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EDITORIAL

COMMON LAW WIVES AND CONCUBINES

by Stephen C. Perks

We live in an age when Christian institutions are the target of social reformers who are intent on nothing less than the total liberation of the individual and society from the oppressive practices of the church and the unreasonable requirements of the Christian faith. Doubtless this is the prelude to a new golden age in the eyes of these social saviours and their cohorts. Perhaps it will even come up to the standards of the golden age of Greek civilisation, tempered by a lavish dose of feminism of course. Though one wonders if it has ever occurred to these latter-day visionaries that hardly any of the golden ages of past, or even present, civilisations outside the influence of the Christian faith would have tolerated anything like feminism. Such a liberal notion would never have been allowed to find expression. That it has been allowed to find expression in Western society is due in great measure to the kind of civilisation that Christianity has created in the West. It is well-known, at least well-known to church historians—obviously less well-known to modern feminist ideologues—that the Christian faith has always been favourable to the plight and rights of women. Greek women of the first century A.D. found in Christianity a consideration as equals and co-workers with men (though not an equality of vocation) that they could not have dreamed of as part and parcel of their former pagan way of life. This was a practical liberation of women from the tyranny of ancient non-Christian civilisation that we can hardly comprehend today, so thoroughly conditioned are we by the blessings and privileges that living in even a post-Christian society has conferred upon us.

Unfortunately, such blessings are taken for granted today, and it is common for social evils, and sometimes things that are indeed not social evils, even social blessings, but which are reputed social evils by modern thinkers, to be blamed on the church or the Christian faith and the limitation of men's and women's potential that Christianity has, reputedly, perpetrated through social pressure and stigmatisation etc. Thus, for example, modern man's discontent with the lifestyle that unemployment or disability creates is not infrequently blamed on the Protestant work ethic. Of course ancient Greece knew no such social problems of unemployment or disability as we have today—slaves seldom have the privilege of being unemployed, and a disabled child would probably have not lived to an age at which he could have contemplated his plight. Nor is such a child likely to fare any better in the new golden age of humanism that looms before us. Exposure at birth was the simple method of dealing with this problem in the golden age of Greek culture; amniocentesis has relieved the modern, post-Christian world of even this unpleasantness and the problem of disability can now be dealt with quickly and clinically, obviating the necessity of even giving birth.

The Assault on Christian Marriage

Marriage too, of course, has had to bear its share of blame for the modern condition, whatever it happens to be. The Christian institution of marriage and family life has had to bear the full weight of humanism's frontal attack on the Christian religion. Marriage is now thought to be outdated, an oppressive relationship unsuited to nurturing the brave new world that the progressive thinkers of our day are intent on creating. Though, rather inconsistently, white weddings and all the trappings that go with them are as popular as ever. No expense is spared on the lavish arrangements that are thought essential to a proper church wedding. It is just that for many people in modern Western society the ceremony means virtually nothing, and divorce is now almost as popular as marriage. This is a strange phenomenon. The cost of a wedding today seems to be inversely proportionate to the value that is attached to the institution of marriage—though the cost of children's birthday parties is hot on the heels of the kind of expense lavished on a wedding in some cultures. But of course the meaning is irrelevant; it's the style that matters. This is just one more element in our increasingly superficial culture, which stresses the outward appearance, the image and mere style as the all important component of modern life, and rejects the content and meaning, the real purpose of human relationships and indeed of human existence. It is not surprising, therefore, that we now hear of pressure groups and think tanks that are working for the complete abolition of marriage as it has hitherto been conceived—i.e. *Christian* marriage—and its replacement with ten-year, renewable or cancelable “marriage” contracts and the like.

For some, though, even this kind of commitment is too much. Living together is now the preferred option of many couples. It is not uncommon, however, for this state to be referred to as “common law marriage,” and the woman deemed to be the man's “common law wife.” Furthermore, in the eyes of some it is thought that a man can have an ordinary wife *and* a common law wife at the same time, and it is not entirely unknown in this country, though it is certainly uncommon, for a man to maintain a relationship with two such women at the same time, the one his legally married wife, the other his reputed “common law wife.” The notion, however, is completely false. Not only is the relationship with the woman who has not gone through any marriage ceremony adulterous and sinful; if it were indeed a common law marriage it would be bigamous, since English law does not recognise marriage to more than one spouse as legitimate, whether that marriage is considered a common law marriage or a civil or ecclesiastical marriage. It is impossible in the eyes of the law to have two wives; one marriage must be illegal and adulterous. The only question that the law addresses is, *which one is the legal, i.e. the valid, marriage?*

Of course, in most cases where the term common law wife or common law marriage is used there has been no ceremony of marriage of any kind at all. As already stated, for a married man or woman to go through a marriage ceremony of any kind with a third party would be bigamous in the eyes of the law, and this has always been the case under English common law. But mere cohabitation, no matter for how long, does not constitute common law marriage, even when the two cohabiting parties are not married to anyone else, and, moreover, it *never* did. This estate of mere cohabi-

tation is one of concubinage not marriage, and English law does not, and never did, recognise it as anything more than concubinage. But concubinage is not a pleasant term, and it conveys a nuance of disapprobation—at least in a Christian or post-Christian culture. The term “common law wife” sounds much more acceptable, and brings with it the supposed advantages of being dissolvable at will by either party. This whole notion is, however, completely false. A man who lives with a woman in a relationship of physical union without marrying her has a concubine, and neither common law nor canon law recognise, or ever have recognised in the past, anything in such a relationship but the fact of mere concubinage.

A Brief History of Marriage in England

The English law of marriage has a long and complicated history. As early as the time of Glanvill (mid-twelfth century) it was recognised that matters of matrimony were exclusively within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts.¹ The English law of marriage was thus the canon law of the church as practised in England.² When a question pertaining to the validity of a marriage came before a common law court it was referred to a bishop to be settled by the canon law. Common law marriage, therefore,—i.e. marriage recognised as such by the common law—was marriage that was recognised by the ecclesiastical courts. In short, common law marriage was by definition a *Christian* marriage, a Christian institution. The mediaeval ecclesiastical courts punished concubinage as fornication and gave those involved the option of marrying or separating.³

It was the view of the early canonists, including Gratian (1090–1150), that where there was no physical union the marriage was not valid.⁴ But this opinion did not prevail. According to Pollock and Maitland its demise was due to the influence of Peter Lombard and the fact that if there were no indissoluble bond created by the ceremony itself—i.e. if physical union was essential to marriage—Joseph and Mary could not have been married at the time of Christ’s birth.⁵ The canon law of marriage thus stated that *consensus non concubitus facit matrimonium*—“agreement not copulation makes marriage.”⁶

Before the Reformation in Europe, and before Lord Hardwicke’s Act in England (1753), marriage was either informal or formal—the latter being conducted at the door of the church (*in facie ecclesiae*—literally “in the face of the church”). Marriage was entered into by the consent of the parties to the marriage. In an informal or non-ecclesial marriage all that was required was a simple agreement of the parties in words of the present tense (*sponsalia per verba de praesenti*), e.g. “I receive you as my wife/husband . . . etc.” or a promise to marry in words of the future tense (*sponsalia*

per verba de futuro), which created a contract that was considered consummated either by words in the present tense or by the act of physical union. Before consummation, however, this amounted to an engagement and the relationship could be dissolved by mutual consent.⁷ Where there was no physical union, therefore, the validity of the marriage depended on the form of words used in the ceremony. If the words were said in the present tense the marriage was made; if in the future tense the marriage was not complete and could be dissolved.⁸ Such informal marriages were irregular, and the church disapproved of them,⁹ but the words created an indissoluble bond of marriage.¹⁰ Any subsequent marriage by one of the spouses to a third party, even if celebrated formally at the doors of the church, was made null and void by the previous marriage, “constituted by a mere exchange of consenting words.”¹¹ Either party, however, could compel the other to solemnise their marriage *in facie ecclesiae*,¹² and the church could compel them by means of spiritual censures to do the same.¹³

Formal marriages were essentially the same as informal marriages, except that they were celebrated at the door of the church (*in facie ecclesiae*), received the priest’s blessing and were followed by a nuptial mass inside the church.¹⁴ Although this gave a degree of certainty to the marriage, in that it was a formal ceremony blessed by the church and witnessed by the community, the church did not marry the couple, it merely solemnised the marriage. As with informal marriages, “The parties were *not* married by the priest’s blessing or the other ceremonies; *they married each other*.”¹⁵

The problem with marriages not conducted *in facie ecclesiae*, formally at the door of the church, was that they might be difficult to prove. It was possible to marry in complete secrecy, without witnesses, by the simple exchange of words in the present tense. Such marriages were valid marriages that created an indissoluble bond, but nevertheless unprovable. The canon law required at least two witnesses for proof of any matter—and in this the church followed the general biblical requirement (Dt. 19:15; Mt. 18:15–16; Jn 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1). Thus, as Pollock and Maitland point out:

If *A* and *B* contracted an absolutely secret marriage—and this they could do by the exchange of a few words—that marriage was for practical purposes dissoluble at will. If, while *B* was living, *A* went through the form of contracting a public marriage with *C*, this second marriage was treated as valid, and neither *A*, nor *B*, nor both together could prove the validity of their clandestine union.”¹⁶

An unfortunate result of this was that the ecclesiastical court would have to admonish *A* and *C* to live together in a state of continuous adultery.¹⁷ Since this was immoral however,—the first marriage, between *A* and *B*, being valid but not provable—theologians were forced to concede that *A* and *B* should for conscience’ sake live together as man and

1. For a brief history of the development of English law at this time, including the separation of the secular and ecclesiastical courts, see Stephen C. Perks, *Christianity and Law: An Enquiry into the Influence of Christianity on the Development of English Common Law* (Whitby: Avant Books, 1993).

2. Frederick Pollock and Frederic W. Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I* (Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, 1911), Vol II, p. 367f.

3. J. H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History* (London: Butterworths, Third Edition, 1990), p. 547.

4. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Baker, *op. cit.* (First Edition), p. 255.

7. *Ibid.* (Third Edition), p. 546.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

10. Baker, *op. cit.* (Third Edition), p. 546.

11. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

12. L. I. Stranger-Jones, *Eversley’s Law of Domestic Relations* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1951), p. 14.

13. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 372f.

14. Baker, *op. cit.* (Third Edition), p. 548.

15. *Ibid.* My italics.

16. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

17. *Ibid.*

wife, thereby disobeying the church and suffering excommunication as a result, secure in the knowledge that they would be absolved on the Day of Judgement.¹⁸

For obvious reasons, therefore, both the secular and ecclesial authorities were keen to put an end to these informal, unsolemnised marriages. In 1200, in a council at Lambeth, Archbishop Hubert Walter promulgated a constitution requiring all marriages to be celebrated *in facie ecclesiae*, in the presence of a priest, and only after the publication of the banns of marriage on three successive occasions prior to the ceremony.¹⁹ Those not married in the regular way after publication of banns were not to be admitted into a church without a licence from a bishop.²⁰ In 1215 at the Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III made this rule effective over the whole of Christendom.²¹ Regular marriages, i.e. marriages celebrated at church according to this constitution, had, from then on, certain legal advantages over informal, unsolemnised marriages. For example, only when a marriage is celebrated at the door of the church can the bride be endowed.²² But the wife's personal property became vested in the husband and her real property was vested in her husband during coverture,²³—i.e. while she was married to her husband and thus under his protection. Nevertheless, informal, unsolemnised marriages did not cease. The mere decree of the church did not bring the custom to an end, and rather than declare such irregular marriages null and void the church continued to accept them. Such marriages were deemed sinful in the eyes of the church, but they were still accepted as marriages and invalidated any subsequent marriage *in facie ecclesiae* by one of the spouses to a third party. As Pollock and Maitland put it: "On the one hand stands the bare consent *per verba de praesenti*, unhallowed and unconsummated, on the other a solemn and a consummated union. The formless interchange of words prevails over the combined force of ecclesiastical ceremony and sexual intercourse."²⁴

This situation continued in England until Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1753. Registration of marriages began in the sixteenth century, but the registers were not universal and they were not always well preserved. The Council of Trent outlawed informal marriages and required the presence of a priest for validity.²⁵ But England, a Protestant nation, was unaffected by this. Informal, or clandestine marriages, as they were called, continued to be made. In 1598 even Chief Justice Coke, who was the attorney-general at the time, married his second wife in a private ceremony, for which he was censured by the Archbishop.²⁶ In 1694 marrying without banns or a licence was made a criminal

offence, but such marriages were still considered valid. Clandestine marriages, again, did not cease; indeed from the mid-seventeenth century onwards they had become more popular.²⁷ The main reason for the 1694 legislation, in any case, was not to end clandestine marriages so much as to facilitate the taxation of matrimony.²⁸ Other attempts were made to end informal, clandestine marriages during this period. But it was not until Lord Hardwicke CJ introduced a bill to end the practice in 1753 that the situation changed.²⁹ This Act abolished clandestine marriages altogether.³⁰ Henceforth, a valid marriage in the eyes of the law required either the publishing of banns or the purchase of a licence, for which parental consent was required in the case of those under 21 years of age, the presence of two witnesses and the recording of the marriage in a public register, falsification of which became a capital offence.³¹ Jews and Quakers were exempted from getting married in church but not Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. The royal family was also exempt from the provisions of the Act as were marriages celebrated with the special licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.³² The Act covered only England and Wales. Outside England and Wales the law recognised the law of the place in which the marriage was celebrated.³³ This accounts for the popularity of Gretna Green. As the nearest place in which one could get married outside the provisions of the Act for the majority of people resident in England it became the most frequently used venue for eloping couples under 21 years of age. The Marriage Act 1836 introduced a civil ceremony, which could be celebrated in a registry office or a registered building, e.g. a Nonconformist chapel.

The Common Law Doctrine of Marriage

To the extent that the term "common law marriage" or "common law wife" referred to an informal marriage unsolemnised by the church, the notion these terms represented was abolished completely in 1753 by Lord Hardwicke's Act. In this sense, therefore, there is no such thing as a common law marriage any more in England and Wales. The term is incorrectly used to denote a relationship based on mere cohabitation and physical union. Such a relationship is concubinage, nothing more, and English law, common or ecclesiastical, never recognised it as anything more than concubinage. In another sense, the only real meaning of the term "common law marriage" or "common law wife" is a marriage or wife that is recognised as such in common law. To the extent that the term has any validity today, therefore, it refers to all valid marriages whether ecclesiastical (Church of England marriages) or civil marriages (e.g. marriages in a registry office or in a Nonconformist chapel), and in England and Wales it refers *only* to such marriages,

18. Baker, *op. cit.* (Third Edition), p. 548.

19. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.* This was not a new ecclesial doctrine however. Lanfranc (1005-1085) had issued a constitution stating: "No one may give his daughter or kinswoman to anyone without the blessing of a priest; if he does otherwise, it will not be judged a lawful marriage but a fornicatory marriage" (ut nullus filiam suam vel cognatam det alicui absque benedictione sacerdotali; si aliter fecerit, non ut legitimum coniugium sed ut fornicatorium iudicabitur—cited in *ibid.*). One may well wonder how a valid marriage can be considered a fornicatory marriage; but the canon still sees the condition entered into by the informal ceremony as one of matrimony, if irregularly celebrated. It is not concubinage. See Pollock and Maitland's comments in *ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

23. Baker, *op. cit.* (Third Edition), p. 552.

24. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

25. Baker, *op. cit.* (Third Edition), p. 548.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, p. 548f. 28.

Ibid., p. 549.

29. An Act for the better Preventing of Clandestine Marriages, 26 Geo. II, c. 33.

30. The term "clandestine" did not refer only to marriages that were entirely secret and without witnesses. The term was used to denote what has been called informal marriages above. "There are various degrees of clandestinity which must be distinguished. The marriage may be (1) absolutely secret and unprovable . . . But a marriage may also be called clandestine (2) because, though valid and provable, it has not been solemnized *in facie ecclesiae*, or even (3) because, though thus solemnized, it was not preceded by the publication of banns." Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

31. Baker, *op. cit.* (Third Edition), p. 549.

32. *Ibid.*, 550.

33. *Ibid.*

since the term can only mean a valid marriage in English common law.

As already stated, the common law prior to the 1836 Marriage Act recognised marriage as the domain of the ecclesiastical courts and accepted as a valid marriage what the ecclesiastical courts accepted as a valid marriage. The English law of marriage was the canon law of marriage. The common law did not have a doctrine of marriage peculiarly its own; it certainly did not have a doctrine of marriage different from the canon law.³⁴ It merely deferred questions relating to the validity of marriage to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Common law marriage, therefore, however it might be conceived, was always a *Christian* institution, an estate judged to be valid in the eyes of the church and therefore accepted as such in common law. To the extent that the term represents the informal marriages of the mediaeval period it was still a Christian institution, i.e. an institution validated by the Christian church, though the canon law did not require the presence of a priest or solemnisation by the church for a marriage to be valid, despite its continual efforts to secure these as the regular form of marriage and the extirpation of clandestine marriage.³⁵

In short, the common law doctrine of marriage was the church's doctrine of marriage. Whatever else common law marriage was, therefore, it was not merely an agreement to cohabit, a state that in no way affected a union of any kind in the eyes of the law. There had to be words of marriage in the present tense or in the future tense that had been consummated by words in the present tense or by physical union. Without these essential words of marriage, i.e. without the couple marrying each other, there was no marriage and the common law did not accept their cohabitation as marriage in any sense.

Of course, modern concubines, of which there are very many in our society, do not like the term that most accurately defines their relationship to the man they live with. The word comes from the Latin, *concubinatus*, meaning "Union of a man with an unmarried woman, usu[ally] of a lower social grade than himself."³⁶ The truth is unpleasant to modern liberated women so the term "partner" or some such circumlocution is used to describe the sexual relationship they have entered into. In the light of all the talk that we get from feminists about the liberation of women from the oppression of Christian marriage, it seems odd that they should be so content with having reached that most exalted of all female conditions: concubinage.

Consequences of the Abandonment of Christian Marriage

The increase in concubinage and divorce and the demise of marriage as a life-long institution has had serious consequences for modern Western society. These deleterious social trends, combined with the heavy taxation policies of modern governments and, not insignificantly, the loss of faith and belief in the Christian world-view, which for a millennium provided the religious foundations of Western culture, have proved fatal to the health of the Christian

institution of marriage and family life, and indeed fatal to the health of our society generally. The result has been the creation of a dysfunctional generation that has hardly any concept of the Christian social order upon which the nation drew for its strength and vitality in the past. The decline of the family as one of the pillars of society has also contributed to the growing homelessness among the young—and State handouts and welfare are not the answer to this problem; the State is no substitute for the family. Without a strong Christian family ethic society lacks a stable and secure environment in which to nurture the next generation, and thereby a means of preserving social order.

Since individual freedom has largely been suspended by the envious State and the church has already been dismantled from within as a pillar of society, only the State remains as a major prop of the social order in modern Western nations. Virtually all other institutions have now been subordinated to the State. The result has been tyranny. Without a strong church, a strong family and individual liberty there is no means of checking the absolutist ambitions of the modern State. Neither church nor family have any real power or authority in society any longer and the all-powerful, predestinating State now controls and governs the life of the individual and the nation. The State has devoured the nation's liberty, prosperity and virtue, to use the words of Alan Duncan and Dominic Hobson.³⁷

The Christian Social Order

The time is surely ripe for reversing this trend. Part of the answer is the restoration of the church to its rightful position and role in society. Part of the answer also, and a very significant part, is the restoration of the Christian institutions of marriage and the family in the life of the nation. Of course, this can only happen as the Christian faith is embraced and the Christian virtues practised in the lives of the individuals and families that constitute the nation. This is a change that must begin in the heart. But it must not stop there. Pietism cannot solve the problems that afflict the nation. If the change of heart effected by regeneration is not demonstrated in a man's outward life, we must seriously question whether there has been a change of heart in the first place, since Christ taught us that it is by the *fruit* they bear that we shall know who are his, not by a mere confession of faith. Only the Christian faith can save our society from its present plight. But it can only do that as individuals, families, churches and politicians work out the faith in all spheres of life and culture proper to each.

A healthy society—i.e. a *Christian* society—requires not only a strong church, but a strong family ethic, a strong ministry of justice (the State), and individual liberty. These are the four pillars upon which a Christian social theory and practice rest. All four are essential to a healthy society, and they are equally essential. A church-centred society is not the Christian ideal; neither is a libertarian society or a patriarchal society, certainly not a Statist society. The Christian ideal requires all four principles: a strong church, a strong family, a strong magistrate,—and by "strong" I mean a *just* magistrate also—and individual liberty, all

34. Pollock and Maitland, *op. cit.*, p. 374. 35. *Ibid.*, p. 372f.

36. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1879), p. 404b.

37. Alan Duncan and Dominic Hobson, *Saturn's Children: How the State Devours Liberty, Prosperity and Virtue* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995). See the review on p. 30 for more details.

operating within the parameters and boundaries, and observing the proper limitations of authority, set down for these institutions in God's word. These are the ideals upon which Christian society is founded. The demise of one of these institutions means, ultimately, the end of a Christian social order. All of these vital institutions must be restored in

society if we are to save the nation from ruin and judgement. One must not be stressed to the exclusion of the others, and none may take precedence of the others. C&S

(Internet discussion on this subject should be sent to C&S@kuyper.org under the title "Marriage.")

THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF CAUSALITY AND THE THOUGHT OF THE BIBLE

by *Jean-Marc Berthoud*

PART II: THE FOUR MODALITIES OF CAUSALITY

Foreword

One of the first things to which we must draw the attention of our readers is the strict limit which we set for the usefulness of the reflections of Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition in the domain which interests us. This tradition has developed a line of thought which is very useful for the question of the divers causes which govern the relations between the multiple aspects of God-created reality. But what is fundamentally missing in this tradition is a right vision of the proper status of the divers states (or conditions) through which the reality of this world passes. As the Dutch Christian philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd¹⁴ has well shown, Aristotle failed to recognise the created character of the universe, its now fallen state and, finally, the redemption of all things (including creation) brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For him the world is normative in itself as given to him and as he observes it. Aristotle's analysis can thus be useful on a structural plane, but we must not forget that he refers to the world only in its state of actual decay. The following remarks must be read from a fundamentally biblical Christian perspective which does not hesitate to affirm that the only basis (explicit or implicit) of all true thought must be founded upon the ontological Trinity. The expression of this divine thought (which is the necessary normative criterion of all human thought) is found deposited in the written revelation of God, the Bible. The Bible offers us a vision true to reality, that is, respecting the perspective of man and the world defined above:¹⁵

- (1) man and creation good, sinless, before the fall;
- (2) man and creation fallen after the original sin;
- (3) man regenerated, firstfruits of the new creation, but still participating in the fallen character of this world;
- (4) man and creation completely restored at the return of Christ. All corruption of man and nature destroyed. The wicked condemned to hell.

These four states of man and the world in which we live are going to affect the whole of the Christian's thought and his way of studying the universe. For Aristotle only natural reality exists rather than these four different states through which all created reality must of necessity pass, which means four different outlooks upon reality. The basic motive of his thought is that of a nature always fundamentally the same, which can be analysed according to a model in which one constantly finds two poles always mutually implying each other: matter-form, soul-body, potentiality-act, the one and the many etc. This mode of analysis is certainly very useful for our thought, but we must never forget its limits nor the fact that it must always be perceived in the Christian perspective of the trinitarian God, who is totally transcendent, the Creator of all things, who sustains his universe by an immanent constant action. This all-powerful and omniscient God is also a personal God, full of love for his creatures, and with whom we can enter into a personal relationship by faith. The history of the relation of this God (the only true God!) to his creation is characterised by four motifs which are at the basis of all right thought:

- (1) the *creation* of all things *ex nihilo* by the word of God according to this stable order which is the original divine covenant with his entire creation;
- (2) the *fall*, rupture of the original covenant, which encompasses all men and whose effects have marked all the aspects of the creation;

14. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (Presbyterian and Reformed, Philadelphia, 1969, 2 vols).

15. Thomas Boston, *Man in his Fourfold State: Of primitive integrity, entire depravity, begun recovery and consummate happiness or misery* (Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1989 [1720]).

(3) *God's revelation of his law* (normative content of his covenant), and of his design of redemption by way of the people of Israel in order to re-establish the covenant broken by the fall;

(4) *redemption*, the renewing of the original covenant, perfectly and definitively accomplished by the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God made man, and by his resurrection and glorious ascension.

All the discussion, so useful and so luminous, which Aristotle, and after him Aristotelianism and Thomism, present on causality must be understood according to the biblical revelation of the true order of reality which we recalled briefly above. We must add that without the doctrine of the common grace of God towards all men the existence of such clarity in a pagan thinker would be completely incomprehensible.¹⁶

Recapitulation

We now come back to the discussion about the four causes which we began in our first part. Let us briefly recall that to facilitate the study of reality Aristotle had divided the abstract analysis of reality into four causes theoretically different but all constantly acting upon the concrete phenomena: the final cause (the purpose), the formal (or organising) cause, the efficient cause (the one accomplishing the work) and, finally, the material cause (the material necessary for the work).

We have also seen that since Galileo modern science has abandoned two of Aristotle's causes in its analysis of reality, the final and formal causes.¹⁷ This means that there disappeared from the universe, the *cosmos*, described by modern science all thought relating to God as well as to the ultimate meaning of the world, the final divine plan which the study of the creation might reveal. In such a perspective the

16. Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel* (Presbyterian and Reformed, Nutley, 1974).

17. This is what Claude Tresfontaines has to say on this subject in an article worthy of the closest study: "The modern definition of the mechanical philosophy is generally that of an explanation by efficient causes alone. The success of this definition seems to proceed from Bacon's disruption of Aristotle's fourfold causation. The author of the *Novum Organum* effectively abandons the study of formal causes to metaphysics and limits physics to the study of efficient causes, the latter including material causes. In addition, Bacon banishes from this field of study any reference whatever to final causes. These, according to him, have the character of 'unfruitful virgins' for they in fact explain nothing. But above all it is Descartes who, by his reduction of material substance to *res extensa* and his explanation of every phenomenon present in the physical universe by 'dimensions, figures and movements,' provided the foundations of that mechanical model for the explanation of reality prevalent at the time of Leibniz. What is of fundamental importance in this conception is that it eliminates every tendency for material bodies to move towards their natural place of rest or to tend towards their proper completion. Descartes system thus came to explain every kind of change, whether of quantity or of quality, simply as the effects produced by the impact of moving bodies in space.

"Descartes did not in fact reject the idea of a God-ordained overall purpose for the creation and the preservation of the material world: he only affirmed that such a purpose is totally unknown to us. Thus his position must here be considered as one of 'agnosticism' with regard to the overall finality of the universe. It is rather with regard to the detail of physical reality that the French philosopher resolutely denies the existence of any kind of 'form' or idea which would be inherent to various bodies and towards which these bodies would tend as towards their particular purpose or full accomplishment. This 'hylemorphic' position appeared to him to be an unwarranted

efficient and the material cause alone remain relevant to the study of a universe created by God. The disappearance of the formal cause from the scientific discourse implies the replacement of metaphysics by mechanics; the essence (reflection upon the meaning, the why?) is replaced by the functioning (the how?). It is not impossible that in such a perspective even Aristotle's concept of *nature* ends up by disappearing in order to make way for a limitless exercise of the human will and the Promethean certitude that everything can change by the decree of man who makes himself god.

The man who accepts this vision of the world as being universally valid becomes on the one hand unable to discern any kind of finality, of a God-ordained end, in the domain of nature studied by science, thus becoming incapable of discovering any purpose and meaning in the cosmos. On the other hand he becomes blind to the dazzling witness rendered by the least detail, the smallest particle of the universe to its Creator. It is the study of the world carried on exclusively from the angle of Aristotle's material and efficient causes (at the expense of the formal and final causes) which has produced the truncated vision of reality called *materialism, the mechanistic view of the world, scientific positivism, scientism, evolutionism*. It is this reduction (hence the expression *reductionism*) of creation to its material and efficient causes which brought in, first, the deism of the Enlightenment thinkers who saw in God (the god of the philosophers) only the great clockmaker who had started the immense mechanism of the universe, and then the godless universe of the moderns, a cosmos subject only to the laws of chance, and finally the reduction of the world to chaos which seems the epistemological hallmark of the end of the twentieth century.¹⁸ Thus, the scientific atheism of the modern world has its source in a logical option, a methodological choice made by this *new science* which developed at the start of the seventeenth century. It is evident that such a logical perver-

survival of magical thought making of nature a goddess whose power man should solicit. This explains why he took such pains to demonstrate that thought must be radically distinguished from matter and that the latter should be reduced exclusively to geometrical space (even if this makes it necessary to solve the problem of the union of the soul to the body in man in a special way). It was the superiority of thought to matter that the French philosopher sought to establish. But very soon his mechanical system came to be seen as a purely materialistic explanation of the universe, removing from nature every kind of finality that God had purposed for it.

"This attitude destroyed the symbolical significance of all things . . . This symbolical understanding of reality had up till then been quite normal. It consisted in establishing a real analogical correspondence between the fields of matter and spirit. In such a traditional perspective man does not feel himself lost in a meaningless world for everywhere he finds signs of the Creator's hand. With Descartes, this 'original covenant' with creation is broken and man discovers himself, to quote Jacques Monod (*Le hasard et la nécessité*) to be 'like a gypsy on the fringe of the universe' . . . Here the subject withdraws into pure inwardness and correlatively the world itself extends into something totally extraneous to man. The world thus constituted consists of a sum of atomised objects juxtaposed one next to the other and whose relations are governed by immutable mathematical laws. 'The eternal silence of this infinite space frightens me': this thought of Pascal expresses well the self-conscious awareness of modern man who finds himself confronted by a world from which all meaning has disappeared." Claude Troisfontaines, "La réhabilitation des formes et de la finalité chez Leibniz" in *Finalité et intentionnalité: doctrine thomiste et perspectives modernes*, *op. cit.* p. 167-169.

18. Roberto de Mattei, *De l'utopie du progrès au règne du chaos. 1900 à 2000: du rêve de construction au rêve de destruction* (L'Age d'Homme, Lausanne, 1993).

sion is not without connection to a previous spiritual and moral decline. But that is another question.

For it is in effect this methodological exclusion of the living God of the Bible from the *scientific* study of the creation which produced this secularisation or this disenchantment of the world, this loss of the sense of the sacred and what we may call a profane attitude in our relation to the creation of God. For the God who is at the origin of everything, who sustains the entire universe, and who is the ultimate goal of all that exists can not thus be eliminated from scientific discourse without producing inevitable consequences. The *a priori* exclusion from our discourse on nature of any kind of metaphysical¹⁹ and theological meaning implies serious consequences, even material consequences, hence the very real modern crisis of ecology. Contrary to what went on in pre-Galilean science, the study of nature was thereafter *methodologically* cut off from any moral meaning, any spiritual significance. As T. S. Eliot so rightly pointed out in the aftermath of World War One, there developed since the start of the seventeenth century in what was becoming the dominant thought of Europe an enduring schism between sensibility and intelligence, and this schism presaged no good either for men's sensibility or their intelligence. We were well on that road of a *science without conscience* and a *conscience without science* of which we can only recognise the ravages everywhere today. It is this impenetrable abyss established between spirit and matter, so typical of Platonising thought, that is at the root of the Enlightenment's rationalistic obscurantism.²⁰ The analogy between the world of creation and spiritual realities was henceforth voided. The picturesque or parabolical language of the Bible therefore largely lost its epistemological justification, its credibility. The study of nature henceforth no longer needed to address theology and metaphysics. The Bible had nothing more to say to science. The evident corollary of this would become manifest only with time: now science dictated to the exegetes and theologians how they had to read the Bible.

Beginning with such foundations affirmed *a priori*, that is, as first postulates put forward without proofs, the atheisation of the study of the universe became inevitable. Sooner or later the increasingly radical instruments of this atheisation of scientific thought, the Laplaces, the Lyells, the Darwins, the Lemaitres, the Rostands, the Goulds, were bound to appear. And the methodological atheisation of science proceeded, by way of the innumerable applications of the technology which so rapidly developed from it, to produce material, social, aesthetical and political structures which estranged from the life of men whatever did not enter into the plasticised and cemented constructs of the new model of the world. The Christian faith, if it still existed with the scientist (and here the non-scientist fared hardly better), was henceforth reduced to the restricted domain of *private beliefs*, which are merely subjective, and personal. Therefore Christian thought could not claim to have the least legiti-

19. Metaphysics is the knowledge of beings which do not immediately fall under the experience of our senses; it is the knowledge of things as they are in themselves; finally it deals with the significance of created beings. In Christian thought metaphysics cannot be separated from theology and the latter from the teachings of Scripture.

20. For a less dualist and a more balanced view of the relation of human thought to the divinely ordered reality of the universe see, Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (Routledge, London, 1994).

mate relevance for the study of the universe and for political and social life. All interference of theological, ethical, aesthetical or metaphysical considerations in the truly scientific study of nature automatically led to the methodological disqualification of those who had the temerity of thus upsetting the new immovable dogma of a pretended autonomy of scientific thought about reality as a whole, of its pretended independence from all theology, all metaphysics, all aesthetics, any kind of moral and spiritual vision of the universe. Thus, all things considered, they transformed the cosmos into chaos.

In our first part we sketched the question of the origins of such a truncated, reductionist vision of the rich and varied reality of the universe by modern science. It is time to return to this question, but now from a different angle, the angle of the Aristotelian study of causes. The question we now treat of is rather difficult and will require patience on the part of the reader. The reward in terms of enlightenment will be well worth the effort needed to understand this excursion into the labyrinth of causes. We shall make our explanation as simple as possible.

To the four causes we have mentioned, the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition added different modalities according to which causality was said to function. It placed distinctions between what has recently come to be called

- (1) *partial concurring causes*;
- (2) *reciprocal and total causes*; and finally
- (3) *the total subordinate causes*.

Later on we will add to them a fourth modality, a category which would hardly occur to the Aristotelian tradition, since it totally failed to recognise the biblical idea of God as the Creator, the providential God who sustains all things, the God of miracles who intervenes in the functioning of the creation and who directs all events of history. This modality is, then,

- (4) *the unilateral total cause*.

(1) The Partial Concurring Causes

Here we mean the causes which we can constantly observe in everyday life. The simplest example is that of two horses which pull a cart. Their effort is *concurring*, that is, the effort of each horse concurs in obtaining the desired goal, to make the cart go forward. Their effort is *partial*, for each horse does a part of the work. Each of the horses can be replaced by another draft animal, another horse, a mule, an ox, etc., or by another moving force, a tractor, two tractors, men, etc. without any change in the result. The causes are interchangeable at will. This system of causes is seen everywhere in the domain of mechanics, chemistry, physics. Modern science has confined itself to the domain of the *partial concurring causes* which is essentially that of the inanimate world.

We can imagine the *partial concurring causes* as situated on one single plane according to the following schema:

(first cause A)—(object to be moved O)—(second cause B)

If we increase A which exercises pressure upon the object O, force B will be pushed towards the right. If we increase force B which exercises pressure upon the object O, it will be pushed towards the left. The more we increase the pressure of A upon O, the more O will go to the right, and

vice versa. If we put a very strong pressure by A upon O, B would virtually cease to exist as a force. It will disappear from the picture on the right. This has hardly any importance if we deal only with mechanical forces. A horse, for example, may pull a sleigh better than four dogs. So much the better. But as we will see further on, it is not the same at all in other fields.

But these *partial concurring causes* are evidently included in the total reality of the four causes. The mechanical description of a fact, while correct, cannot limit itself exclusively to the material and efficient causes, unless one arbitrarily rejects a more complete explanation of the fact under examination whose complete comprehension depends on the involvement of the two other causes, the formal cause and the final cause. On a larger plane, what we say here can extend to the entire universe and to God who is its final cause, that is to say, the source, the meaning and the ultimate goal of all things. But let us repeat, the analysis of reality by partial concurring causes alone is applied quite legitimately to the domain of material causes, causes seen essentially from the mechanical, physical and chemical angle. This is the domain par excellence (and almost exclusively) of modern science. The error of this view has been, as we have seen, to exclude from its description of reality the ordered combination of the four causes. Here we have to do with the first part of divine creation, that of the heavens and the earth, of the material domain, that of the pure laws of physics and chemistry, a domain which does not include the reality of vegetable, animal and human life. We are going to see that the correct comprehension of these latter domains corresponds to a very different form of causality.

(2) The Reciprocal and Total Causes

Here we are on a quite different terrain, on a plane which concerns the causes which are simultaneously both mutual and reciprocal on the one hand, and on the other hand total, that is, irreplaceable, necessary, to each other. In the *partial concurring causes*, we saw that a horse pulling a cart could be replaced with another horse without any fundamental effect upon the effort put forth and the result obtained. With the *reciprocal and total causes* this is not at all the case. Concrete examples will allow us better to understand this. In a living organism, the form of the organism, its fundamental structure (Aristotle would have said its *soul*, we would say its genetic code, for example), is inseparable from the chemical elements of which its molecules and cells are constituted. One goes of necessity with the other. One cannot replace the form of the chemical matter which constitute it without totally changing the organism. Without its specific form and the precise materials which it must have to live, the organism cannot exist. Without matter the organism is only an idea. The form and the materials are *reciprocal total causes* for each other.

Let us note that as useful as it is, our distinction shows here an abstract, intellectual character, almost unreal for those who are not used to it.²¹ In reality there only exists the

concrete organism, form and matter, unity and diversity united together in a concrete, unique being. Without its soul, its specific form, a living being is only an inert heap of chemical elements. But without matter by means of which form becomes realised, the living organism cannot exist. If one takes away the matter, there is no organism here on earth. If one takes away the form, the matter of which the body of the organism is constituted very quickly loses the structure proper for it; the body immediately begins to rot, to disintegrate, to fall to pieces. Eventually nothing at all will exist of it. Consequently, to apply to a living organism the mechanical schema of the *partial concurring causes* (which we have analysed in our first section), a system of causes which we have seen to be uniquely applicable to the material domain, would reduce biological life to a pure mechanism where only material forces act. This causal reductionism (in the mechanicalism of the eighteenth century or the scientific positivism of the nineteenth century) has caused much damage to the study of the biological and social phenomena and for a long time has rendered their real structure incomprehensible.

Let us take another example, the Christian view of marriage. In this perspective, which possesses a universal normative value because it conforms to the original created order, the husband and the wife carry on mutual, reciprocal and total relations. Let us be specific. The husband who loves his wife and the wife who gives him her conjugal affection must not (what are we saying, they cannot) get along without each other without destroying this unique organism, the family. What God has united, let not man put asunder. The husband who exercises an authority full of love over his wife cannot do so without the active collaboration of his wife who gives him this love in showing him a submission full of respect. The two arches of the couple constituted according to the created order mutually support each other. Together they form a unique natural, irreplaceable organism of which every element is different and plays a part proper to it and ultimately defined by the law of God. There normally is no *competition* between them. The couple is a unity whose two elements, thought different, or rather because they are created different, reciprocally sustain each

with precision. The concept serves to distinguish verbally and conceptually in the diversity of concrete reality a chair from a bed, for example. In this way of seeing things and naming them, called realism, the abstract notion of chair corresponds to a set of real concrete forms. This is nothing else but the thinking of ordinary commonsense. For a word is not just an arbitrary abstract notion as is affirmed by diverse philosophical schools: nominalists, (since Ockham) and idealists (since Descartes and Kant), as well as in almost all the thinking characteristic of modern linguistics and linguistic philosophy (Wittgenstein). All these philosophical currents (today practically all powerful) manifest a way of thinking totally at odds with that of ordinary common sense and experimental science, both of which are, philosophically speaking, thoroughly realistic. It is clear that only concrete phenomena (this very chair) exist tangibly for in each concrete object the universal is conjoined to precise accidents: this wooden chair. These are what we call substantial forms. For a history of this fundamental debate see: *Alain de Libera, La querelle des universaux: De Platon à la fin du Moyen Age* (Seuil, Paris, 1996) and the very clear explanation of some of these issues in Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Word of Flux: Modern Man and the Problem of Knowledge* (Thoburn Press, Fairfax, 1975). For their practical implications see the remarkable book by Samuel L. Blumenfeld, *The Whole Language: OBE Fraud* (The Paradigm Co., P. O. Box 45161, Boise, Idaho 83711, 1996). See also our discussion of Bible translation in *Résister et Construire*, Nos. 28 to 31.

21. We have before us here an intellectual distinction between universals and accidents. That an object should participate in the intellectual category *chair* is what one calls a universal. That the chair is made of wood is an accident. The concept, that is the universal, chair, is an intellectual reality. This abstract notion, chair, corresponds to a series of concrete phenomena that can be determined

other. To use the words of modern Aristotelianism, they constitute *reciprocal and total causes* for each other.

But if one applies the causal system of the *partial concurring causes* to the couple, one arrives at the new modern conception of marriage whose elements are partial causes, interchangeable and naturally competing. They are neither naturally necessary nor total in their reciprocal relations. Thus this aberration, that is a norm which this single parent family is, obtains legal status, because the causes constituting the couple can be exchanged (or suppressed) without therefore fundamentally affecting the family constitution. In this manner the application of a causal system inadequate for an organism where divers elements play irreplaceable parts (total causes which occur together for the common good which is the life of the couple) sows legal causes of conflict and division. Egalitarianism can be valuable in the domain of physics and chemistry, but not in that of human relations founded upon the complementarity of the inequalities which occur in various ways to bring about a good which is common to all, a new unity, a community.

It is this egalitarian injustice, unjust because totally inadequate for the reality to which it is applied, which we see in the new Swiss legislation on marriage.²² In this “new style” couple we note that we have to do with two elements essentially independent of each other, no longer called spouses or husband and wife (to mark their different and complementary roles) but *partners* to show more clearly their relation as social atoms separable and reattachable at will. Likewise, marriage is not understood as being an indissoluble covenant, thus manifesting that it is as it were a new organism, the couple, the family. *What God has joined together* in creating, in short, a new unity, a new organism, *let not man put asunder*. Marriage in such a perspective becomes a simple social contract which may be broken almost without formality. Certainly the fact of considering the relations between couples as belonging in the framework of a *reciprocal and total causality* does not at all define the content of the marriage and the role proper for each of its members. But the application to marriage of *reciprocal and total causality* prevents us from falling into an erroneous causal schema, that of *partial concurring causes* which totally fails to recognise the specificity of social relationships and would falsify all our thinking about these questions.²³

It is the same with other aspects of social relationships. This is very clear for men’s mutual economic and political relations. If we apply to men’s economic relations among each other the schema of *partial concurring causes*, certainly useful in the domain of relations among purely material forces, we will never arrive at an understanding of the economic enterprise as forming a whole where the different elements (employers and workers, financiers and technicians) work together in the harmonious design of reaching a common goal. The application to the enterprise of the logical schema proper to the *partial concurring causes* can only end in seeing the divers elements constituting this social institution as being naturally independent from each other. In this atomised perspective they act not for a common goal

22. On the aberrations of the egalitarian social values disseminated throughout the modern world by the human rights’ ideology see: Jean-Marc Berthoud, *Une religion sans Dieu. Les droits de l’homme contre l’Évangile* (L’Age d’Homme, Lausanne, 1993).

23. On this question see Jean-Marc Berthoud, *La famille dans la Bible et aujourd’hui* (AVPC, Case postale 34, CH-1001 Lausanne, 1988).

proper for them all, but with the goal that each one should defend his own interests, his fair share of the cake. We thus inevitably proceed (because of using a false causal schema), first, to the principle of universal competition as absolute rule of economic liberty (this is classical liberalism) and then, consequently, to Marxism, the inescapable match of a pure, hard liberalism, and the class war so dear to the socialists.

In a creationist perspective (that of the original political covenant of God with men) the elements of the coupling of monarch-subject, rulers-ruled, parents-children, teachers-students are seen as supporting each other reciprocally for the sake of the good of the entire community. The mechanistic vision of politics (which is that of the *partial concurring causes*) brings forth as its natural fruit monarchic, oligarchic, or modern democratic absolutism. It is the vision of an artificial social contract, the invention of Hobbesian and Rousseauist nominalist voluntarism,²⁴ itself the direct heir of the mechanistic vision of the world of Galileo. The divers elements of political society are perceived in it as representing necessarily antagonistic forces whose relationships must be regulated by political wiles of a mechanistic kind. God and his law are inevitably excluded from such political systems. They end in impersonal and irresponsible relationships in the image of the purely mechanistic world of quantifiable forces proper to physics. The wrong application of the *partial concurring causes* to human relations empties these relations of their specific substance.²⁵

In all these cases it is a matter of the breakup of the order of creation, and thus of sin, the attitude where men no longer respect the framework (and the causal system) proper for the divers aspects of the divine creation. The mechanisation of the institutions (or of our thought about these institutions) issues in the last analysis from a loss of life, of confidence and of love in social relations. This destruction of the created social order issues in turn from the disappearance of living relations between men and their Creator, who is himself the source of all life and all order on the plane of social relations

24. In what is called Nominalism, concepts, words used to name reality (hence nominalism) are simply arbitrary human conventions. They have no substantial conceptual reality, stability or truth. For example, in a nominalistic perspective the word chair has no real relation with this specific wooden chair. The originator of this conceptual procedure which atomises all thought and makes it autonomous of the reality of substantial forms given in creation, of human language received from God through history and of divine revelation itself was the English philosopher of the XIVth century, William of Ockham (c.1300-c.1350). It is this type of thinking about created reality that was at the root of the XVIIth century scientific revolution which did away with the conceptual reality and pertinence of substantial forms. This way of thinking leads to skepticism, relativism, atomistic linguistics and to that conception of a meaningless universe which is so present in our civilisation.

The great opponent of Ockham’s nominalism in the XIVth century was John Wyclif. The Latin text of his fundamental refutation of nominalism, *On Universals* was published for the first time in 1984 with an English translation by Sir Anthony Kenny (Oxford University Press). The fundamental studies on Wyclif’s thought are due to the pen, or to the initiative, of Anthony Kenny, *Wyclif* (O.U.P., 1985); Anthony Kenny (Editor), *Wyclif in his Times* (O.U.P., 1986). See also Anne Hudson and M. Wilks (Eds.), *From Ockham to Wycliffe* (Blackwells, Oxford, 1987) and Brian Davies, *Language, Meaning and God* (G. Chapman).

25. Jean-Marc Berthoud, “Du pouvoir dans la vie chrétienne,” *Documentation chrétienne*, (Case postale 468, CH-1001 Lausanne) No. XVII, 1977 and Jean-Marc Berthoud, “Social Contract Tradition and the Autonomy of Politics,” *Calvinism Today*, Vol. I, No. 1 (January 1991).

and the no less important plane of the correct mutual relations between ideas. The solution to these causal, spiritual and social blind alleys is found, as always, in a return to God, in repentance (from the word *rethink*) of men and in their will to return to the created order, a desire marked by respect, and the fear of God which produces renewed obedience to the divine commandments. This attitude of confident submission will set our intelligence straight again and lead us back to the respect for the diversity of the created orders appropriate for reality as it came forth from the hands of the Creator.

(3) The Total Subordinated Causes

Those who hold to Thomistic thought have realised that these two systems of Aristotelian causes could not account for all observable causal relations. If, for example, the *partial concurring causes* sufficed to account for mechanical movements and physical and chemical changes, then their exclusive functioning taken by itself could seem to discard the formal and final causes and thus end in a purely mechanical view of reality. This is what we could note with the Galilean revolution. Hence the question arises: how can we reintegrate in this system of causal modalities God and meaning, final and formal causes? In the interests of a more complete explanation which would encompass the sum total of reality a third causal modality was proposed, the modality of the *total subordinated causes*. What is involved here?

Let us recall to memory the schema we have given above for describing the *partial concurring causes*:

(first cause A)—(object to be moved O)—(second cause B)

If we apply this schema of *partial concurring causes* to the relationships which God sustains to the world of his creation, we will see results which are surprising and difficult to accept. If the sovereignty of God is found in A and the responsibility of man in B, we will find ourselves faced with alternatives.

(1) We will insist (rightly) upon the absolute sovereignty of God (force A), an insistence which will push the responsibility of man (force B) squarely outside of our picture. We will thus arrive at what is called *theological hyper-Calvinism*. This position insists so much on the sovereignty of God and upon his grace *at the expense of* the responsibility of man and the works by which he must respond in gratitude to the free compassion of God, that the latter no longer have any importance. Needless to say this position is not at all that of John Calvin as some wrongfully pretend.

(2) On the other hand, if we strongly insist (rightly) on the entire responsibility of man (force B) we will then arrive at the position where the sovereignty of God (force A) will be pushed more and more to the left until it eventually completely leaves the picture. We arrive at Pelagianism (from Pelagius, great adversary of Augustine of Hippo in the fifth century, who insisted so much upon the entire responsibility and the intact capacities of man to obey God that divine sovereignty and grace completely disappeared from his thought system).

(3) Men of the golden mean opt for Arminian synergism (*synergy*—co-operation of several different functions which produce an overall effect). Arminius was a Dutch adversary of Calvinism whose theses were condemned at Dordrecht in

1620. We reach here a (totally false) middle position which affirms the partial action of the sovereignty of God joining with the equally partial responsibility of man. These two *partial concurring causes* allow the partial sovereignty of God to meet the equally partial responsibility of man for O in the middle of our picture.

But how do we get out of such a theological muddle?

We must recognise that this schema of *partial concurring causes* is totally inadequate to the data contained in the Bible. It does not correspond to the reality of the two causes before us. For in the first place we must note that neither of these causes has a partial character at all. They both have a total character. On the one hand, according to the Bible, we could never exalt enough God's sovereignty over all things. But on the other hand, the Bible equally repeatedly and constantly affirms the liberty (for good or evil) and hence the entire responsibility of man who will be judged according to his deeds. In the second place, these two causes are in no way equal; the one, the sovereignty of God, is infinitely greater than the other, the responsibility of man. They are on two completely different planes. The sovereignty of God encompasses the responsibility of man everywhere, yet without diminishing or lessening it.²⁶

We find the same problem when we consider the question of the relation of the first cause to the second causes. If one employs the schema of the *partial concurring causes* to account for the relationship of the first cause to the second causes, one will inevitably proceed towards the lessening, even the elimination, of one or the other. On the side of the first cause we seek (very correctly) to affirm the total sovereignty of divine predestination. It is this total predetermination of the divine decree of all things by God which allows him to know the number of hairs on our heads and the instant in which the smallest sparrow falls to the ground. If we apply here the inadequate schema of the *partial concurring causes*, we fall into an absolute theologism which removes from our thought and our action the reality of the second causes. This is nothing else but the contempt of the natural order, of creation. The first cause takes up so much room that second causes lose their rationale. This super-spiritualisation leads, for example, to Docetism, which places so much stress upon the divinity of Christ that his humanity becomes atrophied. The practical consequences of such an attitude are obvious. Our present human life loses all its importance in view of the demands of eternity. This is an evident deformation of the Christian faith. In art one begins to insist so much upon the symbolical character of the figures that their concrete reality disappears. This is seen in the abstract character of many icons as well as of the painting of the High Middle Age where the human reality of the persons thus portrayed disappears before the spiritual weight they visually bear. In this sense the realism of Masaccio proved to be a real revolution. The symbolic representation of realities relating to God and to spiritual and heavenly dimensions crushed the representation of human and earthly realities.

On the other hand, if when applying the schema of the *partial concurring causes* one reclaims a legitimate and right place for the second causes, one will eventually be forced to reduce or even eliminate the first cause. As we have already abundantly seen, this is what the science resulting from the

26. Pierre Marcel, *Face à la critique: Jésus et les apôtres. Esquisse d'une logique chrétienne* (Labor et Fides, Genève, 1986), pp. 102 to 117.

Galilean revolution does in an ever more thorough manner.

In this ship of fools we tumble from Charybdis to Scylla, from one error into another worse still. For it is clear that the secularisation of science comes in part at least from the application of this schema of the *partial concurring causes* to the relationship between the second causes and the first cause. Likewise, the inextricable debates between hyper-Calvinists and Arminians also come from the application of this same inadequate schema to the relation between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of men. The doctors of the church faithful to God's word have always handled this matter by remaining narrowly attached to the teachings (apparently contradictory if seen on the plane of a *concurrent and partial* logic) of the Bible. For the Bible constantly affirms both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man; at the same time the sovereign authority of the Creator, first cause of all that happens in the universe and all reality, and the second causes, of what we call the laws of nature, in the order proper to them.

Here our third modality, the modality of the total subordinate causes, comes powerfully to our aid. Here are affirmed two causes, both of which have the character of totality, but in the order and place proper to each. On one hand, the first cause, the eternal decree of the true God who absolutely predetermines all things, is affirmed without the least reserve. In fact, if God were not totally sovereign, something in the universe would escape his control, would be in fact another God; this autonomous reality would consequently have an authority independent of him. He would thus cease to be the only God, the unique God. We must realise that the only alternative to the total sovereignty of God is nothing else but polytheism, the multiplication of gods, of sources of sovereignty. But this absolute sovereignty of God does not at all destroy the reality of the created causes, the second causes. The latter function according to the order the Creator has assigned to them, *within the very field of action of the first cause*. We have to do here with two concentric circles: the first, which encompasses all things, is that of the universal predestination of God, of his determination of all that has ever happened in time and in eternity; inside this first circle of God's providential action is another circle, situated in another order, at another level. It is the level of *total subordinated* (and not equal and partial) *causes*.

This lower order is nothing other than the created order with its laws which function according to the character which God himself imprinted on them, at their own level. This order of the natural laws also has its entirely determined character. These second causes, though subordinate, remain no less total in their framework. They encompass all the elements proper to them. This second order subsists within the first without thereby being annulled or diminished. We have here two distinct orders, each of which functions in relation to and in harmony with the other. It is not possible for us in view of the limited character of our intelligence to articulate the logical relations between these two orders in a manner satisfying the demands of our reason. To do that we would need to have access to the thought of God himself.

With Scripture (and aided by the logical analysis we have just described) we must recognise that this manner of explaining the causes is doubtless the one which gives us the most satisfactory account of this difficult question. Only God's mind can fully comprehend such complexity which

for us remains largely in the order of mystery. The error of applying the system of *partial concurring causes* to these causal relations leads to rational simplifications which cause the phenomena they seek to explain to disappear by the simplistic nature of the explanations proposed. We must here rest content with the modest light Scripture gives us. But the problem remains whole and in the last analysis cannot be reduced to the light of the limited reason of man.

On the plane of cosmology we see God in the Bible constantly affirm his direct action upon the phenomena of nature while maintaining *at the same time* the reality of the law he himself installed once and for all at the original creation of the universe. We perceive this extraordinary relation between the first cause and the second causes in this powerful and mysterious picture of the divers and perfectly co-ordinated movements of the animals and the prodigious wheels which open the prophecy of the prophet Ezekiel. In a symbolic manner we see here depicted this divine articulation, incomprehensible to us, which operates the perfect co-ordination between the action of the first cause and that of the second causes with no diminution of either one or the other. We read here:

Each of the four [living creatures] went ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. As they moved, they would go in one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not turn about as the creatures went. Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose among with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. (Ez. 1:12-21).

Many Bible texts could be quoted to confirm the biblical reality of these *total subordinated causes* and the correctness of the description which the Aristotelian tradition gives of it. Let us be content with only one (but striking!) example coming from the Book of Acts. In his first sermon at Pentecost Peter, addressing the Jews, tells them:

Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. (Acts 2:22-23).

We see in this text with admirable clarity the two elements of which the *total subordinated causes* are composed. The work of the cross is on one hand the accomplishment of the *set purpose and foreknowledge of God*; on the other hand, they, the Jews, *put him to death . . . with the help of wicked men*. We clearly

see in this text on the one hand the first cause, the totally sovereign God, and on the other hand the responsibility of men, the Jews to begin with, then that of the Romans who were the executioners of their fatal design.

It is nevertheless astonishing that such a clear perception of the correct causal formulation of these difficult logical problems has been granted by the general revelation of God to this pagan philosopher of the fifth century before Jesus Christ, Aristotle. Let us add, however, that this description which Aristotelianism gives us (an analysis which was taken up again and developed by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century and further refined by Jean Daujat and Andre de Muralt in the twentieth century) of the principal causal formulations of human thought *tells us nothing of the content of this thought*.

Thus, to take one example, on the plane of formal structure one could perfectly well utilize the schema of the *total subordinated causes* to justify on the purely logical plane theistic evolution. According to this point of view, the sovereign God of the first and ultimate cause who sustains the functioning of his creation by his all-powerful and constant action supposedly used the secondary evolutionist causes in order to develop gradually all the beings who ever existed in this world. This utilisation of *total subordinated causes* to defend theistic evolution has been made by a philosopher as well informed as Andre de Muralt, to whose work we owe so much for understanding these difficult questions.²⁷ Such a hypothesis can be formulated on the abstract plane, the plane of analysis of logical causes. Nevertheless, when one reflects upon this, the *magical* passion for miracles (a miracle for every milestone of evolution!) demanded by theistic evolution would seem to lead the laws established by God thoroughly astray for every one of the diverse organisms called into existence. For we cannot simply rest content with abstract logical analysis. Thought must confront reality. And in this case reality in the scientific order as well as in biblical exegesis invalidates in a thousand ways and in the most categorical manner such a hypothesis, the hypothesis of theistic evolution. The evolutionist hypothesis as an adequate description of the reality of the functioning of second causes as well as theistic evolution as a plausible exegetical deduction from the biblical texts do not bear the slightest empirically verifiable proof. In the real world of nature and Scripture this hypothesis corresponds strictly to nothing. Neither the scientific method nor the sober exegesis of the Bible can confirm the abusive usage which Andre de Muralt makes here of his clear causal analysis.

Besides, the explanation adopted by Andre de Muralt frontally assaults the Christian faith itself. It denies the very witness of God himself about his creative acts and makes him a liar. In addition it adopts an explanation of origins which is properly unbelieving, for it permits itself to ignore the creative omnipotence of God, of this God who according to the witness he bears to his own acts has not only created everything from nothing in six normal days,²⁸ but can freely,

at every moment, intervene in the functioning of the second causes in a totally *unilateral* manner by what we call miracles. This is what God also does through the action of his sovereign grace by means of which he regenerates totally unilaterally his elect, spiritually dead in their sins, and justifies them. But it is clear that this regeneration is done within a pre-existing framework, the life of the regenerate, and that in addition these actively participate in their own sanctification by the obedience demanded of them. Here we see the initiative of the total unilateral cause followed by the reciprocal action of the total subordinated causes.

(4) Total Unilateral Cause

The wisdom of Thomist Aristotelianism has thus its limits. And even on the plane where we discover in Aristotelianism an unsurpassable master, the Thomas Aquinases, the Jean Daujats and the Andre de Muralts cannot escape the baneful consequences in which they become entangled by their inordinate desire to attach themselves to a pagan thinker deprived of the light of God's revelation. Aristotle did not understand that God could have created all things by an act of his will alone (his all-powerful word) without needing to have recourse to a pre-existing reality. For him such an act was unthinkable.

Thus the idea of a *unilateral cause*, that is, uniquely and totally divine, to the exclusion of any other cause, could in no way come to the mind of Aristotle. With regard to the unilateral and sovereign character of the divine work of salvation, wrought without any co-operation on our part in the person of Jesus Christ, as well as with regard to the sovereign application of his redemptive work to our souls by the regeneration wrought by the Holy Spirit, the Thomist disciples of Aristotle take much trouble not to follow him. However, God in many circumstances acts both unilaterally and totally, even if his unilateral action often uses already pre-existing elements. Let us show here a few examples of this kind of divine action:

- the creation of the universe out of nothing *ex nihilo*;
- the various divine interventions for the establishment of his covenant; his covenant with Noah, with Abraham, with David, is unilaterally established, but with already existing persons (second causes);
- the miracles which witness to the direct action of God outside of the normal working of the second causes; he unilaterally creates a second reality, a new reality, out of the side of man, the woman; at the wedding at Cana he creates unilaterally out of water the new wine which gladdened the guests so much; in both cases the miracle replaces the normal action of the second causes;
- the new creation, the regeneration of the Christian, his new birth which, dead as he was, brings him back, without the least co-operation on his part, to eternal life in Jesus Christ; but here, too, while we note a creation out of nothing, a true spiritual resurrection, this new birth is yet wrought in truly existing persons who do not thereby lose their body nor their pre-existing character;
- the sovereign grace of God which miraculously renews the Christian at every moment; but this Christian, miracu-

27. André de Muralt, *L'enjeu de la Philosophie médiévale*, p. 325-330. Professeur de Muralt has to some degree retracted the erroneous confidence he formerly placed in the scientific value of the evolutionary hypothesis. His reading of the fundamental scientific refutation of evolution by Michael Denton in his *Évolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Burnett Books, London, 1985, apparently opened his eyes.

28. For a scholarly defence, both exegetical and scientific, of a traditional reading of the text of Genesis see the fundamental work

of André Boulet, *Création et rédemption* (C. L. D., Chambray, 1995). See also the forthcoming classic study by Douglas F. Kelly, *Creation* (Focus Publications, Scotland).

lously sustained and renewed, is certainly alive in flesh and bones; our bodily resurrection itself will not be purely and simply the abolition of our previous being. As the apostle Paul says, then all which will remain of death in us will be absorbed by life (2 Cor. 5:4);

—finally, the final end of all things where we will see God destroy by the breath of his mouth alone everything which remains of corruption in the old creation in order to accomplish the renewal of the heavens and the earth; but this will not be an absolute recreation either, but rather the renewal of a pre-existing but now purified creation.

The prophet Daniel has very well expressed the solitary and magnificent action of this *unilateral total cause* when he spoke the following words to King Nebuchadnezzar which show in vivid fashion the coming reign of God. This text will once again manifest the utility for Christian thought of Aristotelian thinking about the divers causes whose precise formulations must be known in order to comprehend correctly the multifaceted reality which confronts us everywhere and the final overarching authority of the first cause, our almighty God:

While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. The iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2:34-35)

Theological Conclusion

A theological inquiry into the manner in which dogmaticians have resolved this problem would be most useful. In general we can affirm that men like Augustine, Calvin and Bavinck, Van Til and Rushdoony, Auguste Lecerf and Pierre Courthial have known how to avoid this trap. Let us quote a particularly clear passage from Cornelius Van Til on the question which preoccupies us here:

What is the complaint of Pighius against Calvin? It is to the effect that, on his basis, second causes, and in particular human freedom, have no genuine significance. Man's responsibility for sin is denied, says Pighius. What does Calvin say in reply?

In the first place, he makes plain again and again, as Bavinck and others have done after him, and as Augustine did before him, that he simply believes what the Word of God tells him. Believers have primarily to attend to what God in Christ has revealed to us. He steers clear of all rationalist speculation. He sensed clearly that the position of Pighius was speculative. Pighius argued that man cannot be responsible if he be not the ultimate, the alone-cause of his actions, whether for good or evil. . . Pighius, Calvin argues, reduces God and man to one level. Instead, we should realize that we cannot expect to penetrate the mystery of the relation of God and his counsel to the deeds of men. Calvin constantly comes back to the necessity of recognizing this mystery. Berkouwer speaks of it as asymmetry.

Who art thou, O man? In such questions as these the apostle throws a man back into the consideration of what he is, and what is the capacity of his mind. This is a mighty reason rendered, in a few words indeed, but in great reality. For who that understands *not* this appeal of the apostle can reply to God? And who that understands it can find anything to reply?²⁹

29. John Calvin, *The Eternal Predestination of God*, in: *Calvin's Calvinism* (Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grand Rapids), p. 70.

In the second place, Calvin brings out fully, at every point under discussion with Pighius, that on the one hand man is always fully responsible for his deeds and especially for his sins, and, on the other hand, that God controls whatsoever comes to pass . . .

In the third place, Calvin denies that faith is irrational. He insists that whatever Christ teaches his people in the Scriptures is to be accepted by them on Christ's authority. He insists therefore that it is impossible for man to penetrate the relation of God's counsel to human responsibility. But he does not say, in fact, he denies that therefore faith is irrational. He maintains asymmetry, mystery against the rationalism of Pighius. He also maintains symmetry against the irrationalism of Pighius.

We repeat what Calvin says when he makes his justly famous distinction between man as the proximate cause and God's counsel as the remote cause of man's deeds . . .

If then, nothing can prevent a man from acknowledging that the first origin of his ruin was from Adam, and if each man finds the proximate cause of his ruin in himself, what can prevent our faith from acknowledging afar off, with all sobriety, and adoring, with all humility, that remote secret counsel of God by which the Fall of man was thus pre-ordained? And what should prevent the same faith from beholding, at the same time, the proximate cause within; that the whole human race is individually bound by the guilt and desert of eternal death, as derived from the person of Adam; and that all are in themselves, therefore subject to death, and to death eternal? Pighius, therefore, has not sundered, shaken, or altered (as he thought he had done) that pre-eminent and most beautiful harmony with which these proximate and remote causes divinely harmonize!³⁰ C&S

Calvin is quoting Augustine.

30. Cornelius Van Til, *The Theology of James Daane* (Presbyterian and Reformed, Philadelphia, 1959), p. 50-53, quoting Calvin, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

(Internet discussion on this subject should be sent to C&S@kuyper.org under the title "Causality.")

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THE UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT

by John Peck

Suppose you are a Christian politician, artist, sociologist, or just citizen? If there is to be a new heavens and earth when Christ returns, what is the point of working for a Christian social order now?

A land was once ruled by a brutal and cunning dictator. He created such a network of deceit, terror and treachery, that only in one area (for some mysterious reason) did any obvious resistance continue; and there only very sporadically. The years went by, and such is the adaptability of the humankind, people even got used to it. Yet there were occasional attempts to overthrow him. They were unsuccessful because the people had few resources, and what was worse, even in the most dissident district, their efforts were always betrayed. Traitors seemed to infiltrate even the most dedicated and disciplined little groups. An additional problem was that people were not in agreement about what kind of government should take the place of the dictatorship. It is likely that this was the main support to the dictator's skill in "turning" the rebels so that what began as a protest always seemed to finish up as a support to the status quo. So the rebellions failed, there were mock trials publicised in the press, in which the true facts were always subtly and convincingly distorted, and the more recalcitrant rebels were sent into exile. Yet somehow a faint whisper of hope could still just make itself heard.

Then one day a man appeared on the scene who seemed to bear a charmed life. He seemed to have an uncanny nose for treachery, and there was a convincing style about him. He was a commanding leader and yet a man of the people, and he went about raising hopes among them. His sheer elusiveness made people feel that the government was not omnipotent, and he showed the people how they might follow a new kind of strategy of resistance. Above all, he outlined the kind of regime that ought to replace the existing one, and it had the ring of authenticity about it.

As time went by, the authorities became more and more concerned. They had not met with opposition on this scale since the early days, and never anything quite like this. Because in an ironical sort of way it was as if the tactics of deceit were being turned against them. This rebellion didn't look like a rebellion; its adherents behaved for the most part like amenable, quiet-minded citizens. And yet . . . it was hard to put a finger on it; but wherever this movement was at work, well, it was a change of mood, more than anything else. Now even the most oppressive tyranny needs to have some facade of justice, and it was exceedingly difficult to maintain it against this sort of resistance. It was as if people were humouring the authorities, even pitying them! For dictators rule, not by sheer power, but by the terror and hopelessness that their use of it engenders. And in significant cases, the technique was no longer effective. It was rather

frightening. There were some hot-heads who would begin a riot or something, and that was a simple matter; one got wind of the plan, let it go so far, then called in the army and made an example of the survivors. In fact such events were useful; they enabled the Government to suggest that what was going on was really a sinister reflection of its own style of power-struggle. But the authorities themselves knew better; and they had a deep instinctual sense that this was going to be too much for them if it went much further. Of course they laid their plans to prevent it.

Meanwhile, the excitement among the people grew and grew. Even foreign visitors from neighbouring dependencies got wind of the movement. Then one day a woman stopped the leader in the street, and said to him, point blank, "What's to stop us seizing power, now, with you as our leader?"

The man stopped in his tracks, and turned round. He looked at the woman who was staring at him defiantly. He looked round at the eager faces of the people, and he was aware of one or two who were making their way furtively towards the edge of the crowd. Everyone sensed that they had come to a turning point in the whole business. Everyone craned forward in anticipation, listening intently. Then he said:

"You know how it is with revolutions. Those who win do not have enough experience of rule to do it properly, and usually they do not have quite enough power to rule securely without bloodshed. It is not long before they find themselves using the same methods as those they have overthrown. This has got to be different. First: you are not going to overthrow this dictatorship. It must be achieved by invasion; you people have been too long compromised by treachery, too long conditioned by tyranny to do that. But you have a different task. There is no point in starting a new order if no one is ready for it, and no preparations have been made. We dare not have a political or social vacuum. You must make preparations for the new regime that is replacing this one.

"This is what is going to happen. The first thing is that this dictator has got to be decisively exposed. The show of reason which makes people uncertain in their opposition must be stripped off once and for all. This dictator has got to be seen for what he really is. You will know then exactly where your traitors really are, and you will know what they are like. And you will know how to deal with them subtly, without alerting the authorities to their unmasking. In time, some of them may even be recruited as double agents. But I'm afraid that means that I have got to confront the tyrant directly, face to face, and single-handed. I'm sorry but this is something that only I can be trusted to do properly; the issues must not be fudged, not by the minutest fraction. And of course it means that I shall go into exile." There was a chorus of protest, but the man went on, "Well, how else do

you think I'll be able to organise the invasion?"

The crowd went quiet, and listened. One or two, here and there, were smiling, ominously, and confidently. There had been attempts at invasion before. They moved off. There was nothing worth reporting back about. Nothing that made any sense, anyway. The man continued,

"Back here, you must take my place. Oh yes, you can, and you will. Everywhere, you must prepare another social structure to replace this present one. It will mean new relationships, a new kind of family, a new kind of law, a new kind of monetary policy, of education, art, even language. It will be new, right at its roots, growing invisibly like a blade of grass forcing its way through the tarmac. On the face of it, and to those who do not know what to look for, it will often look so much like what is here already that the enemy won't detect it until it's too late (but for heaven's sake make sure you're clear about the difference!). He stopped, and looked at them so intently that many of them shrunk back. Suddenly there was something frightening about this man.

"Get as many people involved as you can," he said. "It doesn't really matter whether you gain open control of any

of the districts or not—sometimes it will be good, if only for the experience, but in some places, it would be better not to do so. But you must create as much of this new order of things as you possibly can, down to the last details. You have my instructions; and I am arranging a telepathic radio link on a wavelength that cannot be continuously jammed, for further help. You'll be taking a lot of risks, and you mustn't be too frightened of making mistakes. It will be horrific for some of you, because the enemy is not only afraid, but afraid to admit they are afraid. Many of you—and your loved ones—will be threatened and captured and tortured and exiled, but, well, you'll know where to find me, I'll make sure of that.

"And when we come back to finish this business, every skill you have mastered, every small achievement in the programme I've outlined to you, every new relationship and understanding, every small growth in wisdom and will-power, every tiny detail, will be put to good service. And with all that you are doing now, there will rise such an empire of joy and freedom as you have not imagined in your brightest dreams." *C&S*

IS THERE A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE TWO CREATION ACCOUNTS?

by Thomas Schirrmacher

A. Two Sources? Two Creation Accounts?

The alleged contradiction between the two reports in Genesis 1 and 2 has unfortunately become the prevailing opinion of our society. Even various translations of the Scriptures have adopted it. The historical-critical theory assumes, on the basis of the names of God used in them, that the two narratives originated from separated sources, an *elohistic* one and a *yahwistic* one, and believes them to be two completely unreconcilable conceptions.

This kind of differentiation of sources cannot be generally refuted here,¹ but note that there is no justification for a differentiation on the basis of the names of God. "Elohim" is a title, "Yahwe" (usually translated "LORD"), a personal name. The so-called "second" account in Genesis 2:5-25 makes this clear, for "Yahwe" is not a substitute for "Elohim," as many believe. Rather, the narrative continually speaks of "Elohim Yahwe" (the LORD God).² This corresponds to the

name, "Jesus Christ," which also consists of a personal name and a title. Besides, deities and rulers in the ancient Near East frequently had several names. There were Egyptian pharaohs, for example, with 300 different ones.³

The question is, whether or not the two narratives essentially contradict each other. We assume that they form a unit, and will investigate the possibility that the writer's knowledge of the first report explains the second. This discussion will translate and comment on the relevant verses, using the arguments of three excellent articles by Samuel R. Külling.⁴

If the two chapters are indeed complementary accounts, the first describes the creation of the cosmos, while the second narrates in detail the preparation of man's environment, and the creation of woman. The second report mentions God's creative activity, but only in verses 7 and 22. Otherwise, it refers to the creation in its completed state.

A brief review of Genesis 1:1-2, 25 will demonstrate this:

1. See Samuel R. Külling, *Zur Datierung der Genesis-P-Stücke*, Kok, (Kampen, 1964), Immanuel Verlag (FETA); (Riehen, Basel, 1987); R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, IVP, (London, 1969), pp. 493-662; Gleason Archer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* Vol 1, Verlag der Liebenzeller Mission, (Bad Liebenzell, 1987), pp. 97-227 (English: *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*); Raymond B. Dillard, Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Zondervan, (Grand Rapids, 1994), pp. 38-48.

2. See verses 5, 7-8, 15-16, 21-22. The name "Yahwe" does not appear alone until Gen. 4:1.

3. Donovan Courville, *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, Challenge Books, (Loma Linda, Cal., 1971).

4. Samuel R. Külling. "Sind Genesis 1,1-2, 4a und Genesis 2, 4bff zwei verschiedene, widersprüchliche Schöpfungsberichte?" *Bibel und Gemeinde* 76 (1976), pp. 217-220: "Der Schöpfungsbericht und naturwissenschaftliche Fragen", ob. cit., "Das Verständnis von Gen 2:4ff. und sein Verhältnis zu Gen 1:1-2, 3; Genesis 13. Teil," *Fundamentum* 4/1983, pp. 4-16.

Review of Genesis 1:1-2, 25

1:1	Proclamatory title: God created the heavens and the earth
1:2-31	How God created the heavens and the earth (The six days)
2:1	Summary
2:2-3	The seventh day
2:4-25	How God provided for man
2:4-7	A garden planted for man's home
2:8	Man brought to the garden
2:9-17	Description of man's home
2:18	The necessity of a helpmeet
2:19-25	The creation of the helpmeet

It is typical of the style of the Bible and of other ancient Middle Eastern literature to relate first only the essential details of an event, and then to describe the details and the results in a second narrative. Jonah 3:3-9 is a good example. The first three verses, which describe the prophet's message and the people's fast, are followed by the narration of king's decision to decree the fast.

The second Creation account is thus not a repetition, but a resumption, a more detailed report of the events, and is also a necessary transition to the narration of the Fall in Genesis 3.

B. The supposedly contradictory verses: Genesis 2:4-15

We will now turn our attention to the verses in Genesis 2 which are believed to contradict Genesis 1: "This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created." (Gen. 2:4a).

In spite of many discussions on the subject, it is trivial to ask whether this text is the conclusion of the preceding narration ("This is the account"), as D. J. Wiseman believes, or the introduction to the following one ("This is the history")⁵ as long as the verse is taken by itself and not connected chronologically with verse 4b.⁶ The contents seem to indicate that the expression, "toledoth," means "that which became of." If this is the case, then Genesis 2:4a, as a transition, makes it clear that the following account does not repeat the creation account, but asks what became of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

At the time (or: on the day) that God created the heaven and the earth,⁷ (5) there was not yet any plant of the field on the ground, and no green herb had grown out of the ground, for the LORD God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not yet any man to till the ground (Gen. 2:4b-5, author's translation).

These verses do not speak of plants in general, but only of cultivated plants which would grow out of seeds already in the ground. Two things are lacking, water and mankind. The time is therefore between the third and the sixth days of Creation. God then continues by providing water and by creating man, so that the requirements for planting of the

Garden of Eden (not the creation of the plants) are fulfilled:

Then the water table rose and watered the whole surface of the ground. (7) And the LORD God formed man, (from the) dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and so the man became a living soul. (8) And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and put the man which he had made into it (Gen. 2:6-8, author's translation).

It becomes clear in the following text, that the narrator is describing the growth, planting and cultivation of the ground, not the actual creation of plantlife.

And the LORD God caused all sorts of trees to grow out of the ground. . . (10) And a river came out of Eden, to water the garden . . . (15) And the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden, to tend it and to keep it (Gen. 2:9+10+15, Author's translation).

C. The supposedly contradictory verses: Genesis 2:18-19

The following text contains another problematic passage:

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable (or appropriate) to him." (19) And the LORD God brought all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air, which he had made out of earth, to the man, in order to see what he would call them." (Genesis 2:18-19, Author's translation).

This text narrates in detail the creation of the woman from the man, while Genesis 1 only sketches the creation of mankind (v. 27). A problem exists only if one interprets the conjunction in Genesis 2:19 as an indication of a chronological order. "And God formed every beast . . . and brought them to the man . . ." This would mean that mankind had been created before the animals.

Carl Friedrich Keil⁸ and Samuel R. Külling give serious arguments from Middle Eastern literature in favour of the first translation, which would indicate that God brought to man animals which he had already created. Keil notes, since only the "beasts of the field" and the "birds of the air" are mentioned; the creatures indicated are domestic animals. This would correspond to the introduction of the cultivated plants in Genesis 2:5ff.

If we assume that the account given in Genesis 2 presupposes the one in Genesis 1, we can see that there are no contradictions between them. Whoever, of course, takes it for granted that the two chapters contradict each other, will continue to maintain his position on the basis of the grammatical uncertainty.

In conclusion, we agree with the Old Testament expert, Gustav Freidrich Oehler:

The contents of Genesis 2:4ff, the introduction to human history, is not a second account of Creation, but rather a supplement of the first and describes the completion of the earth in order to provide mankind with a home, a sphere of activity and a place for the revelation of God.⁹ C&S

5. See Thomas Schirmacher, "Die Entstehung der Genesis," *Factum* 5, 1985, pp. 12-15.

6. See Samuel R. Külling's three articles above for detailed arguments against taking the two statements together.

7. Hebrew uses the same word for "ground" and "the earth."

8. Carl Friedrich Keil, "Genesis und Exodus," *Biblischer Kommentar über das Alte Testament* 1/1, (1878; reprint, Giessen, Brunnen Verlag, 1983).

9. Gustav Friedrich Oehler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, J. F. Steinkopf, (Stuttgart, 1891), p. 74.

ST AUGUSTINE: HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT

by Colin Wright

PART VI: THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

But again I said: “Who made me? Was it not my God, who is not only good, but goodness itself? Whence came I then to will to do evil, and to be unwilling to do good, that there might be cause for my just punishment? Who was it that put this in me, and implanted in me the root of bitterness, seeing I was altogether made by my most sweet God? If the devil were the author, whence is that devil? And if he also, by his own perverse will, of a good angel became a devil, whence also was the evil will in him whereby he became a devil, seeing that the angel was made altogether good by that most good Creator?”

Confessions, Bk VII, chap. iii, §55.

Augustine had a passionate interest in the Problem of the Origin of Evil, even before he was converted. It seems to have haunted him. Conversion only served to inflame this passion.

As an unbeliever, he had tried the answers of the Manichees and the Neo-Platonists in turn. And they had failed to satisfy; basically, I think, because they were powerless to deal with evil. Augustine inherited a certain shrewdness from Monica—he knew the difference between empty talk and reality. He probed too deeply into any answer to a problem for it to get a grip on him if it was at all spurious.

As a Christian, the problem assumed new proportions:

Whence is evil? What torments did my travailing heart then endure! What sighs, O my God! Yet even there were Thine ears open, and I knew it not; and when in stillness I sought earnestly, those silent contritions of my soul were strong cries unto Thy mercy. NO MAN KNOWETH, BUT ONLY THOU, WHAT I ENDURED.¹

Such was his attitude to the problem, as he related it in after years. His new views of God and creation made his former theories totally untenable. But they also raised a new and excruciatingly painful problem. In his *Confessions* he relates the problem and how he sought to solve it:

I set in order before the view of my spirit the whole creation . . . whatever we can discern in it . . . and whatever in it we do not see . . . And this mass I made huge,—not as it was, which I could not know, but as large as I thought well, yet every way finite. But Thee, O Lord, I imagined on every part environing and penetrat-

ing it, though every way infinite; as if there were a sea everywhere, and on every side through immensity, nothing but an infinite sea; and it contained within itself some sponge, huge, though finite, so that the sponge would in all parts be filled from the immeasurable sea.

So conceived I Thy creation to be itself finite, and filled by Thee, the Infinite. And I said, “Behold God, and behold what God hath created: and God is good, yea, most mightily and incomparably better than all of these; but yet He, who is good, hath created them good, and behold how He encircleth and filleth them. WHERE, THEN, IS EVIL, AND WHENCE, AND HOW CREPT IT IN HITHER?”²

It is important to note that Augustine’s problem was not the usual one, normally styled the Problem of Evil. That is, the problem of how to justify the presence of evil in the world in the light of the Scripture doctrine of God. The presence of evil did not seem to conflict in Augustine’s mind with his belief in God as the All-Holy Creator. His firm conviction of God’s absolute power and purity were more than sufficient to deal with what has often been a problem to unbelievers and an embarrassment to Christians. Augustine’s problem went much deeper and is encapsulated in his question: *Whence and how crept it in hither?*² The fact of sin never seems for Augustine to have placed any question mark over the character or being of God in his absolute moral rectitude. But it did present him with the dilemma of how evil could possibly have come about, given his presuppositions about God and creation.

There were three possible answers that Augustine believed he had to reject, as a Christian: First, there was the Manichean answer. The Manichees believed in not one,

1. *Confessions*, Bk VII, chap. vii.

2. *Ibid.*, chap. v.

but two, ultimate principles—Good and Evil. These two substances, equated with light and darkness, spirit and matter, were well-matched rivals in an eternal conflict. Augustine rightly repudiated this as totally unbiblical; it denies all that the Scriptures teach us about the uniqueness of the Only True God. It puts Satan on a par with God, in effect, if it is introduced into Christianity. The influence of Manichaeism was significant in the introduction of monasticism into Christian and non-Christian thought alike. And it denies the unique Creatorship of God, for matter then becomes evil and the creation of Satan. In addition, our bodies become sinful simply by being bodies, and Christianity becomes an attempt to escape the body rather than an attempt to escape sin.³

Then there was Heathenism. The second possibility is to admit the uniqueness of God, but to deny His character. That is, to admit that God created all things, but that some things He created were evil. Again, it is impossible to hold to such a view of God's creative work without denying Genesis chapters 1 to 3, and without compromising His impeccable character. Lastly, there was *Neo-Platonism*. In the third century Plotinus (205-270 A.D.) had developed the philosophy of Plato (427-347 B.C.) in a form that quickly became known as Neo-Platonism. He did this, too, in conscious, direct opposition to the rapidly expanding Christian religion in the Roman world. In its view of evil Neo-Platonism followed pretty much the ancient Greek philosophical ideas. Like them it was rooted in the idea of all-that-is being at bottom One. Even the gods are part of this unity; there is no creator-creature distinction here. Since existence itself, Being, was all that could be said to be truly common to all, Being was elevated to a metaphysical station of some importance as a common denominator. Nevertheless, within this common mass there was a clear demarcation between the being of higher order and the being of lower order. Not all being has the same rank. Thus we have what came to be known as the Great Chain of Being, in which all that exists is both united in one eternal bond of being "Being" and is differentiated into an infinite series of hierarchies of "being" of differing quality. In Neo-Platonism lower orders of being were regarded as emanations from the higher and, hence, *better* orders. In this way evil could be included at the bottom of a chain of being with the lowest quality of being, often described as having no being at all. It sort of worked on the principle of some cleaners: sweep it around until it just disappears. God, or the gods, were put at the top of the chain. Hence even any involvement by them in creating evil could be put at the end of an infinite series of emanations, making them, to all practical intents and purposes, unaccountable for the result. Many scholars would like to maintain that Augustine was heavily influenced by this schema. But although in one respect Augustine did use language that might suggest an affinity, his thought was far from it. What, then, does Augustine say about the origin of evil?

Well, he certainly maintained that it is not a "thing in itself." In fact it is not really a "thing" at all. It is a direction or attitude of the human (or angelic) heart. As we have seen, Augustine's problem was that he believed in the biblical

doctrine of God as the all-holy creator of all that is. As such evil could neither have been in the creation itself, because it was created holy, or introduced into it from outside, because there was no outside. It could, then, have no 'being' in the normal sense of that term. Now the Neo-Platonists may have given a clue to the term (non-being) but Augustine's use of it is a million miles from what they understood by it. Augustine tried to carefully distinguish between a thing's *existence* and its *essence*. If it had *existence*, or being (*esse* in his Latin), then it owed this to its having been created by God; as such it could be nothing but pure. As regards its *essence*, or nature (*essentia* in Augustine's Latin), this constituted those characteristics that make it what it is. Thus we might say that unicorns have no existence, or being, but nevertheless we could not speak of them at all if we did not understand their peculiar essence or nature—that which makes them specifically unicorns rather than Arab steeds. This is not in any way to suggest that evil is only a figment of our imagination, like unicorns, as we shall see. But it does mean that things can in a sense be said to be which nevertheless have no concrete createdness—which *everything* has that is not God himself, according to Augustine.

Augustine found the framework for his idea of the origin of evil in the biblical view of man. The Biblical framework, he maintained, was the doctrine of man as made in the image of God, that is, man as a person. In his *Confessions* he puts his discovery like this:

I discerned and found it no marvel, that bread which is distasteful to an unhealthy palate is pleasant to a healthy one; and light, which is painful to sore eyes, is delightful to sound ones. . . . And I enquired what iniquity was, and ascertained it not to be a substance, but a perversion of the will, bent aside from Thee, O God, the Supreme Substance.⁴

By "perversion of the will" Augustine means a perverted act of the will rather than that the will is in a state of perversion. The *locus classicus* for Augustine's discussion of this topic is undoubtedly *City of God*, Book 12, especially chapters 1 to 9, though we shall find important references in the *Confessions*, too. The Twelfth Book is an enquiry into the moral nature of angels and men. Augustine begins his enquiry with the angels. Why are some good and some evil? What lies at the root of the difference between angels and demons? Perhaps they had different natures, different origins . . . ? Augustine flatly refutes this. He must uphold his biblical view that nothing can exist outside of God that God did not create, and that out of nothing and very good:

That the contrary propensities in good and bad angels have arisen, not from a difference in their nature and origin, since God the good Author and Creator of all essences [CW: A. means *entities*—see quote from ch. 2 below] created them both, but from a difference in their wills and desires, it is impossible to doubt. While some steadfastly continued in that which was the common good of all, namely, in God himself, and in his eternity, truth and love; others, being enamoured rather of their own power, as if they could be their own good, lapsed to this private good of their own, from that higher and beatific good which was common to all, and, bartering the lofty dignity of eternity for the inflation of pride, the most assured verity for the slyness of vanity, uniting love for factious partisanship, they became proud, deceived, envious. The

3. It should be borne in mind, however, that the depreciation of the physical aspects of creation were not the only source of this unhealthy approach to life. Augustine, in particular, was significantly influenced by his doctrine of *concupiscence*.

4. *Ibid.*

cause, therefore, of the blessedness of the good is adherence to God. And so the cause of the others' misery will be found in the contrary, that is, in their not adhering to God.⁵

Augustine draws a clear distinction, notice, between the goodness of the Creator and the goodness of his creation. God is immutably good, men and angels are not so. Their goodness is dependent on their moral relation to him who made them. He is self-sufficient; they are dependent:

He, then, who is blessed not in another, but in Himself, cannot be miserable, because he cannot lose himself. Accordingly we say that there is no unchangeable good but the one, true, blessed God; that the things which He made are indeed good because from him, yet mutable because made not out of him, but out of nothing. Although, therefore, they are not the supreme good, for God is a greater good, yet those mutable things which can adhere to the immutable good, and so be blessed, are very good; for so completely is he their good, that without him they cannot but be wretched.⁶

Then Augustine proceeds to explain his concept of Being and Non-Being. It is an amazing defence of the biblical character of God and the createdness of all outside him. He reiterates this time and time again. It is of fundamental importance for all his theology and philosophy. Indeed, it is quite remarkable how clear Augustine is in his own mind about this issue. It is strikingly van Tillian in its insistence on *the priority of God*. One could wonder how it is that scholars have persistently and consistently portrayed him as a Neo-Platonist, if one was unaware that they begin from anti-Christian presuppositions.⁷ Would that modern Christians were as clear on this issue as Augustine! The infiltration of the humanistic concept of a self-contained and uncreate universe into Christian thinking is a rerun of the problem Augustine was facing from Neo-Platonism and Manichaeism in the fifth century. The second chapter of the Twelfth Book is a classic in this regard and is reproduced in full:

This may be enough to prevent anyone from supposing, when we speak of the apostate angels, that they could have another nature, derived, as it were, from some different origin, and not from God. From the great impiety of this error we shall disentangle ourselves the more readily and easily, the more distinctly we understand that which God spoke by the angel when He sent Moses to the children of Israel: "I am that I am." For since God is the supreme existence, that is to say, supremely *is*, and is therefore unchangeable, the things that he made he empowered to be, but not to be supremely like himself. To some he communicated a more ample, to others a more limited existence, and thus arranged the natures of beings in ranks. For as from *sapere* comes *sapientia*, so from *esse* comes *essentia*,—a new word indeed, which the old Latin writers did not use, but which is naturalised in our day, that our language may not want an equivalent for the Greek *ousia*. For this is expressed word for word by *essentia*. Consequently, to that nature which supremely *is*, and which created all else that exists, no nature is contrary save that which does not exist. For nonentity is the contrary of that which is. And thus there is no being contrary to God, the Supreme Being, and Author of all beings whatsoever.⁸

5. *City of God*, Bk XII, chap. i.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Presuppositions are not the only problem. Many just do not read the original authors, only books about them. This is even true of our university courses now. At best they get their ideas from such books first and then read the originals in the light of what they have read elsewhere. Unfortunately, too, Christian scholars have often been guilty of this.

8. *Ibid.*, chap. ii.

Thus does Augustine establish that wherever evil does come from, it is certainly not from God the creator or from the inherent nature of anything he created. We must look elsewhere for the origin of evil:

In Scripture they are called God's enemies who oppose His rule, not by nature, but by vice; having no power to hurt Him, but only themselves. For they are His enemies, not through their power to hurt, but by their will to oppose Him. For God is unchangeable, and wholly proof against injury. Therefore the vice which makes those who are called His enemies resist Him, is an evil not to God, but to themselves. And to them it is an evil, solely because it corrupts the good of their nature. It is not nature, therefore, but vice, which is contrary to God.⁹

What he is saying is that evil is a direction taken up by the human heart or will in respect to God. Evil is to direct the heart—the self—away from God. To go away from God, says Augustine, refers not to distance of place, but to attitude or direction of the heart or will. The question that naturally arises now, of course, is: *What is the cause of the evil will?* Augustine's answer is clear, as we shall see presently.

When he extends his enquiry to the nature of men he does so by introducing a practical example. Consider, he says, two men, alike in physical and moral constitution. Why is it that on sight of a pretty girl one's mind revolves about illicit pleasures and the other restrains his thoughts within modest bounds? Are these men's moral reactions to what they see *caused*? If so, how? Evidently, the cause, if one exists, cannot be in the object of their contemplation; they both see exactly the same thing. Could one have been tempted by the inner workings of Satan? "As if it was not by his *own* will that he consented to this suggestion and to any inducement whatsoever!" retorts Augustine. "This consent, then, this evil will which he presented to the evil suasive influence,—what was the cause of *it*, we ask?" He adds:

If both are tempted equally and one yields and consents to the temptation while the other remains unmoved by it, what other account can we give of the matter than this, *that the one is willing, the other unwilling*, to fall away from chastity? And what causes this *but their own wills*? . . . However minutely we examine the case, therefore, we can discern nothing which caused the will of the one to be evil. For if we say that the man himself made his will evil, what was the man himself before his will was evil but a good nature created by God, the unchangeable good? . . . Shall we say of the successfully tempted man that he corrupted his will, since he was certainly good before his will became bad? *Then, why did he do so?* Was it because his will was a nature, or because it was made [out] of nothing? We shall find that the latter is the case. For if a nature is the cause of an evil will, what else can we say than that evil arises from good¹⁰ or that good is the cause of evil? And how can it come to pass that a nature, good though mutable, should produce any evil—that is to say, should make the will itself evil?¹¹

That is, there is nothing else which is evil that has caused the evil will. One could perhaps speak, he says, of a deficient cause, but certainly not of an efficient one. To speak of an efficient cause of the evil will is like speaking of seeing darkness or hearing silence:

Let no one, therefore, look for an efficient cause of the evil will; for it is not efficient, but deficient, as the will itself is not an effecting of something, but a defect. For defection from that which su-

9. *Ibid.*, chap. iii.

10. Since the nature was created good.

11. *Ibid.*, chap. vi.

premely is, to that which has less of being,¹²—this is to begin to have an evil will. Now, to seek to discover the causes of these defections,—causes, as I have said, not efficient, but deficient,—is as if some one sought to see darkness, or hear silence.¹³

In the next chapter he continues brilliantly:

The will could not become evil, were it unwilling to become so; and therefore its failings are justly punished, being not *necessary*, but *voluntary*.¹⁴ For its defections are not *to* evil things, but *are themselves evil*; that is to say, they are not towards things that are naturally and in themselves evil, but the defection of the will is evil because it is contrary to the order of nature,¹⁵ and an abandonment of that which has supreme being for that which has less. For avarice is not a fault inherent in gold, but in the man who inordinately loves gold . . . Neither is luxury the fault of lovely and charming things, but of the heart that inordinately loves sensual pleasures. . . Nor yet is boasting the fault of human praise, but of the soul that is inordinately fond of the applause of men, and that makes light of the voice of conscience. Pride, too, is not the fault of him who wields power, nor of power itself, but of the soul that is inordinately enamoured of its own power, and despises the more just dominion of a higher authority.¹⁶

There is, then, no natural efficient cause, or, if I may be allowed the expression, no *essential* cause, of the evil will, *since itself is the origin of evil*. . . and the will is made evil by nothing else than its own defection from God.¹⁷

Thus, for Augustine, nothing¹⁸ is back of the will in the human (or angelic) constitution. His anthropology is founded, quite rightly, upon the *integral nature* of that constitution. Man, strictly speaking, does not *have* a will, he *wills*. Later, a so-called *faculty psychology* was to emerge that placed a great deal of emphasis on various aspects of the human constitution (such as will, understanding, emotions) as separate entities. This psychology is largely exploded now though it remains as a powerful force in western thinking, especially among evangelical and even Reformed Christians. They may only be viewed as such, however, in a theoretical science, and such is always inimical to a full understanding of creation.¹⁹ In Augustine's view of man there is no room for any attempt to play off one faculty against another. That

12. That is, being which is mutable because dependent, unlike God's being which is immutable and self-sufficient.

13. *Ibid.*, chap. vii.

14. Augustine's sense is somewhat lost here unless one realises that the English word relates to the will.

15. By this Augustine means *God's imposed order*, not a neutral and impersonal one.

16. *Ibid.*, chap. viii. Cf. this last clause with a modern-day humanist (and very popular) view: "All power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Lord Acton, quoted in F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, chapter 10).

17. *City of God*, Bk XII, chap. ix.

18. We hope our readers are fully aware that this position in no way undermines the sovereign control of God over all things and his total mastery of each and every the minutest event in creation. That itself is a mystery as fathomless as how a sinless creature could possibly commit that first act of sin. The "loose ends" *cannot* be tied together here by human rationality. They have their unity in God's thought and are understood by us through faith in his self-revelation through Holy Scripture.

19. Modern scientists do this all the time. Each sees the whole of reality as only understandable in terms of his own speciality, whether that be mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, or even chaos theory. Such sciences are *abstractions*; useful as far as they go, but nevertheless only a very partial picture of reality.

root of humanness, which Dooyeweerd referred to as the *heart* and Francis Schaeffer as the *mannishness of man*, is what Augustine, like them, saw as the originator of evil. This is the greatness and the tragedy of man: created as beings capable of *originating*, almost *godlike*—made in God's image, indeed. But this very power, used without reference to the foundation of all created existence—God himself—became the source of all his misery. The nature of eternal hell-fire is only comprehensible in the light of this greatness of what God constituted Man. To turn from God was no trivial deed, but the most awesome exercise of responsibility. Rightly did Augustine entitle one of his earlier works *On the Free Choice of the Will*, or more accurately, *On the Free Determination of the Will*.

To summarise, Augustine's solution to the problem of the origin of evil is a specifically Christian one. Any suggestion that his solution was based upon, or derived from, Plato or the Neo-Platonists is totally untenable. At the foundation of Augustine's answer was his biblical doctrine of God and its corollary, the biblical doctrine of creation. This is where Augustine always started. Indeed, it was because he started here that he had a *problem* in the first place.

Augustine has done the Christian faith and mankind a great service. He ceases from the fruitless search for some third party, and places the blame squarely where it belongs—in the human self-hood or heart. All searching elsewhere is not only fruitless—it is a denial of one's own responsibility for sin. How easily we forget this great lesson of Augustine's! How quickly we seek to excuse ourselves! How dearly would we love to discover that something we conceive evil to be, and lay at its door the cause of all our woes! We are all Manichaeans at heart. But the 'something' does not exist. And we need to confess with Augustine not only, I have *sinned*, but—and here is the shame—I have sinned. The repercussions for our theology are enormous; for our lives they are immeasurable. C&S

(Internet discussion on this subject should be sent to C&S@kuyper.org under the title "Augustine.")

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GOSPEL AND LAW: A BIBLICAL STUDY AND EXHORTATION

by Andrew Sandlin

I imagine few topics are more important for the Christian to understand than the right relation between gospel and law. Luther seemed to imply that all the Bible's teaching is either gospel or law.¹ That may be taking it a little too far, but there is no denying that these two themes dominate the Bible. The giving and explanation of the law comprises a major portion of the Pentateuch. The Old Testament historical books as well as prophetic books catalogue Israel's violation of the law. Even the poetical books give the law a prominent place (one thinks immediately of Ps. 119). Likewise, Jesus in the New Testament consistently corrects his hearers' misunderstanding of the law, and St Paul discusses the law in detail in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. The case with the gospel is similar. It is most pronounced in God's dealings with Abraham and his seed. Abraham obtained righteousness by the exercise of faith, not of works. God establishes his redemptive plan in the Old Testament by requiring animal sacrifices of his covenant people when they sin. As the book of Hebrews proves, this foreshadows the redemptive work of Christ, the final and enduring sacrifice for sins. The Old Testament as clearly as the New Testament teaches that righteousness is not obtained by law-keeping, for sinful man's only hope of salvation rests in the grace of God (Dt. 9:4-7). The declaration of the gospel comes to its fulness, however, in the New Testament, in Jesus' and St Paul's ministry. The gospel is a principal theme of both testaments.

It is therefore true that if we do not understand the correct relation between gospel and law, we likely will misunderstand the Bible itself. This misunderstanding usually manifests itself in one of two main mistakes: first, some deny or neglect the legal basis on which the atonement rests, and thus undercut the message of the gospel and salvation. On the other hand, others allow the law to intrude into the appropriation of the gospel's benefits, and thereby pollute the grace of God. Both of these errors are major deviations from the Biblical view of gospel and law, and both are therefore a "different gospel." Three key points will help us understand the right relation between gospel and law: (1) the promises of the law, (2) the rationale of Christ's atonement, and (3) the content of the gospel.

§1. The Promises of the Law

This issue can be confusing because there are two sets of biblical texts that seem to teach two different views of the law relating to the gospel and salvation. We recall first the more well-known texts which assert with the greatest force that

1. David P. Scaer, "The Law and the Gospel in Lutheran Theology," *Logia*, Vol. III, No. 1 (January, 1994), pp. 27-34.

salvation, and specifically justification, cannot be obtained by law-keeping or good works of any kind. I will limit most of my discussion to Pauline texts,² but could just as easily cite the teachings of other biblical writers, including a number from the Old Testament. One thinks immediately of Eph. 2:8, 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." In Titus 3:5 Paul states flatly, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . ." Specifically of the law, Paul says in Gal. 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Twice in Romans Paul sets salvation by law-keeping and salvation by faith in Christ in the sharpest antithesis. First, in 9:30-32 he shows why God has suspended his work with Israel as an ethnic people and has substituted his saving work with the Gentiles. His argument is that the Jews misunderstood the use of the law, trying to obtain the righteousness of justification by the works of the law. The Gentiles, on the other hand, have sought righteousness properly, by faith. The righteousness of law-keeping is distinguished from the righteousness of faith. Likewise, in 11:6, speaking of the salvation of a Jewish remnant, Paul declares, "And if [salvation is by] grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." It is hard to imagine a more antithetical statement. If salvation is of works, it cannot be of grace. If it is of grace, it cannot be of works. There is no middle ground. Then there is the succinct but emphatic statement in Gal. 3:11: "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident: for: The just shall live by faith [Hab. 2:4]." There is no indication some works of man's righteousness are acceptable as a means of salvation, while other works are spurious. Nothing is further from Paul's mind. Salvation is exclusively by grace, apart from human works or law-keeping.

In fact, certain Pauline texts denounce in the harshest terms those who try to obtain justification, salvation and eternal life by law-keeping or good works. The classic

2. The term *law* as used by Paul has several specific denotations. I will not adduce them here. See H. H. Esser, "Law," in Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids [1976] 1986), pp. 438-451, especially p. 444. Suffice it to say that in most of the texts I cite, law refers to the written law of Moses or the wider Scriptures, the particular stipulations and commands of the law of Moses or the wider Scriptures, or the sphere of law as God's way of dealing with mankind.

instance is Gal. 1:6-9, where Paul anathematizes any who preach a gospel varying from the gospel he preaches. This false gospel is that which he identifies and condemns later in the epistle, the view that justification is appropriated by law-keeping (2:11-16; 5:1-4). Only slightly less severe is his indictment of the Jews in Rom. 2:17-24.

I need not go into extensive exegesis of these texts and others to demonstrate that salvation and justification are in no way obtained by law-keeping or good works; they are rather appropriated by faith alone and bestowed by the grace of God.

There is, however, a second set of texts, less numerous but no less clear and forceful, which assert that flawless law-keeping entitles one to eternal life. These texts are less popular among modern conservative Protestant Christians, probably because on their face they seem to contradict the teaching of the earlier set of texts. We cannot easily dismiss these other texts, however, because a proper understanding of these texts leads us to a proper understanding of Christ's atonement.

In proving that Gentiles who do not have direct access to the written law of God are nonetheless guilty of law-breaking, Paul states (Rom. 2:13), "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified . . ." In Gal. 3:10-13 Paul proves that man is freed from the curse of the law by Christ, who bore its curse for our law-breaking. In the midst of this argument he states (v. 12): "And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them," citing Lev. 18:5. He quotes this text again in Rom. 10:5, where he distinguishes the righteousness one obtains from law-keeping with the righteousness one obtains from exercising faith in Christ. "The commandment (i.e., law)," Paul teaches in Rom. 7:10, "was ordained to life." In Rom. 2:25-27, Paul plainly states that if one keeps the law, his righteousness validates his circumcision.

The most striking sample of this teaching that perfect law-keeping entitles one to eternal life is the answer of Christ himself to the query of the rich young ruler in Mt. 19:16-24³ (cf. Mk. 10:17-30; Lk. 18:18-30): "Good Master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (v. 16). Jesus responds, ". . . if thou wilt enter into [eternal] life, keep the commandments" (v. 17). Christ, knowing the ruler's legalistic heart (see v. 20), answers him directly and plainly: keep the commandments. He does not answer the only legitimate question: "How does a poor, miserable depraved sinner gain life eternal?", the question the ruler should have asked. The answer to that question is the only answer the Bible gives: by exercising simple faith in Jesus Christ. The ruler asked how one is entitled to eternal life, and Jesus answered just as Paul answered—eternal life is conferred only by keeping the law in all points without deviation.⁴

Do not misunderstand. The Bible does not teach in either testament that sinful man—that *any* man—can be justified or saved by law-keeping or good works. The Old Testament no less than the New Testament teaches that man is saved solely by the grace of God, apart from human

merit (Rom. 9:30-10:9). But the Bible also and equally teaches that unswerving law-keeping entitles one to eternal life. In fact, it teaches that this *alone* entitles one to eternal life.

The problem with this method of salvation is that nobody can do it. The Bible asserts without equivocation that all are sinners (Rom. 3:9-19). Because all men are sinners, the law is futile as a means to justify. Verse 20 concludes fittingly, "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his [God's] sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." In fact, Paul observes in Phil 3:8 that his attempts at law-keeping righteousness as a means to obtain eternal life are "dung." This scatological language mirrors that of Isaiah's (64:6): "All our righteousnesses are as filthy [i.e. menstruous⁵] rags." The very best man can do falls indescribably short of meeting the law's righteous standard. This is why Christ's substitutionary work is so essential: sinful man cannot offer one iota of righteousness or goodness to God as entitlement to eternal life, yet this unalloyed, law-keeping righteousness is precisely what God requires of man. In short, man must offer to a just God absolute law-keeping as entitlement to eternal life. This leads straight to the topic of Christ's atoning work.

§2. The Rationale for Christ's Atonement

Why was it necessary for Christ to die? Paul answered that question in Gal. 4:4, 5, "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He had addressed this topic in 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree [Dt. 21:23]."

Christ died to substitute for sinners, to bear the penalty for their sins. Christ's atonement can be understood in various ways, but the most prominent and obvious way it is depicted in the Bible is as substitution.⁶ The Old Testament sacrifices graphically foreshadowed and pointed toward Christ's atonement as a substitutionary act. Messiah as the Suffering Servant is described in Is. 53 as the one who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (vv. 3, 5), who was "wounded for our transgressions [and] bruised for our iniquities" (v. 5), whose soul God made "an offering for sin" (v. 10). In Mk. 10:45 Jesus asserts that he became incarnate "to give his life a ransom for many." "For" means "in the place of." However we understand "ransom," one thing is certain: Christ is teaching that his death would be as a substitute for others. Similarly, in Rom. 5:8, Paul declares, "But God commendeth [demonstrates] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Likewise, in 1 Pet. 3:18 we read, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring

the commandments. This may be true, but it in no way refutes the view I am espousing, for in passages like Rom. 2:11-16, 10:3-6, and Gal. 3:10-17 Paul distinguishes two means of justification. If, as in Rom. 10:6, the "righteousness which is of faith" is salvific, it is hard to imagine why in v. 5 the "righteousness which is by the law" is not also salvific. Paul could easily have cut off the entire argument by stating law-keeping could never under any condition appropriate eternal life. Rather, he painstakingly distinguished the righteousness of law-keeping from the righteousness of faith. Kaiser's view is also held by Daniel Fuller, *Gospel and Law* (Grand Rapids, 1980).

5. F. Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, in C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1988), Vol. VII, p. 470.

6. Leon Morris, *The Cross of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, 1988), p. 8f.

3. See John Calvin's explanation in his *Harmony of the Evangelists* (Grand Rapids, 1993), Vol. 2, p. 394f. (Vol. XVI of *Calvin's Commentaries*).

4. Walter Kaiser denies this interpretation in "The Law as God's Gracious Guidance for the Promotion of Holiness" in Wayne Strickland, ed., *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian* (Grand Rapids, 1993), p. 190ff., and in "Response to Douglas Moo" in *ibid.*, p. 396. He argues that the meaning is "live in the sphere of them," i.e.

us to God . . .” As noted above, in Gal. 3:13 Christ is said to have borne the curse for man. 2 Cor. 5:21, however, may be the clearest and most succinct New Testament expression of the truth that Christ’s death was substitutionary: “For he [God] made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who [Christ] knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him [Christ].” Clearly, Christ died as a substitute for man, paying man’s penalty for sin.

Then we ask, What is sin? We read in 1 Jn. 3:4 that “sin is the transgression of the law.” When Christ died, he paid the price for man’s law-breaking. Christ’s death on the cross is the payment of the debt man owes God for law-breaking. The cross is not primarily a demonstration of love (Jn. 3:16), an act of humility (Phil 2:8), or an accomplishment of victory over Satan and his hosts (Col. 2:15), though it certainly was all of these and much more. *Christ’s death on the cross discharged the debt sinners owe God for violating his law.* This is a fundamental point about Christ’s atonement we cannot afford to miss. It is not very popular in an age that dislikes law and legal categories, least of all legal categories in religion, but it is a fundamental point nonetheless. God acted according to his justice, according to his *law*, when he accomplished our salvation by Christ’s death on the cross.

This obviously implies that God did not relax or change the requirements of the law in saving man. This is one of the key elements of the doctrine of Christ’s death. God did not say, “Well, I see man has sinned by breaking the law. I warned him that he would die because of his sin (Gen. 2:17), but I’ll overlook what I said and bring him back into harmony with me another way. After all, I am God; I can do anything I want.” No, in saving man, God acted according to the promises and curses of his law. This is why Gal. 3:13 states that Christ was made a curse for us: the law pronounced a curse (v. 10; Dt. 21:23). Christ paid the penalty of this curse on the cross.

The most potent expression of this fact is found in the telling statement of Rom. 3:25, 26, in which Paul declares that Christ was sent forth by God to declare God’s righteousness, and that in the death of Christ, God is found to be both “*just* and the *justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus [emphasis added].” The sense is, “He is just, although he is also the justifier,” that is, his work of justification in no way contradicts his justice, but acts according to it. To justify is to declare righteous; it is a legal term.⁷ It does not mean to make righteous; it is the new birth and the sanctifying work of the Spirit that actually make us righteous experimentally. In justification, we are declared righteous on the ground of Christ’s life and death. When God justifies, he does this according to his justice; he does not set aside his justice in order to save sinners. Christ had to pay the law’s penalty for God’s elect; it is on this basis that God frees himself to justify them. He does not declare them righteous apart from the righteous works of his Son who substituted for them.

Now it seems clear that if the law had no claims on man, this depiction of the atonement would be superfluous. It is precisely because man is under the law’s jurisdiction that the atonement must be substitutionary, that God acted according to the demands he set forth in the law in securing the salvation of his people. The point is not that law is above God, that in some sort of Greek conception both God and man are subject to the same law; rather, the point is that God

has willingly bound himself to act according to his law in the Bible.

There is a further point, though. 1 Cor. 1:30 states that Christ Jesus . . . is made unto us . . . righteousness.” As noted above, 2 Cor. 5:21 declares that Christians “are made the righteousness of God” as a result of Christ and his redemptive work. While Christ’s death removed the curses of the law, his life obtained the promises of the law. In Rom. 4:6, Paul quotes David in Ps. 32:1, 2 proving the truth that “God imputeth [credits] righteousness without works.” Verses 24, 25 identify the ground of this imputation: the work of Jesus Christ, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” The most obvious statement of this truth is Rom. 5:19, “For as by one man’s disobedience [Adam’s], many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous.” It is not our point here to discuss precisely how this imputation of both Adam’s disobedience and Christ’s obedience affects their posterity.⁸ The parallel of verses 12-19, however, seems to demand the conclusion that the actions by which Christ led his posterity into righteousness are the positive counterpart to the actions by which Adam led his posterity into sin. In other words, where Adam failed, Christ succeeded. This would lead us to conclude, in turn, that since Adam broke God’s directly revealed law in his disobedience, Christ obeyed God’s directly revealed law in his obedience. We admit that Phil. 2:8 links Christ’s obedience with his death, but this in no way detracts from his obedient life. This obedience in life is called the active obedience of Christ, in contrast to the passive obedience of his death.

To those who say that Christ’s active righteousness was not meritorious, but that his death on the cross cancelled our sin debt, I would ask, What righteousness is imputed to believers? If, as we saw above, perfect adherence to the law entitles one to eternal life, it seems obvious that the righteousness of Christ which God imputes to the elect is righteous law-keeping. It is on these grounds that he rewards Christians with eternal life, not on the basis of their own righteousness (for they have none), but on the basis of Christ’s righteousness.

This explanation takes into account both those texts which denounce in the severest terms any attempt of man’s law-keeping as a ground of eternal life, and on the other hand, those texts which suspend eternal life and salvation on the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.

§3. The Content of the Gospel

The summary definition of the gospel is expressed in 1 Cor. 15:1-4. The first part of that summary is the statement, “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” This is the basic element of the gospel.

The gospel is good news. The good news is that God offers pardon to those sinners (i.e. law-breakers) who trust in Christ. They receive his law-keeping righteousness, and are spared the penalty for their law-breaking, since he bore that penalty on the cross. The good news is that, as Paul puts it in Rom. 7:6, “we are delivered from the law,” that is, from the curse of the law, since Christ has become a curse in our stead (Gal. 3:13). Not only so, but at regeneration God implants in his people a new nature, a new principle of

7. *Idem*, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, 1960 ed.), pp. 224-274.

8. See John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1959).

righteousness (Rom. 8:9-17). We are progressively purified of our law-breaking by Christ's work (1 Jn. 3:3-6).

This, by the way, is why there can be no effective preaching of the gospel until there is an unrelenting preaching of the law. This is Paul's pattern in Romans. He begins by assigning guilt to all mankind for their law-breaking (1:18-3:19) and proceeds to explain justification by faith alone (3:19-5:11).

We have today a very anaemic sort of Christianity in the West. There are a number of reasons for this. But one of the main reasons is that we tend to preach a very anaemic gospel. Jesus is depicted as the great heavenly genie, out to cater to all man's whims. Man's predicament is seen to be his pointlessness, his illness, his lack of self-respect—anything but his law-breaking. Guilt is depicted not as an objective fact—the result of the breaking of God's law. Rather, it is seen as a subjective drag on man's wishes and ambitions. In the Bible, the gospel is displayed as a monumental transformation (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 1:13). It issues in a new type of being, not metaphysically, that is, it does not give man a new brain, new physique, etc. Rather, it progressively destroys the power of sin (Rom. 6:14), furnishes new desires (Rom. 7:15-20), and fits man for his task on earth (Mt. 28:18-20) and an eternal home in heaven (2 Cor. 11:2). The gospel preached in our era, though, has lost its vitality. It is little more than subjective goop. One reason for this is that it is not grounded in a proper understanding of the law. Mark it down—a *defective view of the law always leads to a defective view of the gospel, and vice versa*.

Because the law is not seen today as a prelude to the gospel, men are led to believe that their plight without God is basically subjective-psychological, emotional, physical. They do not recognize that they stand under God's judgment for their law-breaking. They do not understand that God sends sinners to Hell (1 Cor. 6:9, 10). Christ did not come to earth to condemn sinners; they were already condemned (Jn. 3:17, 18). Sin is law-breaking and condemns man to Hell. One of the clearest statements of this is Rom. 7:7, "... Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." And, as Rom. 3:20 reminds us, "... [B]y the law is the knowledge of sin." Likewise, Gal. 3:24 reads, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Sinners learn of their plight from the law. Then they hear the gospel, which discloses the only solution to the guilt produced by their law-breaking. In the law sinners see a reflection of a Holy God. All their excuses melt before God and his law. The entire world stands guilty before him (Rom. 3:19).

The gospel comes to depraved, law-breaking, Hell-bound sinners. Its message is simple: if you repent and trust in Christ, your sins will be pardoned because of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross. God will credit to your account the only righteousness he accepts as entitlement to eternal life—Christ's flawless, substitutionary law-keeping. He will adopt you into his family, and give you progressive victory over sin, and strength to work for him, bringing all areas of life under his dominion (Eph. 2:20-23). If you do not repent and trust in Christ, the law condemns your every action. You are eternally damned.

If sinners pretend to be virtuous, their pretense only aggravates their sin. James says (2:10), "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty

of all." And since all men are sinners (Rom. 3:23); all men have offended the law in all points. Any who try to obtain eternal life and salvation by law-keeping doubly condemn themselves: they act as though they are not sinners, and they flout the flawless law-keeping of Christ.

Both David (Ps. 119:14, 16, 24, 47ff.) and Paul (Rom. 7:22) delight in the law, yet the law condemns. It both condemns and delights. It condemns Christians no less than unbelievers (Rom. 7:7-12), though in a different way. It condemns Christians for their indwelling sin, but it delights them in revealing God's righteousness which they love and toward which they strive. Christians hate the sin which the law identifies and condemns, but they love the righteousness which the law reveals and extols. The knowledge of the law not only drives sinners to Christ; but for Christians, it provokes to righteousness. Only the Holy Spirit can accomplish the work of law-keeping righteousness in Christians (Rom. 8:3-5), but the law is the standard toward which Christians strive.

Therefore, one of the key objectives to which Christians should commit themselves is a revival of the preaching of and acting on the law. Sinners are converted when they have a deep sense of sin, or law-breaking. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Pr. 9:10), and that fear is induced by recognising our law-breaking before a Holy God. In plain words, if sinners are told their plight is not too bad, they will be less inclined to flee to Christ as the only way of salvation. This is a vexing error of much of modern evangelism. It wants to sugar-coat sin. It assumes it will snag more sinners if it does this. Just the opposite is true. The most beneficial message we can give to sinners in preparation for the preaching of the gospel is the preaching of the law in its fullest force. The doctor does his patients a disservice if he hides from them the extent of their disease. The same is true of Christians in declaring the gospel to the unconverted.

In the same way, Christians must be taught the objective nature of the law. If, by contrast, Christians are taught that righteousness and sanctification consist in following spiritual feelings, some religious guru, or a spanking new sanctification formula—*rather* than keeping God's inscripturated law—they will look lightly on sin, or define sin in such a way as to permit law-breaking. Ordinarily they will substitute their own man-made rules for God's law, as the Pharisees in the Bible did (Mk. 7:1-13). *Anything that draws the Christian's attention from law-keeping as the agenda of sanctification is evil* (Rom. 7:16).

Ministers of the word must preach the law and gospel in proper relation and with great authority and urgency. An exposition of the law in both testaments drives sinners to plead for Christ's law-keeping righteousness, and an articulation of the gospel in all its purity discloses the only hope for mankind in its law-breaking sin. The promises of the gospel are the only solution to the curses of the law. Similarly, the preaching of the law to Christians shows them the path of sanctification, and preaching to them the gospel confirms in them the precious promises of hope in Christ. The gospel in all its purity highlights the law-keeping of Christ in his life and death, as well as God's determination to act according to his law in securing man's salvation.

We cannot afford to hold a view of the law and gospel any lower than God's. C&S

(Internet discussion on this subject should be sent to C&S@kuyper.org under the title "Gospel/law.")

Book Reviews

SCIENCE AS SALVATION: A MODERN MYTH AND ITS MEANING

BY MARY MIDGLEY

London: Routledge, 1994, 239 pages (including index),
paperback, £8.99, ISBN 0-415-10773-3

REVIEWED BY COLIN WRIGHT

It is not our policy to review books that have been out so long (the hardback was published in 1992) but I have asked for an exception to be made in this instance. I was given this book as a surprise Christmas 1995 present (it took a bit of hinting) and I think it will go down as one of the best books I read in 1996, and certainly as the *best-written* book I have read in a long while.

Midgley's theme, as the title clearly suggests, is the extravagant religious claims of modern science. In no way sympathetic to traditional orthodox Christianity, she has nevertheless written a penetrating and thoughtful exposure of this new religion. It is required reading for thinking Christians. Some years ago Rushdoony produced a small volume of about the same size called *The Mythology of Science* that took a more Christian approach to the same problem. But what Midgley lacks in biblical accuracy she certainly makes up for in incisiveness, breadth of thought and sheer readability. The two volumes should be seen as complementary therefore, particularly as Rushdoony's book was written over a quarter of a century earlier than Midgley's. His book illustrates the ridiculous optimism of science in the heady days of the Fifties and Sixties; Midgley's examines the pathetic blind continuation of the same myth after the general collapse of scientific optimism in the Seventies and Eighties. (The reader who wants to see clear evidence of this need only look at the remarkable shift in fictional literature over that period from science fiction proper to science fantasy, from Asimov to Tolkien)

One theme runs through Midgley's chapters, whatever aspect of modern science she is dealing with: scientists have espoused a radically false view of their own task, of its relevance to modern man and of its soteriological possibilities for the future of the universe. She maintains that earlier this century a move from claiming too much to claiming too little led scientists up a blind alley. Worried by the extravagant claims for science of Marxist and Freudian thinkers, most scientists sought to reduce the role of pure science. In response to Bernal's claim that "... we have in the practice of science the prototype for all common human action," Midgley writes:

Now people like Bernal could certainly have been answered. But answering them was not specialized scientific work; it involved wider thinking. More orthodox scientists who wanted to avoid this saw that it would be easier to outlaw these fairly well-educated sages instead by narrowing the idea of "science," so as to shut their kind of speculation out of it by definition.

They therefore contracted science and pulled up the draw-bridge. A disturbance followed when it was noticed that they had

accidentally left the whole of evolutionary theory outside in the unscientific badlands as well. But special arrangements were made to pull it in without compromising principle (page 4).

Incidentally, but certainly pertinent, this picture delineates the modern clergy to a tee. Having narrowed down all that is worthwhile to their (often half-baked) theologies they presume to interpret all of life in terms of them. Consequently when real issues arise they have no real answers either. There comes a point when facsimile reprints of ancient preachers are no longer relevant. I learned this personal lesson early and most painfully but that's another story.

Having narrowed science to such limits the scientists proceeded to claim for it the role of *sole interpreter* of all things. As Midgley draws our attention to men like Stephen Hawking who believe that science can answer the question *Why it is that we and the universe exist*. "If we find the answer to that," he says, "it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God." Her incisive remarks on this piece of *hubris* (if not sheer stupidity) are worth quoting here:

In what sense could modern cosmology be pointing towards that? Does it seem plausible that this ancient, universal human longing was always a desire for the kind of scientific theory that Hawking and his colleagues now hope to forge? This would be strange, since before the last few hundred years, nobody anywhere ever dreamt of looking for that kind of theory. Even today very few people in the world have heard of it.

The ancient desire was surely a quite different one. It was a desire for kinds of explanation that are both much wider and more immediate. The wish to know "why we are here," unmistakably asks a question about the point and purpose of existence. The word is "why," not "how." The ancient question is not about the remote physical causes that have made that existence possible; it is a purpose question; it is teleological (page 8).

Again, they assign to their science, in effect, the salvation not only of mankind but of the whole universe (in one case the salvation of all universes!). We will save the universe from black holes by filling them in. Indeed, claim Barrow and Tipler—two of Midgley's hapless targets, "ultimately [human] life exists in order to prevent the Universe from destroying itself. (page 19)." To achieve this we will have to evolve by abandoning our bodies for more suitable machines. Evolution of mankind will progress to the point where we will become pure, intelligent light! Of course there is a down side: many will probably not want to go down this path. There is no compunction among these new prophets about the course of action that will have to be taken with them. Bluntly, it is extermination. These guys are serious. So why do they get away with it, apart from the biting sarcasm of this lone moral philosopher? Why is there no revulsion at their proudly proclaimed plan for super-genocide? Nobody took Hitler seriously either until he was well on his way down a similar road. Of course the church can do nothing. Its spokesmen and teachers probably don't even know the issue exists. They are comfortably ensconced in their manses perus-

ing the latest booklet on revival and preparing dire words for their meagre congregations concerning the real sin of the times: failure to attend the mid-week prayer meeting.

If you want to be a serious writer forget all the manuals of style and study this book. This is the way any good book should be written. It is lucid, racy yet dignified, passionate yet fair, and with a brilliant sense of humour. *Science as Salvation* does for the twentieth century science-priests what *Praise of Folly* did for sixteenth century Roman ones. Mary Midgley is a new Erasmus.

A FIRM FOUNDATION

BY CASPAR OLEVIANUS

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY LYLE D. BIERMA

Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1995, 132 pages
(no index), paperback, £11.95, ISBN 0-85364-701-1

REVIEWED BY COLIN WRIGHT

This thin volume is the first in a new series—*Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*—that is projected to republish some of the finest Reformation texts in new translation. This particular volume is being published in English for the first time, having been written in 1567.

The editor, Professor Lyle D. Bierma, proposes in his Introduction three theologically significant features of Olevianus' small volume. Firstly, Olevianus sees the concept of *covenant* as central to Christian theology. *Firm Foundation* is an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, in which the four sections dealing with Father, Son, Holy Spirit and Church relate to the First Party, the Mediator, the Applicator and the Second Party of the covenant respectively. It marks, claims Bierma, "the beginning of the first effort in the history of Reformed theology to employ the covenant idea as a unifying theological principle (page xxix)."

Secondly, the focus of this covenant theology is seen as personal and practical. "He appeals," says Bierma, "to the covenant of grace not primarily to explain the continuity of salvation history in the Old and New Testaments or to support the practice of paedobaptism but to provide the believer with assurance of salvation (page xxix)."

Thirdly, Bierma holds that Olevianus' theology of covenant was not an attempt to "mollify a rigid predestinarianism in Calvinist theology," as many scholars have supposed, but the very opposite. There is a close relationship between covenant and predestination. The "beginning and cornerstone of our salvation," as Olevianus says, flows out of the covenant that was eternally decreed. This idea is more fully developed in Olevianus' major works: the *Expositio Symboli Apostolici* (1576) and *De substantia foederis* (1585). Unfortunately, these works also appear to be unavailable in English translation, and there are no plans at present to include them in this series.

The volume, to my mind, is marred by the editor's fascination with the link between Olevianus' book and the Heidelberg Catechism. His long introduction is largely taken up with this issue, which has little if any significance for the structure or contents of the text. Indeed, it seems to have no historical significance either, and Bierma seemingly offers none. It is a mere curiosity. In keeping with his predilection, Bierma spatters the text with bold type at every instance of some similarity occurring. This I found both distracting and quite profitless. Nevertheless, it is profoundly moving to read a volume that treats the Christian theology in such a practical manner without losing any of the doctrinal thoroughness and without

sinking into mushy sentimentalism. The truth can not only move us profoundly, it ought to do so. Olevianus explains how.

There is one surprising feature of Olevianus' work that warrants an especial mention, and that is his understanding of Galatians 3:24—"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." His exegesis is clear from his answer to Question 19 (page 8):

Of course the law leads us by the hand, as it were, to this doctrine. For after we are convicted of our unrighteousness and smitten with the awareness of eternal death, the law teaches us not to seek salvation in ourselves but to accept by faith the salvation offered us outside of ourselves in the gospel. St Paul speaks of this in Rom 10:4—"The end of the law is Christ for righteousness to every believer;" Also, "The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24)."

Now, it is certainly true that our coming face to face with God's law will quickly convince us that down the path of obedience to it lies no hope of salvation (since we have not obeyed it); but does it really "... teach us to accept by faith the salvation offered us outside ourselves in the gospel?" I think this is loading too much onto the law. The quote from Galatians 3:24 seems to point clearly in that direction, however. Indeed, such an understanding of that passage is widespread even today. I would maintain that this is precisely what Paul is *not* saying at this point. What intrigued me was finding that Olevianus should take this view: he is regarded as the founder of Reformed covenant theology, yet he does not recognise that very covenant theology in its most definitive statement in Scripture—Galatians 3. His understanding is particularly Lutheran rather than Reformed. Essentially this perspective is founded in Ockham's scholastic nominalism, a perspective that Luther imbibed at his alma mater—Erfurt university—and never abandoned. In Luther's eagerness to defend grace as opposed to law as a means of justification, he polarised them as antithetic in their essence. This attitude is clearly manifest in his statement that:

The Law is the Word in which God teaches and tells us what we are to do and not to do, as in the Ten Commandments. Now wherever human Nature is alone, without the grace of God, the Law cannot be kept, because since Adam's fall in Paradise man is corrupt and has nothing but a wicked desire to sin . . . The other Word of God is not Law or commandment, nor does it require anything of us; but after the first Word, that of the Law, has done this work and distressful misery and poverty have been produced in the heart, God comes and offers His lovely, living Word, and promises, pledges, and obligates Himself to give grace and help, that we may get out of this misery and that all sins not only forgiven but also blotted out . . . See, this divine promise of His grace and of the forgiveness of sin is properly called Gospel. (quoted in *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy*, Sachiko Kusukawa, page 29, Cambridge, 1995)

A bold attempt to defend grace became a denial of the Law of God as a way of life. It serves merely as a tool to push people into repentance and faith. Paul's statement in Galatians 3:24 certainly looks as if it is making the same point about the purpose of God's Law. But it could only be taken to mean this if the context is ignored and the meaning of *paedagogue* is taken to be that of the AV translators: *schoolmaster*. However the *paedagogue* was most definitely *not* a schoolmaster. Rather, he was the slave who dragged the kids to school and saw that they behaved under the schoolmaster. He did not teach them; he drove them to school. Thus the analogy of the law as a teacher who instructs us about the Gospel—or at least our need of it—fails.

It was a reading of Ernest Kevan's *The Grace of Law* in the mid-seventies that began the process of enlightening me on this point, and further reading in another book from which he

quoted more than once: the puritan John Flavel's *Vindiciae Legis et Foederis* (why a book written in English for ordinary mortals should have a Latin title probably only John himself could tell us!). Since the reader may easily search these for himself (and ought to!), and John Brown of Edinburgh produced a lucid exposition of this passage in his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* (1853), I will present here only a summary of a more exegetical argument.

I would argue that the whole chapter is concerned with the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, and the problem of the Mosaic covenant (or economy) for both *vis à vis* Christianity. Paul, I would argue, often uses the single word law in this chapter (and elsewhere) to denote this covenant. This ought to be clear from, at least, verse 17: “. . . the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul.” The Law of Moses—i.e., the whole administration which he set up and to which implicit obedience was required of the Israelite nation—cannot annul a covenant previously made with Abraham. He then asks (verse 18) what purpose this law could possibly have been meant to serve? In the same verse he gives an unequivocal answer: “It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.”

I think a better translation (with some paraphrasing) would read: “It was an appendix to that covenant with Abraham, to last as such until the coming of the promised Messiah, because the sin in human nature needed to be curbed in some way to preserve the covenant people till that day.”

The purpose of verse 24 is simply to restate this fact: the Mosaic administration was a tool, appended to the covenant, to bring the covenant community safely down to the day when Christ would appear. When Paul spoke of “our schoolmaster” he was speaking generally of Christians as a body, much as Peter did in 2 Peter 3:9 (where both *us-ward* and *any* refer to the Christian community only). Like the paedagogue, it was a *curbing* influence, often unpleasant when Israel wandered from the right path. I believe the reader will find this a far more satisfying analogy. My main point, however, was to draw attention to the curious fact that the so-called pioneer of Calvinist covenant theology should understand this passage in a Lutheran manner rather than a more Calvinist way.

RELIGION, LITERATURE AND POLITICS IN POST-REFORMATION ENGLAND 1540-1688

EDITED BY DONNA B. HAMILTON AND RICHARD STRIER

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 280 pages
(including index), hardback, £35.00 (\$54.95 US),
ISBN 0-521-47456-6

REVIEWED BY COLIN WRIGHT

This volume is a collection of essays written by a dozen historians. The essays have little in common other than the period which they investigate. Nothing stands out among them as significant enough to warrant their publication in such a pricey volume. They form little more than a *magazine*, tarted up with a hardback book cover. At the most they would have formed a rather interesting addition to the old half-crown Pelican paperbacks that I read so avidly as a student in the Sixties.

This is not to say that the writers are dealing with uninteresting themes. Many are. The first essay by Annabel Patterson

deals with themes that are of profound significance for those who espouse our philosophy of life at the Kuyper Foundation. It is entitled *Sir John Oldcastle as symbol of Reformation historiography*. This is one of the better compositions we are offered. Nevertheless, having chronicled a major historical theme, it signally fails to draw any evident conclusions. Maybe I am just blind to it. Maybe one needs to be a “modern” historian to understand it. Whatever. I do not think it will appeal to a circle wider than academics. Like the rest of the volume it has the tone of academics talking to each other. Happily they can afford it: free copies in college libraries available on long term loan and paid for by taxes.

To get back to Ms Patterson: her theme is significant and her points well taken. Sir John Oldcastle was a Lollard in the early fifteenth century whose defence of the Wycliffe agenda for reform and for biblical Christianity led to his execution by being burned hanging in chains in December 1417. The debate centres around whether Oldcastle was guilty of treason by leading an uprising against the king, Henry V, in 1414. This was maintained at the time and long after held to be the true reason for his execution. Shakespeare early believed this story and his Falstaff is based on this anti-Lollard propaganda. Later, he saw the error of his position and wrote of Oldcastle as a sincere Christian who died a martyr, causing some to wonder about a change in Shakespeare's own religious orientation. As Patterson clearly documents, two reformation historians produced powerful defences of John Oldcastle, also known as Lord Cobham. The first was John Bale whose historical researches into the primary documents were, as Patterson rightly claims, legendary. The second was John Foxe whose equally legendary *Acts and Monuments* (1563) is long overdue a critical edition. In exile during the reign of Henry VIII, Bale was attempting to do for English historiography what Tyndale was attempting to do for the English Bible. He wrote a stirring plea to his countrymen to reconstruct English historiography:

I wold wyshe some learned Englyshe man . . . to set forth the inglish chronicles in their right shappe, as certain other landes hath done afore them al affections set apart. I can not think a more necessary thing to be laboured to the honour of God, bewty of the realme, erudicion of the people and commoditie of other landes, nexte the sacred scripturs of the bible, than that worke wold be. (Preface to his 1544 *Brefe Chronycle* and quoted by Patterson, page 6)

Patterson perceptively comments on this significant statement that Bale issued regarding his agenda:

. . . Bale saw the reconstruction of English historiography as a Reformation project, parallel to the dissemination of the Scriptures in English. Both were essential to the educational mission that began with Wycliffe and continued as an underground movement through the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth; a mission in which literacy and the accessibility of books were crucial, and spiritual and political consciousness-raising were to go hand in hand. (page 7)

Patterson really takes this important insight no further, content to talk around the various factions discussing the rights and wrongs of the charges levelled against Oldcastle and dismissing Bale's call for an unbiassed (“all affections set apart”) historiography as disingenuous. This latter point is the crux of our difference with these modern historians, who think that unbiassed must mean uncommitted. They cannot possibly accept that Bale or Foxe were interested in genuine historical research because both were Christians with an apparent axe to grind. What adds to their suspicion of course is that Bale and Foxe intended doing something with this historiography. It was not to become the subject matter of another round of polite conversation between university inmates. It was intended to be

taught to the masses so that, as they began to understand their past and how it had led to their present, they would set about freeing themselves of the political, social and religious systems that robbed them of their Christian liberty. They were confident that the truth—whether from Scripture or their own history—would emancipate men and women from the thraldom of the reigning superstitions.

The Bale-Foxe agenda is significant to us for a number of reasons. Not least is the insight that the Reformation was not simply a church issue, a fight over the doctrine of justification before God. The issues were as wide as the human spirit. They concerned every aspect of life, from the way men painted their ceilings to the nature of the Trinity. It is natural that the soteriological issue should be seen as central. Partly it ought to be so: as Augustine and later Calvin pointed out forcefully, until a man truly understands himself—and he can only do this if he truly knows and understands and walks in the ways of God his maker and redeemer—he understands nothing. In his natural state of ignorance man is prey to every form of tyranny and oppression, a slave even to his own lusts. Partly also the inculcation of this centrality of soteriology has been a useful tool in the modern enslaving of the Christian mentality by the new priesthood. The “Christian” ministry has found it a boon in centring life around what the Puritans often styled the “stone-church.” Modern Christianity has again become institutionalised and holiness or spirituality are largely judged in terms of attendance at certain meetings and taking an active part in them. Recently a visiting minister, a well-respected evangelical, insisted in his sermon at our church that repentance and faith are not sufficient to distinguish a Christian man: the *real* proof of his conversion is that he attends the mid-week prayer meeting at his local church. It has been interesting over the years watching the painful puzzlement of those whom I have confronted with the Kuyperian or Calvinistic alternative. Unhappily many (but by no means all or even most) Christian Reconstructionists in America, without any real understanding of what damage such ecclesiocentric thinking can inflict on a society, are busy re-inventing the wheel; substituting slavery under the presbyter’s orders for freedom under God’s law. It pains us that men whose devotion and learning we otherwise greatly admire should have been tempted by the bright lights of a system whose extirpation from Europe cost the blood of millions. Highly significant in this respect, far more significant than he will ever realise, is James B. Jordan’s defence of Tyler’s fascination with ecclesiocentric Christianity in the statement: “Being good American evangelicals, such matters as ecclesiology and worship were ‘new’ areas for most of us. New ideas and insights kept turning up.” One hundred years ago we in Britain lost a two-generation battle against “good English evangelicals” who also found that these self-same “new ideas and insights kept turning up.” We call these insights Tractarianism or Anglo-Catholicism. . . if we are being polite. Sometimes I think history *is* cyclical!

The Kuyper Foundation’s agenda is similar to that of Bale and Foxe: to educate by every means possible, to dispel the darkness imposed on an increasingly godless society by humanists and clerics alike. Only when men understand how they have been duped and robbed, not only in matters of religion but in every area of their lives, will they rise up and, under God’s blessing, become a free people again.

Secondly, it is clear that the Reformation—at least in England—was not something that sprang out of thin air in the early sixteenth century. Wycliffe (1320-1384) had laid firm biblical foundations for a movement—Lollardry—that was still going strong after nearly two centuries. This should have profound repercussions for our historiography and our philosophy of history, as well as our theology. In the first place,

modern Christianity has substituted hagiography for historiography. That is, it is concerned with the hero and his great deeds. The past is reduced to a few momentous events that are then regarded as normative for our everyday experience. Since we cannot possibly rise to this level of “spirituality” we have the ideal excuse for practically abandoning any genuine attempt to affect our culture with the gospel. We simply sit back and wait for God to give us revival. The Lollard movement that had its origin in Wycliffe’s teaching had a staying power that could last centuries because it saw obedience to the gospel as the way of life of the Christian. It expected to have to work hard at being Christian in a godless age. Reform, for most Lollards, meant reform of their own and their families’ lives. There is no record that they spent their time bemoaning their lack of power to bring about the instantaneous and miraculous conversion of vast multitudes. If we are to rebuild our culture on Christian principles, if we are to see a day when multitudes will again swear by the God of Israel, then we must begin with firm foundations in theology and in Christian living. God could work in a moment. A nation could be born in a day, but until it is we must work hard at living the Christian way, transforming first our own lives, then the lives of our families and our churches.

One of the issues that we will have to face squarely is the issue of the family and marriage. I mention this because there is an essay in this volume that deals with a fascinating debate on the issue of the nature of marriage and of legitimacy. Mark Goldie’s *Contextualizing Dryden’s Absalom: William Lawrence, the laws of marriage, and the case of King Monmouth* is ostensibly an essay on Dryden’s poem *Absalom and Achitophel* but in reality is an account of William Lawrence’s book *Marriage and the Moral Law of God Vindicated* published in 1680. Lawrence’s volume—and its sequel *The Right of Primogeniture in the Succession to the Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland* published the following year—was occasioned by his support of Monmouth as successor to Charles II rather than Charles’ brother, the Duke of York. Monmouth was the eldest son of the king by Lucy Walter, who may or may not have gone through a marriage ceremony with the father. Lawrence wanted to argue that, in Goldie’s words:

Charles II was “married” to Lucy Walter not because of a superstition about a ceremony, but because sexual intercourse had taken place. The modern laws of marriage and legitimation had no authority under God’s and nature’s laws. They were corrupt artifices. During the Middle Ages popish churchmen had taken marriage under their wing, just as they had usurped authority over other spheres of life. By turning marriage into an ecclesiastical ceremony, requiring an officiating priest, the clergy amassed huge power and wealth. They manipulated kingdoms and estates through the power to adjudicate rules of legitimacy, inheritance, and affinity. The process culminated in the Council of Trent’s decree that all marriages without a church ceremony were null and void, and their issue illegitimate. (page 211f)

Goldie adds:

Among the manifold tasks of the Reformation, Lawrence argued, was the laicization of marriage, and the replacement of metaphysical mummerly about ceremonies and certificates with a recognition of its real nature: a union grounded in coitus. Lawrence’s book is a work of juridical and historical antipopey. (page 212)

Whether Monmouth’s claim to the throne was valid or not is now a purely historical question but the issues of marriage and legitimacy are probably of greater concern now than for centuries. The break down of traditional marriage has raised a pile of questions that require urgent Christian answers. Simply recoiling in horror at the modern antipathy to the

traditional forms of marriage may be understandable, but it is not sufficient. The subject of Goldie's essay and Lawrence's two books is worthy of further study and consideration among our readers.

**SATURN'S CHILDREN:
HOW THE STATE DEVOURS LIBERTY,
PROSPERITY AND VIRTUE**

BY ALAN DUNCAN AND DOMINIC HOBSON

London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995, 439 pages,
£16.99, ISBN 1-85619-605-4

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL G. BUTCHER

The blurb on the cover of this book tells us: "*Saturn's Children* shows how a high-taxing, high-spending State devours individual liberty and self-expression, expropriates private property, damages material prosperity, displaces self-governing institutions, blights the prospects of the young, undermines the family and demoralises or criminalises the weak and the vulnerable.

"It repudiates the common belief that the present crisis was caused by possessive individualism and the destruction of cherished industries, institutions and communities, and argues instead that it is the State and not the individual that has created poverty, unemployment, poor housing, low educational standards and the present crime wave."

But does it do this well and is it worth the £17.00 cover price? I would say yes, and seventeen quid well spent if you are a UK citizen or are particularly interested in recent UK political and economic history.

It is co-authored by Alan Duncan who was at the time of writing a Conservative MP and a member of the Social Security Select Committee and Dominic Hobson, a Cambridge graduate with no vices listed.

Amongst many things the book analyses the erosion of individual freedom in the name of community, security and democracy and catalogues the rise in public expenditure. It gives reasons as to why despite the Conservatives' enthusiasm to cut public expenditure in the 80's, they failed miserably and expenditure continued to rise.

I found particularly interesting the analysis of the State/corporation relationship. Simply put, the State effectively, by ever increasing regulations, limits new competition while the corporation organises through its bureaucracy the efficient collecting and handing over of taxes. This they call the corporate economy—others call it the fascist economy. They go on to illustrate how like most State involvement, this only works for a limited time until the inherent inefficiencies of the system reveal themselves. It would seem that now the cost of running a large bureaucracy has risen to such an extent that corner-cutting (read regulation avoiding) and possibly black economy competition is making inroads into their markets the corporations are having to cut their direct personnel and employ the cheaper subcontracted labour. The result of this is that collecting taxes for the State is becoming more troublesome and expensive; it is getting very difficult if not impossible to raise tax revenues whilst maintaining the semblance of personal freedom.

The Preface states: "The book includes unusually lengthy historical analysis. Although the final chapter is devoted exclusively to policy recommendations, it might be thought that the book dwells too much on the past or favours analysis over prescription. This is one aspect of the book for which we see no need to apologise . . ."

I would say that actually the weakness of the book lies more in the policy recommendations than historical and contemporary analysis. So it's a relief that policy recommendations comprise only a very small portion of the book. This weakness is not too surprising and I would urge you not to be too judgemental about this; the world is full of critics that delight in pulling apart ideas, but who are not brave enough to roll up their sleeves and suggest alternatives and become themselves a target for criticism.

The policy recommendation most open to misunderstanding is the suggestion that everyone should be given a minimum wage. But hold on to your "Y" fronts! This is clearly a politician's suggestion born not out of the conviction that "everyone has a right to a personal wage" but more the result of a sense of "I am on the Social Security Select Committee and can see what's going on. Help! Help! Someone let me out, the World's gone enormously strange!" Apparently the bureaucratic costs involved in targeting and failing to reach those individuals we have apparently voted to help is so high that it would be cheaper to give everyone a minimum subsistence wage and scrap all the allowances and subsidies. Sounds a bit too easy to me, though details on why this may work are given.

Well, the figures may or may not add up but historical evidence that "the end justifies the means" approach leads to trouble is not entirely lacking. I fear that the cost of cutting the distribution of subsistence allowance by a minimum wage tool will be the kind of reasoning that says "Okay! I now have an established government-sanctioned right to a minimum wage. Now I ought to have the right to minimum health, travelling, entertainment allowances." Once more, the start of brave new short term victory rather than the genesis of a new age.

The authors are clearly very much influenced by biblical thought and base much of their moral arguments on biblical presuppositions. But like most of us, if that is the ground we claim to stand on (they do not claim this in the book) then a biblical means must be employed to achieve our goals. Nowhere does God empower the State or anyone to redistribute other peoples' private property and, democracy not withstanding, he calls this theft and demands restitution.

It is, however, obvious that some of these recommended policies are just conceived as pragmatic solutions to our present mess and do not add up to a zealous quest for Utopia. So don't let the small section on policies put you off the book or the authors (remember, one is a Government insider with all this implies as far as mental health and views of reality are concerned). I am not anti politician, we do need them. Just like the people who labour hard at the local sewerage treatment works, they do a valuable and dirty job. I just don't want them making my sandwiches.

Get the book and enjoy the cover, which depicts Saturn devouring one of his children—a painting by Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828).

**GRACE AND GRATITUDE: THE EUCHARISTIC
THEOLOGY OF JOHN CALVIN**

BY B. A. GERRISH

T. & T. Clark 1993, paperback, xii plus 210 pages,
ISBN 0 567 29233 9

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN J. HAYHOW

Reformed Christians think of Calvin as the Calvin of the five points of Calvinism. Calvin stands for the rediscovery of the doctrines of sovereign grace in their purest and most consistent

form. This, of course, is true. But it is not the whole picture. The continental Reformation was concerned with more than individual soteriology, it was concerned also with the rediscovery of the true doctrine of the church and worship. Hence the men of the 16th century were interested in sacramental theology and sacramental reformation. Gerrish writes of Calvin: “. . . Calvinism actually began its existence in the reformation era as a distinct variety of sacramental theology, more particularly as a distinct interpretation of the central Christian mystery of the Eucharist” (p. 2).

This seems strange to modern Christians, Reformed and non-reformed alike, because sacramental theology is, in practice, non-existent in their thinking. To some degree this goes back to the non-sacramentalism of the 19th century Reformed men.

For example, a look at Robert Lewis Dabney on the true Calvinistic doctrine of the Lord’s Supper (*Systematic Theology*, Lect. LXVIII pp. 809ff) shows that he explicitly repudiated the Calvinist faith at this point, and declared, concerning Zwingli’s aberrations that he was “seemingly the most emancipated of all the Reformers from superstition” (p. 809). Hodge and Cunningham also followed suit. Hence at the turn of the 20th century the Calvinist doctrine had been brushed aside by the otherwise ablest exponents of the Reformed faith. This is why modern Reformed people fail to grasp the significance of sacramental theology.

The practical import of this has been that believers view the sacraments as necessary,—well almost—but not really performing any real function. Infant baptism is “nice,” a rather damper form of dedication, but not necessary: modern paedobaptists are baptists at heart. Consequently, the Supper is necessary, but it serves no recognisable purpose in the practical, week-by-week life of the believer. Modern Christians are non-sacramental in their thinking. After all, sacraments are not “practical” enough—ours is a practical faith! This all

sounds and seems rather too mystical, intangible—not very reconstructionist.

Gerrish argues that far from being simply one locus of theology, the themes of grace and gratitude stand at the very heart of his theology. Gerrish writes: “The holy banquet is simply the liturgical enactment of the theme of grace and gratitude that lies at the heart of Calvin’s entire theology, whether one chooses to call it a system or not. It is, in short, a “eucharistic theology” (p. 20).

I am not going to regurgitate Gerrish’s thesis, of which there is much to commend. But there are some points of criticism to be made. For example on p. 60 Gerrish, I think, diminishes, while not denying, the forensic aspect of Calvin’s doctrines of justification and the atonement. This seems to be an unnecessary flourish—one that betrays the authors own proclivities, rather than the Reformer’s theology.

Gerrish concludes with Six Calvinistic Propositions on the Supper (pp. 135-139):

1. The Lord’s Supper is a gift.
2. The gift is Jesus Christ himself.
3. The gift is given with the signs.
4. The gift is given by the Holy Spirit.
5. The gift is given to all who communicate.
6. The gift is to be received by faith.

Read this book, not without criticism, and then read Calvin in the *Institutes* and the sections on the sacraments and the Eucharist especially. If the faith applies to all areas of life, as it must, then the sacraments play a vital part in that holistic worldview. If revival and reformation are required across the board, then they are required in the church’s view of the sacraments too. This book will help you rediscover the sacramental theology of the great Genevan Reformer. C&S

(Internet discussion on subjects discussed in the reviews section should be sent to C&S@kuyper.org under the title “Reviews/[author].”)

Letter to the Editor

Dear Colin

In reading your review of David Hall’s *Servant or Savior?* [*Christianity & Society*, Vol. VII, no. 1, January 1997, pp. 27-29] I was struck by your quotation from Augustine followed by the observation: “The addition of impunity is the one striking difference between the vast majority of modern governments’ actions and those of the criminals they claim to pursue. I believe the only reason why Christians in America and Britain (or even France or Germany) should not rise up in revolt is the simple one of prudence: we don’t have the fire-power to achieve the goal. So we need to work harder through the system to take over the reins.”

This view of government agrees far more with that of proto-reconstructionist Frederich Nymeyer in his “The Powers that Be” article on the *Contra Mundum* Web site than it does with the dominant view in American church circles. (Frederich Nymeyer originally published this material as a series of articles in *Progressive Calvinism* in 1955.) Compare the statement posted by James Jordan Dec. 28 on the Theonomy-L. list-server: “No man-made document establishes civil government. The Bible (document, covenant) establishes it. And it was established in history, on a particular day: the 27th day of the 2nd month of the year 1657 Anno Mundi. (Genesis 8-9.) A man-made document may reform and for a time set the course of a civil

government, but it does not establish the government as government. God establishes it through the sword. We are told to submit to the sword where it is exercised (not just to any unenforced decrees of the magistrate). If the mafia rules in a neighborhood, you’d better quietly submit (and pray, which will bring change faster than anything else if there be no other Godly means).”

Jordan’s statement shows, I think, the absence of any philosophical political theory in Christian Reconstructionist circles, despite the theonomy. The irrationalism of his position is soon seen: God’s expectation of those addressed by Jordan’s preaching is that they are to submit to every effective coercion by force. If they are effective, those wielding power are ordained of God as civil government. It is sin to use coercion back. For us to take up the sword is forbidden; it is rebellion against God’s appointed order. But to the tyrant or criminal who takes up the sword in order to coerce, Jordan says, God is behind you just in case you are successful.

Why do I not have equal rights with the mafia in a trial by combat (this is what it comes to) for God’s backing of my coercion? There is no reason at all other than Jordan’s preference that Christians simply retreat to their churches to pray. That this issue is emerging as an important one was made clear in recent months in the American press. A participant in a

symposium in *First Things* in November 1996 questioned the legitimacy of the increasingly lawless regime in Washington. In protest against the decision to allow this to appear several editors (prominent neoconservative intellectuals) resigned from the magazine, leading to articles in the neo-liberal *New Republic* and in *National Review* about the significance of this dispute.

Hall's book, the object of your review, has a large flaw, which you did not mention. His history of political thought is the liberal history in the sense that the important figures that he identifies as contributors to the development of political thought are those posited by the liberals. Liberals see political history as an evolution leading to themselves as its culmination. The ongoing project of Cambridge University Press to produce the *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* under the editorship of Raymond Guess and Quentin Skinner may go far to repair the omissions of the standard liberal account, and make known the possibilities and directions that were not pursued to the end. The series includes medieval authors associated with the Conciliar resistance to papal dictatorship, Vitoria of the Salamanca school, John Knox, writings from the Dutch revolt, seventeenth century English controversialists and others whose presence in a seven hundred year tradition of political writing shows a long standing interest in federal, covenantal ideas of representative and limited government, long predating secular modern conceptions of democracy.

T.E. Wilder
Contra Mundum Online
http://www.wavefront.com/~contra_m/

Colin Wright's reply:

Tim, many thanks for these timely remarks. Your comments are always apt and instructive, and very welcome. You are right. I did miss out any mention of the major flaw in Hall's book as you point out. This was a serious oversight on my part. I can only plead in mitigation that I felt I had already been critical enough of David's book and had no desire to go looking for more problem areas. Despite its faults it makes a timely point, and makes it quite well: evangelicals are out of line with two millennia of Christian political thought in their retreatist views of politics. As there are few books that address this issue, at least in Britain, I would still like to see it widely read despite the distortion inherent in its view of what those Christian politics ought to be. This book needs improving rather than burning, in my opinion.

Your assessment of the current situation among Reconstructionists in America is illuminating, and rather discouraging. Jordan's comments are positively heart-breaking. This is Christianity with its hands tied behind its back. We are back to old-fashioned evangelicalism with a vengeance; precisely what Hall is rightly and biblically asking us to abandon. If views like this had prevailed in 1776 you would still be a British subject, paying taxes and having no vote! As they say, with friends like this, who needs enemies?

You say Jordan's statement is evidence of "the absence of any philosophical political theory in Christian Reconstructionists circles, despite the theonomy." I would agree. As Kuyper preached to us one hundred years ago, the time has come when, in the fight against humanism, we must pit principle against principle. We are involved in a great war of ideas, and we will not win it with slogans, however popular. In their own way, both David Hall's CAPO Web site and your own *ContraMundum* site are nobly striving to develop these ideas and principles. *C&S*

(Internet discussion on this subject should be sent to C&S@kuyper.org under the title "Servant or saviour.")

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