

## Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview

By: Albert M. Wolters

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book. This excerpt discusses the Kingdom of God and how different Christian views affect their view of the reality and scope of the Kingdom of God. I highly recommend reading the entire book.

Our point of departure will be the discernment of structure and direction. Human society gives evidence that a *structured order* underlies the great diversity of societal forms in different cultures and periods of history. The Creator's sustaining and governing hand is not absent from the many ways in which human beings organize their living together. However society arranges itself, it must always do its arranging in terms of creational givens. That the family consists of at least a father, mother, and children living together in bonds of committed caring is not an arbitrary happenstance; nor is it a mere convention that can be dismissed when it has outlived its usefulness. No, it is rooted in the way a wise Creator made human nature — rooted in the biological, emotional, social, and moral constitution of men and women. There is a design for the family, a basic pattern that allows for variety but also sets certain very definite boundaries. Families as we know them are partially obedient and partially disobedient responses to that basic creational pattern. The creational structure of the family is the inescapable requirement for the existence of families at all, allowing us to recognize the family as a family. The family is a societal institution *established* by God, the Creator.

As we noted in our discussion of creation, the principle that societal institutions are creational applies across the board. Not only the family and marriage (two distinct communities) but also the institutional church (to be distinguished from the church as the body of Christ, which participates in the other societal spheres as well) and the state are divinely instituted. In fact, as we have seen, the New Testament explicitly relates the structures of political authority to God's ordinance in creation (see Rom. 13:1-2 and 1 Pet. 2:13-14). The fact that the Scriptures do not expressly speak of a God-ordained structure for such institutions as the school and the business enterprise does not mean that they are arbitrary and have nothing to do with God-given standards. Our own experience of the creation confirms the general scriptural teaching that God's ordinances apply to all of life. Someone may try to run a school like a business (businessmen on school boards often do), but in the long run such an attempt will prove counterproductive. The creational structure of the school resists being pressed into an alien mold — just as a business resists being run like a family. That resistance is evidence of a creational norm. Ignoring God's good creation in these areas simply does not pay, either educationally or economically.

An important principle emerges from this creationally oriented conception of the social order. The responsibility of the authorities in a given societal institution is *defined by its normative structure*. That is to say, the unique creational nature of the family, state, school, and the like specifies and delimits the authority exercised in each case. A father's authority is parental; it is both characterized and restricted by the peculiar nature of the family. The father is therefore obligated to exercise his authority in a distinctly familial way, not in a manner appropriate to, say, the police force or a hockey club. Ruling a family like a military unit, as the widowed father in *The Sound of Music* attempts to do, goes against the creationally established grain of the family. Conversely, a father qua father has no authority in, say, the school or the corporation. Likewise, the church elder's responsibility and authority is appropriate in the institutional church, but as an elder he must not act like a father to his congregation, either by ruling it in a "familial" or "paternalistic" manner or by intruding upon a father's sphere of responsibility in his congregation. The creational nature of the ecclesiastical institution must guide him in his official activities. The same principle holds for the authority of the business executive, the educator, the police officer, and so forth. All have an authority proper to their own sphere, which that sphere's creational structure defines and restricts.

The upshot of this principle — which Abraham Kuyper called "sphere sovereignty" but which we may also call the principle of "differentiated responsibility" — is that no societal institution is subordinate to any other. Persons in positions of societal authority (or "office") are called to positivize God's ordinances directly in their own specific sphere. Their authority is delegated to them by God, not by any human authority. Consequently, they are also directly responsible to God. Church, marriage, family, corporation, state, and school all stand *alongside* each other before the face of God. If one institution raises itself to a position of authority *over* the others, inserting its authority between that of God and the others, a form of totalitarianism emerges that violates the limited nature of each societal sphere. Such is the case in totalitarian states, in which political authority overrides all other authority. There the state runs the economic institutions, appoints church officials, and dictates child-rearing practices. Totalitarianism also characterized medieval Christendom; the institutional church spread its wings

over the whole of European society, extending its ecclesiastical authority over education, family, business, and the state. Moreover, totalitarianism threatens to become the mark of contemporary society, in which the economic authority of certain vast transnational companies has become so extensive that in certain cases it interferes with the political sovereignty of states and with the spheres of many less powerful societal institutions.

Totalitarianism of whatever form is the directional perversion of the creational structures of society. The Christian is called to oppose all totalitarianism, whether of the state, church, or corporation, because it always signifies a transgression of God's mandated societal boundaries and an invasion into alien spheres. Perversion of God's creational design for society can occur in two ways: either through perversion of the norms within a given sphere (as in cases of injustice in the state, child abuse in the family, exploitative wages in the business enterprise) or through the extension of the authority of one sphere over another. In both cases Christians must oppose these distortions of God's handiwork. But that opposition should always *affirm* the proper and right exercise of responsibility. Political totalitarianism, for example, should be opposed not by rejecting the state as such (the error of anarchism) but by calling the state back to its God-ordained task of administering public justice. Christians should not simply lament the erosion of the family, for example, but should advocate measures enabling it to play its vital role once again. Not only must they confront exploitative corporations with the challenge of a normative view of the enterprise, but they must also enact legislation that both outlaws glaring cases of corporate abuse (against the environment, for example) and offers incentives for reassuming genuine corporate responsibility. Christians should actively engage in efforts to make every societal institution assume its own responsibility, warding off the interference of others. That, too, is participation in the restoration of creation and the coming of the kingdom of God.

Like all creatures of God, societal institutions have been created “after their kind.” Each institution has its own distinct nature and creational structure. All of us have some intuitive awareness of that nature or structure, an awareness that experience and study sharpen and deepen into practical wisdom. An experienced schoolteacher is likely to sense the normative structure of the school more clearly than does the average parent. Someone who has worked for years in a service organization is apt to know the creational contours of that area much better than does an academician or politician. Each area of societal organization develops its own widely accepted standards of propriety, and anyone who departs from them earns such labels as “unprofessional” or “unbusinesslike.” Such standards always reflect an interpretation (whether accurate or misguided) of the creational ordinance (whether acknowledged or not) that holds for the area in question.

Each societal institution is a positivization of the creational structure that holds uniquely for it. (Unfortunately, in normal language both the individual institution and its creational nature are often called “structure”; to avoid confusion we will reserve the term *structure* for the creational order that holds for creaturely things — in this case, societal institutions.) As we have already noted, positivization is a matter of putting into practice a creational norm. We saw earlier that part of God’s rule over creation takes place through the mediation of human responsibility. Men and women exercise their responsibility in society and culture by discerning, interpreting, and applying creational norms for the conduct of their lives. The precise form a societal institution takes in a given time or place is the result of how those who bear the responsibility understand the norm for that institution. Church elders, who put into practice the norm for the institutional church, work differently in Africa than in Europe, in the fourth century than in the twentieth century, in southern black churches than in northern white churches. Parents put a specific normative structure into practice for the family, corporate boards for corporations, parliaments or kings for states, school boards for schools, and so on. In each case, the authorities in a societal structure are responsible for implementing the norm.

## Total Truth

By: Nancy R. Pearcey

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book. I highly recommend reading the entire book. It's taken from the chapter, "Breaking Out of the Grid."

### ABSOLUTELY DIVINE

The upshot is that no system of thought is a product purely of Reason—because Reason is not a repository of infallible, religiously autonomous truths, as Descartes and the other rationalists thought. Instead, it is simply a human capacity, the ability to reason from premises. The important question, then, is what a person accepts as ultimate premises, for they shape everything that follows.

If you press any set of ideas back far enough, eventually you reach some starting point. Something has to be taken as self-existent—the ultimate reality and source of everything else. There's no reason for it to exist; it just "is." For the materialist, the ultimate reality is matter, and everything is reduced to material constituents. For the pantheist, the ultimate reality is a spiritual force or substratum, and the goal of meditation is to reconnect with that spiritual oneness. For the doctrinaire Darwinist, biology is ultimate, and everything, even religion and morality, is reduced to a product of Darwinian processes. For the empiricist, all knowledge is traceable ultimately to sense data, and anything not known by sensation is unreal.

And so on. Every system of thought begins with some ultimate principle. If it does not begin with God, it will begin with some dimension of creation—the material, the spiritual, the biological, the empirical, or whatever. Some aspect of created reality will be "absolutized" or put forth as the ground and source of everything else—the uncaused cause, the self-existent. To use religious language, this ultimate principle functions as the divine, if we define that term to mean the one thing upon which all else depends for existence. This starting assumption has to be accepted by faith, not by prior reasoning. (Otherwise it is not really the ultimate starting point for all reasoning—something else is, and we have to dig deeper and start there instead.)

In this sense, we could say that every alternative to Christianity is a religion. It may not involve ritual or worship services, yet it identifies some principle or force in creation as the self-existent cause of everything else. Even nonbelievers hold to some ultimate ground of existence, which functions as an

idol or false god. This is why the "Bible writers always address their reader as though they already believe in God or some God surrogate," explains philosopher Roy Clouser.<sup>19</sup> Faith is a universal human function, and if it is not directed toward God it will be directed toward something else.

## Total Truth

By: Nancy R. Pearcey

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book, the chapter entitled, “Breaking Out of the Grid.”

Even the simplest, most universal form of knowledge—mathematics—is subject to sometimes radically differing worldview interpretations. Clearly, the impact of worldview will grow even larger as we move up the scale into more complex fields, like biology, economics, law, or ethics.<sup>25</sup>

The danger is that if Christians do not *consciously* develop a biblical approach to the subject, then we will *unconsciously* absorb some other philosophical approach. A set of ideas for interpreting the world is like a philosophical toolbox, stuffed with terms and concepts. If Christians do not develop their own tools of analysis, then when some issue comes up that they want to understand, they’ll reach over and borrow *someone else’s* tools—whatever concepts are generally accepted in their professional field or in the culture at large. But when Christians do that, Os Guinness writes, they don’t realize that “they are borrowing not an isolated tool but a whole philosophical toolbox laden with tools which have their own particular bias to every problem.” They may even end up absorbing an entire set of alien principles without even realizing it—like Sarah did in our opening story. Using tools of analysis that have non-Christian assumptions embedded in them is “like wearing someone else’s glasses or walking in someone else’s shoes. *The tools shape the user.*”<sup>26</sup>

In other words, not only do we fail to be salt and light to a lost culture, but we ourselves may end up being shaped by that culture.

## BIBLICAL TOOLBOX

What is the antidote to the secular/sacred divide? How do we make sure our toolbox contains biblically based conceptual tools for every issue we encounter? We must begin by being utterly convinced that there *is* a biblical perspective on everything—not just on spiritual matters. The Old Testament tells us repeatedly that “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). Similarly, the New Testament teaches that in Christ are “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). We often interpret these verses to mean spiritual wisdom only, but the text places no lim-

itation on the term. “Most people have a tendency to read these passages as though they say that the fear of the Lord is the foundation of *religious* knowledge,” writes Clouser. “But the fact is that they make a very radical claim—the claim that somehow *all* knowledge depends upon religious truth.”<sup>27</sup>

This claim is easier to grasp when we realize that Christianity is not unique in this regard. All belief systems work the same way. As we saw earlier, *whatever* a system puts forth as self-existing is essentially what it regards as divine. And that religious commitment functions as the controlling principle for everything that follows. The fear of some “god” is the beginning of every proposed system of knowledge.

Once we understand how first principles work, then it becomes clear that all truth must begin with God. The only self-existent reality is God, and everything else depends on Him for its origin and continued existence. Nothing exists apart from His will; nothing falls outside the scope of the central turning points in biblical history: Creation, Fall, and Redemption.

## Creation

The Christian message does not begin with “accept Christ as your Savior”; it begins with “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The Bible teaches that God is the sole source of the entire created order. No other gods compete with Him; no natural forces exist on their own; nothing receives its nature or existence from another source. Thus His word, or laws, or creation ordinances give the world its order and structure. God’s creative word is the source of the laws of *physical* nature, which we study in the natural sciences. It is also the source of the laws of *human* nature—the principles of morality (ethics), of justice (politics), of creative enterprise (economics), of aesthetics (the arts), and even of clear thinking (logic). That’s why Psalm 119:91 says, “all things are your servants.” There is no philosophically or spiritually neutral subject matter.

## Fall

The universality of Creation is matched by the universality of the Fall. The Bible teaches that all parts of creation—including our minds—are caught up in a great rebellion against the Creator. Theologians call this the “noetic” effect of the Fall (the effect on the mind), and it subverts our ability to understand the world apart from God’s regenerating grace. Scripture is replete with warnings that idolatry or willful disobedience toward God makes humans “blind” or “deaf.” Paul writes, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of the

## **Total Truth (cont'd)**

By: Nancy R. Pearcey

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book, the chapter entitled, "Breaking Out of the Grid."

unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel" (2 Cor. 4:4). Sin literally "darkens" the understanding (Eph. 4:18).<sup>28</sup>

Of course, nonbelievers still function in God's world, bear God's image, and are upheld by God's common grace, which means they are capable of uncovering isolated segments of genuine knowledge. And Christians should welcome those insights. All truth is God's truth, as the church fathers used to say; and they urged Christians to "plunder the Egyptians" by appropriating the best of secular scholarship, showing how it actually fits best within a biblical worldview. There may even be occasions when Christians are mistaken on some point while nonbelievers get it right. Nevertheless, the overall *systems* of thought constructed by nonbelievers will be false—for if the system is not built on biblical truth, then it will be built on some other ultimate principle. Even individual truths will be seen through the distorting lens of a false worldview. As a result, a Christian approach to any field needs to be both critical and constructive. We cannot simply borrow from the results of secular scholarship as though that were spiritually neutral territory discovered by people whose minds are completely open and objective—that is, as though the Fall had never happened.

## Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview

By: Albert M. Wolters

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book. This excerpt discusses the Kingdom of God and how different Christian views affect their view of the reality and scope of the Kingdom of God. I highly recommend reading the entire book.

### The Kingdom of God

That salvation means the restoration of creation can be illustrated by a discussion of the kingdom of God, for in fact the restoration in Christ of creation and the coming of the kingdom of God are one and the same. Let us begin by specifying the meaning of the word *kingdom*. The Greek word *basileia*, which is usually translated as “kingdom,” means in the first place “kingship” — that is to say, “sovereignty,” “sway,” “dominion.” It refers not so much to an area or domain (though this is a possible denotation) as to the active exercise of the kingly office. The emphasis is on God as he is active in his sovereign ruling as king. When Jesus tells the parable of the nobleman who goes to a far country to “receive for himself a kingdom” (Luke 19:12, KJV), he is thinking of a ruler like Herod or Archelaus who had to travel to the emperor in Rome to “have himself appointed king.” The kingdom of God, therefore, calls to mind the rightful king as he rules his territory, creation.

Although God is often pictured as the king of heaven and earth in the Old Testament, this theme becomes particularly prominent in the New Testament. Herman Ridderbos, author of the excellent study *The Coming of the Kingdom*, has said that the kingdom of God is “the central theme of the whole New Testament revelation of God.” In Jesus Christ we witness the long-awaited vindication and effective demonstration of God’s kingship in the world. The coming of Christ is the climax of the whole history of redemption as recorded in the Scriptures. The rightful king has established a beachhead in his territory and calls on his subjects to press his claims ever farther in creation.

Jesus’ ministry clearly demonstrates that the coming of the kingdom means the restoration of creation. Christ’s work was not only a preaching of the long-awaited coming of the kingdom, but also a *demonstration* of that coming. In his words and especially in his deeds Jesus himself was proof that the kingdom had arrived. After casting an evil spirit out of a blind and mute man, Jesus says to the Pharisees, “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:28).

Jesus’ miracles, therefore, not only attest to the truth of his preaching concerning the coming of the kingdom but actually demonstrate that coming. Christ’s healing constituted actual evidence of his kingship over the power of sickness and Satan. In connection with our theme of re-creation it is particularly striking that all of Jesus’ miracles (with the one exception of the cursing of the fig tree) are miracles of *restoration* — restoration to health, restoration to life, restoration to freedom from demonic possession. Jesus’ miracles provide us with a sample of the meaning of redemption: a freeing of creation from the shackles of sin and evil and a reinstatement of creaturely living as intended by God.

It was a demonstration of the coming of the kingdom when Jesus said to the woman who had been crippled for eighteen years, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity” (Luke 13:12), and the woman immediately straightened up. This healing was at the same time a confrontation of the liberating King with the enslaving usurper, for Jesus himself adds that the woman was one “whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years” (v. 16). That the healings were a contest with Satan is clear from the link between sickness and possession in many of Jesus’ signs and wonders, and from the way Peter summarizes Christ’s ministry to Cornelius: “He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil” (Acts 10:38). The story of the Gadarene demoniac is another instance in which the healing by Jesus is striking evidence of the coming of the kingdom. The demon in the possessed man fell at Jesus’ feet (in recognition of his divinity and kingship), addressed him as “Son of the Most High God,” and then begged him not to punish it (Luke 8:28). This response on the part of the evil spirit shows that the King is acknowledged, that his superior power is feared, and that the pres-

ence of the kingdom is recognized. Jesus himself, when asked by the messengers of John the Baptist whether he really was the long-awaited messianic king, replied that his ministry spoke for itself: "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and good news is preached to the poor" (Matt. 11:4-5). The healing, restoring work of Christ marks the invasion of the kingdom into the fallen creation.

So, in the person of Jesus the kingdom of God is already present. When the Pharisees asked him when the kingdom would come, Jesus answered, "In fact the kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17:21, NEB). And yet he also instructed his disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come," and taught that its coming is *not yet* an accomplished reality. Both the "already" and the "not yet" aspects characterize the interlude between Christ's first and second coming. The first coming establishes his foothold in creation, while the second coming accomplishes the complete victory of his sovereignty. In the meantime, his servants are called to honor that sovereignty everywhere, for it is already true that "all authority in heaven and on earth" has been given to him (Matt. 28:18). Since his ascension Jesus has continued to make his kingdom come, but now by means of the ministry of his followers empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is the point of the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27), in which the nobleman's servants are called to be faithful in their assigned tasks before the nobleman returns from receiving the kingship. The servants of the already-come kingdom invest their entire resources for the promotion of the kingdom not-yet-come.

Concretely, this parable means that in the name of Christ and his kingdom Christians must now employ all their God-given means in opposing the sickness and demonization of creation — and thus in restoring creation — in anticipation of its final "regeneration" at the second coming (Matt. 19:28). This directive holds for our private lives (e.g., in such things as keeping promises, helping friends, practicing hospitality) but also for such public endeavors as work in advertising, labor-management relations, education, and international affairs. Christ lays his claim upon it all; nothing is excluded from the scope of his kingship. Those who refuse to honor that kingship are like the nobleman's countrymen who declared "We don't want this man to be our king" (Luke 19:14).

One should not think that the scriptural emphasis on restoration implies that Christians should advocate a return to the garden of Eden, however. We have already noted that creation develops through culture and society and that this development is good and healthy. Part of God's plan for the earth is that it be filled and subdued by humankind, that its latent possibilities be unlocked and actualized in human history and civilization. A good deal of that development has already taken place, though it is distorted by humanity's sinfulness.

We must choose *restoration* rather than *restitution*. It would be a profound mistake to attempt to go back to the original stage of the earth's development, to the sort of world exemplified by the garden of Eden. From a cultural point of view, that situation was primitive and undeveloped. It preceded Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal Cain (sons of Lamech), for example, who introduced a number of historical advances (animal husbandry, music making, metalworking) that contributed significantly to the furtherance of civilization (see Gen. 4:20-22). It is doubtful whether Adam and Eve were acquainted with the wheel; it is certain that they had not yet discovered how to make textiles (Gen. 3:21) or bake bricks (Gen. 11:3). In the language of modern archaeology, they lived in the early Stone Age. Restitution would entail the *cultural* return to the garden of Eden, a return that would turn back the historical clock. Such a move would be historically reactionary or regressive.

That is not the meaning of restoration in Jesus Christ. In the terms of the analogy of the teenager who had been sick since babyhood, a return to health at a later stage of development would not entail a return to the stage of physical development that characterized the youth's earlier period of good health. Genuine healing for the youth would be a matter of a healthy progression through adolescence to adulthood. By analogy, salvation in Jesus Christ, conceived in the broad creational sense, means a restoration of culture and society in their present stage of development. That restoration



will not necessarily oppose literacy or urbanization or industrialization or the internal combustion engine, although these historical developments have led to their own distortions or evils. Instead, the coming of the kingdom of God demands that these developments be reformed, that they be made answerable to their creational structure, and that they be subjected to the ordinances of the Creator.

Biblical religion is historically progressive, not reactionary. It views the whole course of history as a movement from a garden to a city, and it fundamentally affirms that movement. Once again, the kingdom of God claims *all* of creation, not only in all its departments, but also in all its stages of development.

### Comparison with Other Views of the Kingdom

It is clear that the conception of the kingdom of God outlined here is crucial for our understanding of redemption. It is probably safe to say that our view of the extent of the kingdom constitutes as telling an index of our worldview as does our conception of “the world.” An almost ineradicable tendency exists among Christians to restrict the scope of the kingdom — a tendency that parallels the persistent inclination to divide the world into sacred and profane realms.

Perhaps the most common example of this restriction is found in *pietism*. Pietists restrict the kingdom of God to the sphere of personal piety, the inner life of the soul. They prefer to translate Luke 17:21 as “behold, the kingdom of God is *within* you” (KJV) rather than “*among* you” (NEB).

Other traditions curtail the scope of Christ’s kingship by identifying the kingdom with the institutional church. This view holds that only clergymen and missionaries engage in “full-time kingdom work” and that the laity are involved in kingdom activity only

to the degree that they are engaged in church work. This restriction has given rise to the misleading phrase “church and world,” which suggests that all of human affairs are in fact divided into two spheres.

By contrast, the dispensationalists restrict the kingdom to the eschatological future. For them the petition “Thy kingdom come” means “May the millennium not be long in coming.” This view strictly equates the kingdom and the millennium and holds that neither of them is in any way “already present.”

Classical liberal Protestantism (the social gospel, for example), on the other hand, attaches the name “kingdom of God” to anything that seems humane and progressive from a humanistic point of view. Liberal democracy or the American way of life is seen as coterminous with Christ’s kingship by adherents of this view, and any countermovement is considered secular by definition. Much of contemporary liberation theology is similar, though it sees the kingdom manifested not so much in liberal as in Marxist socio-political movements.

All these examples illustrate that the permanent temptation of Christian thinking is to find new variants of a two-realm theory that restricts the scope of Christ’s lordship. Again and again Christians find ways of excluding certain areas or dimensions of their lives and the life of their culture from the need for reform for Christ’s sake. Again and again we must remind ourselves that Christ is not satisfied with halfway measures, that he reclaims all of creational life. What we are here calling the reformational worldview is an attempt to honor, in an explicit and consistent way, the insistent message of Scripture that sin is radical, deep, and pervasive. Christ is a match — more than a match — for Satan throughout creation. Satan has done his worst, but Christ has bested him.

\* \* \*

Redemption, then, is the recovery of creational goodness through the annulment of sin and the effort toward the progressive removal of its effects everywhere. We return to creation through the cross, because only the atonement deals with sin and evil effectively at their root. Mark’s version of the great commission bids us “preach the good news to *all creation*” (Mark 16:15) because there is need of liberation from sin everywhere.

## Total Truth

By: Nancy R. Pearcey

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book. I highly recommend reading the entire book.

### READ THE DIRECTIONS

How do we go about constructing a Christian worldview? The key passage is the creation account in Genesis, because that's where we are taken back to the beginning to learn what God's original purpose was in creating the human race. With the entrance of sin, humans went off course, lost their way, wandered off the path. But when we accept Christ's salvation, we are put back on the right path and are restored to our original purpose. Redemption is not just about being saved *from* sin, it is also about being saved *to* something—to resume the task for which we were originally created.

And what was that task? In Genesis, God gives what we might call the first job description: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it." The first phrase, "be fruitful and multiply," means to develop the *social* world: build families, churches, schools, cities, governments, laws. The second phrase, "subdue the earth," means to harness the *natural* world: plant crops, build bridges, design computers, compose music. This passage is sometimes called the Cultural Mandate because it tells us that our original purpose was to create cultures, build civilizations—nothing less.<sup>29</sup>

This means that our vocation or professional work is not a second-class activity, something we do just to put food on the table. It is the high calling for which we were originally created. The way we serve a Creator God is by being creative with the talents and gifts He has given us. We could even say that we are called to continue God's own creative work. Of course, we do not create from nothing, *ex nihilo*, as God did; our job is to develop the powers and potentials that God originally built into the creation—using wood to build houses, cotton to make clothes, or silicon to make computer chips. Though modern social and economic institutions are not explicitly referred to in the Garden of Eden, their biblical justification is rooted in the Cultural Mandate.

In the first six days of the Genesis narrative, God forms then fills the physical universe—the sky with the sun and moon, the sea with its swimming creatures, the earth with its land animals. Then the narrative pauses, as though to emphasize that the next step will be the culmination of all that has gone before. This is the only stage in the creative process when God announces His plan ahead of time, when the members of the Trinity consult with one another: Let

Us make a creature in Our image, who will represent Us and carry on Our work on earth (see Gen. 1:26). Then God creates the first human couple, to have dominion over the earth and govern it in His name.

It is obvious from the text that humans are not supreme rulers, autonomously free to do whatever they wish. Their dominion is a delegated authority: They are representatives of the Supreme Ruler, called to reflect His holy and loving care for creation. They are to "cultivate" the earth—a word that has the same root as "culture." The way we express the image of God is by being creative and building cultures.

This was God's purpose when He originally created human beings, and it remains His purpose for us today. God's original plan was not abrogated by the Fall. Sin has corrupted every aspect of human nature, but it has not made us less than human. We are not animals. We still reflect, "through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12, KJV), our original nature as God's image-bearers. Even nonbelievers carry out the Cultural Mandate: They "multiply and fill the earth"—which is to say, they get married, raise families, start schools, run businesses. And they "cultivate the earth"—they fix cars, write books, study nature, invent new gadgets.

After I spoke at a conference, a young woman said to me, "When you talk about the Cultural Mandate, you're not talking about anything distinctively Christian; these are things everybody does." But that's precisely the point: Genesis is telling us our true nature, the things we can't help doing, the way God created everyone to function. Our purpose is precisely to fulfill our God-given nature.

The Fall did not destroy our original calling, but only made it more difficult. Our work is now marked by sorrow and hard labor. In Genesis 3:16 and 17, the Hebrew uses the same word for the "labor" of childbearing and the "labor" of growing food. The text suggests that the two central tasks of adulthood—raising the next generation and making a living—will be fraught with the pain of living in a fallen and fractured world. All our efforts will be twisted and misdirected by sin and selfishness.

Yet when God redeems us, He releases us from the guilt and power of sin and restores us to our full humanity, so that we can once again carry out the tasks for which we were created. Because of Christ's redemption on the cross, our work takes on a new aspect as well—it becomes a means of sharing in His redemptive purposes. In cultivating creation, we not only recover our original purpose but also bring a redemptive force to reverse the evil and corruption introduced by the Fall. We offer our gifts to God to participate in making His Kingdom come, His will be done. With hearts and minds renewed, our work can now be inspired by love for God and delight in His service.

## Total Truth (cont'd)

The lesson of the Cultural Mandate is that our sense of fulfillment depends on engaging in creative, constructive work. The ideal human existence is not eternal leisure or an endless vacation—or even a monastic retreat into prayer and meditation—but creative effort expended for the glory of God and the benefit of others. Our calling is not just to “get to heaven” but also to cultivate the earth, not just to “save souls” but also to serve God through our work. For God Himself is engaged not only in the work of salvation (special grace) but also in the work of preserving and developing His creation (common grace). When we obey the Cultural Mandate, we participate in the work of God Himself, as agents of His common grace.

This is the rich content that should come to mind when we hear the word *Redemption*. The term does not refer only to a one-time conversion event. It means entering upon a lifelong quest to devote our skills and talents to building things that are beautiful and useful, while fighting the forces of evil and sin that oppress and distort the creation. *How Now Shall We Live?* added a fourth category—Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration—to emphasize the theme of ongoing vocation. Some theologians suggest the fourth category should be *Glorification*, to call to mind our final goal of living in the new heavens and new earth, for which our work here is a preparation. Whatever term we use, being a Christian means embarking on a lifelong process of growth in grace, both in our personal lives (sanctification) and in our vocations (cultural renewal). The new heavens and new earth will be a continuation of the creation we know now—purified by fire, but recognizably the same, just as Jesus was recognizable in His resurrection body. As C. S. Lewis puts it at the end of his Narnia tales, we have started a great adventure story that will never end. It is the “Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”<sup>30</sup>

## **Mere Christianity**

By: C.S. Lewis

The following are excerpts from the above-referenced book.

### Chapter: The Rival Conceptions of God

For Christianity is a fighting religion. It thinks God made the world—that space and time, heat and cold, and all the colours and tastes, and all the animal and vegetables, are things that God “made up out of his head” as a man makes up a story. But it also thinks that a great many things have gone wrong with the world that God made and that *God insists, and insists very loudly, on our putting them right again.* (emphasis supplied)

### Chapter: The Invasion

Christianity agrees with Dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think that this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by the rebel.

Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. *Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.* (emphasis supplied)

## **Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview**

By: Albert M. Wolters

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book.

[T]heologians have sometimes spoken of salvation as “re-creation”—not to imply that God scraps his earlier creation and in Jesus Christ makes a new one, but rather to suggest that he hangs on to his fallen original creation and salvages it. He refuses to abandon the work of his hands—in fact he scarifies his own Son to save his original project. Humankind, which has botched its original mandate and the whole creation along with it, is given another chance in Christ; we are reinstated as God’s managers on earth. The original good creation is to be restored. (p. 70)

\*\*\*

The obvious implication is that the new humanity (God’s people) is called to promote renewal in every department of creation. If Christ is the reconciler of all things, and if we have been entrusted with “the ministry of reconciliation” on his behalf (2 Cor. 5:18), then we have a redemptive task wherever our vocation places us in his world. No invisible dividing line within creation limits the applicability of such basic biblical concepts as reconciliation, redemption, salvation, sanctification, renewal, the kingdom of God, and so on. *In the name of Christ distortion must be opposed everywhere—in the kitchen and the bedroom, in city councils and corporate boardrooms, on the stage and on the air, in the classroom and in the workshop.* Everywhere creation calls for the honoring of God’s standards. (p. 73)

## **On the Incarnation of the Word of God**

By Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (born 296–298; died May 2, 373),

Since the Saviour came to dwell in our midst, not only does idolatry no longer increase, *but it is getting less and gradually ceasing to be*. Similarly, not only does the wisdom of the Greeks no longer make any progress, *but that which used to be is disappearing*. And daemons, so far from continuing to impose on people by their deceits and oracle-givings and sorceries, are routed by the sign of the cross if they so much as try. On the other hand, *while idolatry and everything else that opposes the faith of Christ is daily dwindling and weakening and falling, the Saviour's teaching is increasing everywhere!* Worship, then, the Saviour “Who is above all” and mighty, even God the Word, and condemn *those who are being defeated and made to disappear by Him*. When the sun has come, darkness prevails no longer; any of it that may be left anywhere is driven away. So also, now that the Divine epiphany of the Word of God has taken place, the darkness of idols prevails no more, and *all parts of the world in every direction are enlightened by His teaching*. (emphasis supplied)

## The Roots of American Order

By: Russell Kirk

The following are excerpts from the above-referenced book, Chapter entitled: "The Reformer's Drum."

We cannot trace the course of the Reformation in these few pages; all we can do, with a view to suggesting the influence of Protestantism upon American order, is to sketch the principal doctrines of the Protestant Reformers, and later to describe the course of the Reformation in Britain through the lives of a few men of thought and action. What commenced as a debate about theological questions and church discipline soon made an open breach in Christendom; and there followed a century and a half of devastation, the Wars of Religion, Catholic against Protestant and one Protestant sect against another. In the name of the Son of Man, the Redeemer, zealots took the sword against other Christians, illustrating practically the Christian dogma that all men are sinners. Yet out of that long agony of religious fanaticism (mingled with national political rivalries, class warfare, and ruthless private ambitions) emerged the religious pluralism and toleration of the United States.

What were the knottiest questions dividing the Catholic establishment and the Reformers? The Protestant leaders, though they attacked the corruptions of the sixteenth-century Church, argued that the visible Church's moral decay was the result of theological errors into which the papacy and the hierarchy had fallen. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin declared that the most profound difference between Papists and Protestants was the question of freedom of the will. Luther debated this subject with the Dutch humanist Erasmus, in 1524. Is the will free or enslaved? This is "the essential thing, the real knotty problem," Luther said; "instead of . . . tiresome trifles about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and other futilities of the same order."

Now the medieval Church, with Aristotle as its classical philosophical authority, gradually had modified Saint Augustine's doctrine that man is wholly corrupt—that so far as man has free will, this is opportunity only to choose among evil acts. Man is a creature of mingled good and evil impulses, the Church had come to teach: in the depths of the soul, there

lingers an essence or spark of divine substance, potentially enabling man (if given grace) to exercise his will for good. This medieval teaching, which runs through Dante's great poem, the Reformers denied utterly; they returned to the stern teaching of Saint Augustine. "For man cannot but put self-seeking first, loving himself above everything else," said Luther: "this is the root of his sinning."

Because man is utterly corrupted by self-love, the Reformers reasoned, man enjoys no freedom to act for the good. He can be saved from his total depravity only by the arbitrary grace of God. Because the Church, or rather its hierarchy, had fallen away from this dogma, the Reformers continued, the Church had been corrupted: the notorious system of indulgences for money was merely one of many abuses resulting from abandonment of the pure doctrine of original sin. Therefore the Church might be purged of corruption only if its ancient dogmas should be restored.

In the Middle Ages, the Church had taught that man can be saved both by faith and by good works. That good works—charitable and self-sacrificing acts—can be a means to salvation of the soul, the Reformers denied also. True faith in God should produce obedience to the moral law, and should result in good works; yet good moral choices and works are merely by-products, so to speak, of grace and faith. So the reformers demanded that the Church abandon the elaborate structure of penances and good works and absolving of sins that had been built up during a thousand years.

This controversy over freedom of the will, and over faith and works, was fundamental to the contest between Catholics and Protestants; yet many other points of doctrine and liturgy were as hotly disputed. Back of all these doctrinal clashes of the sixteenth century, as seen in the perspective of the twentieth century, there lay a profound disagreement concerning the source of true Christian belief. For truth, the Catholics turned to Authority; for truth, the Protestants turned to Private Judgment.

By Authority, the Catholics meant the teaching authority of the whole Church, over the centuries, as expressed in Scripture, in tradition, in the works of the Fathers and Doctors of

## **The Roots of American Order** (cont'd)

the Church, in the consensus of church councils, in the sayings and acts of saints, in papal decretals. By Private Judgment, the Protestants meant the individual Christian's interpretation of the Bible, in the light of conscience, for the guiding of his actions. Thus Protestantism was intensely Biblical, believing that every man must come to know fully the Old Testament and the New, for the tutoring of his conscience. So the tendency of Catholicism, as presently it would be formulated at the Council of Trent in denial of Protestant theses, was toward a tightly-structured authoritative church and a close-knit society; while the tendency of Protestantism was toward religious and social individualism.



## **“Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition**

By: Harold J. Berman

The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced book. In this excerpt, you will see how even this Jewish legal scholar at Harvard University notes the eschatology is what propelled the great revolutions” out which our Western legal tradition has come. Note, too, how the early church (prior to the Papal revolution) only saw life from a spiritual, other-worldly perspective and that the roots of our Western legal tradition that began with the Papal Revolution did not come until the church began to see that “regeneration was . . . applicable also to the secular society.” Note too his observation that the Reformation and the results it brought into colonial America “were the last great movements within the institutional church to influence the development of Western law in any fundamental sense.” And note, in the very last paragraph, what he believes to have been “the significant factor” in his sad conclusion regarding the institutional church’s on-going affect and influence in the development of law.

### About the book

The books posits that the roots of modern Western legal institutions and concepts go back nine centuries to the Papal Revolution, when the Western church established its political and legal unity and its independence from emperors, kings, and feudal lords. One of its main themes is the interaction between the Western belief in legal evolution and the periodic outbreak of apocalyptic revolutionary upheavals.

Berman challenges conventional nationalist approaches to legal history, which have neglected the common foundations of all Western legal systems. He also questions conventional social theory, which has paid insufficient attention to the origin of modern Western legal systems and has therefore misjudged the nature of the crisis of the legal tradition in the twentieth century.

## THE PURSUIT OF THE MILLENNIUM

An important element of each of the great revolutions of Western history was its apocalyptic vision of the future. Each was more than a political program, more even than a passionate struggle to reform the world. Each also represented a belief in, and a commitment to, an eschatology—a messianic dream of an end-time, a conviction that history was moving to a final *dénouement*. In the case of the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Puritan revolutions, the eschatology was expressed in biblical terms. The Christian revolutionaries foresaw “a new heaven and a new earth.” They envisioned the fulfillment of the prophecy of a thousand years of peace on earth between the Second Coming and the Last Judgment. “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven . . . for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.” (Rev. 21:1–5). In the case of the American, French, and Russian revolutions, the eschatology was a secular one: a new and final era of freedom and equality, the end of man’s long history of oppression, the dawn of a just society.

The successful revolutions were also based on a Christian eschatology, which in turn was based on the Judaic vision of history as moving toward a final *dénouement*, a climax. In contrast to the other Indo-European peoples, including the Greeks, who believed that time moved in ever recurring cycles, the Hebrew people conceived of time as continuous, irreversible, and historical, leading to ultimate redemption at the end. They also believed, however, that time has periods within it. It is not cyclical but may be interrupted or accelerated. It develops. The Old Testament is a story not merely of change but of development, of growth, of movement toward the messianic age—very uneven movement, to be sure, with much backsliding but nevertheless a movement *toward*. Christianity, however, added an important element to the Judaic concept of time: that of transformation of the old into the new. The Hebrew Bible became the Old Testament, its meaning transformed by its fulfillment in the New Testament. In the story of the Resurrection, death was transformed into a new beginning. The times were not only accelerated but regenerated. This introduced a new structure of history, in which there was a fundamental transformation of one age into another. This transformation, it was believed, could only happen once: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ was thought to be the only major interruption in the course of linear time from the creation of the world until it ends altogether.

Rosenstock-Huessy has shown how the belief in an end-time, the end of the world, has influenced the great revolutions of Western history. Each of those revolutions translated the experience of death and regeneration into a different concept of the nation and of the church.<sup>21</sup> When Christian eschatology was discarded by the Enlightenment and by liberal theology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a secular eschatology took its place. “No people,” Rosenstock-Huessy writes, “can live without faith in the ultimate victory of something. So while theology slept, the laity betook itself to other sources of Last Things”—to the eschatology of Karl Marx, on the one hand, and of Friedrich Nietzsche, on the other.<sup>22</sup>

Before the great reform movement of the eleventh century, the church, both in the East and in the West, had taught that the end-time is not within this world, the material world, but within the spiritual world—not in historical time but in eternity. This was one of the main points of St. Augustine’s contrast between the earthly city and the city of God. The earthly city is in perpetual decay. Those who live in the end-time are no longer of this world. For Augustine the same word, *saeculum*, meant “the world” and “time.” The *saeculum* was without hope of redemption: it could only be abandoned for the realm of the spirit. St. Augustine and the church, generally, in the first ten centuries, were against revolutionary millenarian movements of the kind described by Cohn, which tried to transform the social and political and economic realities of the here and now into a heavenly kingdom of the spirit. The rebirth of the individual Christian believer as well as the regeneration of mankind were understood to refer only to the eternal soul, which experienced such rebirth or regeneration only by “dying to this world”—above all, through the monastic life.

Similarly, when Christianity first came to the Germanic peoples of western Europe, it was presented as an otherworldly faith, concerned with the sacred and the saintly and having relatively little to say to the existing military, political, and economic power structure, except to devalue it.

In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries regeneration was for the first time seen as applicable also to the secular society. The reformers put themselves at the beginning and end of a new secular time: they projected backward into the past in order to project forward into the future. They saw themselves at a turning point in history, the beginning of a new age, which they thought would be the final age before the Last Judgment. This was a new interruption within the Christian era; it combined the Greek cyclical idea of a return with the Hebrew idea of linear movement toward a predestined end and the earlier Christian idea of a spiritual birth or a rebirth.

Each of the great revolutions, starting with the Papal Revolution of 1075, made a sharp division between what went before it, "the old," and what came with it and after it, "the new." Each of them also placed the historical old and new within a framework of an original creation, or state of nature, and a final end, an ultimate victory. Without the belief that this world, these times, the secular institutions of human society, could be regenerated—and that such regeneration would lead to the fulfillment of man's ultimate destiny—the great revolutions of Western history could not have occurred.

More specifically, the belief in the capacity of man to regenerate the world, and the necessity for him to do so in order to fulfill his ultimate destiny, provided a basis both for a conscious attack upon the existing order and for the conscious establishment of a new order. The sacred was used as a standard by which to measure the secular order. Thus the eleventh-century reformers began to judge emperors and kings and lords according to principles derived from divine and natural law. The papal party denounced the emperor for betraying the office of ruler of the church and charged that he did not have title to it. It was Daniel's challenge to Nebuchadnezzar: "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin"—"tekel: thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Dan. 5:25, 27). "Freedom of the church," the slogan of the Papal Revolution, was justified as God's will. So also in all subsequent great revolutionary periods of Western history, transcendent standards have been invoked against the existing power structure. When Karl Marx (quoting Proudhon) said, "Property is theft," he was speaking in the Western millenarian tradition: the whole economic and political system was weighed in the balances of the end-time, the *eschaton*, and found wanting.

A slightly later form of Protestantism, Calvinism, also had profound effects upon the development of Western law, especially in England and America. The Puritans carried forward the Lutheran concept of the sanctity of the individual conscience and also, in law, the sanctity of the individual will as reflected in property and contract rights. But they emphasized two elements that were subordinated in Lutheranism: first, a belief in the duty of Christians generally, and not merely Christian rulers, to reform the world;<sup>24</sup> and second, a belief in the local congregation, under its elected minister and elders, as the seat of truth—a "fellowship of active believers" higher than any political authority.<sup>25</sup> The active Puritan congregations, bent on reforming the world, were ready to defy the highest powers of church and of state in asserting their faith, and they did so on grounds of individual conscience, also appealing to divine law, to the Mosaic law of the Old Testament, and to natural-law concepts embodied in the medieval legal tradition. As the early Christian martyrs had founded the church by their disobedience to Roman law, so the seventeenth-century Puritans, including men like John Hampden, John Lilburne, Walter Udall, and William Penn, by their

open disobedience to English law laid the foundations for the English and American law of civil rights and civil liberties as expressed in the respective constitutions of the two countries: freedom of speech and press, free exercise of religion, the privilege against self-incrimination, the independence of the jury from judicial dictation, the right not to be imprisoned without cause, and many other such rights and freedoms.<sup>26</sup> Calvinist congregationalism also provided the religious basis for the modern concepts of social contract and government by consent of the governed.<sup>27</sup>

Puritanism in England and America, and Pietism, its counterpart on the European continent, were the last great movements within the institutional church to influence the development of Western law in any fundamental sense.

But the significant factor in this regard—in the nineteenth century and even more in the twentieth—was the very gradual reduction of traditional religion to the level of a personal, private matter, without public influence on legal development, while other belief systems—new secular religions (ideologies, "isms")—were raised to the level of passionate faiths for which people collectively were willing not only to die but also to live new lives.

## Reason in the Balance

### The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education

By: Phillip E. Johnson

The following are excerpts from the above-referenced book, Chapter entitled: "The Established Religious Philosophy of America."

#### A Shift in Religious Philosophy

During the second half of the twentieth century, the United States' established religious philosophy changed drastically from what it had been previously. In the nineteenth century, Americans overwhelmingly assumed that the Protestant version of the Christian religion was true, at least in a general way. Soldiers marched to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic"—a song that would probably be banned from most public schools today—and judges unabashedly referred to Christianity and the Bible as the foundation of the legal order. When Utah joined the Union, the Mormons did not have to change their theology, but they did have to give up polygamy, because a Christian nation would not tolerate the practice. A great deal of whatever schooling ordinary citizens had was provided by churches, or by public schools that were on very friendly terms with Protestant Christianity.

The degree to which this Protestant-dominated culture was tolerant of groups like Catholics and Jews varied greatly depending on place and time, but on basic moral questions there was little dispute, because Protestants, Catholics and Jews agreed upon a common tradition stemming from the Bible. There were differing doctrines on divorce, for example, but there was an overwhelming consensus that divorce was a great evil that should be legally and socially discouraged. There was plenty of room for argument over specific questions, but there was nearly universal agreement that the Bible and the Judeo-Christian tradition furnished the materials on the basis of which the argument would be conducted.

Today things are very different. Many people would say that we have progressed from a de facto religious establishment to a position of neutrality toward religion, but, as I have said, that would be a superficial and misleading way of describing the contemporary situation. What has really happened is that a new established religious philosophy has replaced the old one. Like the old philosophy, the new one is tolerant only up to a point, specifically the point where its own right to rule the public square is threatened.

When I want a long and fully descriptive name for it, I call the established religious philosophy of late-twentieth-century America "scientific naturalism and liberal rationalism." When I just want a convenient label, I shorten this cumbersome term and call the ruling philosophy simply "naturalism" or "modernism." Modernism as an intellectual condition begins when people realize that God is really dead and that humankind is therefore on its own.

Naturalism is a *metaphysical* doctrine, which means simply that it states a particular view of what is ultimately real and unreal. According to naturalism, what is ultimately real is nature, which consists of the fundamental particles that make up what we call matter and energy, together with the natural laws that govern how those particles behave.\* Nature itself is ultimately all there is, at least as far as we are concerned. To put it another way, nature is a permanently closed system of material causes and effects that can never be influenced by anything outside of itself—by God, for example. To speak of something as "supernatural" is therefore to imply that it is imaginary, and belief in powerful imaginary entities is known as superstition.

\*"Naturalism" is similar to "materialism," the doctrine that all reality has a material base. I prefer the former term because it avoids any confusion caused by the ordinary language distinction between matter and energy (both are ultimately made up of the somewhat ghostly subatomic entities studied by particle physicists). Moreover, particle physicists sometimes write and speak as if what is ultimately real is not the particles themselves but the grand unified theory that explains the movements and interactions of the particles. The essential point is that nature is understood by both naturalists and materialists to be "all there is" and to be fundamentally mindless and purposeless. This distinguishes naturalism from both pantheism (God is all there is, and God is identified with nature) and theism (God created the natural world for a purpose).

Naturalism gives priority to natural science as a way of describing reality, because everything we know about nature, other than by direct observation, is the product of scientific investigation. Science may not be able to answer all questions, at least for the time being, but some of the most visionary scientists already speak of a “theory of everything,” or “final theory,” which will in principle explain all of nature and hence all of reality. Because (in this view) science is by far our most reliable source of knowledge, whatever conflicts with scientific knowledge is effectively false, and whatever is in principle closed to scientific investigation is effectively unreal. We might say that any supernatural reality or nonscientific knowledge is “immaterial,” meaning both that it is not based on matter and that it is of no concern to us.

Scientific naturalism, as I have just described it, provides modernist culture with its picture of reality. Liberal rationalism, the other half of the equation, provides its ethical and social viewpoint. Everyone agrees that government policy in such matters as lawmaking and education should be based on reason. Reason implies more than logic, however, because logic is merely a way of getting from premises to conclusions. Logic works from metaphysical assumptions, or pictures of reality, and it leads in very different directions depending on the starting point.

For much of Western history, lawmakers assumed that authoritative moral guidance was available to them in the Bible and in the religious traditions based on the Bible. From a naturalistic standpoint, however, the Creator God of the Bible is every bit as unreal as the gods of Olympus, and the commands of an unreal deity are in reality only the commands of an ancient priesthood. Such human commands derived from the conditions and problems of primitive societies can hardly furnish authoritative guidance to lawmakers and educators of modern societies, who, having the benefit of modern scientific knowledge, are presumably much better informed than their remote ancestors.

This does not mean that supposedly God-given rules like the Ten Commandments are necessarily irrational—some of them may have a sound basis in human experience. But it does mean that premodern standards need to be evaluated by the standards of naturalistic reason. Thus modernist culture retains the prohibition of theft and murder, retains the sabbath merely as a secular day of recreation, discards the admonition to have “no other gods before me” as meaningless, and regards ambivalently the prohibition of adultery and the command to honor parents. Adultery, for example, may be damaging to human relationships and a breach of contract. In that case an individual should avoid it for secular reasons, but to condemn adultery merely because God forbids it would be, in modernist terms, irrational.

Naturalistic rationalism provides modernist societies with either a socialistic or a liberal morality. The former starts with the needs of the society or the government; the latter starts with the needs of the individual. Because socialist ideologies are currently undergoing hard times, and because my main concern is with the individualistic culture of late-twentieth-century America, the liberal alternative is more important for present purposes.

The term *liberal* itself is unavoidably confusing, however, because in America it is often used in a partisan sense. Thus to defend large government spending on social programs is said to be “liberal,” whereas to urge greater reliance on the free market is said to be “conservative”—even when the so-called conservatives are the ones advocating radical change and the liberals are defending the existing structures of government.

### **Liberal Rationalism**

In the philosophical sense in which I employ the term, *liberalism* refers not to a position about the level of government spending or to the desirability of change, but to the secular legacy of philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill. Its essence lies in a respect for the autonomy of the individual. Because liberalism starts with the

individual, the most characteristic liberal political doctrines are the social contract as the foundation of legitimate government and individual rights as the basis of liberty. Contemporary liberals will speak enthusiastically of natural rights, but they tend to reject the concept of natural laws, in the sense of obligations that are superior to those created by governments. Obligations in contemporary liberalism come not from nature, and certainly not from God, but from society, and they are clearly legitimate only to the extent that individuals have in some sense consented to be bound by them. Rights, on the other hand, are founded directly on our assumed status as autonomous beings.

Although the initial founders of liberalism were theists, the dominant contemporary form of liberal rationalism incorporates the naturalistic doctrine that God is unreal, a product of the human imagination. The famous “death of God” is simply the modernist certainty that naturalism is true and that human beings must therefore create their own standards rather than take them from some divine revelation. We cannot look to anything higher than ourselves, because there *is* nothing higher, at least until we encounter superior beings from other planets. That means we have to start with human society (socialism) or with the individual (liberalism) as the unit that is fundamentally real. Of course the two units will tend to be mixed in practice, because any enduring governmental system must take into account both the needs of society and the needs of the individual. For example, John F. Kennedy’s famous exhortation “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country” appears to be a thoroughly socialistic utterance. It was directed by a liberal president to an overwhelmingly individualistic nation, however, as a corrective to the selfishness that rampant individualism tends to spawn.

Because liberalism starts with individual rights and autonomy, its morality tends to become progressively more relativistic and even permissive. The exercise of individual freedom is limited primarily by the rights of others, and to a lesser extent by abstract social policies, which are usually debatable. We may all agree that a man’s freedom to swing his fist ends at his neighbor’s nose, but

it is much less obvious that he has violated any liberal norm if he opens a pornographic movie theater or divorces his children’s mother to marry someone more attractive.

The current battle over the morality of abortion exemplifies the liberal approach to moral issues. Nearly everyone agrees that the deliberate killing of a newborn infant is murder, but there is intense disagreement about the morality of early, middle and late abortions. In the face of such disagreement the liberal rationalist position is “prochoice,” as it presumably will be if one day a substantial body of opinion—especially articulate and well-educated opinion—develops in favor of infanticide. How could it be otherwise, if morality rests ultimately on human decisions rather than external authority?

So far I have given a brief description of the nature of scientific naturalism and liberal rationalism, which I will henceforth designate by the less cumbersome term *modernism*. When I say that this religious philosophy is “established,” of course I do not mean that people are literally compelled to believe it, any more than people were compelled to believe in Protestant Christianity when Alexis de Tocqueville described that creed as the *de facto* established religion of America in the early nineteenth century. A religious establishment is consistent with a large degree of tolerance, but there is a very important difference between being tolerated and being allowed to govern. The established religious philosophy is the creed of the people who do the governing, or most of them. They are the ones who decide how much tolerance will be extended to others.

# REGENT UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW

---

VOLUME 4

SPRING, 1994

---

## GOD'S REVELATION: FOUNDATION FOR THE COMMON LAW

HERBERT W. TITUS\*

### I. INTRODUCTION

"[W]hile the Roman law was a deathbed convert to Christianity, the common law was a cradle Christian."<sup>1</sup> So wrote John C.H. Wu in his 1955 encomium to the Anglo American legal system known as the common law. Wu, a convert to Christianity in the 1930's and a noted international statesman, jurist and law professor, documented this claim by tracing the history of the English common law from Bracton through Coke to Blackstone.

Bracton, named by Wu as the "Father of the Common Law,"<sup>2</sup> was a Churchman, learned in both the canon and Roman law. Remembered for his great thirteenth century treatise, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae*, the first systematic treatment of the English common law, Bracton laid down an unmistakably Christian philosophy of law:

The king himself . . . ought not to be under man but under God, and under the law, because the law makes the king. . . . [F]or there is no king where will, and not law, wields dominion. That as a vicar of God he [the king] ought to be under the

---

\* B.S., University of Oregon; J.D. Harvard University, Editor and Publisher of THE FORECAST.

1. JOHN C.H. WU, FOUNTAIN OF JUSTICE: A STUDY IN THE NATURAL LAW 65 (1955).  
2. *Id.* at 71.

law is clearly shown by the example of Jesus Christ . . . [f]or although there lay open to God, for the salvation of the human race, many ways and means . . . He used, not the force of his power, but the counsel of His justice. Thus He was willing to be under the Law, "that he might redeem those who were under the Law." For He was unwilling to use power, but judgment.<sup>3</sup>

Coke, whom Wu praised as "the incarnate common law"<sup>4</sup> or the Savior of the Common Law, showed incomparable courage when he cited Bracton in his momentous encounter with King James I, who claimed that he personified the law as King.<sup>5</sup> Well prepared to defend the common law against tyranny even from the highest place in the kingdom, Coke, like Bracton, understood that God, not man, was the ultimate source of law, even that law which governed the civil realm. Before his confrontation with the King, Coke had confidently proclaimed that "the law of nature is part of the law of England,"<sup>6</sup> that this "law of nature was before any judicial or municipal law,"<sup>7</sup> and that this "law of nature is immutable."<sup>8</sup> What was this "law of nature?" Coke described it eloquently:

The law of nature is that which God at the time of creation of the nature of man infused into his heart, for his preservation and direction; . . . this is *lex aeterna*, the moral law, called also the law of nature. And by this law written with the finger of God in the heart of man, were the people of God a long time governed, before the law was written by Moses, who was the first reporter or writer of law in the world.<sup>9</sup>

Coke's "law of nature," the "eternal law of God," written on the heart of every man, paralleled John Calvin's "moral law," which the theologian characterized as "nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that of conscience which God has engraved upon the minds of men."<sup>10</sup> Coke's "law of nature" and

---

3. HENRY BRACTON, DE LEGIBUS ET CONSUEUDINIBUS ANGLIAE 39 (Sir Travers Twiss ed. 1878).

4. WU, *supra* note 1, at 93.

5. *Id.* at 91-93.

6. *Id.* at 91.

7. *Id.*

8. *Id.*

9. WU, *supra* note 1, at 91 (quoting Calvin v. Smith, Eng. Rep. 377 (K.B. 1610)).

10. JOHN CALVIN, INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION 1504 (John T. McNeill ed., Ford L. Battles trans. 1960).



Calvin's "moral law," in turn, drew support from the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Rome: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the [written] law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness . . ." <sup>11</sup>

This Christian philosophy of law came to full bloom in England with the work of Sir William Blackstone in his monumental *Commentaries on the Law of England*. In his seminal chapter on "the Nature of Laws in General," Blackstone stated his Christian thesis with unmistakable clarity:

Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the law of his creator, for he is entirely a dependent being . . . [A] state of dependence will inevitably oblige the inferior to take the will of him, on whom he depends, as the rule of his conduct . . . And consequently, as man depends absolutely upon his maker for every thing, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his maker's will.

This will of his maker is called the law of nature. . . .

. . . .

This law of nature, being co-eval with mankind and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to all other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times; no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original. <sup>12</sup>

Published in 1765, Blackstone's *Commentaries* quickly became the definitive treatise on the common law both in England and in America. Blackstone's statement of the meaning and significance of the law of nature served not only the cause of the common law, but providentially the cause of the American War for Independence. As for the common law, Blackstone provided to Associate United States Justice Joseph Story ample evidence to support the justice's firm opinion that "[t]here never has been a period, in which the Common Law did not recognise Christianity as lying at its foundations." <sup>13</sup> As for America's claim to inde-

---

11. *Romans* 2:14-15 (King James) [hereinafter all citations to the King James Version].

12. 1 WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, *COMMENTARIES* \*39, 41.

13. Joseph Story, *Discourse Pronounced Upon the Inauguration of the Author, as Dane Professor of Law in Harvard University, August 25th, 1829*, in *THE LEGAL MIND IN AMERICA* 176, 178 (Perry Miller ed. 1962).

pendence, Thomas Jefferson unhesitatingly and confidently rested his case upon "the laws of nature and of nature's God."<sup>14</sup>

For over one hundred years, however, this Godly heritage of American law has been neglected. It is no longer generally acknowledged by her lawyers or her judges. The purpose of this article is twofold: (1) To document and to explain how God's revelation provided the basic foundation for the Anglo-American common law system; and (2) To urge its renewal and restoration.

Part II contains a succinct summary of the Biblical philosophy that laid the foundation for the common law at the time of America's founding. It concludes with a brief account of its demise, occasioned by a late nineteenth century Darwinian revolution, and with a forecast of a coming Christian counterrevolution.

To illustrate how this Biblical philosophy was applied in the past, and how, if restored, it would make a difference in the future, Parts III and IV address two subjects, private property and civil jurisdiction. Both of these parts document the Biblical roots of the common law of property and of jurisdiction, and urge a return to them to preserve economic stability and to reestablish true liberty in America.

## II. GOD'S REVELATION AND THE COMMON LAW

### A. *The Law of Nature and of Nature's God.*

The Declaration of Independence's reliance upon the laws of "nature's God"<sup>15</sup> as well as upon "the laws of nature"<sup>16</sup> reflected the faith of America's founders in a "God Who is there and Who is not silent."<sup>17</sup> They believed without reservation that God had created all mankind, that God had endowed them with certain rights, and that God actively judged and superintended the affairs of man, including that of nations.<sup>18</sup> Their faith in God and in His revelation in support of their revolutionary cause mirrored Blackstone's faith in God's will as revealed in nature and in the holy Scriptures. Not surprisingly, America's founders endeavored to

---

14. THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE para. 1 (U.S. 1776).

15. *Id.*

16. *Id.*

17. The phrase has been inspired by Dr. Francis Schaeffer's books, *THE GOD WHO IS THERE* (1968), and *HE IS THERE AND HE IS NOT SILENT* (1972).

18. See generally GARY AMOS, *DEFENDING THE DECLARATION* (1989).

preserve and to purify Blackstone's philosophy of the common law even as they were leading the United States of America in a war against the mother country.

Jesse Root, in his "remarkable preface to the first volume of systematic *Reports* on Connecticut cases,"<sup>19</sup> explained the revelational epistemology upon which all Americans understood the common law to rest:

What is common law?... [C]ommon law is the perfection of reason, arising from the nature of God, of man, and of things, and from their relations, dependencies, and connections: It is universal.... It is in itself perfect... it is immutable,... it is superior to all other laws and regulations.... It is immemorial... it is co-existent with the nature of man,... It is most energetic and coercive....

[W]ho will ascend into heaven to bring it down, or descend into the depths to bring it up, or traverse the Atlantic to import it? It is near us, it is within us, written upon the tablet of our hearts, in lively and indelible characters;... It is visible in the volume of nature, in all the works and ways of God. Its sound is gone forth into all the earth, and there is no people or nation so barbarous, where its language is not understood.

The dignity of its original, the sublimity of its principles, the purity, excellency and perpetuity of its precepts are most clearly made known and delineated in the book of divine revelations; heaven and earth may pass away and all the systems and works of man sink into oblivion, but not a jot or tittle of this law shall ever fall.<sup>20</sup>

Root's explicit revelational epistemology was presupposed by Blackstone in his *Commentaries*. Thus, Blackstone unapologetically began his chapter on the Nature of Laws in general with propositional statements derived from the Genesis account of creation:

Law... signifies a... rule of action, which is prescribed by some superior, and which the inferior is bound to obey.

Thus when the supreme being formed the universe, and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be. When he put that matter into

---

19. Jesse Root, *The Origin of Government and Laws in Connecticut, 1798*, in THE LEGAL MIND IN AMERICA, *supra* note 13, at 31.

20. *Id.* at 34-35.

motion, he established certain laws of motion, to which all moveable bodies must conform.<sup>21</sup>

Continuing this Genesis theme of creation, Blackstone moved quickly from the laws of the creator governing the inanimate world to the rules of the same creator governing the animate world:

If we farther advance, from mere inactive matter to vegetable and animal life, we shall find them still governed by laws . . . equally fixed and invariable. The whole progress of plants . . . the method of animal nutrition, . . . and all other branches of vital economy . . . are not left to chance, or the will of the creature itself, but are performed in a wondrous involuntary manner, and guided by unerring rules laid down by the great creator.<sup>22</sup>

Again without hesitation, Blackstone moved from the rules governing the animate world to those applying to human action or conduct. While he acknowledged that man, unlike the animals, is "a creature endowed with both reason and freewill,"<sup>23</sup> Blackstone drew a straight line from the laws governing the inanimate and animate worlds to the laws governing the "image-bearing nature world"<sup>24</sup> peculiar to man:

For as God, when he created matter, and endued it with a principle of mobility, established certain rules for the perpetual direction of that motion; so, when he created man, and endued him with freewill to conduct himself in all parts of life, he laid down certain immutable laws of human nature, whereby that freewill is in degree regulated and restrained. . . .<sup>25</sup>

By relating God's laws governing mankind to those governing the inanimate physical world, Blackstone—whether advertently or inadvertently I do not know—followed God's revelatory strategy in His dealing with Job. For in response to Job's complaint, God answered by declaring His sovereign power as Creator over inanimate nature and, consequently, His rule of

21. 1 BLACKSTONE, *supra* note 12, at \*38.

22. *Id.* at \*38-39.

23. *Id.* at \*39.

24. This term reflects the realm of nature that was made in the image of God. *Genesis* 1:27. The term emphasizes the distinction between man and animals. The emphasis is necessary in this modern age so enamored with the Darwinian belief that man is only a "human animal."

25. 1 BLACKSTONE, *supra* note 12, at \*39-40.

that inanimate world: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Who hath laid the measures thereof? . . . or who hath stretched the line upon it? . . . Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?"<sup>26</sup>

God repeats this revelatory strategy throughout Scripture both in his relationships with Israel<sup>27</sup> and with individual human beings. In a most telling passage in the Book of James, God likens His physical laws governing water quality to His moral laws governing what man speaks with his mouth:

[T]he tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God . . . and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?<sup>28</sup>

Given these revelations of identity between the laws governing the physical world and those governing man's free will, Blackstone envisioned the job of the lawyer or jurist to be like that of the physical scientist; namely, to use God's gift of "reason to discover the purport of those laws" governing mankind's freewill.<sup>29</sup> Blackstone had faith that God "has enabled human reason to discover" these laws "so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions."<sup>30</sup>

First, Blackstone contended that God created each individual human being in such a way that he but by his own self-love will discover the rules that lead to happiness.<sup>31</sup> According to Blackstone, one need not be a metaphysician in order to know what is good and what is evil.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Jesse Root claimed that the law of nature created by God could be known through reason because God had created all human beings with the capacity to know those laws:

[T]he law exists . . . [not as] a matter of speculative reasoning merely; but of knowledge and feeling. We know that we have a property in our persons . . . we know that we have a right

---

26. *Job* 38:4-5, 33.

27. See, e.g., *Jeremiah* 10:2-15.

28. *James* 3:8-11.

29. 1 BLACKSTONE, *supra* note 12, at \*40.

30. *Id.*

31. *Id.*

32. *Id.* at \*40-41.

to think and believe as we choose . . . we know the value of a good name . . . we know that every man's peace and happiness is his own. Nay, more when our persons are assaulted, our lives attached, our liberties infringed . . . our property . . . spoiled, we feel the injury that is done to us. . . . We know also that other men have the same rights. . . . When their rights are violated, this law is therefore evidenced both by the knowledge and the feelings of men.<sup>33</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that God had revealed His laws clearly in nature and had created each human being with the capacity to discover those laws, both Blackstone and Root agreed that God's revelation of His laws in the natural world was not the only source of man's knowledge of the rules governing his free will. Indeed, both claimed that there was a better source than nature to consult, namely, the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, Root called the "book of divine revelations . . . the Magna Charta of all our natural and religious rights and liberties."<sup>34</sup>

Calling the Bible the Magna Charta of justice and liberty did not mean that God had failed to make known His laws through the natural world; nor did it mean that God had failed to give man sufficient reasoning and emotional capacity to discover those laws in nature. To the contrary, God's ways in nature were still discoverable by man through his reason. Nevertheless, God, in His mercy, provided man with a more sure guide. Blackstone captured best the reason why God took these laws already sufficiently revealed in nature and revealed them also in writing:

[I]f our reason were always, as in our first ancestor before his transgression, clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudice, unimpaired by disease or intemperance, the talk would be pleasant and easy; we should need no other guide but this [i.e., the law of nature]. But every man now finds the contrary in his own experience; that his reason is corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance and error.

This has given manifold occasion for the benign interposition of divine providence; which, in compassion to the frailty, the imperfection, and the blindness of human reason, hath been pleased . . . to discover and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered

---

33. Root, *supra* note 19, at 36.

34. *Id.* at 35-36.

we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the holy scriptures.<sup>35</sup>

For Blackstone and Root, then, the Biblical revelation did not displace the natural revelation, but confirmed it and made it possible for man, even though his reason had been corrupted by sin, to continue to discover the special rules that the Creator had imposed upon him as a human being created in the image of God. Again, Blackstone is most explicit:

These precepts [the ones written in the holy scriptures] . . . , when revealed, are found upon comparison to be really a part of the original law of nature, as they tend in all their consequences to man's felicity. But we are not from thence to conclude that the knowledge of these truths was attainable by reason, in its present corrupted state; since we find that, until they were revealed [in writing], they were hid from the wisdom of ages. As then the moral precepts of this law are indeed of the same original with those of the law of nature, so their intrinsic obligation is of equal strength and perpetuity.<sup>36</sup>

In other words, God's putting in written form "Thou shalt not murder"<sup>37</sup> did not make murder wrong, but His putting the rule in writing revealed more effectively to fallen man the original law protecting the sanctity of human life that God had placed and revealed in the created order from the beginning. Murder was wrong, therefore, because it was contrary to the nature of man and to the very nature of God's creation.

### *B. The Municipal or Civil Law.*

By presupposing God's revelation in both nature and in the Holy Scriptures, Blackstone and Root established the common law heritage as rooted in an objective legal order that pre-existed civil society and the writings of men. That objective legal order Blackstone identified as "the law of nature and the law of revelation."<sup>38</sup> As for the laws of civil order, Blackstone claimed that such laws were wholly dependent upon the law of nature and the law of revelation and that "no human laws should be suffered

---

35. 1 BLACKSTONE, *supra* note 12, at \*41-42.

36. *Id.* at \*42.

37. *Exodus* 20:13.

38. 1 BLACKSTONE, *supra* note 12, at \*42.

## No Transcendent Law-Justice Holmes and the United States Supreme Court

By David Fowler

From 1842 until 1938, the United States Supreme Court, in cases not involving federal statutes or the Constitution—cases between two citizens involving common law, such as cases dealing with torts, like car wrecks or simple contract disputes—said federal courts were not bound to apply state court decisions applying the common law to cases analogous to the one that was then before the federal court.<sup>i</sup>

In other words, there might be a decision from years ago in which the *state* court said a person who gets drunk at a hoe down and drives his wagon into another neighbor's wagon is liable for the damages he causes, and the current case in *federal* court involves a person who gets high at a Super Bowl party and drives his car into another person's car. That would have been a common law case years ago and under the common law, a judge would look back at prior cases—like the drunk wagon driver—to help determine what the result should be when the mode of transportation is a car, not a wagon, and the driver is high, not just drunk.

What the Supreme Court was doing was saying that it could determine the liability of the stoned car driver for itself without reference to analogous cases in the states. In other words, it could declare what it thought the “law” should be. And it could do that because all the federal court was doing was “*declar[ing]* the law,” at least in a case like the above present hypothetical, not “*mak[ing]* it.”<sup>ii</sup>

But in 1938, in a case called *Erie Railroad v. Tompkins*<sup>iii</sup>, the Supreme Court said it was unconstitutional for federal courts to do what they had been doing—to decide what the law in these cases should be and to disregard state court decisions in deciding what the law should be.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, an atheist and avowed Darwinian in his worldview, was one of the chief critics of this older idea, and the reason why is really important.



The “fallacy” he said of a federal court thinking it could decide what the applicable law should be without regard to state court decisions was the whole idea that :

common law . . . is one august corpus, to **understand** which clearly is the only task of any Court concerned. If there were such a **transcendental** body of law **outside of any particular State** but obligatory within it unless and until changed by statute, the Courts of the United States might be right in using their independent judgment as to what it was. *But there is no such body of law. The fallacy and illusion that I think exist consist in supposing that there is this **outside thing** to be **found**.* Law . . . in the sense in which courts speak of it today does not exist without some **definite authority** behind it. The common law so far as it is enforced in a State . . . is not the common law generally *but the law of that State existing by the authority of that State* without regard to what it may have been in England or anywhere else.<sup>iv</sup>

In other words, there is no overarching, transcendent law governing all people and all states, everywhere. Common law is not a pre-existing, pre-governmental law that exists by a “transcendental” authority but exist only “by the authority of that state.”

This is a huge shift—it is a rejection of the theistic foundations of law that are inherent to a belief in a transcendent Creator God. The Court is saying there is no law imposed on us by a transcendent authority that we merely “find” and only “declare, but law exists only by the “authority of [the] state” and which the state, in all instances “makes.” That is how you wind up with a Supreme Court that says a state, which is now the sole source and judge of the law, cannot define marriage as one man and one woman, because such a law is discriminatory.

Many Christians can’t understand why it’s discriminatory, as marriage has always been defined as one man and one woman. It’s discriminatory now because there is no “transcendental body of law . . . outside . . . the authority of any particular state” to which human civil law must conform or which civil law must recognize, and therefore, since the state can “make” marriage

whatever it wants to make it, it can't make it something that discriminates against people just because they are of the same sex.

But there is yet another thing going on here that makes it possible to declare laws authorizing only opposite-sex marriages discriminatory. It is the view that there is no transcendent authority to guide us relative to our understanding of anthropology, what it means to be human and what it means for our bodies to be biologically distinct. There is no transcendent source of law or meaning. Consequently we are now—*all of us*—androgynous in the eyes of the law, and that is why some federal courts are interpreting “sex” to include “gender identity.” Sex is no longer an objective thing with a meaning that has been imposed on it by a transcendent source; sex is just another word for “gender” by which purveyors of that term intentionally mean a social construct having only the meaning we give it.

Consequently, what all of this means is that we can no longer say with Martin Luther King, “an unjust law is no law” because there is no law apart from the “authority of the state.” Law has now become an “immanent” thing—something that comes not from the Creator but the creature and his institutions—and we’ll turn to that concept next—but for now the point is this: there is now no longer any “transcendent” law in the eyes of our Supreme Court (and most all judges *and lawmakers*, for that matter) by which the law the creature makes can be judged.

So, we are free to say that marriage is whatever we say it is, and so long as the “authority of the state” says it is so, it is so.

© David Fowler 2017

---

<sup>i</sup> *Swift v. Tyson*, 41 U.S. 1 (1938)

<sup>ii</sup> *Kuhn v. Fairmont Coal Company*, 15 U.S. 349, \_\_\_, \_\_\_ S. Ct. \_\_\_, \_\_\_ (1910) (Holmes, J., dissenting)

<sup>iii</sup> *Erie Railroad v. Tompkins*, 304 U.S. 64, \_\_\_ S. Ct. \_\_\_ (1938),

<sup>iv</sup> *Black and White Taxicab and Transfer Company v. Brown and Yellow Taxicab and Transfer Company*, 276 U.S. 518, \_\_\_, \_\_\_ S. Ct. \_\_\_, \_\_\_ (1928) (Holmes, J. dissenting)

## The Stone Lectures of 1898

By: Abraham Kuyper

... the history of our times starts from the *unbelief* of the French Revolution. P. 25

There is no doubt then that Christianity is imperiled by great and serious dangers. Two *life systems* are wrestling with one another, in mortal combat. Modernism is bound to build a world of its own from the data of the natural man, and to construct man himself from the data of nature; while, on the other hand, all those who reverently bend the knee to Christ and worship Him as the Son of the living God, and God himself, are bent upon saving the "Christian Heritage." This is *the struggle* in Europe, this is *the struggle* in America . . . If the battle is to be fought with honor and with a hope of victory, then *principle* must be arrayed against *principle*; then it must be felt that in Modernism the vast energy of an all-embracing *life-system* assails us, then also it must be understood that we have to take our stand in a life-system of equally comprehensive and far-reaching power.

\* \* \*

The leading thoughts that had their rise in the French Revolution at the close of the last, and in German philosophy in the course of the present century, form together a life-system which is diametrically opposed to that of our fathers. Their struggles were for the sake of the glory of God and a purified Christianity; the present movement wages war for the sake of the glory of man, being inspired not by the humble mind of Golgotha but by the pride of Hero-worship. And why did we, Christians, stand so weak, in the face of this Modernism? Why did we constantly lose ground? Simply because we were devoid of an equal unity of life-conception, such as alone could enable us with irresistible energy to repel the enemy at the frontier.

... what are the required *conditions* for such general systems of life . . . These conditions demand in the first place, that from a special principle a peculiar insight be obtained into the three fundamental relations of all human life: viz., (1) our relation *to God* (2) our relation *to man*, and (3) our relation *to the world*.

... it is the interpretation of our relation to God which dominates every general life system . . .

\* \* \*

If it is true that every general development form of life must find its starting point in a peculiar interpretation of our relation to God,—how then do you explain the fact that *Modernism* also has led to such a general conception, notwithstanding it sprang from the French Revolution, which on principle broke with all religion. The question answers itself. If you exclude from your conceptions all reckoning with the Living God just as is implied in the cry, "no God no master," you certainly bring to the front a sharply defined interpretation of your own for our relation to God.

[The French Revolution] was the declaration that henceforth God was to be considered as a *hostile power*, yea even as dead, if not yet to the heart, at least to the state, to society and to science. To be sure, in passing from French into German hands, Modernism could not rest content with such a bare negation; but the result shows how from that moment it clothed itself in either pantheism or agnosticism, and under each disguise it maintained the expulsion of God from practical and theoretical life, and the enmity against the Triune God has its full course.

# Reason in Balance: The Case against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education.

By: Phillip E. Johnson

This excerpt is from the Chapter entitled "The Established Religious Philosophy in America".

The vast majority of Americans at least say that they believe in such a God, and if that belief were to emerge as a serious contender at the intellectual level, there could be important consequences. If God is more than a myth or a figure of speech, then modernist culture is ignoring something really important, and its ruling philosophy may be in serious trouble.

On the other hand, defenders of modernism cannot openly ban the advocacy of theism without contradicting their own commitment to freedom of expression and unfettered intellectual inquiry. Modernist discourse accordingly incorporates semantic devices—such as the labeling of theism as "religion" and naturalism as "science"—that work to prevent a dangerous debate over fundamental assumptions from breaking out in the open. As the preceding chapter showed, however, these devices become transparent under the close inspection that an open debate tends to encourage. The best defense for modernist naturalism is to make sure the debate does not occur.

It would be inadequate and misleading, however, to account for modernist rule as if it were a kind of plot by agnostics to rule the United States by employing deceptive techniques. Modernism is not a conspiracy, but a way of thinking that is taken for granted not only by agnostics but also by millions of people who consider themselves theists but have to some extent adopted modernist ways of thinking about theism. In fact, the authority of modernism rests largely on theists' tacit acceptance of modernist premises. It is possible to make so strong a case for modernism that it may seem futile and self-destructive for theists to challenge modernism as a public philosophy.

## The Advantages of Modernism

I believe that the case for modernism can be answered convincingly,

but the case that has to be answered is a powerful one, and it will not do to underestimate the difficulty of the task. There are at least five reasons that advocates of modernist naturalism can (and do) give to justify their right to rule, and I will state them as persuasively as I can.

1. Modernism's metaphysical foundation rests firmly on scientific naturalism, which is "the way things really are." Through science we now know that nature, of which we are a recently evolved part, really *is* a closed system of material causes and effects, whether we like it or not. Any other system—particularly one based on the supposed commandments of a supernatural being—would therefore be founded on illusion rather than reality. God is a product of the human imagination, not the Creator of us all. Once science has established the facts, we have eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge and there is no going back to pre-scientific beliefs, however great a sense of loss some of us may feel.

2. Modernist naturalism is equivalent to rationality because it excludes consideration of miracles, defined as arbitrary breaks in the chain of material causes and effects. This argument is particularly important to scientists, who see the success of science as inextricably linked to the presumption that no supernatural mind or spirit ever interferes with the orderly (but purposeless) course of natural events. Most modernists' identification of naturalism with rationality is so complete that they do not think of naturalism as a distinct and controversial metaphysical doctrine, but simply assume it as part of the definition of *reason*.

3. Modernist naturalism is liberating, especially in the area of gender roles and sexual behavior, because it frees people from the illusion that outdated cultural norms have permanent validity as commands of God. Persons who attack scientific naturalism or the theory of evolution probably do so as part of a disguised agenda to reestablish a stifling patriarchal code of sexual behavior. I have found that any discussion with modernists about the weakness of the theory of evolution quickly turns into a discussion of politics, particularly sexual politics. Modernists typically fear that any discrediting of naturalistic evolution will end in women being sent to the kitchen, gays to the closet and abortionists to jail. That kind

of consideration explains why any perceived attempt to undermine the teaching of evolution as fact in the schools is met with such fierce opposition; much more than a scientific theory is deemed to be at stake.

4. Modernist naturalism supplies the philosophical basis for democratic liberty, because it relies only on knowledge that is in principle available to every citizen. Modernists characterize persons who wish to make public policy on the basis of some divine revelation as inherently undemocratic, because they assert authority on the basis of a knowledge that has been revealed only to them and hence is not available to others. In contrast, the observations and methods of reasoning employed by science are universally accessible in principle, although in reality the special study (and funding) required to practice science limits citizens' ability to judge scientific questions for themselves. If public debate is carried out only on the basis of knowledge derived from sensory experience and scientific investigation, then in principle everyone can participate on equal terms. Modernists think debates between competing supernaturalistic ideologies can be settled only by force, whereas debate on naturalistic principles is open to reason and hence to peaceful solution.

5. Finally, modernist government is acceptable even to many religious people, including Christian theists of relatively high intellectual standing. Modernism is not inherently antireligious or even antitheist, provided that "belief in God" is relegated to its proper place in private life. Under liberal rationalist principles of tolerance, believers may have their own churches and may even send their children to private religious schools if they can afford to do so—provided that they do not attempt to force their beliefs

on other people by seeking, for example, to advocate them in the public schools. Modernists think that this is as much authority as believers with a proper respect for the autonomy of nonbelievers should want. The restriction of religion to private life therefore does not threaten the vital interests of the majority religion, and it positively protects minority religions from the tyranny of the majority.

The tacit understanding that religion has to do with subjective feelings rather than objective facts allows scientific naturalists to exempt religion from all-out scientific scrutiny; thus modernism compassionately protects the cherished illusions of religious believers. Modernists warn Christian theists who want to dispute naturalism in the public arena that they are making a big mistake and are inviting a conflict with science that they cannot win. As the example of creationism illustrates, modernist tolerance stops at the point where the religious people start demanding that public institutions treat their subjective beliefs as if they might possibly be objectively true.

### **Theistic Realism**

That is a formidable list of advantages and justifications, but in the end everything depends on the first argument: the God of Christian theism and of the Bible is unreal, the product of a pre-scientific human imagination. Grant that premise, and everything else follows. But reject that premise, and everything on the list becomes doubtful.

Of course a social order should be founded on reality and not unreality, but if God exists, a naturalistic order is founded on unreality and naturalistic rationalism is an illusion.

Of course science likes to assume that the cosmos is rationally understandable and not arbitrary, but how better to guarantee a rational cosmos than to recognize that it was created by a rational mind?

The following is an excerpt from an article written by Francis Schaeffer and published in It can be found, in full, at <http://www.the-highway.com/articleOct01.html>

### **The Abolition of Truth and Morality**

The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so, in regard to society and in regard to government, is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals.

They have very gradually become disturbed over permissiveness, pornography, the public schools, the breakdown of the family, and finally abortion. But they have not seen this as a totality — each thing being a part, a symptom, of a much larger problem. They have failed to see that all of this has come about due to a shift in world view — that is, through a fundamental change in the overall way people think and view the world and life as a whole. This shift has been *away* from a world view that was at least vaguely Christian in people's memory (even if they were not individually Christian) toward something completely different — toward a world view based upon the idea that the final reality is impersonal matter or energy shaped into its present form by impersonal chance. They have not seen that this world view has taken the place of the one that had previously dominated Northern European culture, including the United States, which was at least Christian in memory, even if the individuals were not individually Christian.

These two world views stand as totals in complete antithesis to each other in content and also in their natural results — including sociological and governmental results, and specifically including law.

It is not that these two world views are different only in how they understand the nature of reality and existence. They also inevitably produce totally different results. The operative word here is *inevitably*. It is not just that they happen to bring forth different results, but it is absolutely *inevitable* that they will bring forth different results.

Why have the Christians been so slow to understand this? There are various reasons but the central one is a defective view of Christianity. This has its roots in the Pietist movement under the leadership of P. J. Spener in the seventeenth century. Pietism began as a healthy protest against formalism and a too abstract Christianity. But it had a deficient, "platonic" spirituality. It was platonic in the sense that Pietism made a sharp division between the "spiritual" and the "material" world — giving little, or no, importance to the "material" world. The totality of human existence was not afforded a proper place. In particular it neglected the intellectual dimension of Christianity.

Christianity and spirituality were shut up to a small, isolated part of life. The totality of reality was *ignored by the pietistic thinking*. *Let me quickly say that in one sense Christians should be pietists in that Christianity is not just a set of doctrines, even the right doctrines. Every doctrine is in some way to have an effect upon our lives. But the poor side of Pietism and its resulting platonic outlook has really been a tragedy not only in many people's individual lives, but in our total culture.*

True spirituality covers all of reality. There are things the Bible tells us as absolutes which are sinful — which do not conform to the character of God. But aside from these the Lordship of Christ covers *all* of life and *all* of life equally. It is not only that true spirituality covers all of life, but it covers all parts of the spectrum of life equally. In this sense there is nothing concerning reality that is not spiritual.

Related to this, it seems to me, is the fact that many Christians do not mean what I mean when I say

Christianity is true, or Truth. They are Christians and they believe in, let us say, the truth of creation, the truth of the virgin birth, the truth of Christ's miracles, Christ's substitutionary death, and His coming again. But they stop there with these and other individual truths.

When I say Christianity is true I mean it is true to total reality—the total of what is, beginning with the central reality, the objective existence of the personal-infinite God. Christianity is not just a series of truths but Truth — Truth about all of reality. And the holding to that Truth intellectually — and then in some poor way living upon that Truth, the Truth of what is — brings forth not only certain personal results, but also governmental and legal results.

Now let's go over to the other side — to those who hold the materialistic final reality concept. They saw the complete and total difference between the two positions more quickly than Christians. There were the Huxleys, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), and many others who understood a long time ago that there are two total concepts of reality and that it was one total reality against the other and not just a set of isolated and separated differences. *The Humanist Manifesto*<sup>1</sup>, published in 1933, showed with crystal clarity their comprehension of the totality of what is involved. It was to our shame that Julian (1887-1975) and Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), and the others like them, understood much earlier than Christians that these two world views are two total concepts of reality standing in antithesis to each other. We should be utterly ashamed that this is the fact.

They understood not only that there were two totally different concepts but that they would bring forth two totally different conclusions, both for individuals and for society. What we must understand is that the two world views really do bring forth with inevitable certainty not only personal differences, but also total differences in regard to society, government, and law.

There is no way to mix these two total world views. They are separate entities that cannot be synthesized. Yet we must say that liberal theology, the very essence of it from its beginning, is an attempt to mix the two. Liberal theology tried to bring forth a mixture soon after the Enlightenment and has tried to synthesize these two views right up to our own day. But in each case when the chips are down these liberal theologians have always come down, as naturally as a ship coming into home port, on the side of the nonreligious humanist. They do this with certainty because what their liberal theology really is is humanism expressed in theological terms instead of philosophic or other terms.

## “Christianity and the Class Struggle”

By: Abraham Kuyper

[http://www.reformationalpublishingproject.com/pdf\\_books/Scanned\\_Books\\_PDF/ChristianityandtheClassStruggle.pdf](http://www.reformationalpublishingproject.com/pdf_books/Scanned_Books_PDF/ChristianityandtheClassStruggle.pdf)

This is Kuyper’s “opening address” given to the First Christian Social Congress in Amsterdam in 1891. The purpose of the Congress (and his opening speech) was “to speak among ourselves as brothers united in the name of Jesus, and to discuss seriously this question: what we as confessors of the Christ should do about the social needs of our time. This excerpt picks up at that point in which he notes, at this time in his nation’s history and the influence of the socialism and the French Revolution, Christians find themselves “placed in the rear guard.” In other words, Christians were no longer in the place of influence they once were.

We have thus been placed in the rear guard. And that not only through the leaders given us by God, but as strongly by the Socialists themselves, who constantly appeal to Christ in support of their Utopias; who continually hold before us serious mottoes from the Holy Word; indeed, they have so strongly felt the bond between the Socialist need and the Christian religion that they have not hesitated to present Christ Himself as the great prophet of Socialism, and to cry out: “there can be no talk of a failure of the Christian liberation; there lies only two milleniums between the beginning and the conclusion of the work undertaken by Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

A liberal of the old school, Adolphe Naquet, is consequently uneasy lest it be precisely Socialism which prepares new triumphs for Christianity, and reproaches the Socialist exactly for furthering the cause of religion, despite his hatred for it. “*You do the work of religion,*” he exclaims, “when you put in the foreground exactly those problems in whose solution Christianity is so closely involved.” This is an unintentional but nevertheless meaningful tribute to the influence which Christianity can exercise on the solution of the social problem. It is an influence which comes out more beautifully in

these rich words of Fichte: “Christianity conceals in its womb a much greater treasure of rejuvenation than you surmise. Until now it has exerted its power only on *the individual* and only indirectly on the state. But anyone who, as believer or as unbeliever, has been able to spy out its secret dynamic, must grant that Christianity can exert a wonderful *organizing power on society also*; and not till *this* power breaks through will the religion of the cross shine before the whole world in all the depths of its conception and in all the wealth of the blessings which it brings.”

Enough, and more than enough, has already been cited, my friends, to arouse within you the conviction that the direct relation between the social question and the Christian religion is simply *undeniable*. One even feels some shame that the voice of conscience has not thus far spoken more loudly within us, or at least that it did not stir us to earlier action. It becomes a matter of guilt and moves us to humiliation that when so crying a need became apparent, we did not long since act in the name of Jesus. And it is in this spirit of self-criticism, and not at all in a tone of haughtiness that I understand your probable reproachful question whether such an obvious truth needs demonstration in a gathering such as this, and whether standing before the awful need of these times, a need which at every point is related to the very essence of *error* and *sin*, our eye should be allowed, or should be able, to turn away from the *Christus Consolator*, who assuredly also addresses to our violently disturbed century the persistent call of His divine compassion: *Come to me*, richest century that ever was, which is so deathly weary and heavy laden, and *I shall give you rest*.

<sup>3</sup> This constant appeal of the Socialists to Christ must neither be under-estimated nor valued too highly. A double motive is at work here. First, a means of propoganda, for men know how easily they win influence as long as they appeal to Scripture. Also, that of a mistaken conviction. Some Socialists are indeed impressed by the strong contrast between the way in which Christ saw the social need and the attitude towards that need adopted through long years by many Christians . . . .



On the *essence* of this relation I shall therefore waste no more words. Rather, recognition of this is indeed the presupposition of this congress. But what you do expect of me, and what I, depending on your charitable judgment, will at least *try* to furnish, is a laying bare of the fibres by which these two life-phenomena, the Christian religion and the social question, are intertwined. The conviction that such a relation exists is not enough. It must also take on form and shape for us. Only so can it speak to our consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

To that end I select as point of departure an antithesis which is plain to all of us. I mean the antithesis between *nature* as it exists independent of our will, and our *human art* which acts on this nature. For the whole social question is born of the relation between our human life and the material world which surrounds us. But now in that human life as well as in this material world, there is on the one hand a power which lies beyond our reach and which we commonly call *nature*, and on the other hand a power derived from a man's will which may be summarily designated as *art*. We with our own human nature are placed in a nature *around* us, not to leave that nature as it is, but with an urge and calling within us to work on nature through human art, to enoble and perfect it. An example is the breeding of horses for the improvement of the strain; and so, too, the competent florist does not gather a bouquet of wild flowers, but he rather increases and refines the varieties through the mingling of seeds; so steam comes from water; and out of the dull stone the polished diamond; and so men lead the wild stream that breaks through the mountains into safer channels, to make its water serve for shipping and for irrigating their fields. Briefly, then, human art acts on every area of nature; not to destroy the life of nature, much less, mechanically to juxtapose another structure, but rather to unlock the power which lies concealed in nature; or, again, to regulate the wild power which springs from it. God so wills it. While yet in paradise man received the order "to preserve and cultivate" the material world. It was created — forgive me here the indispensable Germanism — to be "completely-perfected." Every creature, says our confession so beautifully, must serve man, so that man may serve his God. But from this it follows that this rule applies as inexorably to your own *human* life, both in its personal and its social aspects. It is renouncing your duty when you let your inner nature run its course unrestrained, and do not try to help enoble it through the holy art of "watching, praying and struggling." It is shameful for fathers and mothers to let their children grow up naturally and not to improve on nature through the art of education. And so too, it is naught but primitive barbarism whenever

human society, without higher control, is left to the course of nature. And so political art, here taken in the higher sense, intervenes, so that out of this society a *community* may develop, and so that, further, this both in itself and in its relation to the material world, may be ennobled.

If in this process *no* mistake were made, if men did *not* fall into error, and egoism and crime did *not* meanwhile interfere, then this development of human society could always follow its course in peace, and uninterruptedly move forward to a progressively happier condition. But unfortunately the situation was not so simple. True, a certain instinct in almost every people has led to the recognition of a few indispensable bases for all human society, and in this area geniuses and heroic figures have from ancient times had many a happy intuition, but as soon as it came to more *developed* regulation for this so complex phenomenon which we call human society, action after action was misdirected, as much by those who in social life patterned usage and custom as by those who acted with magistral power; and in both instances the series of misdirected actions had a two-fold unchanging cause, error and sin. Error insofar as there was ignorance as to the essence of man and his social attributes, and ignorance equally as to the laws which govern on the one hand human association and on the other, the production, distribution and use of material goods; sin, insofar as greed and ambition disturbed or opposed the sound growth of human society, whether through force or through vicious custom and unjust law, and sometimes for centuries abetted a very *cancerous* development. And in time both this error and this sin joined forces to enthrone untruthful *principles*, which did violence to our human nature; and out of these false principles to build *systems* which licensed injustice and theoretically stamped as *normal* that which was actually opposed to the demands of life.

<sup>4</sup> The error which is frequently committed is this: that men associate the Christian religion only with the world of feeling. And undoubtedly even in this respect its significance for the social question is great, insofar as incredibly much depends on the state of feeling in rich and poor, rulers and subjects, and even in the public interpreters and spokesmen. He who can contribute even a little to improve the feeling does thereby an excellent work. But it is a mutilation of the Christian religion to confine its working to the area of emotional life. It professes not only Christ, but the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and therefore it has at the head of the Creed: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth . . ." But in this there is also the explicit commitment that the Christian religion must also have and give a conviction regarding our relation to nature, authority, and fellow men; and also regarding human nature and its attributes. That is, a conviction regarding just those life-phenomena which together determine the social question.

### What is the real end game in politics?

I need to be honest. God has provoked me to think about just how God-centered my thinking about politics has been. I am thinking it has not been.

That may sound surprising, because probably friend and foe alike knew my policy views were grounded in what I will call “Biblical values.” But, for the sake of killing legislation I thought morally bad or passing legislation I thought morally good, I tried to leave God out of the legislative arguments. In light of our culture, it seemed that bringing God into the argument at any point just created hassles and objections that made the desired disposition of the legislation that much harder.

This was what I have taken some to mean by “principled persuasion,” even if that is not what they meant. I thought this was what the Apostle Paul did on Mars Hill when he used things the people generally knew, even quoting their own poets, to reason with them.

This is a good approach, but an approach to what? To what end is this approach directed?

As I have considered more fully and carefully the story of Paul on Mars Hill found in Acts 17, the Apostle’s end was to not leave those on Mars Hill in ignorance as to *why* what he said about this “big” or “transcendent” over-everything God was true. The end game was to point them to a true knowledge of the true God, what they had held “in ignorance.”

Knowing God *is* the “end game” of Christianity. Knowing God is eternal life. Knowing God is to know the glory of God. Knowing the glory of God is to see that we live only for the sake of glory of God and realizing that apart from our union with Christ we can never measure up to such a calling.

But this knowing must be externalized and directed to the only purpose that is worthy of God and does not “fall short of” His glory (Romans 3:23), namely, manifesting the “glory of the *knowledge* of God” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Not to do this is to repudiate one of the very reasons we were made in the image of God for part of what is entailed in that image is an exercise of authority in relation to the rest of creation and its further development (Genesis 1:28), recognizing, of course, it is a delegated authority and circumscribed by God for use only to His glory,

It seems to me that the end game in much of modern evangelicalism is not God but the individual person. It may be about escaping Hell to get a Heaven of pleasure (like Islam minus the 72 virgins). It may be about getting whatever will help a person cope with [name something]. It is about me, me, and me. God and salvation become strictly for the sake of the individual, not God.

And in much of conservative evangelicalism, it seems to be about “saving souls,” not the whole person, body, mind, *and* soul, a form of Christian Platonism that is fully compatible with the transgender worldview in which what is in the person’s head (a me-centered “spiritual” or psychic reality) does not need to correspond to the body. The *real* me has nothing to do with my body, and the Scripture warns us against such dualistic thinking.

Similarly, I have for too long considered the end game of politics to be the disposition of legislation in accord with a Biblical moral value. Such a result is good, but is there anything in which a Christian

(over, please)

engages for which the end game should not be coming to know God better in the process (the process of sanctification) *and* pointing others to the knowledge of God (bearing witness)?

Which of these two end games might be of most interest to God—a particular legislative outcome or a relational knowledge of God?

I do not think the answer has to be either/or because it is just possible that if legislation is addressed with the knowledge of God as the end of the process (what we say as we advocate) *and* the end of the legislation (its final disposition), then the knowledge of God in society and legislative outcomes will begin to coincide, if not immediately, then over time.

In fact, history shows that to be the case *and*, though a minority view today, I believe God will be faithful to the goal set by Himself for His Creation in Genesis 1. God never has a Plan B. The basis for the Gospel is not laid in Genesis 3:15, but in Genesis 1 and 2. Genesis 3:15 is not Plan B, but the means by which Plan A is to be brought about.

I further ask myself these questions:

Is removing or at least obscuring the “God factor” in my advocacy for a desired legislative end a form of manipulation?

Is reliance on a “principled persuasion” that says God must remain hidden a denial of the power of God to achieve whatever *His* purposes may have been by the legislation’s presentment *and* the exaltation of worldly wisdom. Why add, at the end “Oh, I believe in God,” when I have just convinced others God is not necessary?

Am I assuming that God’s purpose must be a disposition of the legislation that accords with Biblical moral values? But is this not perhaps grounded on a legalistic spirit that makes right moral values the end and purpose of Christ’s advent, life, death, resurrection, and ascension rather than the knowledge of the glory of God?

This is not to say that I no longer believe that civil law educates and influences. I still believe that there is a quantum of law reflecting a particular worldview that will influence the direction of the social order, even if many are not Christian. *And that is why Creator based societies with their Creator based views of law have to be overthrown by those who do not know God.*

In our country, it has been overthrown predominately by the U.S. Supreme Court, which, in turn, changed the nature and purpose of education, which, in turn, changed the people being educated. Then those “re-educated” persons took over the levers of political government. That is where we now are.

Then again, maybe the Supreme Court was able to jettison the Creator, because of the grief and scorn heaped upon “fundamental” Christians after the Scopes trial and our inability or unwillingness to respond intelligently. Did dualism become our escape from the world and did that produce the whirlwind we have inherited?

Finally, I ask: Should we expect to see any change in a social order that has moved away from God and moving further away every day by hiding God under our bushels? I think not.

## TESTIMONY OF DAVID FOWLER ON AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 1079

(Challenges SCOTUS' 1976 decision holding that the martial relationship could not be allowed to "interfere" with a married woman's right to abort the child she and her husband conceived, because *the state could not delegate* such a power to a husband.)

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, my name is David Fowler. I am a licensed attorney in Tennessee and am President of The Family Action Council of Tennessee and Alliance for Law and Liberty.

This bill is very simple in terms of what it proposes. If you don't believe in a God who created the universe and, in particular, man and woman, bestowed on them life and fitted them for a unique compatibility and unity we call marriage and for the consequent relation of parent and child, then vote as you please.

But I do believe those things. In other words, I believe there are moral realities we do not make up out of our own heads and, consequently, I believe it is perilous for us to ignore them.

With that as background, this bill puts before you two simple, determinative questions:

First, do you believe there is anything true or real about the nature of the relationship that comes about when a man and woman mutually commit themselves to one another in marriage. If you do, then you should vote for this bill.

Second, do you believe there is anything true or real about the nature of the relationship a married man and woman have to the human being that results from their procreative acts. If so, you should vote for this bill.

If one does not believe these relationships have any natural, intrinsic, or God-given meaning and purpose, then they are necessarily mere creations or inventions of the state and civil society, and I would concede, under this worldview, that these relationships only have such meaning as the government gives them.

Such a circumstance brings to mind Humpty Dumpty's worldview in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, "'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean— neither more nor less.'"

In Wonderland's fantasy world, the words husband and wife, mother and father, parent and child would have no meaning but for that which those in power assign to them.

But understand, this necessarily means there are no real rights and duties, privileges and responsibilities inherent in the relationship of husband and wife and parent and child.

This Wonderland philosophy is essentially that to which the U.S. Supreme Court subscribed in 1976 when it said that *the state* had no authority *to give* a married man any say in the abortion of the child he and his wife had joined together to create.

By contrast, in the world God creates, He gives meaning to what He creates and gives duties to spouses and parents. Our civil laws that require some ground for divorce, and our laws against dependency and neglect of children, are acknowledgments of these pre-existing familial truths.

If you believe as I do, then I submit the Ninth Amendment's text about the nature of rights is the constitutional authorization needed for these truths about human nature, embedded in our common law legal heritage, to be asserted and protected in state statutes.

### Testimony on House Bill 35

(Subject to zoning regulations, prohibits state and local government from prohibiting the number of persons who may gather in a person's residence or how many can attend a worship service)

My name is David Fowler. I am president of The Family Action Council of Tennessee and Alliance for Law and Liberty. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this legislation and the important principles that underlie it.

First, let me thank this Governor for not mandating restrictions on worship as other governors have.

Second, I understand why some will disagree with me.

If I believed that matter itself is ultimate reality, worship would be nonsense.

If I believed ultimate reality was an impersonal mind or spirit, as some do, then I would not know why worship would be essential or even who or what to worship.

And, finally, if I believed God were divorced from what he created, or even divorced from civil government, as some do, then what you do here is none of God's concern.

With all of these worldviews, the rights of the majority should prevail if corporate worship might work some disadvantage to them.

But I, along with many other Tennesseans, believe in a Triune God who has being in Himself, and therefore lacks nothing in Himself and is dependent on nothing outside of Himself and who therefore created all things simply for the sake of His glory and in a way that was intended to reveal His glory. As the Psalmist said, "The whole earth is full of His glory."

Thus, it would be absurd for me, as a rational *created* being, not to pay homage to the personal and eternal being who sustains my being at every moment.

However, for *me* and for those who believe with me that the crowning glory of creation was that God made human beings in His own image, then worship is about more than mere duty or obligation, but essential to human flourishing in two ways.

First, we realize that God graciously made each of us in His image in order that we might be capable of knowing God and being in fellowship with Him, it naturally draws worship from us even as a beautiful sunset naturally draws forth our praise. And second, we realize that we were

made in His image so that God could communicate to us all things pertaining to true life and godliness, 2 Peter 1:3. Thus, the worship of God is essential to human flourishing.

But, second, because the glory of God is greater than that of any one man or one woman, it is in human community that we have a fuller revelation of that glory.

Therefore, in corporate worship, those who have been joined together in Christ have a tangible view of that final and eternal state in which “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all” (Colossians 3:10-11). This, too, is part of human flourishing.

This is why I believe Jesus said we cannot live by bread alone and for those to whom the restoration of the image of God is their final end and greatest good whereby the glory of God will be seen and known as much as is possible of mere creatures, worship provides what bread cannot. As Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well, “If thou knew the gift of God, and who it is that said to you, ‘Give me to drink;’ you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water.

Amendment No. \_\_\_\_\_

<b>FILED</b>
Date _____
Time _____
Clerk _____
Comm. Amdt. _____

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Sponsor

**AMEND Senate Bill No. 494**

**House Bill No. 1079\***

by deleting all language after the caption and substituting:

WHEREAS, in *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137, 174 (1803), the Supreme Court of the United States said "it cannot be presumed that any clause in the constitution is intended to be without effect"; and

WHEREAS, the Ninth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees the people of Tennessee that the rights enumerated in the Constitution will never be "construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people"; and

WHEREAS, a source of those other rights is the common law to which the Supreme Court of the United States has looked for its interpretation of rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights and for incorporating rights in the Bill of Rights into the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States described William Blackstone as "the preeminent authority on English law for the founding generation"; and

WHEREAS, Blackstone in his magisterial treatise *Commentaries on the Law of England*, after discussing "the rights and duties of persons, as standing in the public relations of magistrates and people" came next to "consider their rights and duties in private economical relations," which he described as the great relations in private life as being:

1. That of master and servant, which is founded in convenience whereby a man is directed to call on the assistance of others where his own skill and labor will not be sufficient to answer the cares incumbent upon him;



0767391703



\*005811\*



2. That of husband and wife, which is founded in nature but modified by civil society, the one directing man to continue and multiply his species and the other prescribing the manner in which that natural impulse must be confined and regulated;

3. That of parent and child, which is consequential to that of marriage, being its principal end and design and it is by virtue of this relation that infants are protected, maintained, and educated; and

4. Since the parents, on whom this care is primarily incumbent, may be snatched away by death before they have completed their duty, that of guardian and ward, which is a kind of artificial parentage in order to supply the deficiency, whenever it happens, of the natural; and

WHEREAS, the common law acknowledged that rights and duties arise naturally in the mutuality of commitment to one another inherent in the marital relationship between a man and a woman and, as between them, arise naturally with respect to the children "consequential to that of marriage" underived from any enacted law; and

WHEREAS, there are also natural and common law rights and duties owed by the parents to a child consequential of their marriage; and

WHEREAS, the aforesaid real and natural rights and duties attendant to a marital relationship between a man and a woman and their recognition and protection are among the "other rights" retained by the people of Tennessee pursuant to the Ninth Amendment; and

WHEREAS, no power to regulate the marital relationship between one man and one woman or between a child and the child's two biological parents is "delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States," such power is "reserved to the States respectively, or to the people" by the Tenth Amendment; and

WHEREAS, and notwithstanding the foregoing, the Supreme Court of the United States in *Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth*, 428 U.S. 52 (1976) opined that "the marital couple is not an independent entity with a mind and heart of its own, but an association

of two individuals each with a separate intellectual and emotional makeup. If the right of privacy means anything, it is the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child"; and

WHEREAS, on the basis of this atomistic view of humanity and the marital relationship in particular, the Court in *Danforth* held that a state law requiring a husband's consent as a precondition of his wife's abortion is an unconstitutional invasion of the individual woman's ostensibly singular decision to end the life of her preborn child; and

WHEREAS, the majority in *Danforth* stated "the State cannot 'delegate to a spouse a veto power which the state itself is absolutely and totally prohibited from exercising during the first trimester of pregnancy.' [citation omitted] Clearly, since the State cannot regulate or proscribe abortion during the first stage, when the physician and his patient make that decision, the State cannot delegate authority to any particular person, even the spouse, to prevent abortion during that same period"; and

WHEREAS, the *Danforth* Court assumed without explanation or authority a purely statist view of the marital relationship between a man and woman, and of the relationship of the married parents to their child, whereby any and all rights, duties, and privileges possessed by persons in a marital relationship and their parent-child relationship exist only upon delegation to them from the State; and

WHEREAS, the *Danforth* Court's view of marriage is contrary to the understanding of the source and nature of the marital relationship recognized at common law and as acknowledged in *Meister v. Moore*, 96 U.S. 76 (1877), wherein the Supreme Court of the United States stated "[i]n formal marriage by contract per verba de praesenti . . . constitutes a marriage at common law there can be no doubt, in view of the adjudications made in this country, from its earliest settlement to the present day. Marriage is everywhere regarded as a civil contract. Statutes in many of the States, it is true, regulate the mode of entering into the contract, but they do not confer the right"; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States has never ruled that marriage between one man and one woman is not a real and natural relationship that exists apart from positive law; and

WHEREAS, in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644, 135 S. Ct. 2584 (2015), the Supreme Court of the United States addressed itself exclusively to the legislative licensure of civil marriage, and did not, and did not pretend to have the authority to, eradicate, alter, or modify the pre-legal and thus natural institution of marriage between a man and woman—whose conjugal relationship is that through which children come into existence—acknowledged in human civilization throughout time and not conceivably subject to elimination by a local constitutional amendment contingently appearing in our nation in the nineteenth century and which in no way and presenting no specious aspiration purported to deny human realities universally acknowledged and practiced throughout history; and

WHEREAS, with these words from Article XI, Section 18 of the Constitution of Tennessee, in 2006, the voters of Tennessee overwhelmingly recognized and revived the common law understanding of marriage in Tennessee:

The historical institution and legal contract solemnizing the relationship of one man and one woman shall be the only legally recognized marital contract in this state. Any policy or law or judicial interpretation, purporting to define marriage as anything other than the historical institution and legal contract between one man and one woman, is contrary to the public policy of this state and shall be void and unenforceable in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the *Meister* decision and the Constitution of Tennessee recognize and affirm the marital relationship between a man and a woman and the existence of obligations related to that relationship that are antecedent to any enacted law or judicial decision, and these authorities acknowledge the marital relationship as one that legislators and judges do not originate but only coordinate; and

WHEREAS, the dictum in *Danforth* treated the marital relationship as one having no meaning or prerogatives except those bestowed by government determination and did not consider and was not required to consider the nature of the marital relationship recognized by the common law, *Meister v. Moore*, and the Constitution of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the natural and customary rights and duties of marriage are not derived from any delegation made to them by the state; and

WHEREAS, the legislature has a duty to specify and protect those "other rights" reserved by the Ninth Amendment to the people of Tennessee and, pursuant to the Tenth Amendment, has the power to do so; and

WHEREAS, the *Danforth* Court created an "unwarranted government intrusion into" the mutuality of obligations and unity inherent in the marital relation as recognized at common law for the sake of the Supreme Court's removal of impediments to wives aborting marital children, and this judicial interference violates the rights inherent in the mutuality and unity that exists in the marital relationship between a man and woman and retained by the people of Tennessee in accordance with the Ninth Amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States has never adjudicated the provisions of the Ninth Amendment and never adjudicated the relationship between the Ninth and Fourteenth Amendments; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, Chapter 15, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) The general assembly finds:

(1) A mutuality of commitment between one (1) man and one (1) woman is inherent in the marital relationship between the man and the woman and creates a unity between the man and woman underived from any civil law;

(2) The mutuality of commitment between one (1) man and one (1) woman in a marital relationship and the unity entailed therein should be protected

from unwarranted intrusion by civil government that destroys by its own actions that mutuality and unity;

(3) The right of persons under the due process clause in the fifth and fourteenth amendments is predicated on the common law right of every person to personal security which includes the right to life;

(4) The word "person" in the constitution of the United States is not exhausted by the description of certain rights belonging to certain categories of persons enumerated in the constitution and the amendments thereto;

(5) Rights are inherent to the relationship between a child and the child's parents that do not arise only after the birth of the child, and certain duties are inherently owed by both biological parents to the child who is a consequence of the parents' marital relationship, and these duties do not arise only after the birth of the child;

(6) The right to life of the unborn child who is a consequence of the marital relationship between one (1) man and one (1) woman, and that child's right to the protection of the child's life by the child's married mother and father, are extinguished when civil government deems the child's father immaterial to the marital relationship and severs the relationship between the child and the married father;

(7) The ninth amendment guarantees to the people of Tennessee that the rights the people held at common law and that are inherent in the marital relationship between a man and woman would not be denied or disparaged by a misconstruction of enumerated rights;

(8) The ninth amendment guarantees to the people of Tennessee that the rights a married man and father held at common law would not be denied or disparaged by a misconstruction of enumerated rights;

(9) No power to regulate the marital relationship between one (1) man and one (1) woman or between a child and the child's two (2) biological parents, was "delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States"; and

(10) An abortion provider has no legally cognizable interest in mutuality of commitment and unity existing in the marital relationship between a man and woman.

(b) Except in a medical emergency that prevents compliance with this subsection (b), a person shall not perform or induce, or attempt to perform or induce, an abortion upon a pregnant woman who the person knows or reasonably should know is, at that time, married to the father of the pregnant woman's unborn child, without the written consent of the father. A violation of this subsection (b) is a Class C felony.

(c) Subsection (b) does not apply if an action for legal separation or divorce has been filed by the husband of the pregnant woman and is pending before the judicial branch, or if the husband of the pregnant woman is at that time subject to a protective order in favor of the pregnant woman.

(d) The signed consent of the husband of the pregnant woman must be retained by the person for a period of at least one (1) year. Failure of the person performing, inducing, or attempting to perform or induce the abortion to obtain or retain the documentation and consent for a period of one (1) year is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine only, unless the failure of the person performing the abortion to obtain the required documentation was due to a bona fide and documented medical emergency, in which case there is no violation.

(e) A person commits a Class A misdemeanor who impersonates the pregnant woman's husband or, if the person is the pregnant woman's husband, the person knowingly or with reckless disregard for the truth makes a false statement as to the

person's biological relationship to the child for the purpose of conspiring to violate subsection (b).

(f) In any judicial proceeding to determine the constitutionality of the provisions of this section relative to the rights of a married father or relative to the rights owed by a married father to the father's child, the married father shall have legal standing to assert those rights as a matter of due process of law.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

## **The Right of States Legislatures to Ban Abortion is in the Ninth Amendment.**

By David E. Fowler, Esq.

The late U.S. Circuit of Appeals Judge Robert Bork once famously said that the Ninth Amendment was an “inkblot.”

It is true, as Justice Amy Coney Barrett said during her confirmation hearings, that the U.S. Supreme Court has never opined on the Ninth Amendment’s meaning. But that does not suggest its meaning is unclear.

When the amendment’s text is understood in terms of its public meaning at the time of its ratification—an interpretative approach approved by a majority of justices now on the Supreme Court—its authorization for States to ban abortion is clear. The Fourteenth Amendment did not change that.

### **What is the Ninth Amendment?**

The Ninth Amendment reads as follows: “The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.” Without even putting these words in any historical legal context, we can draw some conclusions.

First, it means we have more rights than those enumerated in the first eight amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights. There are “others” beyond those enumerated.

Second, our rights do not originate with the Constitution. They are based on something outside of and preceding it. The Constitution merely enumerates certain of those rights.

Third, the unenumerated other rights “retained by the people” obviously also derive from a source outside the Constitution. The text’s discussion of “rights”—be they enumerated or retained—implies that the rights share a common source among them.

Fourth, the preceding point suggests that the enumerated rights were intended to carry forward the meaning they had under the source of law from which they derive.

These latter two points require further explanation. To say there are “certain rights” that are “enumerated” and “other” rights that are “retained,” bespeaks a common group divided only by whether they appear in the Constitution’s text. Any suggestion to the contrary would be a strained construction of the sentence, having no textual warrant.



## **Where are these ‘other rights’ to be found?**

Since we have rights other than those that are enumerated, the natural question is where those rights are to be found. They are found in the common law. This is the source of law to which the U.S. Supreme Court routinely looks when interpreting enumerated rights and when deciding whether a common law right enumerated in the Bill of Rights—such as the right bear arms or the right to jury trial—should be “incorporated” into the Fourteenth Amendment’s Due Process Clause to prohibit States from infringing them.

## **What are these ‘other rights’?**

How to identify the other rights is the sixty-four-million-dollar question, and this is where historical context comes in. At common law and to our Founding Fathers these other rights would at least contain the three rights that were considered so fundamental that abridgement of any one of them was considered an act of injustice and government oppression: the right of personal security (which included protection of one’s life, limb, and reputation), liberty, and property.

In fact, these three fundamental rights at common law were considered “absolute” in the sense that they were part of the nature of things and thus did not arise from mere social convention or convenience. They were God-given, you could say.

These three rights were so fundamental that no person could be “deprived” of them “without due process of law,” as stated in the Due Process clauses in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.

## **Where are these three fundamental rights ‘enumerated’ in the Constitution?**

The three fundamental rights at common law are not enumerated as rights in the Due Process clauses. Of course, the due process clauses assume and are predicated on the existence of those three fundamental rights. But the due process clauses only “enumerate” the requirement that a certain kind of process be had according to law before the government may deny or diminish one’s life, liberty, or property.

There are other rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights that are themselves predicated on the three absolute rights at common law. For instance, the Second Amendment right to bear arms serves to protect one’s life, liberty, and property. The Fourth Amendment right against unlawful searches and seizures countenances a person’s right to enjoyment of property. Yet the three fundamental rights at common law are not themselves enumerated anywhere in the Constitution or Bill of Rights.

Is their absence of enumeration a cause to deny their existence? No. Apart from their existence, there is no foundation or background for the rights that were enumerated, and no one would have any *real* reason to complain about government elimination of persons' life, liberty, and property.

Moreover, a person cannot be deprived of these rights by the private acts of other persons, which explains laws against murder, theft, and the life. If these three absolute rights did not exist, we would have no logical basis upon which to object to their diminution or denial by others either. However, because each of us possesses these three absolute rights, each of us owes a corresponding duty to others not to deprive them of these rights.

This, then, has implications for those in civil government. They have a duty to protect all persons in the enjoyment of these rights from the acts of others. Yet, the rights themselves are inalienable, and for that reason they are retained by the people.

Denying the abiding inalienable existence of these three fundamental rights—whether by direct acts of civil government or by private persons—was precisely the point of the Ninth Amendment: the “enumeration of rights” cannot be “construed to deny or disparage” the fundamental rights at common law, *not enumerated*, that the people “retained” for themselves.

Thus, for the U.S. Supreme Court to “interpret” an enumerated right, like the Due Process Clauses, to mandate the legally unimpeded killing of unborn children repudiates a fundamental common law right to life. The Supreme Court thereby falsely construes the enumerated right of due process in defiance of the retained, unenumerated common law right to life recognized by the Ninth Amendment.

Because the three fundamental rights at common law were “retained by the people,” the people of the United States and of the several States, the Supreme Court cannot take them away from the people. It would be akin to stealing.

Unfortunately, the people and the States can and do act as if they do not retain these rights, and thus permit the Court to ignore the Ninth Amendment and foist upon the States and people a false-to-the-Constitution interpretation of the Due Process Clause. We've been doing that for 47 years.

### **But the unborn aren't 'persons' under the U.S. Constitution, right?**

Denying constitutional personhood to the unborn is a common resort by abortion proponents and prolife lawyers alike, each unfamiliar with the common law and the Ninth Amendment. Both are wrong. William Blackstone, described by the United States Supreme Court as “the preeminent

authority on English law for the founding generation,” wrote that in the common law “the unborn in the mother’s womb, is supposed in law to be born for many purposes.”

Was that understanding of the person at common law abandoned by the ratifiers of the Ninth Amendment? Nothing in the text of the amendment would lead to that conclusion. In fact, even in *Roe*, the Court noted that the unborn have property rights that can be protected in Court by a guardian *ad litem*.

More importantly, since the three absolute rights at common law were “retained by the people,” the people have the power to specify and to apply them in such manner as they think best protects those rights. States’ power to do so is found in the Tenth Amendment, which says that the “powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.”

Since the Ninth Amendment means that the fundamental rights to life, liberty, and property were “retained by the people,” no power over them was “delegated to the United States by the Constitution” in any absolute sense. Therefore, the States through common law adjudications or legislation can apply those rights as fitting to their respective jurisdictions.

### **But didn’t the Fourteenth Amendment change all that?**

There is nothing in the text of the Fourteenth Amendment that repeals the Ninth Amendment and its conception of rights, or abolishes the three fundamental rights at common law, or transfers plenary jurisdiction over these rights to the federal government or the Supreme Court.

Moreover, by prohibiting states from denying any person procedural due process in regard to any deprivation of the three absolute rights at common law or denying them equal protection of the laws, the Fourteenth Amendment made *even more secure* the “denial or disparagement” of those rights “retained by the people” through the Ninth Amendment. Abortion proponents would have to rebut both points before the Ninth Amendment could reasonably be described as an inkblot.

Moreover, as to the Supreme Court’s use of the Fourteenth Amendment to prohibit State laws against abortion: Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment gives the power to enforce its prohibitions to Congress, not the judiciary.

Not long after the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified, in *Ex Parte Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court said “[a]ll of the [civil war] amendments derive much of their force from this latter provision,” Section 5.

The Court further explained the text of the Fourteenth Amendment:

It is not said the judicial power of the general government shall extend to enforcing the prohibitions and to protecting the rights and immunities guaranteed. It is not said that branch of the government shall be authorized to declare void any action of a State in violation of the prohibitions. It is the power of Congress which has been enlarged. Congress is authorized to enforce the prohibitions by appropriate legislation. Some legislation is contemplated to make the amendments fully effective.

*Ex Parte Virginia* thus condemns any use of the federal judicial power *to invent* and *then* enforce new, substantive rights through substantive due process.

So, state legislatures, exercise the legitimate constitutional powers you possess to fulfill your *duty* to secure to all persons in your state—including the unborn—their fundamental right to life. And do so by specifically relying on the Ninth and Tenth amendments.

Make the Supreme Court confront the long-neglected Ninth Amendment that was written specifically to preserve common law rights and liberties and ensure State-based representative self-government. It is time for the people, through their State representatives, to reclaim the rights and duties that the Supreme Court has baselessly told them are no longer theirs.

© David E. Fowler, April 2021

Appendix 2

Protecting Unborn 'Life' Through the Ninth & 5<sup>th</sup> Amendments & Creating a Conflict with SCOTUS's 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment 'Liberty' Jurisprudence

Start Here

9<sup>th</sup> Amendment

"The enumeration ... of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage **other rights** retained by the people."

"The interpretation of the Constitution of the United States is necessarily influenced by the fact that its provisions are framed in the language of the English common law, and are to be read in the light of its history." *Smith v. Alabama* (1888)

"The natural life,' says Blackstone, 'cannot legally be disposed of or destroyed **by any individual**, neither by the person himself, nor by any other of his fellow creatures, **merely upon their own authority.**' 1 Blackstone Com." 133. *Hopt v. Territory of Utah* (1884)

"An infant *in ventre sa mere*, or in the mother's womb, is **supposed in law to be born for many purposes.**" Blackstone

5<sup>th</sup> Amendment

"No **person** shall be ... deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."

"The **Bill of Rights** originally applied **only** to the Federal Government, not to the States." *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (2010)

"Due process of law in the [5<sup>th</sup> Amendment] refers to that law of the land which derives its authority from the legislative powers conferred upon Congress by the Constitution of the United States, and interpreted according to the principles of the common law." *Hurtado v. California* (1884)

Person

Life

Liberty

14<sup>th</sup> Amendment

"No state shall ... deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

"In the late 19th century, the Court began to hold that the Due Process Clause prohibits the States from infringing **Bill of Rights** protections. See, e.g., *Hurtado v. California*." *McDonald v. City of Chicago*

Life

Liberty

Constitutional protection of the woman's decision to terminate her pregnancy derives from the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. It declares that no State shall "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." The controlling word in the cases before us is "liberty."

**Conflict Between Common Law "life" under 9<sup>th</sup> and "life" in 5<sup>th</sup>, which must equal "life" in the 14<sup>th</sup>, and Casey's "liberty"**

## Word War, World War

[HTTPS://WWW.THEPUBLICDISCOURSE.COM/2019/09/56717/](https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2019/09/56717/)  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2019 BY ALAN MCLAUGHLIN

To capitulate on pronouns is not an act of charity. It is rather the total surrender of the world, in a word.

---

In today's public communication climate, something as quotidian and unimpeachable as calling a girl "she" constitutes an invitation for legions of enforcers to descend in wrath upon the erring speaker. The sexual revolution's assaults on the ethic and integrity of the social order are matched by the uncivil methods it employs to upend the community's normative vocabulary.

Words anchor a culture. They are the depository for the wisdom and observation of generations. A community is found, and its world is expressed, through its language. To destroy its patrimony requires that its vocabulary be abducted. Chesterton—with reason—suggested that words are the only things worth fighting about. Nietzsche, partly right, wrote that unspeakably more depends on what things are called than on what they are.

### From "Child" to "Fetus"

It is particular to our time of upheaval that a pregnant woman officially carries a fetus rather than a child. The word "fetus" has served powerfully to reorient our legal-constitutional system and public moral culture. From dimensions personal to jurisprudential, fetus soothes and justifies.

In 2006, I was in the courtroom of the United States Supreme Court during oral arguments treating the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. Solicitor General Paul Clement was arguing in defense of that statute, and at one point he denominated the child subject to the abortionist's lethal ministrations a "child."

General Clement: "the issue is to whether [the abortion is] going to be performed in utero, or when the child is more than halfway outside of the womb. And that of course ..."

Justice Stevens interrupted him.

Justice Stevens: "The *fetus* is more than half-way out."

General Clement: "I'm sorry?"

Justice Stevens: "Whether the *fetus* is more than half-way out. And some of these fetuses I understand in the procedure are only four or five inches long. They're very different from fully formed babies."

Justice Scalia evidently could not resist:

Justice Scalia: "When it's half-way out I guess you could call it either a child or a fetus. It's sort of half and half, isn't it."

General Clement went on to urge that “nothing turns on the terminology” one might use to describe the circumstance. This point was true enough, with respect to understanding the statute’s operation. But Justice Stevens did not interrupt and reprove the Solicitor General for his word choice because it impeded understanding of the congressional act. Rather, Justice Stevens was restoring to its throne the word that rules and sustains the *Roe* empire.

An abortionist does not kill a child; he eliminates a fetus. Behind the shroud of this consoling distinction has been carried out the slaughter of millions. In its 2016 opinion in *Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt*, the Supreme Court majority quoted approvingly—and without a whiff of irony—the district court’s finding that “abortion in Texas was extremely safe with particularly low rates of serious complications and virtually no deaths occurring on account of the procedure.”

“Fetus” as a legal-cultural placeholder anchors *Roe*’s subversive anthropology. On its terms, maternal nurturing is not intrinsic to womanhood. Instead, the reigning legal default deems pregnancy an invasion and a presumptive impediment to fulfilling superior and defining life priorities. A particular woman’s private and idiosyncratic wish may be to gestate offspring. But for her public identity, defined in constitutional case law, she is presumed in non-relation to a fetal presence, and thus without responsibility toward it. Such a relation and responsibility can only come into being by her affirmative election.

*Roe* thereby has redefined motherhood from a natural and public fact to a private option. This purports to serve the cause of liberation. In fact, it ensures the opposite, for it relocates the meaning and relationality of human persons from immutable nature to court-guarded, contingent selection. The family therefore is not a reality of creation or a radical aspect and expression of human identity, but a construct of choice ultimately beholden to the coercive agencies that create and regulate it.

As with the fetus, then, the natural family has become expendable—though the latter’s demise has taken longer to recognize, being a matter of legal rather than physical disappearance. But more recent political captures (including the redefinition of marriage, the associated and evolving replacement of natural mother and father with contractual “parent,” and the precarious prospects of even “male” and “female”) have elaborated and clarified the logic. In all events, the battle is pitched in the field of *words*.

### **Transgenderism vs. Logic and Law**

This battle of words finds an expression of unprecedented belligerence in the transgenderism campaign. The trans heist of pronouns and other sex-referent vocabulary is calculated to eliminate descriptions of the real world by absconding with the words required to portray and express it. The trans program’s boundless ambition is seen in its implicit condemnation of the entirety of human civilization and its oeuvre of song and literature, its law and social practice, and all the dictionaries.

It similarly lays waste the counsels of logic. A few months ago, a court in British Columbia notoriously ruled against a father who had sought an injunction that would forbid doctors to inject his fourteen-year-old daughter with synthetic male hormones. The court described as follows the father's objection to the medical abuse of his daughter: "A.B.'s father is opposed to the commencement of hormone treatment for his son at this time."

The court's misuse of *son* notably still intends to stand for a person in relation to a father and mother. But how could it? It is incongruous to assert that physiology can be erased from legal valence and public vocabulary yet all of its dependencies remain intact and unaffected.

In calling the father's daughter his "son," the judge might as well have called the father his daughter's mother, or—why not?—called the daughter her father's father. Once daughter and son, male and female are ratified in law and language as disembodied personal selections, family structure with its reproductive relations collapses into a bedlam unspeakable. Lost is the notion of paradigmatic physical realities and any words to articulate them. The court's aim to discard "daughter" yet preserve "father" illustrates the incoherence plaguing trans ideologues with their characteristic half-use of the real world they endeavor to erase.

Predictably, the court went on to order the father to submit to the new trans vocabulary, forbidding him to speak to or about his daughter using her given name, or otherwise use words that would identify her as a female or as his daughter. And, in a fitting conclusion, the court ruled the child authorized to pursue unimpeded a new legal name and male legal status, and that her (or "his"—as the judge wrote) mother and father (whatever those words now mean) may not interfere with these public acts of symbolic self-generation hereafter pursued by the fourteen-year-old monad they may no longer call daughter.

Under trans ideology, the family as natural institution is finished. Whatever remains of its traditional form (now empty of public reasons for its existence) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the state, whose chief regulatory function is to enable its constituents to escape and defy what once were the family's protective authorities of belonging and relatedness.

### **The Mother of All Error**

Recently, courts have been assigning paternity status to women. State law historically and uniformly set forth the evidentiary presumption that a man is the natural father of a child born to his wife. But because of the commerce of sperm banks, the redefinition of marriage to include a relation of two women, and the progressive discernment that legal fairness requires stipulating the irrelevance of sexual differences and their properties (except as commodities for purchase), courts have discovered that the statutory terms "man" and "father" just as well mean "woman" and "mother." "Paternity," therefore, is to be redefined as an androgynous caretaking role just as well handled by a female genetic stranger ("mother"). Fair-minded children surely will not notice a difference, anyway. One nice, judge-approved adult functionary is as good as any other.

Centuries ago, Richard Hooker wrote that to treat in language those things that are in fact different as if they were the same is "the mother of all error." He presumably did not anticipate



that his employment of that maternal metaphor would ensure his indictment itself would lose its intended sense upon arrival of a consummate case of the error he decries. In the *Obergefell* and trans era, *mother* as a paradigm no longer describes a woman's generative and gestating relation to offspring, but must now denote an interchangeable state-appointed custodial superintendent. Fittingly, Hooker's cautionary advice loses its meaning at the very moment its vindication is epitomized.

Upon converting words of male and female significance into markers for selectable states of mind without physical referent, the innovators posit a new humanity. They have imagined away the organic community of familial persons and removed it from language, to be replaced by an aggregate of self-defining ghostly units contractually clustering. To paraphrase Isaiah, they have given birth to wind. The new person is loosed from relational physicality into the ether of abstraction. Vanquished is the family web of derivation, relation, and connective permanence. We are now radically alone.

Once bodies are shorn from identity and deemed silent on personal classification, there can no longer remain male or female, he or she. The affront in the vocabulary hijacking project is that words of identity marking what is immutable, momentous, public, and visible (the sex of persons) are inverted to mark instead what is mutable, mundane, private, and invisible (the desires of persons). When pronouns are transmuted into a proprietary feature of individuality, "she" can no longer designate a category, as there are no points of apparent commonality among those who would choose to affiliate with that now-emptied word no longer referring to a physical form. Once a wish supplants the thing wished for, the wish itself (now bereft of its object) dissolves. And when such a wish defines human identity, it is *we* who dissolve. C.S. Lewis succinctly described the dynamic, and the futility, of this sort of project: "It is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower."

The essence of the transgender ideology revolt is a human fade into meaninglessness. Its medical and linguistic crimes are enactments of the ideal nothingness into which it consigns us all, by definition. To capitulate on pronouns is not an act of charity. It is rather the total surrender of the world, in a word.

# The Foundational Command: "Subdue the Earth!"

by Dr. A. M. Wolters

Summer, 1973

Many of us here have been taught that there is such a thing as a "cultural mandate," and that this expression refers to Genesis 1:28, where we read that God says to the first man and woman: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it."

I am not sure, however, whether we always realize the significance of the *context* of this mandate. I believe that the context in this case is very instructive.

I need not belabor the point that quoting out of context is almost always, to a greater or lesser degree, a doing-violence to the meaning of the speaker or writer. On this score I think we Christians often sin grievously, and consequently often obscure completely the meaning and force of God's words to us.

For my present purposes I am going to distinguish three contexts of the cultural mandate (actually four, but I shall deal with the first two together.)

The *immediate* context is the story of creation—the six days of God's creative work as related in Genesis 1, and the concluding seventh day of God's rest. The account of this creation "week" (Gen. 1:1-2:3) forms a clearly marked-off literary whole, which is plainly meant to be understood as a unit.

The pattern of Genesis 1 is familiar to us. After the opening grand statement that God created both the heavens and the earth, the writer proceeds to restrict himself to the "earth" (i.e. the earthly cosmos which is man's home, as opposed to heaven as God's dwelling-place) and pictures how this earth was at first a dark, watery mass, with God's Spirit "hovering" (i.e. poised for creative action) over it. The writer here describes how God, through a succession of eight mighty creative Words, brought out of that undifferentiated earth-mass the whole range of created variety. First the darkness is flanked by light, and the alternation of day and night appears. Then the creation of the firmament brings about the separation of waters above and below. Next the lower waters are further differentiated into sea and dry land, and the dry land (now called "earth" in a narrower sense) is clothed with vegetation. Then, on the fourth day, God begins to populate the three major regions into which he has now divided the primordial earth-mass (seas, land, and sky) by creating the lights of heaven. The next day he fills the seas and sky with fish and fowl, and finally, on the climactic sixth day, he creates the inhabitants of the dry land: all the many species of land animals and the solitary man and woman of the human race, whom God has made to look like himself. When this is completed, and the human pair have been given their instructions, God's work is over, and on the seventh day he sits back and rests. The stage is set for history.

From this rough sketch of the first (and fundamental) chapter of the Bible it is clear, I think, that there is a concentration of meaning and importance on the sixth day. After the first five days—in which, as it were, the lights and props and scenery of the stage are provided—we see on the sixth day that the divine Stage-director introduces the hero and heroine of the drama, gives them their cue, and withdraws from the work of preparation to rest. It is now up to the actors to do their part. It is clear that, if we are to understand the meaning of the ensuing drama, it is extremely important to know how the actors have been introduced, and to know what their cue is. The story of the

sixth day gives us a clear answer: the actors are introduced as God's "image-bearers", and their cue is the so-called "cultural mandate".

Let's look a little closer at the passage involved. After the creation of the land animals, the creation story continues:

"And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

What strikes us about this account of the sixth day (or rather, of the eighth mighty Word of creation) is that it breaks with the pattern of the previous days. It does not say, "And God said, let there be man. And it was so." No, for this, the eighth and final creative Word, the pattern changes. We are now told that God first formulated his *plan* for the creation of man (vs. 26), and then how he executed that plan (vs. 28). He says in effect, "Let us make man to be our image and to have dominion," and then proceeds to make man in fact his image and to command him to have dominion. We should note, therefore, *that this command to have dominion and subdue the earth, this so-called "cultural mandate," is part of the execution of God's plan for man in that final Word of creation with which he completes his work. Moreover, that this mandate is very closely connected in God's plan with man as the image of God.*

We are saying, therefore, that the sense of the passage we just read is concentrated in the two fundamental ideas of "dominion" and "image," and that these two ideas are closely related. All parts of this significant passage converge upon these two foci. This also applies to the command to be *fruitful* and multiply. This command is also given to the fish and fowl on the third day, and it is not mentioned in God's initial announcement of his plan, so that it must be taken to *lead up to* the specifically human task of subduing the earth. It is part of a purposive series: man is to be fruitful *in order to* multiply, he must multiply *in order to* fill the earth, and he must fill the earth *in order to* subdue it. The point is that man is to proliferate so as to deploy a *taskforce* over all the earth.

There is also a close connection between the command to have dominion and man's nature as *image* of God. To be created in the image of God means that man bears a resemblance to God, shows what God is like. There are many dimensions to this likeness of man to God—the New Testament explicitly mentions righteousness, holiness, and knowledge—but in the present context it has to do with *lordship*. God as creator is sovereign *Lord* over the works of his hands; so man, too, is in a derived sense to be lord of creation. The connection in the text between image and dominion is quite explicit: "Let us make man in our image ... and let them have dominion." In fact, a more idiomatic translation of the Hebrew paratactic style is that of the *Dutch Nieuwe* which has: "Let us make man in our image ... *in order that* they may have dominion." We find the same connection made in Psalm 8: "Thou has made him (i.e. man) little less than God... Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet." To be like God, to bear his likeness, means to subdue the earth.

The upshot, then, of our taking the "cultural mandate" in its immediate context, is that it is the climax and focus of God's creative work. Everything in this opening section of the Bible—the works of the previous days, man as God's image, the command to multiply, the cessation of God's work immediately afterwards—

everything converges to highlight the importance of that one fundamental command given to mankind: "Subdue the earth!"

But there is more than the immediate context. The command to subdue the earth also stands in the wider context of the book of Genesis as a whole. That first section of the seven days of creation is only the preamble of the story which Genesis has to tell. The writer of Genesis has given a very definite structure to the book, and in that structure the creation story clearly fulfills the function of *prologue* for what is to come. It is very plain from the way Genesis continues after 2:4 that this prologue is meant as the *setting-of-the-stage for world history*. Let me just mention a few indications which point in this direction.

The book of Genesis breaks down into eleven sections: the Prologue with which we have just dealt, and ten further sections. The beginning of each of these ten sections is marked by the significant phrase "these are the generations of." The first section, immediately after the Prologue, begins, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth once they had been created," and there follows the story of the garden of Eden and the fall into sin. The other nine sections are introduced as the "generations" respectively of:

- Adam (5:1)
- Noah (6:9)
- the sons of Noah (10:1)
- Shem (11:10)
- Terah (11:27)
- Ishmael (25:12)
- Isaac (25:19)
- Esau (36:1)
- Jacob (37:2)

This is the framework, the basic outline of the book of Genesis.

We should note parenthetically that this list shows a certain pattern: beginning from a cosmic scope (the heavens and the earth), through the account of the origin and dispersion of all the world's peoples in "the generations of the sons of Noah" (which includes the story of the tower of Babel), the lens of the story zeroes in on the line among the Semites which leads directly to Terah and his migration away from Ur of the Chaldees: the beginning of the history of God's covenant people. The focus of Genesis becomes the election-in-history, from among all the nations of the world, of God's chosen people, and is therefore the world-historical placing-in-perspective of the history of redemption.

But what does this recurring phrase "the generations of" mean? The Hebrew word is *toledoth* from the root *yalad*, which means "to beget" or "give birth to". The root-meaning of *toledoth* is therefore "begettings." But its use in Genesis shows that *toledoth* has a much wider meaning as well: it refers to what developed (genealogically and historically) out of such-and-such. For example, the account of the "generations" (*toledoth*) of the sons of Noah (Genesis 10 and 11) gives not only extensive genealogies, but it looks upon the descendants it lists as primarily *bearers of history*, so that these "generations" include the rise of historically significant nations and the world-historical turning point of the confusion at Babel. As a rough-and-ready translation, therefore, we can say that *toledoth* means "historical developments", with an emphasis on the genealogical.

Now how does this bear upon the context of the mandate to subdue the earth. It shows us that this mandate is significantly given just before the point where the

account of the history of the peoples of the world begins. No sooner has God finished his creation by giving this mandate, and rested on the seventh day, than the Bible continues (Gen. 2:4): "Now the following are the 'generations' (i.e. the historical developments arising out of) the heavens and the earth once they were created." It is in this light that we must see the story of the garden of Eden, and also the story of the Fall. In this immediate sequel to the command to subdue the earth it is made plain what this concretely means—namely to dress and keep the garden—and how man was unfaithful in the fulfillment of his task. It is important to keep in mind as we read the rest of Genesis that the author is recounting how man responds to the command to fill the earth and so subdue it. This accounts, I believe, for the references to Abel and Cain as shepherd and farmer, respectively. It accounts for the explicit mention of the sons of Lamech and their great cultural advances in technology and music, which shows that man's historical task is not changed after the fall, even in disobedience. The story of Babel is also to be read in this light: on the one hand the refusal to spread out (that is, not to "fill the earth") and on the other hand the specific mention of the invention of brick-making which made city-building possible.

It is a mistake, therefore, to view Genesis 2:4ff. as a "second account of creation," as is commonly done. There is only one account of creation, culminating in the command to subdue the earth. This is the backdrop, the foundation, the indispensable presupposition of all that follows. To repeat our earlier imagery, it is the stage which is set for the ensuing drama. Then, in the following chapters, explicitly introduced as the historical development ("generations") of this created scheme of things, we get the first act of the drama. To be sure, the author employs something of a flashback technique in the first act; in his focusing on the story of Adam (i.e. "Man") as the protagonist of the play, and goes back to recount details which were not mentioned, or not worked out, in the initial prologue (the creation of woman, for instance), but it is not at all a creation story: it presupposes the six-day creation of heaven and earth, and especially the final command given to man. What it does do is *explicate* that command, showing that it means such things as filling the ground, dressing and keeping the garden and naming animals. It is the historical outworking of the great task assigned to mankind, the execution in detail of the "cultural mandate."

There is much more that could be said, but the point, I think, is clear: within the context of the book of Genesis as a whole, the cultural mandate stands as the first and fundamental law of history. Together with the idea of the image of God, it sums up—in the context of the whole scope of the world-wide history of mankind—the place and task of man.

Yet there is still another context in which the cultural mandate is to be seen. It is the context of God's special revelation to man as recorded in the Bible. We know from the Bible itself that God's revelation to man is progressive: God discloses Himself ever more fully to man, and this progression can be traced right through the Old Testament, finding its climax in the New Testament revelation of the "mystery" of Jesus Christ. This revelation is progressive in the sense that it moves steadily onward; but it is not progressive in the sense that it leaves behind what went before it; every new addition to the fund of man's knowledge of God presupposes and builds on the knowledge which went before; a new revelation of God does not supersede the promises and commandments which went before, but it builds on them as on a foundation, each new message raising higher the building (so to speak) of God's revelation.

If we look at the cultural mandate from this point of view, we see again that it has a position of astonishing significance, for we realize that the very first communication addressed by God to man, the cornerstone (as it were) of all subsequent revelation, is precisely this command to fan out and subdue the earth. We notice again the special position of the sixth day in the creation story: all through the previous five days? work God has spoken briefly and in the third person: "Let there be light... let there be a firmament." But now on the sixth day God suddenly becomes—if I may say so—loquacious, and begins to address in the second person that image of himself which he knows can understand and respond.

There is something highly dramatic about the moment when God has created a creature to be like himself and then clears his throat, so to speak, to address him. This is the moment when man, the crown of creation, is to be told what God's plan is for him, why God has placed him in this world, what his marching orders are to be for the long campaign ahead. It is the significant moment when God Almighty enters into communication with flesh-and-blood man, initiates the revelation-and-response structure of man's total life, making it into religion. It is at this moment of cosmic significance that God gives the command: "Fill the earth and subdue it!"

That is revelation and that is a command. It is the first and primary revelation, and the first and primary command. God is not a person to go back on a word once spoken, he is not one to countermand an order once given, for he is a constant God. And it is therefore of the greatest importance to keep that first, foundational word in mind when we listen to the many subsequent words which God addresses to man. All other revelation presupposes this. The history of God's progressive self-revelation can be compared, in a very legitimate sense, to an inverted pyramid. Everything is poised, is pivoted upon, a single focal point upon which the whole structure rests. And that pivotal point is the cultural mandate.

It is easy to overlook the centrality of the cultural mandate, because Genesis 3 relates the Fall of man into *sin*, and the whole rest of the Bible is overshadowed by this and focuses upon the history of *redemption from sin* which culminates in Christ. But we must not lose our sense of perspective and fall into a Christomonosim. For redemption means *restoration*, a ransoming out of the slavery of sin back into an original freedom. And a freedom for what? A freedom to serve, a freedom to obey God's commands, to do his will once again, a freedom to execute his mandate. Christ's work is a restoration to our original task, and his lordship is a re-affirmation of the original mandate.

To sum up, therefore, we can say that the command to subdue the earth assumes an importance of ever-widening dimensions, as we examine it in the successive concentric circles of its Biblical context. If we take the context of the sixth day, this command appears to be the focus, if we take the context of the creation story, this command shows up as the climax, if we take the context of Genesis as a whole, this command is the cue for the drama of history; if we take the context of the whole history of God's special revelation, this command turns out to be the foundation of the whole. It seems almost impossible to overemphasize the importance of this first and fundamental command of God to man.

## That You May Prosper

By Ray Sutton

The following is an excerpt from the above-reference book:

[T]he bible tells the story of how God re-established not His sovereignty – He never lost it because it can't be lost – but Adam's hierarchical rule over the world. God did this by sending a seed who represented Him better than Adam, Seth. But one by one each seed person fell, just like Adam, until the true Son, Jesus Christ. He was the only one who could truly manifest God's visible sovereignty. He died, rose again, and put a new delegated hierarchy on the earth again, the Church. The Apostle Paul describes this fact:

He [God the Father] raised Him [Christ, God the Son] from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in *subjection* under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things *to the church*, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Eph. 1:20-23)

... Christ is raised and seated in heaven, and then His authority is planted on earth. The Lord declares Christ's transcendence, and then establishes Christ's visible sovereignty through the rule of His people as His authority.

There is no escape from the principle of man's God-given mediatory authority over all of Creation. If God's authorities do not rule, neither does He. He manifests visible sovereignty through the visible authority of those who are in visible covenant to Him. The Christian always affirms that God rules over His creation. God (theos) rule (kratos). We live in a theocracy. The entire universe is a theocracy. Every human institution is a theocracy, - Church, State, Family, business, etc. There is no escape from theocracy. But Christians in every aspect of their daily lives are supposed to make manifest His rule in every institution (and not just the State). This is why God is interested in having earthly authority.

This is why Paul encourages the Ephesian Church to take rule! Christ has conquered the powers and now He wants them out of office

## **Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries** by Abraham Kuyper

The following is an excerpt from the above-named article published in 1893 in the *Methodist Review*. It is included because of its explanation of how both pantheism and evolution are of the same cloth and both deny the boundaries established by God's transcendence. It establishes well the point that once this transcendence (of essence, not "distance") is denied, all boundaries go with it and that helps explain why our culture cannot understand the boundaries upon which Christians insist.

---

For do not forget that the deepest trait of pantheism consists of a false love; a love which, it must be allowed, steps across appointed boundaries, but which, even in this false and unrighteous form, is born, nevertheless, from the motive of love. It repels not, but it attracts. Its purpose is to unite, and not to separate. Call it spiritual adultery, but adultery, nevertheless, born of affectionate inclination, the outcome of homesickness and of the pathos of sympathy.

Pantheism effaces distinctions, obscures boundary lines, and betrays the tendency to wipe every antithesis.

Philosophical pantheism, which systematically fuses every thesis and antithesis into a synthesis, and, by the tempting notion of identity, explains everything which seems dissimilar as similar and, in the end, as being of like essence.

This philosophy, with ever greater necessity of consequence, transports us from the real, living world into an abstract world of thought; and in this world, of course, it has free play with every distinction and antithesis. For then we deal no longer with living persons, but with heads sketched by ourselves; and from these crayon-sketches all sorts of lines and wrinkles may be effaced and charmed away as by magic, which from the living face will nevermore depart.

All that appears to our eyes as difference and distinction, however much our consciousness insists upon nonidentity, is nevertheless in essence one and the same; it is but the presentation, the formation, the characterization, the development, alteration, expression, revelation, or form of the single substance which alone exists.

This becomes manifest at once in the relation which is thought to exist between God and the world. *For centuries the Church of Christ has guarded its barrier against open or crypto-pantheism by the solemn confession in the inaugural of its Articles of Faith: "I believe in Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" and, in the third century, justly denounced the first weakening of the creation idea, together with the first effort to make the world eternal by putting Origen under her ban. The most distinctly marked boundary line lies between God and the world; with the taking away of this line all other boundaries blurred into mere shadows. For every distinction our consciousness—aye, the very faculty itself of our consciousness to make distinctions—takes root at last in this primordial antithesis. Think it away, and it becomes night, in whose shadowy darkness everything in our horizon dissolves in somber gray. But every pantheist starts out with the denial of this primordial*



*antithesis, which is mother to every antithesis among creatures. The pantheist stands ready, the moment we open the Bible, to invalidate the solemn inaugural of Genesis. No, not "in the beginning," he says, for there was no beginning; not "created," for the world is eternal; and not "the heaven and the earth," for the beyond is a mere dream. In this way the three most deeply marked lines of our distinction are wiped out with a single stroke, and every boundary is taken away between God and the world, between time and eternity, between the here and the hereafter. And yet, pantheism must needs begin with the revocation of these antitheses. It can do no other. . . . For the pantheist there is no existence of God and the world thinkable as two individual substances.*

Objection may be made by reminding us of what we stated above, namely, that it is another wind with blows in higher circles of science; that in those better circles pantheism, together with materialism, has long since been shown the door. . . . But has the principle of evolution . . . therefore ceased to be the Credo of the science of our day? *And what is this evolution theory other than the application of the pantheistic process to the engine of investigation of phenomena?* Here, also, the "nature takes no leap" is the motto. *Here, also, everything that appears is explained by a preceding appearance. And here, also, both with spiritual and natural phenomena, are denied all real differences of kind, together with independence of origin, and every deeper distinction of being, in either sphere by itself, as well as between the two sphere mutually; and hence, as a matter of fact, every line which marks a boundary is wiped out, and every boundary post which divides the jurisdiction is leveled to the ground. . . . [A]s an English writer expressed it, "Science amongst us is at its highest when it interprets all orders of phenomena as differently conditioned modes of one kind of uniformity." . . . That which was explained by Darwin mechanically could likewise be interpreted dynamically, and even if need be teleologically, as a spontaneous process in the cosmos which received its impulse from the first germ, whose motive starts from the teleological idea which dominates the entire process. One may therefore be a Darwinist, and with Darwin bend the knee reverently before a "God," for surely God created this "force" which potentially included the entire cosmos within itself; or it was he who determined for the cosmos the aim of its development process. . . . [David's Note: "Theistic evolution" is the name we now give this line of thinking]*

\*\*\*

How have pantheism and evolution risen to be so powerful? Certainly not because of Kant or Hegel, Darwin or Haeckel, for no single man transforms the spirit of his time if he be not himself a child of his time. No, the general mood of mind, the temper of soul, the inclination of heart, all of life down to its deepest impulses, had risen up in rebellion at the close of the last century against the boundaries appointed by God; pantheism was in the air; Hegel and Darwin, as children of their age, only hastened the birth of the monstrosity, which our age had long carried under its heart. . . . *In opposition to those who efface the boundaries both in life and consciousness a life must be developed with deeply marked character lines; the floating of pantheism must be confronted with the clear and positive utterances of a truly embraced confession; and in like manner the exaltation of the world's dictum must be opposed by the absolute authority of the Scriptures. An independent basis of operation will be regained and a reality will originate which already as such exercises an influence upon our inspiration. Thus only will a fortified line present itself at the front which will render it possible to postpone a giving of battle until quietly and definitely the forces are developed,*

the weapons sharpened, and the ranks well exercised. Thus, also is revived that holy comradeship, that confidence in one's own cause, and that enthusiasm for the colors of the banner which double the strength of every army.

That this system demands great sacrifice is not denied. It compels an entire break with much that is attractive. It cuts off all intercourse with the nobler heathen, however fascinating that may be. A great price must be paid for it; and, worse yet, it will cause the resolute man all manner of family inconvenience, and will render it difficult to find a position in life for the support of oneself and family. But with the Scriptures in hand we declare that this sacrifice must be laid on the altar. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

*Christ came not to bring peace in a pantheistic sense, but to make discord among men, that is, to establish a boundary which none can remove between those who touch the hem of his garment and those who reject him.*

## The Law and The Saint

By: A.W. Pink

Found at [http://www.the-highway.com/Law\\_Pink.html](http://www.the-highway.com/Law_Pink.html)

The following is an excerpt that begins on p. 1.

What, we may well inquire, is the cause of the lawlessness which now so widely obtains? For every effect there is a cause, and the character of the effect usually intimates the nature of the cause. We are assured that the present wide-spread contempt for human law is the inevitable outgrowth of disrespect for Divine Law. Where there is no fear of God, we must not expect there will be much fear of man. And why is it that there is so much disrespect for Divine Law? This, in turn, is but the effect of an antecedent cause. Nor is this hard to find. Do not the utterances of Christian teachers during the last twenty-five years go far to explain the situation which now confronts us?

History has repeated itself. Of old, God complained of Ephraim, "I have written to him the great things of My Law, but they were counted as a strange thing" (Hosea 8:12). Observe how God speaks of His Law: "The *great* things of My Law"! They are not precepts of little moment, but to be lightly esteemed, and slighted; but are of great authority, importance, and value. But, as then, so during the last few years—they have been "counted as a *strange* thing". Christian teachers have vied with each other in denouncing the Law as a "yoke of bondage", "a grievous burden", "a remorseless enemy". They have declared in trumpet tones that Christians *should* regard the Law as "a strange thing": that it was never designed *for them*: that it was given to Israel, and then made an end of at the Cross of Christ. They have warned God's people to have nothing to do with the Ten Commandments. They have denounced as "Legalists" Christians of the past, who, like Paul, "*served* the Law" (Rom. 7:25). They have affirmed that Grace rules the Law out of the Christian's *life* as absolutely as it did out of his *salvation*. They have held up to ridicule those who contended for a Christian Sabbath, and have classed them with Seventh-Day Adventists. Having sown the wind, is it any wonder that we are now reaping the whirlwind?

The character of the cause determinates the character of the effect. *Whatsoever* a man soweth that (the same in kind) shall he also reap. Unto them who of old regarded the great things of God's Law as a strange thing, God declared, "Because Ephraim hath made many *altars* to sin, *altars* shall be unto him to sin" (Hosea 8:11). And because many of our Christian leaders have publicly repudiated Divine Law, God has visited us with a wave of lawlessness in our churches, homes, and social life. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked"!! Nor have we any hope of stemming the onrushing tide, or of causing Christian leaders to change their position. Having committed themselves publicly, the examples of past history warn us that *pride* will keep them from making the humbling confession that they have erred. But we have a hope that some who have been under the influence of twentieth century Antinomianism will have sufficient spiritual discernment to recognize the truth when it is presented to their notice; and it is for them we now write.

In the January 1923 issue of a contemporary appeared the second article from the pen of Dr. McNichol, Principal of Toronto Bible School, under the caption of "Overdoing the Dispensations". . . . Quoting, Dr. McNicol says:

1. *There is danger when the Law is set against Grace.* No scheme of prophetic interpretation can be safe which is obliged to represent the dispensations of Law and Grace as opposing systems,

each excluding the other and contrary to it. If this were the case, it would mean that God had taken opposing and contradictory attitudes towards men in these two different ages. In the last analysis this representation of the relation of law and grace affects the character of God, as everything which perverts the Scriptures, disturbing thereby the mirror of His mind, ultimately does.

So far from being opposing systems, law and grace as revealed in Scripture are parts of one harmonious and progressive plan. The present dispensation is spoken of as the age of grace, not because grace belongs to it exclusively, but because in it grace has been fully manifested. When John declared that 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ', he was contrasting law and grace, not as two contrary and irreconcilable systems, but as two related parts of one system. The law was the shadow, Christ was the substance. The law was the pattern, Christ was the reality. The grace which had been behind the law came to light through Jesus Christ so that it could be realized. As a matter of fact, grace had been in operation from the beginning. It began in Eden with the first promise of redemption immediately after the fall. All redemption is of grace; there can be no salvation without it, and even the law itself proceeds on the basis of grace.

"The law was given to Israel not that they might be redeemed, but because they had been redeemed. The nation had been brought out of Egypt by the power of God under the blood of the slain lamb, itself the symbol and token of His grace. The law was added at Sinai as the necessary standard of life for a ransomed people, a people who now belonged to the Lord. It began with a declaration of their redemption; 'I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage' (Ex. 20:2). It rested on the basis of grace, and it embodied the principle that redemption implied a conformity to God's moral order. In other words, the very grace that redeemed Israel carried with it the necessity of revealing the law to Israel. The law was given that they might walk worthy of the relation in which they now stood to God, worthy of a salvation which was already theirs. The covenant of the law did not supersede the covenant of promise, but set forth the kind of life which those who were redeemed by the covenant of promise were expected to live.

The law was not a covenant of works in the sense that Israel's salvation depended upon obedience to it. The devout Israelite was saved by faith in the promise of God, which was now embodied in the tabernacle services. He looked forward through the sacrifices to a salvation which they foreshadowed, and by faith accepted it, as we look back to the Cross and by faith accept the salvation which has been accomplished. The Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints are both saved in the same way, and that is, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ alone.

Of course the people did not keep the law. It only brought sin to light and proved that righteousness could not come that way, as Paul points out in the Epistle to the Romans. It made all the more evident that there was a need for the work of Christ. But Christ came not to put the law aside and introduce another plan. 'I came not to destroy', He declared, 'but to fulfill'; not to dissolve the obligations of the law and release us from them, but to substantiate the law and make good all that it required. In the Sermon on the Mount He expounded and expanded the law, in all its depth and breadth, and in all its searching sweep. This Sermon He spoke to His disciples; it was His law for them. It was not intended for another age and another people; it set forth the kind of life He expected His own people to live in the present age.

Of course we cannot fulfill the law of the Sermon on the Mount as an outward standard of life. Our Lord did not leave it at that. He was Himself going to make it possible for His disciples to fulfill it, but He could not yet tell them how. When He died and rose again and ascended into heaven, and His Holy Spirit—the same Spirit which had fulfilled and exemplified that law completely in His own life—came flowing back into the lives of His disciples, then they had to

keep it. The law was written on their hearts. Their lives were conformed to the law, not by slavish obedience to an outward standard, but by the free constraint of an inward spirit. The ordinance of the law was fulfilled in them when they walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

It is this very feature of grace which seems to make it an entirely different and separate system from the law, for it did not exist in the Old Testament dispensation. It could not be realized before the redemptive work of Christ was done and the Holy Spirit came. The Israelites occupied a different position toward the law from that occupied by the Christian now. The law demanded an obedience which the natural heart could not give. In its practical working, therefore, the law necessarily came to stand over man as a creditor, with claims of justice which had not been satisfied. These claims Christ met on the Cross and put out of the way. More than that, by virtue of our union with Him in His death and resurrection, He has brought us out of the sphere where the law as an outward authority demands obedience of the natural man, into the sphere where the law is written upon the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. He has created us 'a new man' whose nature it is to fulfill the law by an inward power and principle. This is what Paul meant when he said, 'I through the law died unto the law that I might live unto God' (Gal. 2:19), and when he wrote to the Romans, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace' (6:14).

This new revelation to the law has been created by the grace of God through the work of Jesus Christ. *But the law still remains.* It is the reflex of His own character and the revelation of His moral order. He cannot set it aside, for then He would deny Himself. The wonder and glory of grace consists in this, that it came in, not to oppose the law and substitute another plan, but to meet and satisfy all its claims and provide a way of fulfilling all its obligations. It has pleased the Lord by His grace to magnify the law and make it honorable.

With the above remarks we are in hearty accord, [Except that in the closing paragraphs Dr. McNicol is somewhat confused about the present relation of the Law to the believer.] It is a superficial and erroneous conclusion that supposes the Old and New Testaments are antagonistic. The Old Testament is full of grace: the New Testament is full of Law. The revelation of the New Testament to the Old is like that of the oak tree to the acorn. It has been often said, and said truly, "The New is in the Old contained, the Old is by the New explained"! And surely this *must be* so. The Bible as a whole, and in its parts, is not merely for Israel or the Church, but is a written revelation from God to and for *the whole human race*. It is indeed sad to see how little this elementary truth is grasped today and what confusion prevails.

“THE BRIEFING” AT A ALBERTMOHLER.COM ON JUNE 16,2017

## **MORALISTIC THERAPEUTIC DEISM AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS & CHURCHES IN AMERICA'S TEENAGE SPIRITUAL CRISIS**

Next, one of the most important articles to appear in the mainstream media in recent days appeared in the June 14 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*. The article is by Clare Ansberry, the title, “The Teenage Spiritual Crisis.”

This article tells us—remember it’s coming in a secular newspaper—that there has been a major shift in the spiritual lives of American young adults, and most particularly teenagers and adolescents. The article documents the fact that the vast majority of adolescents in the early stage of that period of life are believers in God. It is an overwhelming majority. But by the time many of these teenagers exit those years and enter the 20s into that period of emerging adulthood, many of them are now distanced and disengaged from the spiritual communities of their families and many of them are no longer even theists. Ansberry explains that many of these teenagers believed in God in their younger ages, now they’re not so sure. She writes,

“The teen brain grows rapidly, and with it the ability to think more abstractly and critically. In early adolescence, teens begin to establish their own ideals and recognize hypocrisy in people and institutions around them. They deal with heartbreak and social cliques, see suffering in the world and wonder if there is a God who cares. They are trying to figure out their place and how and if something like religion belongs.

“Exploring such questions,” said Lisa Miller, a clinical psychologist, she’s the author of ‘The Spiritual Child,’ “is the most important work a teenager can do.”

Just in terms of psychological data, the *Wall Street Journal* tells us that research shows, “Adolescents with a strong personal spirituality are found to be 60% less likely to be severely depressed.”

We’re also told that a major change is now taking place in that many of these teenagers, a greater percentage than in times in generations past are exiting the faith as they exit the teenage years. It’s important to recognize that the *Wall Street Journal* is only really interested in religion in the abstract and spirituality in a very generalized sense. We as Christians are far more specifically concerned.

At this point we need to remember pioneering research, some of the most important research theologically speaking in recent decades. Christian Smith and his associates at the University of North Carolina tracked the spiritual identities of American teenagers and indicated that the overwhelming theological consensus of American adolescents was what he described as “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.”

He described it in these terms, that Moralistic Therapeutic Deism includes beliefs such as,

1. “A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.”
2. “God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.”
3. “The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one’s self.”

4. “God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.” And
5. “Good people go to heaven when they die.”

Now what become spectacularly important here is the understanding that these teenagers are not holding to Christianity, even though many of them are identified with Christian churches and participating in the activities of those churches. Many of their parents would classify these children as Christians simply because of their identity as a family or furthermore, even as they look at their children identifying in their teenage years as Christians. What is not asked is what these children and teenagers actually believe? And in closer inspection, let’s be very clear, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is religion, but it isn’t Christianity. It’s nowhere close to biblical Christianity. Christian Smith and his colleagues summarize their findings this way,

“To the extent that the teens we interviewed did manage to articulate what they understood and believed religiously, it became clear that most religious teenagers either do not really comprehend what their own religious traditions say they are supposed to believe, or they do understand it and simply do not care to believe it. Either way, it is apparent that most religiously affiliated U.S. teens are not particularly interested in espousing and upholding the doctrines of their faith traditions, or that their communities of faith are failing in attempts to educate their youth, or both.”

Now on closer inspection, that second factor looms largest here. It becomes increasingly clear that the majority of American teenagers are not rejecting doctrines they have been taught, rather they’ve never been taught these doctrines at all. What they are doing is absorbing from the larger culture the doctrines of a secular age, the doctrines that comes from moralism, the belief that all God really wants is that we behave, that we be nice; and therapeutic, meaning that we understand our problems, primarily in therapeutic categories. We believe that there may be a problem with us, but it’s something that can be resolved by feeling better about ourselves or coming to a more satisfactory self-identity. And then Deism; let’s be very clear, Deism is a persistent heresy. It is the belief that there is some kind of God but not a God who is sovereign ruling over the universe, not a God who cares particularly about me, not a God who desires to have a personal relationship with me, but rather just a generalized deity who probably created the world and has some relationship to it, but only in the most distant and abstract sense. That second factor becomes very, very clear when you consider that most of the teenagers interviewed by Christian Smith and his team seem to have only the most vague and generalized understandings of the particulars of their doctrinal faith tradition. It turns out that most of them don’t even know many of the basic facts of the stories that are very central to that religious identity. To speak in a Christian biblical context, most importantly they know a great deal, says Christian Smith, about even the most minute details of the lives of celebrities, but when it comes to Moses or Noah, Peter or Paul, well, let’s just say it would be an understatement to say not so much.

These teenagers—and remember this research is now over a decade old—basically believe that the most important function of religion is to feel good about oneself and in return to be nice. And even as the research is dated, the important bottom line is this: there is absolutely no reason to believe that this picture has changed for the better and subsequent research indicates, precisely to the contrary, that this pattern is continuing, and in the age that is now dominated by social media, the internet and other technological realities, these trajectories have become even more exaggerated.

But now we need to ask the most fundamental question, where are teenagers getting this Moralistic Therapeutic Deism? Are they just imbibing it from the larger culture, from celebrities and from the entertainment culture, from the educational system? Well, the answer to that is certainly yes, but Christian Smith and his associates documented something far more haunting. They are actually in many cases getting it from their churches and from their parents. What they're getting from many of their churches is just what they believe, that God basically wants them to feel good about themselves and to be nice to others, period.

One of the most bracing aspects of this research is the understanding that many, many churches, indeed multitudes of churches, and many, many parents who think themselves to be Christian parents are failing in one of most critical tasks of transmitting the faith from one generation to the other. Far too many youth ministries are basically about entertaining youth, and furthermore reinforcing the fact that what religion basically comes down to what Christianity in particular means is that we should feel good about ourselves and be nice to everybody.

So one of the most important things we can recognize quite humbly is that teenagers have been listening carefully to us and to their churches; they've been observing their parents in the larger culture with diligence and insight. They understand just how little many of their parents really believe and just how much many of their churches and Christian institutions have accommodated themselves through the dominant culture. They sense the degree to which theological conviction has been sacrificed on the altar of individualism and a relativistic understanding of truth. They have learned by observing their elders that self-improvement is the one great moral imperative to which we're all accountable, and they have observed the fact that the highest aspiration of those who shake this culture is to find happiness, security, and meaning in life on their own terms.

Clare Ansberry of the *Wall Street Journal* in this article that appeared just this week on the teenage spiritual crisis kind of updates what Christian Smith and his Associates saw over a decade ago. There is indeed a teenage spiritual crisis and it should tell us something that a major secular newspaper, one of the most influential in the United States recognizes that there is such a crisis and that it just might be important. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is a false religion, no matter where it is found or how old might be the adherent.

But at this point we also need to recognize another specific, very important factor with Father's Day staring at us in the face coming on Sunday. It is made very clear in Scripture that fathers have an outsized importance in the spiritual identity and development of their children. And even as this was a secular article in a secular newspaper, even secular psychologists and specialists tell us that one of the most important determinants, one of the most important predictors of whether or not a child as a teenager and as a young adult will be a believer is whether or not that child sees his or her father actively identified and believing and participating in the life of the church.

For Christian fathers this means our responsibility to live before our children in such a way that they see us believing in and living by something far more than Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, rather living out and believing in biblical Christianity and teaching biblical Christianity to our own children. This does not ensure that our children will be Christians, there's no easy formula. But the opposite is certainly true if our children do not see us living out biblical Christianity and teaching these doctrines, then we should be surprised that they have no idea what Christianity actually even is. That doesn't fit too well on a greeting card, but it just might be the most important message for Father's Day.



## Be Encouraged—The Incrementalism of Creation and Salvation as Recreation

I want to continue this morning with this question of how do we look at accomplishing really big things, particularly when progress may at best be slow, when it may be imperceptible, and even when it seems things are going backwards, in the wrong direction, as sometimes seems to be the case to me. You know there had to be times that our Old Testament heroes had to think things were actually going backwards too; it had to feel like that. There are plenty of verses in which we find the prophets and the Psalmists saying things like, “How long, Oh Lord?” and pleading with God to remember His covenant.

And I think it is in times like this we need to remember two things that I mentioned yesterday that I want us to spend some time bringing together this morning. The first thing was the ways of God in creation. We focused on the fact that God could have done the “big thing” of creation all at one, but he chose to do it step-by-step and then, giving that model to man, he told man to continue the work of creation, to continue filling and forming the earth. But the other thing I mentioned, more in passing, that I want to focus on this morning and connect to what we discussed yesterday is that this set-by-step process of continuing to fill the earth and subduing it, of building civilization, was made hard by the Fall.

Until I started thinking about the ways of God, I'd never thought about what I found out in my studies — historically theologians have viewed salvation itself is an act of creation, parallel to the original creation - a re-creation. For example, Athanasius, who was said to have stood against whole world, a time when it surely seemed to him that things were going “backwards” in terms of the growth of the Kingdom of God, wrote in *On the Incarnation*, “

We will begin, then, with the creation of the world and with God its Maker, for the first fact that you must grasp is this: *the renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word Who made it in the beginning.* There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation; for the One Father has employed the same Agent for both works, effecting the salvation of the world through the same Word Who made it at first.” (emphasis supplied)

In other words, the God who says that He is the same today as he was yesterday and will be the same a year from now when you're grappling with some big issue, is the same not just in terms of his character and nature, which is what my mind has always tended to focus on, but also in his ways. His way of doing things, his way of accomplishing really big things, like creation and salvation, are consistent, they are step-by-step.

And in more modern times this same thought has been more specifically expressed by A. W. Tozer in *God's Pursuit of Man*,

“Redemption is not a strange work which God for a moment turned aside to do; rather it is *His same work performed in a new field, the field of human catastrophe.*”

And what I love about his statement is that it points to that “field” in which we operate and in which we seek to do big things. Nothing we'd do, no matter how “big” and challenging as it may seem, compares in scope and significance as the work of salvation in a fallen world. And as we said yesterday, the Fall—that brought about this field of human catastrophe—has made our work harder, but our understanding of the ways of God in relation to the work we are doing is not different, it is step-by-step.

Then Alert Wolters, in *Creation Re-gained*, that I mentioned yesterday, said,

Theologians have sometimes spoken of salvation as “re-creation” – not to imply that God scraps his earlier creation and in Jesus Christ makes a new one, but rather to suggest that he hangs on to his fallen original creation and salvages it. He refuses to abandon the work of his hands—in fact he sacrifices his own Son to save his original project. ... The original good creation is to be restored. ... In a very significant sense this restoration means that salvation does not bring anything new. ...; rather it is a matter of bringing new life and vitality to what was there all along.

Here I think is something very important. You and I are in the “business” as Christians of restoring or, a word perhaps we’re more familiar with, reforming. And restoration and reformation stand in opposition to revolution, and again it is a step-by-step process. As we think about our government and what is taking place in politics today, is it a matter of needing something “new” in the sense of overthrowing and “replacing” what we have or is it a matter of finding that which will bring “new life and vitality” to what we have that’s gone wrong?

In other words, as I think of these three statements, I can’t help but think that even as God could have done with his original creation—made it all at one time-- God did not crush Satan’s rebellion immediately. He did not immediately replace the fallen Adam with the new, Second Adam, which He could have done. In keeping with the ways of God *as seen in creation*, God began a process of salvation, of re-creation.

As I thought about this step-by-step process, I also began to realize that this necessarily means that timing is important to God. And sure enough that what we find in Scripture. In Ecclesiastes 3 we read that, “there is a time to tear down, and a time to build up.” When things seem to be falling apart, it could be because God is in the process of “tearing down” some worldviews, some systems, some processes, some establishments in our culture that have been perverted by the Fall so that He might “build up” out of them something better or greater.

And Solomon adds there is even a “time to be silent, and a time to speak.” This is a hard one for us as politicians, to know when to speak to something and when to be silent. The time to speak may not always be as immediate as partisans or the press may want to make it.

I know my mouth got me in trouble on more than a few occasions because I had a tendency to want to have a rejoinder to every whacky thing someone said, to every awful bill someone proposed, and every lame argument someone made. There can be a temptation to feel that we need to speak to everything and, if not, then we’re not fighting, that we’re not standing up, that we’re denying the faith. But the Word of God says that there can be times when silence is the appropriate response. This, too, can be a part of the step-by-step process of restoration and reformation.

But the clincher for me was Ephesians 1:7-10:

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He [lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight he made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to *an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth

In other words, the full revelation of God given in Jesus Christ was a matter of timing in God’s economy. A lot happened between the Fall and the coming of Christ that God thought was

important before that really big thing could take place, a lot of pieces had to come together before the time was right. In looking back at our own country, do we not see that same concept of process and timing—the revolt of the Barons against King John that led to the Magna Carta that provided a foundation for the step-by-step long-term development of representative government upon which our government rests and the first Great Awakening without which there would have been no Spirit of 1776 that led to our independence?

And, in keeping with what we just read in Ecclesiastes, between Malachi and John the Baptist, God was silent through the voice of the prophets for 400 years! And this process of redemption still awaits its ultimate consummation at the second coming.

In sum, even as God gave Adam and his descendants the step-by-step, incremental task of filling and forming the earth, God gave to the descendants of the “last” or “second” Adam—Jesus—the task of expanding the Kingdom of God throughout the earth. And this “big thing,” in which you and I are engaged is also a step-by-step process that will unfold in God’s timing, which may not always be coincide with our sense of timing. Learning the ways of God and trusting in the sovereign, superintending providence of God as He uses us in His step-by-step plan and process for the consummation of his work of recreation, restoration of His creation just may be the key to hope and confidence in the midst of the storm and the assurance that the little steps we may accomplish are not in vain.

© David Fowler June 2016