its way among the barbarians from whom we are descended without the touch of Caesar’s sword. At least we would have been spared such horrors as the Crusades and the Inquisition.

Also, the contest between the Roman empire and Christianity was nothing like so political as you make it out to be. What got first century Christians’ backs up was being asked to burn incense to Caesar’s image. To any Christian, and especially one of Jewish background, the burning of incense was primarily a *religious* act; it was symbolic of the worshippers’ prayers ascending to God (Rev. 8:3, 4a). Among the sins of God’s professed people singled out for mention as a reason for the inevitability of judgement was the fact that they had burned incense to other gods (2 Kg. 22:17). No objection would have come if all that was required was that they prayed for the emperor’s welfare; such a state of affairs existed when the Jews were under Roman rule, when all that was required of them was the offering of daily sacrifices on behalf of the emperor. Among the things required of Christians (and listed as a primary duty!) then was that of “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings” being made for “all men, for kings and all who are in high positions that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life” (1 Tim. 2:1, 2). Praying *for* the emperor was one thing; praying *to* the emperor was a totally different thing altogether.

The current danger is the subtle imposition by the back door of the secular humanist religion, especially when such comes in a Christian disguise. Nowhere is this more exemplified than in the current “received orthodoxy” of political correctness, and few more blatant examples have been shown of its readiness to ride roughshod over even undeniable historical fact than in the recent remake of the film *The Dam-Busters*. So scared were the film makers of the heavy hand of the PC brigade that the code-word signal “Nigger, Nigger, Nigger!” was replaced by something else. Nigger was Wing Commander Guy Gibson’s dog, tragically killed in a road accident while his master was away on that raid. And although it is possible for religious bodies to broadcast the gospel to a greater extent now than before there are still restrictions (some well founded, it should be said) on what can be said over the air.

Meanwhile, in Canada the following straw in the wind should serve as a warning to us on this side of the water. A law is being proposed that would make it illegal to allegedly “incite hatred” against any minority group, even if one had read a passage from the Bible that could be interpreted that way. Thus gays and lesbians could sue anyone who publicly read Lev. 18:22 where it pronounces lying with a man as with a woman as an *abomination*. It may be that this law won’t get off the ground; however, it is symptomatic of the way the wind is blowing at present.

Seventh-day Adventists in Canada are casting a wary eye on their sermon notes and publications in light of the enactment on April 29 of Canadian Bill C-250, which adds “sexual orientation” to a list of “hate crimes” for which perpetrators can be charged with an “indictable offense,” equal to a felony in the United States.

Under the amendment to the law, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada said sexual orientation is added to the prohibited grounds for “advocating genocide,” or advocating or promoting genocide; “public incitement of hatred” which is defined as communicating statements in a public

place that incite hatred; and the “willful promotion of hatred,” which the Canadian law defines as communicating statements, other than in private conversation, that willfully promote hatred against any identifiable group.

According to the Evangelical Fellowship, “a ‘public place’ is defined as ‘any place to which the public have access as of right or by invitation, express or implied,’” which presumably would include most churches. Barry W. Bussey, legal and public affairs director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, said Adventist pastors will have to carefully watch future developments. “It’s a wait-and-see attitude right now,” Bussey told ANN on May 3. “We don’t know how a court will basically deal with adding ‘sexual orientation’ in the hate crimes section of the Criminal Code. All we can do is look at hints in recent court decisions.”

Those hints aren’t overly promising: In December of 2002, the Saskatchewan Court of Queen’s Bench ruled against a Christian who printed a newspaper advertisement objecting to homosexual conduct and citing references to Bible verses proclaiming severe penalties for such conduct. They rule this as spreading “hate.” Justice Ronald Barclay, in an opinion, stated: “The use of the circle and the slash combined with the passages of the Bible herein make the meaning of the advertisement unmistakable. It is clear that the advertisement is intended to make the group depicted appear to be inferior or not wanted at best.”

About 18 months earlier, in May 2001, the Supreme Court of Canada said graduates of an evangelical teachers’ college could hold a view opposing homosexual conduct and be licensed as teachers; but in the exercise of their beliefs they must not discriminate against homosexuals. “I think we have to follow the scriptural adage, ‘be wise as serpents and harmless as doves,’” Bussey said. “We continue to live our lives as Christians and we let the chips fall where they may. When we have to speak out, we need to speak out, obviously very carefully and wisely and with concern for our fellow man.”

He said the church would defend its own pastors—and support cases on pastors from other denominations—brought up on charges under the new statute. At the same time, he noted that the hate crimes legislation does have some protection. For example, the attorney general has to approve prosecutions, and there is an exemption for those who in “good faith” “expressed or attempted to establish by argument an opinion on a religious subject.” “However, it only takes one person to make a complaint, and only one police officer to lay a charge” against a clergy member, noted Dr. Janet Epp Buckingham, general legal counsel for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. “I will say that in past cases, the court has set the standard pretty high. You have to say something that demonizes people in the group . . . that advocates violence against them, that would encourage people to be violent,” she added. Dr. Buckingham told Adventist News Network that it will be important for all pastors to weigh their words as this new law takes effect. “Bill C-250 makes it clear that pastors need to think about the effects of what they say, before they say it. Now, I would argue that pastors should do that anyway, but this imposes an additional obligation on them,” she said.

Ironically, Canadian Member of Parliament Svend Robinson, who sponsored C-250, was not able to witness the passage of his law. Two weeks before the event, Robinson confessed to the theft of a Can. \$50,000 ring from a jeweler,

and is on “medical leave” for treatment of “extreme stress” while prosecutors weigh potential criminal charges.

Barry Gowland

EDITOR’S RESPONSE: There are two points that I should like to make here. First, I do not agree that I have laid myself open to “the charge of endorsing the mediaeval practice of first converting the rulers, who then impose Christianity on the people at large.” It would be entirely unfair to make such a charge on the basis what I said in the article. I never expressed or even hinted at such an idea. The charge is inferred not implied, and unfairly inferred. If such a charge is reasonable, it must equally be leveled at the Scripture itself. Mt. 28:19 does not say “Go therefore and make disciples of people from all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” as you suggest. It says “Go and disciple the nations . . .”¹ I have merely pointed out that this is what Scripture says. Those who insist on reading “people from all nations” at this point are reading what they want to believe into the text of Scripture. It may be that they have a problem with this, but their difficulty lies not in any spurious interpretation on my part, but rather in the text of Scripture itself.

My point was not in any sense that rulers ought to impose Christianity on unwilling subjects, but that *Christians* should see *their* mission in the world as not merely one of snatching brands from the fire—mere soul saving—but one of subjecting all areas of life and culture, *including the political realm*, to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is the *nations* that are to be discipled to Christ, not merely individuals from the nations. That is what the text says. We are to work for the conversion of the *nations* to Christ. The Great Commission is *not* a command to evangelise *individuals* (though of course it is impossible to fulfil the Great Commission without doing this), but rather a command (1) to disciple *and* (2) to baptise the *nations*, which means of course that they must be evangelised and brought to faith in Christ, *and* (3) to teach them (i.e. the *nations*) to obey God’s commandments.

Second, you refer to the burning of incense as a religious act. Indeed it was, but that does not mean it was not a political act, nor does it mean it was not *primarily* a political act. You say that the conflict between Rome and Christianity was not so much political as religious. But your definition of religion here is too narrow and therefore you miss the nature and significance of the conflict between Rome and Christianity. The function of Roman religion was political, to act as social cement and to support the State.² Burning the incense was an act of political compliance. This was the whole point of what I was saying. Rome did not have a problem with people worshipping Jesus merely as an object of personal devotion. The problem was with the idea that someone other than the Roman emperor, i.e. Rome itself, should have a prior political claim on their allegiance. Christianity was a political problem for Rome.

1. *Μαθητεύσατε* (aorist active imperative of *μαθητεύω*) means *be a disciple*. This verb is used in classical Greek only in an intransitive sense (H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of Matthew* [Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, Sixth Edition (1883) 1979], p. 527). In the koine Greek of the New Testament, however, it is used transitively to mean *make a disciple of*, taking as its direct object in Mt. 28:19 *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*, “all the nations.”

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and The Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Fairfax, Virginia: Thoburn Press [1971] 1978), p. 92.

Nor was the problem merely one of perception on Rome's part—i.e. paranoia. The word *ekklesia* is an intensely *political* term not a cultic term. For Christians to claim that they are members of the *ekklesia* of another kingdom with a divine King whose jurisdiction is total and to whom all men must, and one day will, bow was a great *political* offence to Rome. Worse, it was *treason* against Rome because Christ was proclaimed as a superior Lord to Caesar, a King above the Roman emperor, to whom Christians prayed "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done . . . on earth . . ." Christians claimed that Jesus Christ is Lord, not Caesar. That lordship comprehends everything, politics included. In the end the only way to save Rome *politically* was for Caesar to bow the knee to Jesus Christ.

You misunderstand the issue. Politics cannot be separated from religion. Christianity is not merely a private devotional cult, a worship hobby, that could find a quiet place in the greater context of Roman religious idolatry. Merely to add Christ to the Roman pantheon is a denial of Christ's lordship and sovereignty. Christianity is far more than a devotional cult. It is a religion that structures the whole of man's life. Both the early Church and the Romans understood this. Modern Christians on the whole have signally failed to understand this. Christ does not merely demand that we refrain from burning the incense to Caesar, he demands that Caesar burn the incense to him and acknowledge his lordship and sovereignty over Rome and the Empire. To profess Christianity meant not merely that one had a devotional hobby with Christ as the object of devotion. It meant one served a different Lord, a Lord who demands that Caesar worship him. To burn the incense to Caesar was to acknowledge that Caesar was the political overlord. For a Christian to refuse to burn the incense meant that Jesus Christ is the political overlord, the King of Kings to whom all kings must bow, Caesar included. There is no area of religious neutrality anywhere in the created order. Politics is not a religiously neutral enterprise, it is an intensely religious enterprise. Burning the incense was a religious act of political submission. Refusing to burn the incense was not a religious crime in the narrow sense (a devotional offence), but a religious act of political rebellion.

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WE need the help of someone who can do the proof reading for *Christianity & Society*. The next issues of *C&S* will be out in April 2005. We shall need the proofs reading and correcting in late February/early March and then again in late August/early September. Proofs are sent out with a stamped addressed return envelope and the job will need to be completed in two weeks. We are not able to offer payment for this service but the proof readers will get a free subscription. We need someone with a well-developed eye for detail and a good understanding of English spelling and grammar. If you are interested in helping with this please contact the Editor: Tel. (01823) 665909, or email scp@kuyper.org, or by post (P. O. Box 2, Taunton, TAI 4ZD England).

This is not a novel interpretation on my part; it is an historical fact, which is why I quoted the words of Francis Legg, which are worth quoting once more: "The officials of the Roman Empire in time of persecution sought to force the Christians to sacrifice, not to any of the heathen gods, but to the Genius of the Emperor and the Fortune of the city of Rome; and at all times the Christians' refusal was looked upon not as a religious but as a political offence."³—SCP

3. Francis Legg, *Forerunners and Revivals of Christianity, From 330 B.C. to 330 A.D.* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, [1915] 1964), Vol. I, p. xxiv, cited in R. J. Rushdoony, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

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