

# CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

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## CONTENTS

### EDITORIAL

FROM JIHAD TO GREAT COMMISSION

by *Stephen C. Perks*..... 2

### FEATURES

THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM: ARE WE EQUIPPED?

by *Christine Schirrmacher*..... 5

ABRAHAM KUYPER ON ISLAM

by *Francis Nigel Lee*..... 9

ON THE COVENANTAL NATURE OF THE TRADITIONAL  
FRENCH MONARCHY

by *Simon Scharf*..... 13

POST-HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE: THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION  
HOW THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC HAS INFLUENCED HEALTH CARE

by *Hugh Flemming*..... 20

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# EDITORIAL

## FROM JIHAD TO GREAT COMMISSION

by *Stephen C. Perks*

IN the past fifty years or so Britain, and indeed the West generally, has experienced significant immigration from Muslim countries. It is no longer uncommon for mosques to be found in Western cities. The tension that this immigration has caused in some cities and large towns in the UK is usually represented by the British media and politicians as a race relations problem and *multiculturalism*, one of the chief shibboleths of the new atheist religion of secular humanism, is endlessly championed as the answer to this problem. Unfortunately, the real nature and meaning of multiculturalism has been misunderstood by politicians and media alike and, along with the tension created by the presence of large Islamic and Hindu communities in Western cities, has been defined in terms of race. But this is a serious mistake. Culture does not have its origin in race, and the constant obsession with race by the media and politicians in Western societies only exacerbates the problem since it reinforces the prejudices of fanatics while offering no meaningful analysis of the problem—indeed it gets in the way of a better understanding of the problem.

Culture is a religious phenomenon. As Henry Van Til pointed out, culture is substantially the externalisation of religion.<sup>1</sup> What underpins cultural differences is not race but religion, since culture is religion externalised. Cultural tensions exist where religions come into conflict among populations. The conflict in India between Muslims and Hindus when India became independent was not based on racial differences, but on religious differences. The race card that members of ethnic minorities are often so willing to play in order to secure advantages and achieve their politically correct goals is a red herring that is creating more problems than it can possibly solve. In reality the race card is a propaganda trick that simply creates more of the tension that those who play it claim to abominate. This is not to deny that racism exists. It does. But the “institutionalised racism” that is increasingly imputed to Western societies and institutions and often so uncritically accepted as fact is a fabrication aimed at making it impossible for our society to deal with the cultural problems that currently beset it other than by acceding unconditionally to the demands of those operating the race industry.

It is true that culture—i.e. religion as it is externalised in particular societies—sometimes breaks down along racial lines. That is to say, particular races that have lived without assimilating with other ethnic groups tend to maintain their own individual cultural identity. But the fact that culture sometimes breaks down along racial lines in this way is entirely incidental and has no bearing on what determines a

particular cultural identity. It is not race that determines culture, but rather religion, and this is also the case where racial differences between societies incidentally correspond to cultural differences. It is vitally important that we recognise that the concept of race is at most an incidental fact likely to mislead us, not an essential element of culture, if we are to understand the problems posed by mass immigration from the Third to the First World today. Race is irrelevant. Religion is what counts, what determines cultural identity, and we shall not get anywhere near solving the multicultural problems that face our societies until this fact is recognised and people are prepared to deal with the issues it entails.

Not all Asians are Muslims and Hindus. What is today Pakistan had a thriving Christian community long before the prophet of Allah was born. Christianity predated Islam in most of the regions over which Islam today rules. Christians have suffered and continue to suffer horribly under the yoke of Islam.<sup>2</sup> But the world has largely forgotten these people. While the West and the UN concern themselves with trying to save Muslims from the barbarous consequences of their own religion Christians suffering under the oppressive rule of Islam are forgotten. Why? Because the apostate West, blinded by the religion of secular humanism, now hates Christianity more than it hates the evil of Islamic terrorism. Christianity is regularly represented as one of the world’s problems, not the answer to the problems the world faces, despite the fact that the religion of secular humanism has no answer to the conflicts that presently trouble the world and no track record of ever having been able to solve such problems, while Christianity has already proved itself as the only successful answer to the kinds of problems we are now facing.

The obsession that Westerners seem to have with beating their chests over the Crusades is a good example of the misrepresentation to which Christianity has been subjected. The misguided “Christian” ministries that go in for apologising to Muslims for the Crusades are another. The fact is, there would have been no Crusades had not Islam first brutally subjugated the Christian lands of the Middle East under its ruthless and persecuting rule. A concern for Christian people suffering under Islamic rule and acceptance of large scale immigration of these Christian communities into the West, rather than large scale immigration of Muslims and Hindus, would have saved us from a great many of the problems that the West now faces over the multicultural issue and would have been of great benefit to the West. Instead we shall now have to face *jihād* on our own streets, and the poverty of secular humanist answers to this problem combined with the irrelevance, apathy and apostasy of the Church has created a religious vacuum in which even Westerners are now being won for Islam.

This has happened because Christianity in the West has ceased to function as a religion for most people, i.e. it has ceased to function as an overarching structure to human life that anchors the individual and society as a whole in God’s will for man.<sup>3</sup> Instead of a Christian nation we now have a secular humanist nation in which a virulent Islamic fundamentalism is able to exist alongside a larger, acquiescent

2. For information about the persecution of Christians under Islamic rule see the web site of the Barnabas Fund, an organisation dedicated to helping the persecuted Church (<http://www.barnabasfund.org>).

3. See “Christianity as a Cult” in Stephen C. Perks, *Common-Law Wives and Concubines: Essays on Covenantal Christianity and Contemporary Western Culture* (Taunton: The Kuyper Foundation, 2003).

1. Henry Van Til, *The Calvinist Concept of Culture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, [1959] 2001).

Islamic community that will, if given leave and opportunity,—as it is being given leave and opportunity at the moment—eventually grow into a State within a State with the ultimate objective of stamping Islamic culture and law upon the societies of Britain and other Western States. The feeble-minded and apostate Christian Churches of the West and the politically weak and easily manipulated political establishment in Britain will be increasingly powerless to do anything about this rise of Islamic culture in the West the more the situation is allowed to continue unaddressed. There is an answer, and only one decisive answer, to this problem but neither our politicians nor our Church leaders on the whole recognise the problem, let alone the answer.

On top of this the Western nations face a significant demographic trend that will compound the problem seriously. Birth rates in Western countries have dropped dramatically over the past century. By contrast, the birth rates of immigrant Asian communities has increased. According to *The Sunday Times Magazine*, which recently ran a feature article on declining birth rates and fertility among Westerners, “The largest families in Britain are in ethnic-minority groups, growing some 15 times faster than the white population.” The article goes on to ask the question: “Given that the real cost of buying a home in the UK has trebled since 1970, and the cost of raising a child has risen dramatically, how have Bangladeshi men and women [about 80 per cent of Bangladeshis are Muslims—SCP], with the highest unemployment rates in the UK (20% and 24% respectively), achieved the UK’s highest fertility rates?” The answer given is “Probably because three-quarters of them are couples by the age of 25, most marry, few divorce, and the women are more likely to fulfil a traditional female role in the family.”<sup>4</sup> A century ago this description would have broadly fitted most Western—i.e. Christian—families. It is not only the *choice* of Western couples to have fewer children however. The promiscuous lifestyle of many Westerners has led to increases in venereal diseases that cause infertility.

The decrease in Western birth rates throws up considerable problems for the future of Western cultures. This trend will probably put many strains on the kind of lifestyle that Westerners have come to expect, particularly at the age of retirement—indeed, it will put a great strain on the very concept of retirement. Western politicians seem determined to solve these problems by encouraging immigration. In this situation Islam, which is determined to bring the West under the yoke of Allah, will find itself in an increasingly strong position in Western counties.

Furthermore, although some Muslims living in Western countries may speak of Islam as a religion of peace and interpret *jihad* in a “spiritual” way, we must look at history and to those countries under the rule of Islam in order to determine to what extent this is a genuine or mainstream Islamic notion. The evidence is not propitious. Whilst they constitute a minority in Western countries it makes sense, and is acceptable to Islamic ideology and strategy, for Muslims to make peace and live in harmony with non-Muslims. But the stronger the Muslim communities become the less need there is for this merely tactical ideology of peaceful coexistence. Islam must, according to the logic of the faith, become dominant wherever and whenever possible. The idea of peaceful coexistence is merely a means to an end, namely the

establishment of another Islamic State that will demand complete conformity to Islamic law from *all* its subjects. The history of both past and present Islamic States demonstrates this point unequivocally. Modern Pakistan and Nigeria provide compelling contemporary evidence for this.

The West itself is now beginning to suffer the consequences of the more orthodox understanding of *jihad* that will increasingly dominate Western Muslims’ understanding of *jihad* as Islamic communities become stronger in Western nations. The interpretation of *jihad* as a peaceful personal struggle is a concession to the West that will cease to be espoused by the majority of Muslims in Western nations once Islamic communities in these nations are strong enough to flex their muscles against Western security forces.

The granting of special concessions to Islamic communities in the UK by the government, followed by the insistence of Muslims that these Islamic communities be permitted to govern themselves according to their own traditions (*sharia* law) is by no means unthinkable in Britain. Given the weakness, foolishness and short-sightedness of British politicians, and taking account of their miserable track record in giving in to the most absurd and immoral demands of pugnacious minority groups, from pro-abortion and gay rights groups to the IRA—in other words, given the moral decadence of contemporary British politicians—Muslims may well soon come to feel that the more historically accurate and literal understanding of *jihad* is the way forward in Britain and believe that victory is within reach. Why not? After all, Muslims can look to Northern Ireland as a good example of how terrorism has succeeded in wringing major concessions out of the British political establishment. It worked for the IRA. Why should it not work for Islam? The fanatical terrorist activities of what short-sighted Western politicians who don’t read their history books, or their Korans for that matter, insist is only a minority fringe that has misunderstood the real nature of Islam is only the vanguard of a wave of militant Islam that will shatter naïve Western illusions of Islam as a peaceful religion unless the real issues are addressed soon. If and when that happens, the West will most likely be powerless to do anything about it. Further concessions may well be the West’s only response but such concessions will prove to be a prelude to the end for those who refuse to bow the knee to Allah.

Is this a reasonable prognosis? In order to answer this question we need only consider whether it fits with the facts of history as Islam came to dominate other lands in past centuries and the pattern of events in the formation of modern Islamic States. Pakistan is a good example of the latter.

The word Pakistan means “pure land.” Muslims understood this to mean that they were setting up a State that was free from the compromising effects of the British Raj and the Hindu caste system. But it was not the purpose of Mohammad Jinnah, Pakistan’s founding father, to establish a theocratic State based on *sharia* law. His aspirations were for religious freedom and he stated in his presidential address to the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi on September 11, 1947: “You are free . . . free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State. We are starting in days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed or another.” These are secular ideals. Pressure from

4. Richard Girling, “The Great Baby Shortage” in *The Sunday Times Magazine*, February 15th, 2004, p. 29.

Muslims to establish *sharia* law as the law of the land increased after Jinnah's death in 1948. The religion of Islam was introduced into the Objectives Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. This resolution became the preamble to the 1956 constitution, but the preamble also stated that "adequate provision shall be made for the minorities freely to profess and practise their religion and develop their culture" and the constitution carefully avoided establishing *sharia* law as the law of the State, referring to the Koran only as a means of promoting self-examination and leaving Parliament free to formulate Pakistani law. The preamble was subsequently made into a substantive part of the constitution, but the word "freely" was deleted from this clause. Since then the Islamisation of Pakistan has been pursued relentlessly. *Sharia* law was established as the supreme law of the land by the Enforcement of Sharia Act 1991. A Federal Sharia Court has been established with the power to overturn any statute law contrary to the teachings of Islam. This Federal Sharia Court constitutes a parallel judicial system that has undermined the supremacy of Parliament. *Sharia* law is applicable to non-Muslims but a non-Muslim lawyer is not permitted to practise before the Federal Sharia Court. Ironically, Christians largely supported the establishment of Pakistan as a separate State. Both Christians and Muslims had suffered under the Hindu caste system. The declarations of tolerance and freedom for all religions by the Pakistani leadership in 1947 led Christians to believe that Pakistan would be a liberal State in which they would not be discriminated against or persecuted. They were entirely wrong and have subsequently been routinely discriminated against, persecuted and even murdered by the Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the lands now under Muslim rule and influence, and all of the lands originally conquered by Islam in its initial phase of expansion, were once Christian lands. Islam conquered these lands and civilisations by means of the sword and then proceeded to obliterate the Christian cultures that had previously thrived in these countries, replacing them with its own barbarous and backward civilisation. The greatest threat to Christendom from without has been Islam. Of course, the greatest threat to Christianity is not an external threat, but an internal threat, namely apathy and apostasy within the Christian community of faith. When such apathy and apostasy are widespread, however, the threat from without becomes more ominous. Islam will give no quarter to the West if it once gets into the position to make its victory complete. It never has done before and there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that it will do so in the future. Indeed, the evidence demonstrates that Islam is just as brutal and tyrannical as it always has been.

The eclipse of the Western way of life has been prepared by secular humanism. But secular humanism is weak and it is unlikely that secular humanist States, on their own, will be able to withstand the ideological, religious and ultimately,

given the free play of Islam as a religious force in the West, the military (terrorist) and political forces of Islam. With all the will in the world, liberal Muslims and secularists have been powerless to resist the Islamisation of Pakistan. It will be no different in the West as Islamic communities become more numerous and stronger socially, economically and ultimately politically. Only a resurgent Christianity offers the West any hope in the fight against Islam. The answer to the problem that our political elite cannot see is repentance and faith in Christ and the ordering of our lives *and* society according to his word. Secularism is incapable of standing its ground against Islam. We must return to our Christian cultural heritage and restore Christianity as the religion of State. For this to succeed, however, we must rid ourselves of the feeble imitation of Christianity that has come to dominate the Western Church over the past century and replace it with a robust faith in the sovereign God of history that the Bible sets before us.

Islam represents one of the most important mission fields facing the modern Church, and this mission field now exists on two fronts: the Muslim communities in Western nations and the more distant Islamic States of the Middle East and the Third World. Both these fronts require urgent attention. Nothing less than a new crusade is needed to deal with these mission fields. But it must not be a crusade of the kind that took place in the Middle Ages, i.e. an attempt to subjugate Muslim lands by means of Western military technology. It is a mistake to think that Islam can be dealt with by means of military power, and foolish to attempt to deal with it in such a way—though this emphatically does not mean that Western States should not defend themselves against Islamic aggression or bring to justice those who commit criminal acts of aggression against Western States and individuals. But this is not the task of the Church. Rather, the Church must use the spiritual weapons of the word of God and prayer, the healing of the sick, works of charity and self-sacrifice in the cause of the gospel if she is to bring the light of the Christian faith to the Islamic world.

Nothing less than a total conversion of the Islamic nations and Islamic communities within Western nations is called for by the Great Commission. The only means available and appropriate for this task are spiritual means: the preaching of the gospel and the disciplining of the Islamic nations and communities to Christ. It is essential, therefore, that the Church take seriously her call to preach the gospel to the Muslim world. This course of action represents not merely the only hope for Muslims, but also for the Western nations themselves, and indeed for the world.

The history of Eastern Christianity under the rule of Islam has already been written.<sup>6</sup> The story is a depressing one. The history of Western Christianity under the rule of Islam has yet to be written. Whether it will ever be written may well depend on how seriously the Church in the West takes the Great Commission in the next few decades and on whether the zeal and self-sacrifice of Muslims for their *jihad* can be matched by the zeal and self-sacrifice of Christians for the Great Commission—indeed, whether Muslims, with their zeal and self-sacrifice, can be converted from *jihad* to the Great Commission. C&S

5. On the disabilities of Christians under the rule of Islamic law in modern Pakistan see Naeem Shakir, "The Blasphemy Law in Pakistan and its Impact" (<http://www.ahrchk.net/hrsolid/mainfile.php/1999vo109no07/1143/>). I am grateful to John Peck for much of the above information on Pakistan. See also Alyssa A. Lappen, "Ford has a Better Idea: One Nation Under Allah" (<http://www.think-israel.org/lappen.fordfoundation.html/>). For more information on the situation in Pakistan see Patrick Sookhdeo, *A People Betrayed: The Impact of Islamisation on the Christian Community of Pakistan* (Christian Focus, 2002)—for a review of this book see *Christianity & Society* Vol. xiii, No. 1 (January 2003), p. 30f.

6. See, for example, Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (London: Associated University Presses, 1996). For a review of this book see *Christianity & Society*, Vol. x, No. 3 (July 2000), p. 28ff.

# THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM: ARE WE EQUIPPED?<sup>1</sup>

by *Christine Schirrmacher*

It would almost seem as though many people in Germany have only started taking notice of Islam since the terrorist attacks of September 11 shook the world. “Terrorism” and “The West” were, in the minds of many people, two separate worlds. Terrorism only happened in far-away countries, like Africa, Algeria, or the Middle East. Since the aircraft attacks of “Nine-eleven,” and successive terrorist attacks, often prevented in Europe by the security services, but succeeding in other parts of the world, this perception is changing. The awareness of the existence of Muslim extremism and its potential threat has increased.

Are we, however, better informed now concerning Islam itself? Islamic extremism represents an alarming and spectacular threat, but it is only a very small spectrum contained within Islam. It is not enough to be preoccupied with Islamic extremism, even though it certainly deserves urgent attention. It behoves us to acquire an over-view of Islam in its entirety, and not simply an imaginary, self-constructed picture. We need to understand Islam’s own assumptions, its theological variety, its various goals, the specific goals of the Islamic community here in Germany, and the network of international relationships.

*Islam: Are we adequately informed?*

First and foremost we must be correctly and thoroughly informed. This statement sounds so self-evident that one would think it requires no further comment. It does appear, however, that this fundamental requirement for mutual understanding has been neglected for too long. Muslims have not only been living in Europe since the eleventh of September 2001, and did not appear here in Germany unexpectedly and overnight. As far back as 1961, more than forty years ago, the first work-permits were issued for Turkish workers recruited by the government. The recruiting of Turkish workers was halted in 1973, but the number of Muslims has increased to approximately 3.2 million—through the coming together of families, through a proportionally higher birth-rate than the rest of the population, as well as refugees and people applying for asylum. Amongst the Turkish population of about two million that forms the

Islamic landscape in Germany there belongs a large group of Kurds and other minority Turkish groupings. About 150,000 people have not yet been able to return to Bosnia, several hundred thousand people have come from various Arab countries, such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt, as well as in excess of 100,000 Iranians, who fled from Iran after the outbreak of the Iranian revolution in the 1980s, and the Iran/Iraq war of 1980–1988.

From a theological perspective, the main group in Germany are the Sunni, (also worldwide) with more than two million adherents, followed by the Shia, with around 150,000 followers. There are also the Alevites, with about 400,000 followers, mostly from Turkey and Syria, as well as about 50,000 members of the Ahmadiyya movement, dismissed as a sect by other Muslims, but viewing themselves as strict and faithful Muslims and very active in the building of mosques in Germany. Around 600,000 Muslims have German citizenship, including about 10–12,000 German converts.

Well, so much for statistics. Have we appreciated the variety contained within the Islamic community within our society? What is to be discovered behind such bland labels as “Sunni,” “Shia,” or “Alevite”?

All of these theological groupings, which sometimes coincide with ethnic origins, possess their own views of the State and democracy, of life in a secular, post-modern society, and are, to varying degrees, bound by obligations to observe Sharia, the complete Islamic law containing not only regulations concerning crime, punishment and civil law, but also directions concerning moral and religious observance.

*Developments and tendencies amongst Muslims in Germany*

The first generation of “Gastarbeitern” (Guest-workers) in Germany had the self-declared goal of working in Germany for a few years, and, having gathered up a modest pile of wealth, returning back home to Turkey. These plans changed, however, partly because of negative economic developments in Turkey, and also because the second and third generation of children were growing up here in Germany. In the 1980s, at the very latest, one could see that most of these people now intended to stay. The assumption was, where this development had even been taken notice of, that these people would simply adapt themselves to Western

1. Translated by Jonathan Skeet. This essay was first published in German at: „Evangelische Verantwortung,“ Evangelischer Arbeitskreis der CDU/CSU, November 11/2003, p. 7–12.

secular society, relinquish their religious-ethnic customs, and in time become “assimilated” within the rest of society. Nowadays it has become evident that this has not happened; rather, a reverse dynamic has come about.

#### TWO EXAMPLES:

##### 1. *Children brought up in Germany, but with poor German language skills*

It still happens that immigrant children—especially from Turkey and Arab countries—commence primary school<sup>2</sup> and are unable to speak German, having grown up so far in an exclusively Turkish or Arab environment. This is often exacerbated by the tendency for Turkish Muslims living in Germany to marry relatives from Turkey. (Marrying a cousin is seen as particularly advantageous.) Muslim immigrants in Germany often hold to strict Islamic rules of etiquette concerning the separation of the sexes, the women being largely confined to the home, while husbands and fathers deal with all matters requiring contact with the outside world, sometimes even the weekly shopping. This means that married women living in Germany seldom attend German language courses or establish any kind of contact with German society.

Additionally, many immigrants choose to live in city-districts with high proportions of Muslim residents, leading to the formation of “Little Istanbul,” where all social and business affairs can be catered for by Turkish people, from hairdressing to the bakery, shopkeeper etc. as well as, of course, the local mosque. It becomes possible to live on a daily basis with no contact at all with German society, and what contact does exist is often experienced as unpleasant and unfriendly. The resulting weakness in German-language skills often displayed in second and third generation Muslims has already led to the not-uncommon situation in which secondary or special school-leavers have little or no academic qualifications, and in considerably higher proportions than their German peers. One has to ask oneself what future these young people have with such a difficult employment situation in Germany.

The discussion concerning a compulsory pre-school year for immigrant children to gain language skills is a step in the right direction, and long overdue. In Germany, the debate concerning “Leitkultur” (The “Leading Culture”) sparked off no small controversy (typically German, one is tempted to comment), but it has long been clear in other countries with a high immigrant population that integration, success in a job and career, and a healthy identification with the new homeland, with its laws and customs, begins with a thorough understanding of the language, and is not possible without it.

##### 2. *Withdrawal into Mosque and family*

It is clear that Islam, as a religion, has become more rather than less attractive. The frequently propagated idea that religion would become “watered down” in the second and third generations is no longer mentioned. There are, of course, “secularised” Muslims who go in for the same kinds

of leisure activities as their German peers, but all in all Islam has remained very much alive as a religion among immigrants, not perhaps with every small point of Islamic law being minutely observed in every family, but sufficiently so for Islam to offer an identity. Religion and custom are currently more strictly observed here than in the country where the immigrants came from, and young people who form the second and third immigrant generations, whose parents live a fairly relaxed and “enlightened” form of Islam, are returning to a lifestyle of much stricter religious observance (examples being headscarves and fasting).

In many surveys Muslim youths often emphasise that the majority of them not only do not feel accepted, but clearly believe they are marginalised and discriminated against. Research amongst young people, such as the well-known “Shell Youth Study” demonstrates that Muslims and Non-Muslims in Germany keep themselves very much to themselves and cross-cultural friendships are still more the exception than the rule. Thus, broad German society and culture remains opaque to Islamic sub-culture and many Muslims remain ignorant concerning German society. They no longer live in Turkey, but have not really “arrived” in Germany in terms of language, emotional identification, and active participation in German society. When difficulties and academic failure at school combine with experiences of rejection and increased attachment to the local mosque (which often will preach distance and withdrawal from German society, propagating Turkish nationalism and Islam as an identity) then it often seems that openness to broad German society and chances of successful integration are lost forever.

Only a more thorough knowledge of Islam and the current developments among Muslims in Germany, including the special cultural facets of Islam, such as family values, will put us into the position where we can possibly have any kind of firm basis for thinking of ways to influence this development. This is also the only way we can avoid the situation where we only start to notice certain negative developments when the threat to German society has already formed (for example, recent events concerning the “King Fahd Academy”<sup>3</sup> or the long drawn-out legal proceedings concerning the “Caliph from Cologne”<sup>4</sup>). It will not be sufficient merely to become familiar with the mind-set of a few violent extremists, but to get to know the thinking, faith and life of the Muslim minority as a whole. As long as this lack of knowledge concerning Muslim cultural values (such as the concept of “Honour and Shame” or the role of women) persists, then we will continue to have situations such as the desperate woman schoolteacher, who cannot understand why one of her male pupils refuses to acknowledge her authority in any way, and why his elder brother has him considerably more under control than she does, or why one of the girls in her class, whom she considered fairly modern and open-minded, suddenly, and without any warn-

3. *Translator's note:* The reference is to recent controversy concerning an Islamic school in Bonn, Germany, which is said to have taught its pupils Islamic extremism, including advocating violence to propagate Islam.

4. *Translator's note:* This is a reference to legal proceedings on the part of the German government to ban an extremist Islamic organisation whose leader has earned the nickname “Caliph from Cologne.” The organisation is now banned and further proceedings are under way to possibly have the aforementioned Caliph deported to his country of origin.

2. *Translator's note:* Primary school children in Germany generally commence schooling when they are six to seven years old.

ing, is bundled off to Turkey for an arranged marriage shortly after having participated in a school field-trip.

Western societies will only be able to define religious and social freedoms and boundaries for themselves, as well as for religious minorities—some of whom also have a political agenda—through a deeper and more thorough understanding of Islam.

#### *Barriers to Religious Freedom?*

A discerning knowledge of Middle East culture will enable us to form a well-grounded and sober assessment of our own Western culture. This assessment will make it possible to differentiate between the demands made by religious groups which can be readily accepted and fall into the category of “Religious Freedom,” and those demands which call into question the basis of Western society—values only relatively recently won, after hard struggles, and seen as great triumphs (for example, sexual equality). This brings to light a distinguishing feature of Islam, namely, that it sees itself not just as a religion, but as a formative influence in society, and, according to the views of Islamic authorities, a would-be political system. Islamists therefore will always be attempting to re-order existing society to make Islamic law (i.e. Sharia law) more and more binding. This is also the perspective from which to view the various court orders which have had to be made concerning ritual animal-slaughter, the wearing of headscarves, or calls to prayer over loudspeakers.

Also to be viewed in this context is the striving to build ever-larger mosque complexes with minarets built as high as possible, some metres higher, in some cities, than the planning permission allows, but until now always allowed to remain standing. Not a few people in this country are concerned that Islam is working toward their own conversion. Of course, a non-Muslim converting to Islam would be seen as a cause for rejoicing, but is by no means the main strategic direction from the Islamic camp.

#### *Same expressions, same definitions?*

Knowledge concerning Islam and its understanding of theological, legal, and cultural matters is still at a very primitive stage, which can be seen in discussions in which both sides argue about certain expressions, or terms, but in which, because of their differing religious-cultural contexts, they have widely differing understandings of what these terms and expressions actually mean.

#### *Human Rights*

Take for example the question of Human Rights, which has, in this context at least, faded somewhat into the background. Muslim organisations have often emphasised that Islam not only respects human rights but has formulated even more comprehensive catalogues of human rights than the West, and actually is the source of all human rights. At second glance, however, at human rights declarations in a Western and Islamic setting, it becomes clear in the preamble to Islamic human rights declarations that Sharia is placed over all human rights declarations. This means, to take a practical example, that an apostate Muslim cannot expect any kind of treatment which would resemble anything

connected with human rights, because, according to Sharia, he has committed a sin worthy of death and cannot therefore appeal to decrees concerning religious freedom or human rights. The vast majority of Muslim theologians support the view that the right to religious freedom and human rights ends when someone falls away from, or otherwise leaves, Islam. This is a reality which must be looked in the face. Herein lies the actual point at issue concerning Western and Islamic understandings of human rights, not the current discussions about whether or not Islam recognises human rights. Only in the context of a deeper and more thorough knowledge and understanding of the religion, culture, and legal system of Islam can such broadly stated and public discussions be held.

#### *The Question of Tolerance*

Another example is the question of tolerance and its definition. Muslim apologetics often argues that Islam accepts Christianity but that Christianity rejects Islam. It is often pointed out that Muslim conquerors, in contrast to the Christian Church and the Crusaders, never confronted Christians with the choice of converting to Islam or being executed. It is also stated that Muslims recognise Jesus as a revered prophet and accept the Old and New Testaments as true God-given revelation, whereas Christians refuse to accept the validity of the Koran.

Also here—without a well founded knowledge of Islam—the discussion concerning the expression “tolerance” often goes off in the wrong direction. How is the term “tolerance” understood in Islamic circles? Certainly not as an equal status with other religions. The Koran makes it clear that Muhammad attempted to gain the recognition and support of Christians (and Jews) from 610 A.D. onwards, but began to view Christianity increasingly as blasphemous and the Christian Scriptures as counterfeit, since Christians continued to refuse to follow him.

It is true that in territories conquered by Islam, Christians were permitted to keep their faith, but they were made into second-class citizens (Arabic: *Dhimmi*, i.e. protectees) who had to pay special taxes for their “unbelief” and suffered many legal disadvantages, discrimination, even persecution and death. Yes, the Koran testifies that the Old and New Testaments are divine revelations, and Jesus is a revered prophet in Islam, but only as a “prophet of Islam,” as a forerunner of Muhammad, only as a man, and not as one who is able to bring about salvation for anyone. The Islamic position is that Christians mistakenly honour Jesus as the son of God and thus completely confuse his “original” Islamic message. The Christian revelations, as “falsified writings,” receive very little attention in Islam, and Jesus, as revealed in Old and New Testaments, just as little.

Another cause for concern is the fact that some Muslim organisations insist that publishing anything “negative” about Islam be forbidden, as this would constitute discrimination—or, in other words, everything about Islam that is not written from an Islamic perspective should be forbidden. (This development is more advanced in Great Britain, through a very powerful Islamic lobby.)

This way of thinking results from the “Dhimma,” or “Protectee” status that Islam allots Christians, in which they have to submit to Islam and Islamic law. A lot will depend on how alert Western society is to this process, and to what

extent it is prepared to defend the hard-won freedoms of speech and press.

#### *Women's questions*

Further food for thought is found in the matter of the role of women. Here also, a much more thorough and well founded knowledge of Islam would be helpful in the discussion, and would lead to more honesty concerning the really controversial points. Muslim apologetics often emphasise that women enjoy equal status before God in Islam and that Islam lends women true dignity, freedom, protection and respect. From a Western perspective a woman who covers herself with a long coat and headscarf is “oppressed.” Where lies the truth? It is true that the Koran speaks about men and women having been created equally by God, and contains no hints that women are at all inferior in status or value. At the same time, however, the Koran speaks clearly (and the Islamic traditions even more so) about very different roles for men and women, from which differing rights are derived, which means that women are effectively disadvantaged as far as their general rights go. She is disadvantaged in inheritance laws (she inherits only half), and as a witness in court (her testimony is worth only half that of a man), and also in laws concerning marriage. For a woman, divorce is made difficult, in some countries impossible, but her husband is allowed, in most Islamic countries, to have more than one wife.

A virtually universally recognised principle in Islamic marriage laws is the duty of the wife to obey her husband and the right of the man to “train” her in right and wrong, which makes it forbidden for her to make her own independent decisions should he raise objections to her plans, or to her leaving the house, maintaining contact with people of whom he disapproves etc. If she does not fulfil her duty of obedience he is permitted, according to the vast majority of Muslim theologians, to chastise her (Sura 4:34). The whole basis of Islamic marriage laws (polygamy, submission of wife to husband, chastisement, inheritance laws) is interpreted almost exclusively in a conservative sense in the Islamic world (with the exception of Turkey, perhaps) and is the real cause of clashes with the German legal understanding, as opposed to the simple question of head-carves. These controversial “women’s affairs” have, however, not been sufficiently dealt with in the public discussions concerning Islam.

The same terms, used by different people, do not always carry the same meaning. The way in which cultural-religious themes are understood has a lot to do with the cultural-religious background in which they were formed. Expressions such as “tolerance” or “equality” cannot, when cut off from their Christian roots, be simply applied to other cultures and religions as meaning the same things.

Through a deeper understanding of Islam it would be possible to have a more realistic assessment of our own situation and would enable us to see from what perspective Islam views our society—including the Church. The rather superficial discussions concerning the “Abrahamic Religions” could, with better grounded knowledge concerning the other religion, reach the point where one was able to speak about really sensitive themes, such as the perception of who God is, and what he is like, spiritual revelation, the way the Koran came to be written, why Islam claims to have existed before Christianity, and why Adam is seen as a prophet of Islam.

#### *Muslims expect answers*

Islam has become an enormous challenge for the State, society and the Church. Muslims, Muslim leaders and Muslim organisations expect well-thought-through answers from German society. They do not expect to be marginalised on a human level, nor discriminated against by our society and they should not experience such treatment.

Our society has not experienced a “Muslim invasion,” but Muslims live among us as people who were invited by German society to come and live and work here. Muslims also expect theological answers, so that they can see in Christianity a group that can be taken seriously and engaged with in serious dialogue. Answers cannot be reached without a much deeper knowledge of Islam, or by simply assuming that both religions have the same content, or by refusing to face the differences which surface from the respective text traditions. Muslims themselves certainly do not believe that Islam and Christianity are the same, or stand for the same things. Clear Christian standpoints and values, lived out by Christians in Church and society, would be taken for granted by Muslims, would require no justification, and would, furthermore, receive admiration and respect. Muslims respect this kind of clarity amongst themselves, and theological vagueness, trying at all costs to maintain a false kind of “chumminess” is recognised for what it is by many Muslims, and despised. The majority of apolitical Muslims who live in Germany are very concerned about the rights which Islamic groups are gaining, step by step.

It is the job of the State—from the position of a deeper knowledge of Islam—to find sensible ways of drawing clear boundaries for political groups and influences. There must be no double standards, for example, in the question of a woman’s place in society, or acceptance of polygamy, for a State can only survive permanently if there is common acceptance of the same laws and values. It is well worth the effort of standing up for these common values, in a fair and friendly manner, and of defending the foundations of our society, Church and State. *C&S*

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# ABRAHAM KUYPER ON ISLAM

by Francis Nigel Lee\*

NOT long ago, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the world-famous Calvinist Abraham Kuyper became the Prime Minister of the Netherlands. Thereby he became chief politician of the largest Islamic country in the world—the then Dutch colony of “India” (alias the present Indonesia to the north-west of Australia). *At that time*, Kuyper could indeed still claim:<sup>1</sup> “Our Queen [Wilhelmina] rules over *fewer* Christians and *more* Muhammadans than the Sultan of Turkey in Europe and Asia together. England with her . . . millions of Muhammadans in the Indian Sub-Continent, still leads.” Since then, England and the Netherlands and Turkey have all lost their Empires. Yet Islam has today become almost the most influential religion in the world.

In 1905 Kuyper lost the General Election in the Netherlands. He then requested Queen Wilhelmina to discharge him from his office. Immediately thereafter<sup>2</sup> he began to write his impressive two-volume work *Om de Oude Wereldzee [Around the Mediterranean]*.

Much of what he there says about Islam is still very important. More so because the Islamic lands that were then colonies of Western nations have become independent since the Second World War, and in many cases have proclaimed Islam as the law of the land. Thus the West today ignores the warnings in Kuyper’s book at its peril.

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1. A. Kuyper, *Pro Rege [For the King]* (Kok, Kampen, 1911), I:9.

2. A. Kuyper, *Om de Oude Wereldzee* (Van Holkema & Warendorf, Amsterdam, 1907), I:v.

“What makes the Mediterranean Sea so very important?”—writes Dr. Kuyper in the above work.<sup>3</sup> “First, for more than thirteen centuries it has been the centre of our human life. Second, it was and is precisely this Sea which both connects *and* separates the three Old World Continents of Asia and Europe and Africa. And third, it has dictated the course of the cultural development of (and the resultant struggles between) . . . the Christian and Muhammadan elements around its edges. Even now, the Mediterranean Sea maintains a rank of serious importance . . .

“It was [and is] not a struggle of Asia against Europe, but . . . of the Crescent against the Cross . . . Islam conquered North Africa and Spain; the Turks were stopped only at Vienna . . . Islam—by its almost complete destruction of the Christian Church in Asia [Minor], Egypt, Nubia [in the Sudan], Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and almost still more by its conquest of the Holy Land—has ignited a fire of division which still burns . . . A hard-pressed Christendom has for centuries known no other enemy than Islam . . .

“The feeling of belonging together is increasing among Muslims . . . Without exception all Islamic states, [then] led by Turkey, are in a condition of pitiful decadence . . . To convert adherents of Islam to Christianity is next to impossible in Turkey . . . He who is under the illusion that Islam is a spent force and need not be taken into account is mistaken. The proclamation of a holy war [*jihad*], of which one is fearful, is no hallucination . . . Islam remains an unusually strong spiritual power . . .

“The two basic foundations of Islam, its fatalism and its determination to extend that religion by the sword, completely reconcile the apparent contrast . . . Once the call for revenge has been proclaimed the old thirst for blood awakens, and the ancient struggle is once again resumed with the courage of a lion. What occurred in Armenia [during the genocide of 1894–1915], will prove to be only a prelude to the drama of greater bloodshed . . . Fate has so decreed—and the moment to throw off the Western yoke and to repair the glory of the Crescent has arrived . . .

“In Christ the Self-revelation of the Supreme Being occurred . . . through *incarnation*, with the central personality of our human race in *the Son of man* . . . That is the confession of the Trinity, where an attempt is made to express even dogmatically this absolute and complete character of the Christian Religion. That is what Muhammad found in his day—but without himself believing in it . . .

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3. *Op. cit.*, I:vi, 2:7, 17, 19f., 21f., 24, 29f., 40f., 325, 335; II:1f., 3f., 7f., 11.

“The inner spiritual vitality of Islam is being illuminated more clearly . . . Islam knows how to maintain itself as a spiritual unity from behind the Himalayas right down into the heart of Africa . . . The feeling of community continues to maintain itself. And all who belong to Islam form one mighty complex which is and remains much more strongly aware of itself and of its spiritual unity than does the multiplicity of Christian Churches [of their Christianity] . . .

“There is a bond which binds every Muslim to Muhammad’s tradition . . . The Koran controls his entire life—in social, juridical, and even political respects . . . The whole of life is encompassed within the sphere of the Koran.

“The animosity against the Christian nations is still apparent in the disposition of the Muslim . . . A Pan-Islamic action is underway among them which overlooks all sectarian differences. Right down to far along the northern coast of Africa, there is a revival of the hope of restoring the power of the Crescent. And it is becoming overwhelming . . .

“It cannot be otherwise than that the first sortie of this, with its front, is turning against all European [or Western] powers . . . The danger that Europe and America at a given moment shall find Asia *together with* Islam ranged against it is far from imaginary . . . Hatred against Christians is not decreasing but increasing . . . The chasms which separate us from Islam are becoming ever broader . . . Do not forget that the pilgrims who return from Mecca as hadjis are fanatical . . .

“The struggle of the ages between Asia and Europe has been for the leadership of the world. Europe [and its extensions] indeed has the upper hand. But it is still . . . Judaism, Christianity and Islam which dominate the spiritual life in both parts of the world [Afroeurasia as the ‘Greater World-Island’ and the Americas as the ‘Lesser World-Island’]. Africa is an appendix of Asia; America and Australia are overflows from Europe . . .

“Fanatical power resides in Pan-Islamism, and also in the Muslim mission [to Non-Muslims] within Africa and in our Archipelago [viz. Indonesia] . . . The Pan-Islamic movement is even now stirring up three World Continents. It is zealously working its way through them. It is constantly winning more followers . . .

“In Africa . . . Islam has recently been expanding . . . He who wishes to learn about Islam in its conquering and driving power is now in the first place to be pointed to Africa . . . Sixteen centuries ago, at least its whole northern coast along the Mediterranean Sea and the eastern coast of what is now called Port Said and as far as deep into the Sudan had been won for the Cross. But all of that has perished. Along the entire coastline, Islam has triumphed. And it indeed seems the Crescent is right now seriously preparing itself to conquer also the interior . . .

“By the fourth century of its existence, Christianity had penetrated deep into the heart of Asia. It had conquered the entire northern coast of Africa and Southern Europe, practically across the whole breadth of the once so powerful Roman World Empire. But what is that increase in the course of four centuries in comparison to the gigantic triumph of Islam, which within a hundred years of the *Hijra* [Muhammad’s flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D.], still excluding only the greater part of the whole of Europe, subjected the entire broad territory in Asia and Africa to its spiritual influence and at the same time also brought it under its sceptre? . . .

“Islam broke through with a penetrating force against which nothing offered resistance. It overthrew and expelled everything in its path. Indeed, it transformed the spirit which dominated it into its own spirit. And so fast and so deeply did it impress its own stamp upon the conquered peoples that even today, after the course of fourteen centuries, all those peoples live from the spirit of *Islam*, propagate *its* traditions, and refractorily reject all *others* (even when they are of a *higher* culture) . . .

“What, then, was the magic wand by which Muhammad caused all this unparalleled enchantment to stream forth from him, to effect this unprecedented turning-point in the history of the world? . . . Muhammad did *not* place his profession of faith *alongside* of life. His religion was no secret, only for his closet. Much rather was he so deeply and ideally saturated with the all-embracing and all-inclusive dominion of the omnipotence of Allah that he spanned his profession of Allah, like a net, over the whole of human life. He commandeered domestic, social and political life—no less than his personal life—under the controlling influence of his religion. Religion as a purely private matter was simply unthinkable to Muhammad . . .

“Allah was *always* supposed to have ruled. He would then always have revealed his will, and would always constantly have validated himself during history. Man, however, was simply not able to fathom the full scope of Allah’s dominion. Hence, then, a gradually progressing and constantly advancing revelation. The prophets of all ages were the organs of this . . .

“Their series begins already with Adam. Noah and Shem belong to it. After them, especially Abraham; after Abraham, Moses; and after Moses, Jesus Christ. All of these would not only have been zealous for Monotheism and preached the honour of Allah. But in their successive actions, there would be a linked chain, a constantly progressive revelation given by Allah. Jesus would have been the last and the highest among those who preceded Muhammad but, in kind and in order, nevertheless equal to Moses and his predecessors. Thus even Jesus would not have completed the revelation of Allah. Was it then not predicted in the Gospel itself that after Jesus yet another Comforter [viz. Muhammad] would come?

“The final completion of the revelation of Allah would appear in Muhammad. He would consummate what had been begun in Abraham, Moses and Jesus. And not only that. Muhammad would receive the concluding revelation . . . After Muhammad, there could no longer be any further or higher or more complete revelation. That which began with Adam, or if you wish with Abraham, would be one united process which would reach its consummation in Muhammad . . .

“Islam crossed over all boundaries. And wherever idols still stood erected, or the acknowledgment of Allah got no entrance, men were regarded as being rebellious, contumacious, and provoking the Almighty . . . The shadowy dark side of Muhammadanism, which similarly flowed forth from its legalistic character, is its lack of spiritual depth. It knows of no rebirth. It knows of no deeper view of sin. It is devoid of every soteriological character reaching further than ceremonial reconciliation . . .

“The riddle which the rapid rise of Islam places before us is that it attacked, almost exclusively, *only* just about totally *Christianised* nations. With such *higher standing* peoples, after a

short struggle, it caused the so vastly superior Christianity to vanish sometimes almost without a trace.”

As Kuyper remarks:<sup>4</sup> “The basic thrust of *the book of Revelation* may and should be applied to the *past* as well as to the *present* of the Church . . . If we take a look at the marginal notes of Revelation [in the *Dordt Dutch Bible*], we shall then see that they apply it . . . to *Muhammad* and the Pope of Rome etc. In itself, there is nothing against that.”

“The Christian Church of the East, when Islam arose, was stormed unexpectedly. Islam shook her fundamentally, and her most beautiful cathedrals presently fell down into ruins . . . *Like a swarm of locusts* settling on an orchard [cf. Rev. 9:1–21], presently to leave no leaf and no blossom on the little twigs stripped bare, so the Christian garden in those lands was gnawed away and totally emptied . . .

“According to Islamic law, only three choices were left to the Christian population in a militarily occupied land. One either had to embrace Islam and then be absorbed among the ‘believers’; or one had . . . to pay special taxes and then become a *Ghimmi*; or finally, one had to die by the sword. Whoever chose payment of the special taxes performed a deed of submission in the payment itself, and painfully had to endure it . . .

“When Omar captured Jerusalem he wrote in the decree of capitulation that ‘the Christians may freely hold their worship services in their churches and chapels, provided that every Muhammadan may be present there at all times day and night, that their worship services would never come out onto the streets . . . , that they would not convert anyone to their religion, [and] that they would never prevent anyone from becoming a Muslim.’”<sup>5</sup>

Kuyper rightly added:<sup>6</sup> “If the Turks during their invasion of Europe had not been stopped, and Islam had not been pushed back out of Spain, the entire Church of Christ would have been exposed to the danger of practically being exterminated. That indeed happened in Western Asia and on the northern coast of Africa where it had once so powerfully flourished.”

“Islam wanted to control the whole of life—not only religious but also social, juridical and political life. And the further that the sphere of life which is to be ruled expanded itself the more the need was felt to systematise the consequences of Islam. Theologically, socially and juridically—every principle in all its consequences had to be thought through from the Koran.”<sup>7</sup>

“Whatever attempts were made even from the sixteenth century onward to convert the Negro races [in the Old World] to Christianity never succeeded. On the other hand, the Arabs who trekked inland succeeded almost without resistance to win one tribe after the other for Islam. The Sahara and the whole Sudan had already then been as good as won—and the propaganda among the Bantu populating the whole of Central Africa (which possesses related tribes even as far as the Zulus) . . . had already begun with power. Consequently, from the Mediterranean Sea as far as Rhodesia [viz. Zambia and Zimbabwe], one continuous complex of peoples would finally belong to Islam . . .

“Islam penetrates to deep within the Indian Sub-Continent and the Archipelago [of Indonesia]. It still exudes new vitality, and is now taking over Africa unnoticed . . . European [viz. Western] Christianity is struggling through hard times . . . while Islam is . . . much rather rejoicing in a spiritual renaissance . . . Yet missions among the Muhammadans may certainly never for that reason be abandoned! However discouraging it often might be, so that one knows in advance how there has hardly been any success in getting a nation which has once been won for the Crescent to kneel at the Cross, duty and calling command that continued sowing must be *persisted* in even among such peoples . . .

“The outcome cannot be clinched anywhere else than precisely on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It was precisely so named because it is the only sea whose waters lap against the three Old World Continents of Europe, Asia and Africa [viz. Mackinder’s *Greater World-Island*] . . . Great is the struggle of interests which are controlled by the Atlantic Ocean. Mightier still is the significance of the struggle which is arising in the Pacific Ocean.”

Only four years later, Kuyper warned in his 1911 *Pro Rege*:<sup>8</sup> “The Heathen Asia is again waking up, and is dreaming of a mighty future . . . Also in Islam, a new action is to be detected. Islam is expanding itself steadily, especially in Africa . . . The time of the hegemony of Christian Europe is approaching its end. Both in the technical areas as well as in the world of ideas and not least in the religious sphere, the ancient struggle is once again reviving with increasing power.

“America too is standing at our side; but still she follows her *own* utopias. And with increasing anxiety, one asks oneself what is going to be born from that chaos when China . . . shall perhaps match Japan in development, and also the [Dutch and English East] Indies have regained their independence . . .

“Note what Islam had done. By storm, it is now again penetrating into the middle of Africa, and knows how to subject one opponent after another to Muhammad—while it is also expanding very rapidly before our eyes deeply into the Indian Sub-Continent as well as our [Indonesian] Archipelago . . . The ‘young Turks’ did their studies especially in *Paris* . . . One would thus presume that their modern [revolutionary] views would have led them to a new kind of anti-clericalism which would have opposed Islam with equal decisiveness as it opposed the faith of Christians.

“Yet matters turned out altogether differently. Very speedily it nevertheless began to become clear that the young Turks acted like genuine Muhammadans. They espoused the cause of the Ottoman character of the State, and very quickly began with their action against their Christian fellow-citizens who belonged to the Greek or the Armenian Church . . .

“Today under the new regime in Turkey, even more emphasis is being given than earlier to the Ottoman character of that Empire . . . And with that, the honour of Muhammad now still stands written in the land of the Saracens—fully twelve centuries after the *Hijra* [of 622 A.D.]”

The following is what the great Calvinist Abraham Kuyper wrote many decades before the Dutch granted independence to predominantly Islamic Indonesians:<sup>9</sup> “Guardianship over a nation not related to us becomes

4. A. Kuyper, *Locus de Consummatione Saeculis* [*Locus on the Consummation of the Ages*, p. 220], in his *Dictaten Dogmatiek* [*Dogmatic Dictations*], (Kok, Kampen, n.d.), V.

5. A. Kuyper, *Om de Oude Wereldzee*, II:16–21.

6. A. Kuyper, *Pro Rege*, J.H. Kok, Kampen, 1911, III:339.

7. A. Kuyper, *Om de Oude Wereldzee*, II:23, II:39f., 506–11.

8. A. Kuyper, *Pro Rege*, III:312f. and 58of.

9. A. Kuyper, *Ons Program*, J. H. Kruyt, Amsterdam, 1979, pp. 963f. and 968–72. 10. A. Kuyper, *Pro Rege*, III:316f.

possible only when the moral realisation of duty and of responsibility to ‘the Judge also of the nations’ is aroused . . . Guardianship, be it noted, not to keep these nations always immature, but to accept them for what they are—that is, as immature . . .

“Toward those immature nations, we need to accept the threefold duty under which every guardian stands toward his ward. Namely: (a), to raise him morally; (b), to control his possession of the majority of his assets with prudence; and (c), in the future, as God so wishes, to make the adoption of an independent position possible . . .

“A colonial programme of Anti-Revolutionary [Calvinists] in which the *Christianisation* of Indonesia is not *the point of departure*, is unthinkable . . . It should be the inspiring *chief ingredient* for everyone who honours God’s Christ also as ‘*the Saviour of the nations*’ . . .

“The *Church* and her members stand in the *spiritual* sphere. Because of this, she professes that all power in heaven and on earth *has* been given to Christ [Mt. 28:19–20]. She thus honours him as King over all peoples and nations [cf. Rev. 15:4]. She accordingly feels herself obliged to make God’s Word known also to the peoples overseas. And, indeed, for three reasons: (a), because obedience is to be shown to this Word: ‘Go into the whole world, and proclaim the Gospel to every creature!’ [Mk 16:15]. (b), because King Jesus is to come to that honour, even with the peoples of the [Indonesian] Archipelago. And (c), because the salvation of souls should stimulate us to be merciful.

“But the *State* should judge *differently*. She only knows that she has been called to honour the only true God, also in the education of the nations entrusted to her, that therefore neither pagan [idolatry breaking the First as well as the *Second Commandment*] nor *muhammadan idolatry* [breaking the *First Commandment*] is to be honoured or supported by her, and

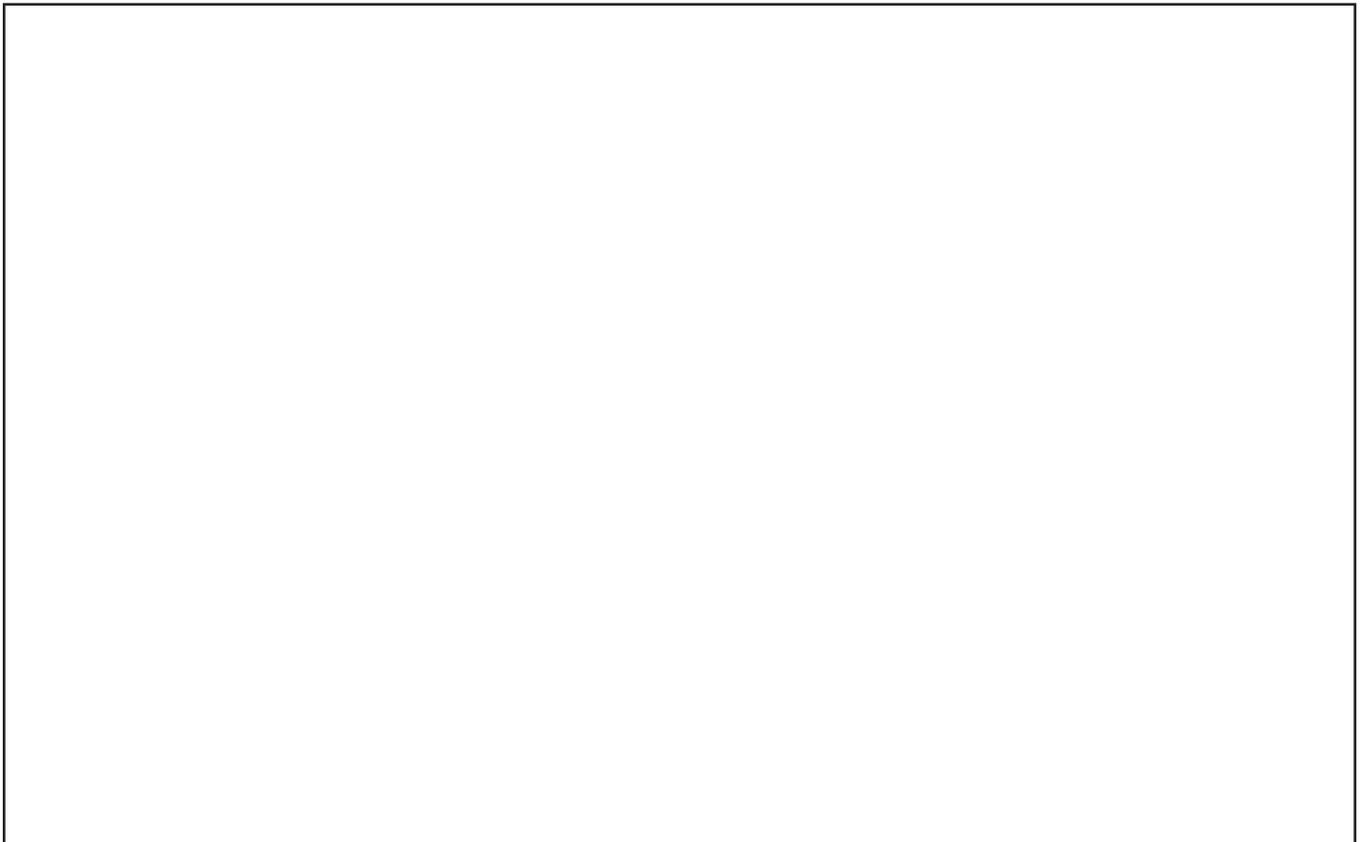
that, to the contrary, according to the unimpeachable testimony of history, only conversion to the *Christian* vital principle is able to open up a vista of national development in the higher sense even to those *nations* . . .

“*Islam*, even in its noblest form, is not able to deliver for the existence of a nation as such anything other or better than either fanaticism or petrification . . . The thoroughly untrue representation that the [image-hating] Muhammadan is not an *idolator* needs to be opposed . . . It should *again* be professed and acknowledged that ‘*Allah*’ is a god [or idol] invented by man himself, which does not even have the same name in common with *the Triune God* of Christians.”

Yet, as Kuyper also rightly remarked:<sup>10</sup> “The proclamation of the calling of the *nations* goes throughout the whole prophecy to [Old Testament] Israel. Moor [in *Morocco*] and Tyrian [in *Lebanon*], Egyptian [as well as Assyrian in *Iraq*] and Persian [in *Iran*] *shall* turn to God . . . Even for the Jews [also in *Israel*], the time shall come when they shall again in great numbers bow before the King whom God has anointed over Zion . . . Thus the appointment of our King [*Jesus*] extends over the *whole world*.”

Kuyper died in 1920. Despite the destruction of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War; despite the containment of Islam by Western Colonial Powers until the end of the Second World War; and despite the disempowerment of all Muslims throughout the Soviet Union until the early 1990s, a revived Islam is today rapidly colonising the West and able to strike almost at will (whether in Moscow, Madrid, or New York City).

It is past time for the Christian Church to recommit herself to complete the discipling of every Islamic nation on Earth. Her very survival, especially in the face of a revived Islam, now depends upon her complete execution of Christ’s Great Commission. *C&S*



# ON THE COVENANTAL NATURE OF THE TRADITIONAL FRENCH MONARCHY

by Simon Scharf\*

“‘Feudal anarchy’: thus the democratic terrorism baptizes, in order to denigrate it, the only era of concrete liberty known to History.”—Nicolás Gómez Dávila

In this article we intend to examine, in very broad terms, the structures of the traditional French monarchy. The goal of this modest study is to verify if the Old Regime, particularly during the “Age of Faith,”<sup>1</sup> can be considered to conform to the biblical notion of the covenant.

As Reformed believers our duty is to examine the subject closely and compare all things with the word of God. The latter constitutes, as we well know, the “covenant treaty.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore it is only in the federal context that a right understanding of reality and the different “law spheres” that govern it can be developed. When built on such a foundation, Christian civilisation will surely structure itself according to the law of God (theonomy), which is an aspect of reality and revealed in the Bible. It is this reality that we wish to deal with, especially in the pre-Revolutionary French context.

Christian France was governed from its origin by a monarchy, but a monarchy with explicitly Christian foundations. The concept of the French monarchy was not exhausted by the sole person of the king. Its characteristics are the covenant structure that we find at all level of society. We shall briefly sketch out a picture of mediaeval society organised on the basis of Rev. R. Sutton’s five-point covenant model, which elucidates the foundations of every type of biblical covenant: first, “transcendence”; second, “hierarchy”; third, “ethics”; then “sanctions”; and last, “continuity.”<sup>3</sup> Only when this is done shall we be able to tackle in detail the theonomic nature of the French kingdom.

## A. A SYMBIOTIC SOCIETY

We shall endeavour to illustrate this study by making references to history without entering, strictly speaking, into historic research. We shall try to establish what the principles

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1. Or, in other words, the Middle Ages, cf. Pierre Courthial, *Le jour des petits recommencements* (Lausanne: L’Age d’Homme, 1996), p. 184.

2. *Idem*, *Fondements pour l’avenir* (Aix-en-Provence: Kerygma, 1981), p. 43.

3. R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper* (Tyler: ICE, 1987), p. 120f.

were that allowed the rebirth and reconstruction of mediaeval France after it was torn apart by the rivalries of Charlemagne’s descendants.

### 1. *The family: the essential covenant*

When St Augustine was writing his *City of God* Rome had just been sacked by the barbarians (410 A.D.). The declining Roman empire was progressively succumbing to its own decadence, as well as to the thrust of the Germanic tribes, which had been gathering for centuries on Rome’s borders. Historians use the word “anarchy” to refer to this period but we should be cautious about this. As the former pagan empire collapsed a new era of humanity began. As the civil institutions weakened, the original patriciate was being replaced by the harsh aristocracy of the newcomers. The influence of the Church—and more generally of Christianity—continued to grow. Since the new historiography of the Enlightenment philosophers much has been said about the fact that the Church took advantage of the situation to establish its temporal power. From the point of view of civilisation, the decline of the Roman empire made possible the settling of a Christian way of thinking that was no longer defensive and apologetic but rather constructive and ready for conquest. The blood of the martyrs had certainly been the seed from which the Church grew, according to the expression of St Irénée of Lyon. From the soil ploughed by the invasions a civilisation greatly informed by the most genuine Christianity emerged.

The existence of the Church as the oldest Christian institution—a result of the work of the clergy—is due to the providential situation we have just mentioned. “During one thousand two hundred years and more [the Church] had been both architect and labourer, at first alone, afterwards nearly alone.”<sup>4</sup> “Nearly alone” because during this time, in France at least, in order to establish a Christian temporal power—i.e. an institution on which the Church could lay the burden of the terrestrial guidance of men in order that she could dedicate herself to her calling: the care of souls—she had to secure the preservation of a “vital minimum” that would prevent the Western peoples from falling into com-

4. H. Taine, *Les origines de la France contemporaine* (Paris: Laffont, 1986), T.I, p. 9.

plete barbarism while at the same time keeping the faith, of which the Church is the appointed servant.

We will not elaborate on this aspect of the work of providence. The Church, which is established on the solid foundation of the prophets and the apostles, Jesus Christ being the corner stone, cannot be destroyed and is under the care of the one who gave his life for her at Golgotha. Sometimes ignored, persecuted and disobeyed, at other times listened to and obeyed, nevertheless the Church is one of the two indispensable lungs of society's life.

The other one, the temporal power, was in a very bad state. We must now make some distinctions. As much as the spiritual authority is a simple government by its entirely supernatural nature, the temporal power appears to be a principle allocated among various law spheres which, although they have a certain independence from one another, are nevertheless fundamentally linked together by the expansion and resorption principle. Let us explain.

Although "all power comes from God" (Rom. 13:1) it is still true that the temporal power comes from the paternal authority, which is legitimised by the divine fatherhood. Now if this paternal authority is really to be the root of the magistrate's legitimacy, it must be practised in the natural structure which is the family. If the family is distorted (as it had become among the ancient Romans), the character of the father—and thus his authority—will be weakened, corrupted and consequently, the entire society will follow the path of decadence.

For a civilisation to be built on the ruins of the Roman empire the basic principles of civilisation had to be not only potentially present but also closely linked to a true transcendence. Concerning this last point, we have seen that the presence and the vitality of the Church during this transitional period secured the propagation and conservation of the doctrinal orthodoxy.

As for the rediscovery of and the return to the constituent principles of society, we notice that it was made in the most natural way. What do we mean?

We will not be naïve enough to claim that it is the Church which has re-established the principle of the family as such. Every theocosmonomist<sup>5</sup>—every Christian—knows very well that nature is not opposed to grace and that the structures of temporal institutions spring from the nature of things.

The reconstruction of the family was encouraged in great part by the Church as an alternative to the declining Roman society. But this was essentially the revival of the natural order of things as society was liberated from iniquitous practices and perverted laws. It is interesting to notice, as we shall see, that natural institutions, even though they need the help of the Church to develop properly, are never opposed to the revealed law of God but rather provide the

Church with the proper context in which she can develop fully.

The descriptions of the institutions of ancient Rome (and more broadly of the Indo-European tribes) by the historian Fustel de Coulanges, enable us to see that the reformation of family institutions at the beginning of the Middle Ages—or should we rather say the glorious era of Western Christianity—constituted the first concrete manifestation of the covenant as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

It is well-known that the traditional concept of the family was much broader than the modern concept of the nuclear family. "A family consists of a father, mother, children and slaves."<sup>6</sup> What is of interest here is the covenantal nature of this primordial institution. "What unites the members of the ancient family . . . is the home's religion."<sup>7</sup> The Christian family is no different. If we look at the traditional elements of family life in the context of the newly born Christian civilisation we see the perfection of the universal principle, i.e. the creational institution, which, although it had been preserved as well as it could have been in the ancient world, was now restored by Christianity.

If we take into consideration the categories of Rev. Sutton, it is easy to recognise the covenant nature of the Christian Indo-European family. First, concerning transcendence, we have seen that the Church defined this by her proclamation of the orthodox symbols of the faith. Fustel confirms that the importance of the family as an institution—and particularly marriage—was deeply instilled in the religious conscience. Neither the bearing of children nor the affection or authority of the husband are sufficient to establish this institution. Only religion legitimises the institution of marriage and the family. Emile Benveniste confirms the remaining covenantal characteristics of marriage.<sup>8</sup> Hierarchy is represented by the authority of the husband and father, which, far from being oppressive and arbitrary, is, on the contrary, the guarantee of the wife's security and the protection of the family. As the federal representative of his family the father teaches the law and governs his family according to it—though in doing this he must not act as an autonomous tyrant.<sup>9</sup> And the home is a protective environment<sup>10</sup> inasmuch as the paternal authority is real and strong enough to secure this.

It goes without saying that the moral standards, the third principle in the covenant model, come naturally from the religious character of the family. Every member of the family is included ritually (we could even say sacramentally), and this requires piety from everyone. When we understand the extremely powerful meaning of this term for the ancients we realise that the mediaeval Christian family was thoroughly imbued with the notion of sin and justice. "To sin is to talk, act or desire against the eternal law."<sup>11</sup> This assertion of St Augustine punctuates the Age of Faith. If the penalties provided for the transgression of the divine law did not appear explicitly in the institution of the family (we must remember that the latter is not contractual but sacramental) it is because the Church passed judgement in those cases,

5. The terms *theocosmonomist* and *theocosmonomic* refer to the latest book by Pierre Courthial, *De Bible en Bible* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2002), which gives the meaning of these terms. They refer to a development of the Dooyeweerdian "cosmonomic" idea, which states that if it is true that the universe is structured according to the laws given it by God, we must not forget that "God is by Himself, and that the creature only EXISTS by Him, the sovereign Creator-Ruler of the universe" (p. 159). Thus, by the term *theocosmonomic* (a term that will occur quite frequently in this essay) we intend to designate the traditional Christian mediaeval world-view—the very one against which the modern mind has been forged—in which transcendence is linked to immanence, as the soul is to the body.

6. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique* (Paris: Hachette, s.d.), p. 93.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

8. E. Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1969), T.I, p. 239f.

9. Fustel de Coulanges, *op. cit.*, p. 98f. 10. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

11. E. Gilson, *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, 2ème série (Paris: Vrin, 1932), p. 123.

deferring finally to the father or his substitute, the magistrate. As for the fifth point, the principle of continuity, we find it explicitly mentioned by Fustel: the purpose of the family was not so much to perpetuate the name and the lineage of the family as to make the domestic religion endure. In the Christian perspective, we can affirm that the transcendent goal of the institution of the family was to give grace the lasting support of nature. The desire of Christian parents to produce offspring who would become saints remained undiminished whatever the political or economic conditions in which they had to live.

We shall conclude this brief survey of the foundation of Christian civilisation with the following comment: "An institution born spontaneously in so many different countries, cannot be an institution inspired by mere nature alone, but rather, by the author of our nature."<sup>12</sup>

## 2. *The enlarged family: the feudal covenant*

But fundamental as it may be, the family is only the first of the social bodies. It was normal that the gathering of families should give birth to institutions of a more complex nature. As it grows, the family becomes a "mesnie" (a household). "The household is composed of the relatives and the most faithful allies. They are fed, brought up, instructed about farming and soldiering along with the nephews, the descendants and other family members. The household is still strictly governed by a family-centred spirit."<sup>13</sup>

The household rapidly becomes a miniature State that gathers all kinds of professions directly connected to traditional needs. "The administration of justice, the defence of interests, etc., in fact all that contributes to his survival and his development, is under the authority of the father. He then takes the title of 'lord'<sup>14</sup> because of the increase of responsibility laid upon him, and also because of the dignity inherent in the head."

Up to now we have seen the formation of the initial nucleus of society. Now, taking the natural inequality of men for granted, we will have no difficulty in understanding the logical result of the development of the family.

For various reasons, natural as well as historical, certain families found themselves in a situation of authority and therefore of superiority towards the many smaller covenantal entities unable to preserve their integrity by themselves. Therefore, a natural movement led the weaker ones to seek refuge with the stronger, which brought about a new covenantal relationship, namely: the feudal bond.<sup>15</sup>

One fact must be underlined here. It carries, in our opinion, a very particular meaning, especially if we keep in mind the Dooyewerdian conception of the various modal spheres that constitute reality. With the feudal institution we face a civilising practice that does not directly emanate from the Church. Certain historians have even asserted—no doubt excessively—that feudalism was not a Christian practice.<sup>16</sup> This is evidently wrong, as we shall see. Nevertheless,

12. H. Delassus, *L'esprit familial dans la maison, dans la cité et dans l'Etat* (Lille: DDB, 1910), p. 158.

13. F. Funck-Brentano, *Le Moyen-Age* (Paris: Hachette, 1922), p. 8.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

15. F.-L. Ganshof, *Qu'est-ce que la féodalité?* (Paris: Tallandier, 1982), p. 19. English edition: *Feudalism* (London: Longman, 1964).

16. Such as L. Gauthier, *La chevalerie* (Paris, 1884, rééd. Pays & Terroirs, Cholet, 1999), p. 22.

if we wish to understand the deeply theonomic nature of mediaeval society, we must make some distinctions, particularly between the purely ecclesiastical institutions (episcopacy, clergy, etc.) and those institutions derived from nature, which are, themselves, no less influenced by Christianity.<sup>17</sup>

By its nature, *vassalage* has an intermediate position between the family and the royal covenant. Because of its nature this bond has no less a sacred dimension. However, it is clearly distinct from the sacred nature of the family and the throne in such a way that it does not represent an end in itself. This creates a certain ambiguity.<sup>18</sup> Let us say that the feudal covenant is the natural framework that allows the realisation of the family's purpose (as a creational institution), namely the fulfilling of the "cultural mandate." This allows one to live (as far as possible, considering the presence of sin) a *normal* individual and social human life provided all things are submitted to the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Monarchy seems to set up the necessary conditions for achieving such an enviable result.

Feudalism is essentially "a synallagmatic contract"<sup>19</sup> in which both parties are equally engaged, although in a hierarchical manner. The feudal system is therefore characterised by the covenantal ordering of a weaker and a stronger party, with a view to mutual assistance, which guarantees the peace and stability of human life. In this perspective we are reminded of the purpose of marriage,<sup>20</sup> which goes further than the simple "social contract" and underpins the importance and scope of this bond.

In whatever Western country it is found, the ceremony of vassalage always contains the three following elements: homage, faith and investiture.<sup>21</sup>

"The rite of homage is one of transfer of oneself, the giving of the vassal's hands into the lord's symbolising the giving to him of the whole of the vassal's person, and the lord's gesture of closing his hands on the vassal's, symbolising his acceptance of the self-giving."<sup>22</sup> On one side the vassal submits himself to his lord, on the other side the lord accepts this submission. From the first gesture both parties are bound to one another by reciprocal obligations.

Then the faith, the oath, is pronounced, the vassal having placed his hand on the holy books, or on the altar.<sup>23</sup> In virtue of this the lord carried out the investiture by granting a piece of land to the vassal.<sup>24</sup> It was practically impossible that a vassal should not obtain a fief. Indeed, the covenantal commitment would have had no meaning if it had not been concerned with the most tangible aspect of reality: living space. If the feudal covenant has been greatly criticised by modernity, it remains nonetheless fundamentally bound to the necessity of securing the conditions for a normal life. This is how the vassal owed his lord submission and respect, as well as "honour duties."<sup>25</sup> The latter did not

17. Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen-Age* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), p. 410. "Christianity appears in almost every sentence of the feodo-vassalic ritual."

18. Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p. 349, where the author indicates an absence of symbolic interpretation of the vassalic homage on the part of the cleric, contrary to the semantic developments concerning royal crowning ceremony. And p. 412, "It remains that the ritual is neither Christian nor even really christianised."

19. F.-L. Ganshof, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

20. "The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony" in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

21. Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

22. Ganshof, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

24. Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

25. Ganshof, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

consist so much in a *dare* (taxes) as in a *facere* (duty rendered<sup>26</sup>): the *consilium*, in other words counsel in exercising stately jurisprudence, and the *auxilium*, i.e. military or even financial help in case of attack from the enemy. By joining to himself vassals, the lord enlarges, we could perhaps say organically, his natural “family.” The rite of vassalage is part of the family bond as well as of the biblical covenant between God and his creature.<sup>27</sup> This is seen all the more since, on his side, the lord is obligated to a similar faithfulness toward his vassal, and to this were added the duties of “protection” and of “care.” In the same manner as the *paterfamilias*, the lord defends his vassal militarily, or in court before the king.<sup>28</sup>

Feudalism therefore extends the family structure to the non-parents. It is in such a manner that the mediaeval society develops in concentric circles, growing larger and larger but all centred around the same primordial institution: the family.

If we examine what has been said above in the light of Sutton’s five-point covenant model, we notice once more the covenantal characteristics: reference to the God and the transcendence of Holy Scripture, hierarchical structure in the inequality of the parties; and the requirements constituted by the mutual duties of the vassal and the lord. Concerning the sanctions, they are clear. As the bond of vassalage cannot be broken by one side only, in the same way, a dereliction of “faith” (by the lord or the vassal) can lead to the confiscation of the fief, (meaning the “driving off” of the vassal), or at least its seizure.<sup>29</sup> The crime of perfidy, of rupture of faith, was, in the spiritual mindset of the mediaeval man, extremely serious (as the *chanson de geste* show), while it would seem trivial and rather abstract for the modern man. This is the sign of a conscience permeated with divine ethical requirements.

Concerning the fifth point, which is related to continuity, the principle of hereditary transmission guarantees the perpetuation of the global structure. The parallel with the covenant of grace is such that the heredity of a fief was always “an heredity of a very special nature”: for each generation, the vassal’s heir had to give homage anew to the lord. The transmission of the fief was not automatic but the heir’s request could not be refused.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. *Tripartition: the organic covenant*

Most of the time, towns were constituted by the gradual disappearing of the fief’s borders. Nevertheless, the family nature of the household, of the fief, and even of the village remained for a long time.

From the point of view of the natural order of things as they have been created by God, it is obvious that each creational institution is destined to develop and grow, while remaining in its particular sphere. Thus, if the family gave way to the household, particular callings had to be organised into guilds that were integrated into the general structure of society. Craftsmen of all categories gathered, therefore, in as many *corporations*. We should like to underline the fact that

the mediaeval corporation shows, in the same manner, a very strong covenantal aspect. However, the “specialisation” of its members in a “poetic” activity, i.e. the creation “*ποίησις*” of objects, does not allow the setting up of a full covenantal structure. The craftsman needs to be protected in order to work in peace. Corporations were, therefore, covenantal sub-categories fully integrated in the social body. The growth and increase in complexity of the household shows more and more the inequality of the men living together in it: on one side there are those who govern, judge and protect; on the other, those who produce, feed and require protection. A third category is added to the first two, one that transcends them without being foreign to them: the men of the Church who submit to no temporal power but need at the same time to be protected and defended in the same way by a lord.

We have here the fundamental basis of mediaeval society and, in fact, the fundamental basis for traditional Christian society as a whole.

Far from being only an abstraction brought about *a posteriori* by modern historians, the mediaeval tripartition was the object of deep reflection on the part of contemporary theologians, in particular by Adalbéron de Laon and Gérard de Cambrai (eleventh century). Being a product of the theology of the Church fathers and permeated by a biblical vision of reality (which did not arbitrarily separate the Old from the New Testament) the social theology of the Age of Faith was not the systematisation of an established fact,<sup>31</sup> but rather the perfecting by Christianity of a natural structure, already noticeable among the ancient Indo-European tribes.<sup>32</sup> Again, this is not a question of suspecting a pagan origin for this way of seeing things, but of discerning, through the consequences of the Fall, the remnant of the natural order.

A society can only conform to God’s law if it has a covenantal structure, for the simple reason that God’s law is the code for the covenant of grace and a pattern for all the other covenants. In the same way, a society cannot be theocosmomic without having a traditional cosmology, one which is based on a hierarchic view of the orders of reality. In this perspective, mediaeval theology is resolutely theocosmomic. The basic axiom is that “the strongest bonds do not unite . . . equals.”<sup>33</sup> For a society to know “concord,” “harmony” and “peace” it must be organised according to a very precise order. In a Christian society it is obvious that charity unites the various members of the social body, which is structured by a strong hierarchy.<sup>34</sup> Far from constituting a departure from the spirit of Christianity this perspective, which was greatly influenced by St Augustine, is indeed the mark of a sound Christian political realism. The terrestrial city is not the Church, even if all the members of this city are baptised members of the Church. Thus, at the outset revolutionary egalitarianism is rejected. Such revolutionary egalitarianism has always been a consequence of the rejection of the Old Testament and the imposition upon

26. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

27. Besides, the “homage” has, theoretically at least, the effect of making the vassal the “man,” i.e. in a sense the lord’s possession, of which “power [is] immediate and direct upon the vassal’s person, only limited by the notion of what was not compatible with the dignity of a free man and by the respect due to the king.” Ganshof, *ibid.*, p. 132.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 159, 160.

28. Ganshof, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

31 For the following we refer to G. Duby’s major work, *Les trois ordres ou l’imaginaire du féodalisme*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), without, however, supporting the agnostic presupposition of the author, who only sees in mediaeval history the will of men at work, while faithfully and honestly expounding the ideas of the theologians concerned.

32. Refer to the works of the main authority on the subject, G. Dumézil, especially *Mythe et Épopée* I, II, III, (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).

33. G. Duby, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

society of the New Testament “constitution,” which concerns in fact only the Church, the celestial city.

However, the tripartition of mediaeval society creates the problem of the two powers: how will the temporal power and the spiritual authority organise themselves so that they live together in peace? If we look at this problem only from the historical point of view, we notice an almost constant antagonism, or at least a definite rivalry. But from the point of view of *principles* the traditional arrangement presents a perfection which is undeniable, to the extent we can assert that, at least in France, no subsequent political “system” has ever been able to combine in such a natural manner the facts of created reality with the requirements of Revelation. From the tenth century a definition of the Christian tripartite society was given:

The *labourers* are those who provide our subsistence by their work, the *priests* are those who intercede for us before God, the *soldiers*, those who protect our towns and defend our soil against invading armies. In fact, the ploughman must work to feed us, the soldier must fight our enemies and the servants of God must pray for us and fight spiritually the invisible enemies.<sup>35</sup>

In their desire to underline the antiquity of the newly expressed formulation, the authors were careful to add that the three orders were instituted among the Jews as well as the Romans.<sup>36</sup>

Following St Augustine, but also St Denys the Areopagite and St Gregory the Great, the theologians of the tripartition saw the hierarchic order of society as the result of the natural order of things—the result of Creation, which is good—and at the same time a consequence of the conformity of the visible order of things with the invisible. It would be even more correct to speak of *isonomy*,<sup>37</sup> i.e. the organisation and government of all the degrees of Creation by one law. One of the functions of this order is the repression of sin, the presence and effects of which were constantly in the mind of mediaeval man. But this is not all. Because the modern idea of “progress” was absent from the theological and political orthodoxy of the Age of Faith,<sup>38</sup> the direction and purpose of the social organisation was *upward*, not directed towards a better future. The result was, therefore, that “order is on the one hand understood as being peace (‘peace in all things: quietness of order’); on the other hand, it is considered as the way leading to God (virtue is said to be *ordo amoris*, love according to order).”<sup>39</sup> This is the Augustinian view of the *City of God*. It is the theological expression of the effort to build Christian society—even civilisation.

The modern mentality is so full of the idea of “progress” that it is extremely difficult for modern man to understand the mediaeval theonomic conscience. Whatever criticisms can be made of the application of the principles, a theocosmomic mind cannot fail to recognise in the feudal system the authentic Christian view of reality.

In the theological and political setting, the *normality* of the institutions had to allow for the relative fulfilment of each

“law sphere.” This principle consists in each one excelling in the role assigned to him by providence without seeking to go beyond the limits of the function he serves. In fact “disorder does not result in the change of nature but rather in the fact that order is disturbed.”<sup>40</sup> (We can better understand, hereby, the nature of the revolutionary apostasy.)

In the midst of this tripartite society, we have seen that the temporal power and the spiritual authority competed with one another. In fact, such a thing came from the juxtaposition of the two Cities in the midst of the same and only reality: Creation. But this confusion did not exist in theory. Cosmological and social hierarchy demands that spiritual authority be situated at the “top,” immediately followed by the temporal power, then by the third estate.

Now we have seen that the lord was to protect the cleric and the labourer. How could he resist the temptation to impose on them a total domination? On the other hand, as with the Old Testament Levite, the cleric only came under the ecclesiastical hierarchy. How could he not also feel the temptation to master the rest of society?

What we often forget is that during the Age of Faith this apparent antagonism was rather a constant readjustment that made possible the life and perpetuation of Christian civilisation. But we cannot develop this subject now, since it goes beyond the limits of this study. Concerning the covenantal structure of the mediaeval tripartite and hierarchic society, we must admit that at this point it became quiet complex. We have here an example of the intertwining of covenants, each constituted on the same and unique basic outline.<sup>41</sup> Starting with the family, traditional Christian civilisation was founded on creational institutions, as set forth in special revelation, which made sense of each level of reality because the work of God’s law is written in the consciences of all men, because the social institutions are created norms, established for God’s glory (which reveals itself in the good order of Creation), and above all, as we shall see, because of the central importance of the Mediator, the God-man, Jesus Christ, in mediaeval society.

Thus mediaeval society was symbiotic in essence because the “underlying presupposition was a Christian . . . theocracy; a presupposition completely opposed to the modern idea of the conflict of interests as the basis of economy and society.”<sup>42</sup> No doubt we have here the realistic and concrete notion of peace in a Christian political realism.

## B. THE CHRISTIAN MONARCHY

We now come to the core of our study. Having explained the familial origin of mediaeval society, which is bound in various ways to Old Testament doctrine, we shall now briefly consider the implications of the New Covenant for Christian civilisation. If the goal of theonomy is to re-establish an exact replica of ancient Israel, then the Christian civilisation of the Middle Ages was undoubtedly a failure. On the other hand, if Christian civilisation is founded on a right interpretation of the whole word of God, then we can certainly see in the Age of Faith a true paradigm for a theocosmomic society.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 131. 36. *Ibid.*, p. 139. 37. G. Duby, *op. cit.*, p. 141.  
38. Should we say, relatively absent, because present in the millenarian (Joachim de Flore, etc.) and utopian movements, who combined antinomianism with optimism, i.e. millenarianism, which “nurtured in the Middle Age—and afterwards—the most ‘revolutionary’ ideas and drives.” (J. Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, Paris: Gallimard, 1996, p. 647). 39. G. Duby, *Les trois ordres*, p. 96. 40. *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

41. R. Sutton, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

42. P. Courthial, *Le jour des petits recommencements*, p. 184.

1. *The King: the Covenant representative*

Let's return to France. Three dynasties of kings have followed one another. The first was the Merovingian, established by Clovis (465–511), the archetype of a Christian king, orthodox in doctrine and using his sword in the service of God's law. The second, the Carolingian, saw with Charlemagne (747–814) the coming of an imperial theocracy in which the two powers were united in one person, realising for a period of about fifty years the most glorious, but alas transient, manifestation of Christian civilisation.

The third dynasty, the Capetian, laid the foundations of present-day France and embodied a form of monarchy which, of all the monarchies of Western Christendom, has been the most stable (987–1789) and the nearest to the biblical ideal. The Capetian monarchy follows the rule set out above: it had its origins in the family. "As the family developed, it produced a household and as the latter expanded it gave birth to the fief; the combination of several small fiefs will form medium fiefs, and these, when they gather together, will make larger fiefs: Hugues Capet, in 987 is a feudal lord who ascended the throne."<sup>43</sup>

By a coincidence that is providentially symbolic, it was Adalbéron, bishop of Reims, himself of royal blood (a descendant of Charlemagne)<sup>44</sup> and a theologian of the tripartition, who crowned the first of the "Davidic"<sup>45</sup> kings.

The king is first of all the father of his people. But neither the paternal authority nor the feudal bond are able to confer on the French king the distinctive feature of the Capetian monarchy, namely the divine right. In fact, strictly speaking, the paternal power is exercised in its own household and extends no further than this, while the bond of vassalage does not compel a vassal's vassal to pay homage to his lord's lord.<sup>46</sup> Until the seventeenth century, the Capetian monarchy was limited by a very powerful feudal organisation<sup>47</sup> guaranteeing the people a real freedom, which would be curtailed by "absolute" monarchy and finally destroyed by the Republic. Nevertheless, the king was not a puppet; his role as a political head and supreme unifier of the various seignories was only the most visible side of his responsibilities; as for his ancestors David and Solomon, the king of France fundamentally belongs in a mysterious way to the order of bishops. If he is not a cleric—and he cannot be according to the constitution of the monarchy—his crowning in Reims by the archbishop and his anointing make him more than a "simple" layman, although without receiving a sacerdotal ordination. His case is unique. Should we see in this strange practice the pagan resurgence of the living god-king? Surely not. Everything in the practice of the crowning and the theory of the divine right of monarchy refutes such a suspicion. The king is not god, he is not even equal to the bishops. If monarchy has a sacerdotal character it is because "the king is a minister of God."<sup>48</sup> From the perspective of the power/hierarchy principle, the king is bound to listen to the Church as she speaks through her bishops because he is above all a Christian. Moreover being endowed by God to

govern his kingdom, he does it as a Christian king, i.e. as one "subject to Christ's dominion, to the divine law."<sup>49</sup> If he is king, his kingship is in the image of Jesus Christ, so that having his office by a Christ-like delegation, he is a "lieutenant of God."<sup>50</sup> If the person of the king is sacred, it is because he is Jesus Christ's representative to his people, and the people's representative at the divine judgement seat. As the Lord Jesus is his "model," he is judge, father, provider and mediator.<sup>51</sup> This task, which is almost sacerdotal, is only justified if we remember the intrinsically covenantal structure of the whole of society, of which the king is the head. It is as possessor of the supreme paternal authority that the king is an ecclesiastical character. Is a father not a priest to his family, the covenantal head vis-à-vis Christ? Furthermore, the suzerain of suzerains is himself a "vassal of God."<sup>52</sup> This is not just a way of speaking. Considering the Deuteronomic covenant we must take seriously the divine/human feudalism to which the king of France was subjected. He was pledged to Christ in the legal sense of the word. According to the biblical covenant, "France embodied . . . this legitimacy of Christ in the idea itself of political principality in accordance with which God was actually part of a suzerainty contract."<sup>53</sup>

Let's go back to Sutton's categories. The coronation of the king of France is more a religious ceremony than the vassal's ceremony of homage. It takes place in the cathedral of Reims, the town of the very first coronation of the first Christian king of France, Clovis. We can say that God is the founder of the nation of France.<sup>54</sup> This is true legally as well as covenantally. It is a historico-theological fact. "The anointing is a ceremony which goes back to the Old Testament."<sup>55</sup>

It is perfectly legitimate for the Church to play such an important role in the investiture of the king. Since all authority comes from God it is normal, in a Christian civilisation, that the recognised minister of God (in this case the archbishop of Reims) should ratify this ceremony. We must remember that in a Christian system of government there is no institution that can officially reject the sanction of the guardian of Special Revelation without becoming apostate.

Now, concerning the point regarding transcendence, we must admit that the anointing of the king in the name of the Trinity and the taking of the oath on the Bible guarantees that the divine party in the covenant is indeed the living God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe. Here again, as strange as it may seem to our modern rationalistic mind-set, the divine sanction of the coronation is manifested by the scrofula miracles: a public meeting during which the newly crowned king touches the sick and heals them. This happened with all the kings without exception.<sup>56</sup> Is it not normal that, on entering into covenant with God, God should manifest himself to the king in his way—in time and history?

We have seen already that hierarchy is visible in the feudal nature of the coronation. The king would possess

43. F. Funck-Brentano, *L'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Fayard, 1926), p. 221.

44. G. Duby, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

45. On this subject, see de la Franquerie, *Ascendances davidiques des rois de France* (s.l.: St. Rémi, 2002).

46. Ganshof, *op. cit.*, p. 155, 156.

47. J. Bainville, *Histoire de France* (Paris: Ed. Godefroy de Bouillon, 1996), p. 56.

48. A. Bonnefin, *Sacre des rois de France* (autoédition, 1988), p. 30.

49. G. Duby, *op. cit.*, p. 65. 50. F. Funck-Brentano, *Ce qu'était un roi de France* (Paris: Hachette, 1940), p. 94.

51. G. Duby, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

52. P. Virion, *Le Christ qui est Roi de France* (Paris: Téqui, 1995), p. 30.

53. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

54. *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

55. C. Beaume, "Les monarchies médiévales" in *Les monarchies* (Paris: PUF, 1997), p. 102.

56. On this subject, see M. Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983).

nothing of his own and would have no authority if God himself had not delegated it to him. The king is responsible for his people, for France, as the federal head. That is why Alcuin, Charlemagne's minister, could say "the king's goodness is the prosperity of all, the army's victory, the people's health." Just as was the case for the Hebrew kings, the sin of the head brings about inevitably the people's apostasy.<sup>57</sup>

Concerning the presence of a theonomic code of ethics, "from the origins, from the very taking of the oath of the coronation, we can find the notion of a higher standard imposed upon the king."<sup>58</sup> This standard is nothing other than the law of God. The two main oaths of the coronation concern in the first place the clergy, then the kingdom; in other words the ministers of Christ and the Christian people. To the clergy the king promised the preservation of the canonical privileges, protection and defence.<sup>59</sup> The second oath toward the "Christian people" was to preserve real peace for "the Church of God," to protect her and to exercise justice, with God's help.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, both oaths briefly summarise the Christian ideal of the king's duty towards his people, who are at the same time the Church of God. That is to say, the kingdom does not personally belong to the king: he is given the responsibility of its protection and administration by the true king of France, Jesus Christ.

Of course, the sanctions provided in the scope of this covenant are in proportion to the responsibility involved. S. Remy's testament is obviously constructed according to the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. It contains a preamble rehearsing the baptism of the French kings by which they are "consecrated to the Lord." Then follow the curses which threaten the king if he becomes apostate and iniquitous (i.e. guilty of rejecting baptism and the law of God) and rebellious to the warnings that are given to him up to seven times. Then there are the patriarchs' blessings with reference to the throne of David.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, the principle of continuity is manifested in the need for each king to be individually anointed, as in the feudal system of vassalage. A king who refused to be anointed (although this never happened) would be an apostate king. The royal heir must, at each generation, receive the kingdom from God to give it back to him as a good "lieutenant" and administrator of the property belonging to the divine king. France was several times officially "given" to God.<sup>62</sup>

## 2. *The meaning of the covenant after the Incarnation*

The covenantal nature of every level of society of the traditional French monarchy is clearly apparent. The profound meaning of the coronation ceremony "is there to emphasise the necessary role of a legitimate sovereign: to serve the city according to the divine law."<sup>63</sup>

Before concluding this article we must consider briefly the political theology of the Age of Faith. Indeed, an analysis of historical facts that is independent of the theoretical principles involved would lead us into error (knowing that original sin tends to dissociate the action from its proper end). Thus, to deduce from contingent facts some "presup-

positions" and then to attribute them to theoretical concepts and to the positive will of men would imply that men of all ages should be condemned not only for their sin but also for a mischievousness so obnoxious that we could rightly ask ourselves if the visible world is not filled with devils rather than men. Men are sinful of course, but they are made in the image of God. The trials and tribulations of the Age of Faith must not hide the glorious coherence of its theology.

The most representative period, historically speaking, of the French Christian monarchy is no doubt that of the reign of Louis IX—Saint Louis (1226–1270). During these forty-four years of the thirteenth century the kingdom was governed in a way quite naturally theonomic. And if there had already been other pious kings who were faithful to the covenant before St Louis and would be after him, the theoretical principles were never more faithfully applied in practice. The period deserves a study of its own, so concerned was the king to see the law of God applied to all spheres of life—political, social and economic.<sup>64</sup> Each age has the men it deserves; thus we see eating at the king's table one of the greatest mediaeval theologians: Thomas Aquinas.

Aquinas' political doctrine can be summarised as follows: under the new covenant, the temporal goods promised to those that obey, although still desirable, are replaced by eternal goods, which are vastly preferable. Therefore the king's task is not so much to guarantee the material "progress" of his people as their virtue, which is to the glory of God. To govern well is to guide a man soundly to his proper end.<sup>65</sup> When the common good is blessedness and the king strives with all his heart to guide his people toward this spiritual reward, access to which is made possible by the Church,<sup>66</sup> and when the temporal power is informed by the law of God and the spiritual authority fulfils her role of teaching the faith, then there is indeed a new Christian civilisation that is covenantal. To prolong this state of affairs without change, to repress sin and guarantee peace to the Church, such is the triple task of the king.<sup>67</sup>

The faithfulness of each generation to the conditions of a covenant constantly renewed at every level, according to a natural order structured by the law of God—this is the *raison d'être* of the political theology of the mediaeval doctors of the Church.

## CONCLUSION

This should, and could, have been the history of the kingdom of France up to our day. However, from the time of the Renaissance, which reintroduced the worst of paganism into Christendom, and with the advent of Cartesian dualism, which was previously unknown, transgression of the covenant became common. The rapid spread of witchcraft, organised with the intention of subversion<sup>68</sup>; the support of all the libertarian and progressive ideas of the time by the elite; the

57. G. Duby, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

58. J. Hudault, *Histoire des institutions de la France* (Paris: Loysel, 1994), p. 101.

59. A. Bonnefin, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

61. H. Montaigu, *Reims, le sacre des Rois* (s.l.: La Place Royale, 1990), pp. 215, 216.

62. P. Virion, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

63. Y.-M. Adeline, *Le pouvoir légitime* (Paris: Sicre, 2001), p. 138.

64. We refer the reader to the brilliant work of J. Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, already quoted. Although the author's perspective is neither Christian nor "covenantal," the reign of Saint Louis carries so sharply the marks of the Covenant that, without even being aware of it, the whole book is a detailed description of a theonomic society.

65. S. Thomas Aquinas, *De regno*, lib. I, cap. I.

66. *Ibid.*, lib. I, cap. XIV.

67. *Ibid.*, lib. I, cap. XV.

68. Cf. M. Devoucoux, *L'œuvre de Dieu en Marie des Vallées* (Paris: F.-X. de Guibert, 2000), p. 318.

temporal power's increasing rejection of the spiritual authority; and above all the growing importance of economy and money; all these provoked the wrath of the king's Suzerain, Jesus Christ. In the Revolution the working classes proclaimed themselves set free from the natural order, and they established in its place the liberal order.

Since the year 1789, the Age of Faith has been known as the "Old Regime." But what then? Has the covenantal structure of France been destroyed by the implementation of

the sanctions foreseen by this same covenant? Revolutionary thought would assert precisely that. But this is wrong because it is unbiblical (cf. Rom. 3:3, 4).

The relevance of the observations we have made in this essay consists in the fact that they can, hopefully, give the servants of God working in France a brief survey of France's intrinsically Christian origins, as well as suggesting some objectives to be achieved in seeking to restore the Christian faith to this country. *C&S*

# POST-HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE: THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION

## HOW THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC HAS INFLUENCED HEALTH CARE<sup>†</sup>

by Hugh Flemming<sup>‡</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

WHEN first asked to present a paper to a Society that had anything to do with medicine, I thought I was having a bad dream. However, after having been told that the subject was to be *How the Christian Ethic has Influenced Health Care*, I agreed to accept the task and do my best at it for three main reasons. First, I could deal with the subject mainly from the historical perspective in keeping with my formal training in biblical theology and classics. Secondly, I might help to set the record straight by correcting some errors and myths disseminated by several secular anti-Christian historians. Thirdly, the high regard and utmost respect I have for the two close friends who asked me to tackle this subject; their confidence in me is very humbling, but at the same time a great source of encouragement in researching this subject.

After having agreed to speak on this subject, I began to read and note every article and book I could find which dealt with the subject of health care, particularly those that had some relevance to Christian ethics. Much of the material I could not understand due to my ignorance of things medical. However, like Mark Twain and his Bible, it was not so much the things that I did not understand that bothered me as those things I did understand. Let me explain what I mean by briefly mentioning a few examples. This information could lead one to believe that what has been called "The Golden Age of Medicine"<sup>1</sup> may be coming to an end. I also believe that these examples show how the medical profession

is gradually abandoning its Hippocratic tradition and its Judeo-Christian ethical foundation. The following examples were randomly discovered as I researched the subject. The source of each article is referenced in the footnotes of this paper so, if you wish, you can study them individually.

You can read all about babies being treated like a crop of potatoes in the new science of fetal harvesting<sup>2</sup>; you can read all about women serving as breeders in surrogate motherhood programmes<sup>3</sup>; you can read all about the "new growth industry," as it is called, of genetic manipulation in test tube baby experiments<sup>4</sup>; you can read all about how the poor serve as guinea pigs in bizarre particle bombardments<sup>5</sup>; or read about handicapped patients facing compulsory sterilisation<sup>6</sup>; or the latest in genetic engineering<sup>7</sup>; or—probably the most frightening of all—the revival of the racially motivated eugenic programmes<sup>8</sup>; and finally, how two *Wall Street Journal* reporters revealed a tale of deceit and manipulation by the government, the media, and the Centre for Disease Control in order to gain political support for the billions being spent on AIDS research and prevention.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Leo Alexander, instructor in psychiatry, Tufts Uni-

2. Joe Levine, "Help from the unborn," *Time*, January 12, 1987.

3. Elizabeth Meheren, "Surrogate mothers: let's stop this," *Los Angeles Times*, September 1, 1987.

4. William Winslade and Judith Wilson Ross, "High-tech babies; a growth industry," *Galveston Gazette*, June 17, 1983.

5. Lucas Berry and Davis Lowery, "Human experimentation in Berkeley draws fire," *Local Times*, February 8, 1978.

6. Daniel J. Kelves, *In the Name of Eugenics* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).

7. Ted Howard and Jeremy Rifkin, *Who Should Play God* (New York: Dell Publications, 1977).

8. Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton and Co., 1981).

9. Amanda Bennett and Anita Sharpe, "AIDS fight is skewed by federal campaign exaggerating risks," *Wall Street Journal*, May 1, 1996.

<sup>†</sup>This essay is the text of a paper given originally to the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada, May 23–24th, 1997.

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1. Michael Woods, *The World and I*, September, 1987 (The National Institutes for Health).

versity Medical School, on duty with the office of the Chief of Counsel for War Crimes at Nuremberg during the trials, made some very insightful observations as far back as 1949. In the *New England Journal of Medicine*, he wrote as follows:

Whatever proportions these crimes finally assumed, it became evident to all who investigated them that they had started from small beginnings. The beginnings at first were merely a subtle shift in emphasis in the basic attitude of the physicians. It started with the acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived . . . the question that this fact prompts is whether there are any danger signs that American physicians have also been infected with Hegelian, cold-blooded, utilitarian philosophy and whether early traces of it can be detected in their medical thinking that may make them vulnerable to departures of the type that occurred in Germany.<sup>10</sup>

The “Golden Age of Medicine” was built upon the foundation of the Judeo-Christian ethic and the Hippocratic tradition. It flourished because of this foundation. Whenever and wherever this foundation has been abandoned, medicine has given way to barbarism and superstition. Let us now re-examine our foundation.

## I. THE BIBLICAL PERIOD

### 1. *The Old Testament*

Christian ethics has its genesis in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Holy Bible. It is this book that contains the record of God’s revelation to man and of man’s experience of that revelation. Christian ethics, therefore, begins with God, continues with God and ends with God. Dr. John Wilkinson brings us right to the heart of the matter when he points out that, “Ethics in the Old Testament cannot be separated from religion for both are intertwined and both depend on the character and the will of God.”<sup>11</sup> Inasmuch as everyone is religious, it will be that particular religion, or world view, or metaphysical system which will determine ethical standards.

Basic to Christian ethics in the Old Testament are two foundational revealed truths. One is that God is Holy and its following corollary as stated in Lev. 19:2, “You shall be Holy because I the Lord your God am Holy.” Old Testament ethics cannot be grasped apart from some understanding of the holiness of God and man as a fallen sinful creature. The other truth is that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).<sup>12</sup> It is these foundations that have shaped Christian ethics in general and governed the Christian concern for the care of the sick. This doctrine of the *imago Dei* was central to the strong Christian belief in the sanctity of life.

During the past few decades, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* has been vehemently attacked. Peter Singer (1993) had an article published in *Pediatrics*, the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The title of the article was “Sanctity of life or quality of life.” In this article, Singer stated: “We can no longer base our ethics on the idea that human beings are a special form of creation, made in the image of God, singled

out from all other animals, and alone possessing an immortal Soul.”<sup>13</sup>

He referred to the concept of the *imago Dei* as nothing more than “religious mumbo-jumbo”<sup>14</sup> that must be stripped away. All life for Singer is a continuum, and your place in the scale of things is determined by the quality of your life or its utilitarian value. Let us hear his own words and, at the same time, remember he is representing the Centre for Human Bioethics at a large influential American university. He writes as follows:

Only the fact that the defective infant is a member of the species *Homo sapiens* leads it to be treated differently from a dog or pig. Species membership alone, however, is not morally relevant. Humans who bestow superior value on the lives of all human beings, solely because they are members of our own species, are judging along lines strikingly similar to those used by white racists who bestow superior value on the lives of other whites, merely because they are members of their own race . . . If we put aside the obsolete and erroneous notion of the sanctity of all human life, we may start to look at human life as it really is: at the quality of life that each human being has or can achieve.<sup>15</sup>

To understand the origin of Singer’s system of ethics we have to go back about thirty-five hundred years to ancient Egypt. There they also believed that every living thing had a common being and nature. John Wilson, in the symposium *Before Philosophy*, explains this as follows:

. . . it is not a matter of a single god but of a single nature of observed phenomenon in the universe, with clear possibilities of exchange and substitution. With relation to gods and men the Egyptians were monophysites; many men and many gods, but all ultimately of one nature.<sup>16</sup>

The difference in things was one of degree, not of kind; this even included the gods. Juvenal, the Roman Satirist (fl. A.D. 110), ridiculed the continuing aspect of this old naturalistic synergistic faith when he facetiously observed that for the Egyptians, “it is an impious outrage to crunch leeks and onions with the teeth. What a holy race to have such divinities springing up in their gardens!”<sup>17</sup>

In spite of her many achievements, Egypt was known as the “mother of diseases.”<sup>18</sup> Every part of the body had its own god.<sup>19</sup> Magical methods were based on the principle of transfer; to cure a migraine rub the head with a fried fish!<sup>20</sup> Other remedies include, “lizard’s blood, swines’ teeth, putrid meat, stinking fat, moisture from pigs’ ears, excreta from humans, animals and even flies.”<sup>21</sup> Behind all these remedies stood the healing deities who were called upon to heal the suppliants. Amun is praised as “he who frees from evil and drives away suffering, a physician who makes the eye healthy without medicine, who opens and cures squinting.”<sup>22</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea (fl. A.D. 300) refers to Apis as the

10. Alexander Leo, “Medical science under dictatorship,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, 241(2), 39–47.

11. John Wilkinson, *Christian Ethics in Health Care*, p. 20.

12. For a definitive account of the history of the doctrine of the image of God in man see David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: SCM Press, 1953).

13. Peter Singer, “Sanctity of life or quality of life,” *Pediatrics*, 72(1), July, 1993, p. 129.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

16. Quoted by R. J. Rushdoony in his personally typed *World History Notes*, p. 11. Dr. Rushdoony very kindly sent these unpublished, typed notes to the writer after the latter expressed an interest in them several years ago.

17. Juvenal, *Satires*, XV.10 (*Loeb Classical Library*). Hereafter we shall abbreviate the *Loeb Classical Library* to (LCL).

18. Lois Magner, *A History of Medicine*, p. 26.

19. Herodotus (LCL), II.84.

20. Magner, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

21. S. I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases*, p. 9.

22. Michael Brown, *Israel’s Divine Healer*, p. 54. In a footnote on page 282, Brown refers to J. C. deMoor’s *Rise of Yahwism*, pp. 42–57 [with references]: “Of course it is Amun-Re who blesses parents with

“son” or “living replica” of Ptah and credited him with the origin of medicine.<sup>23</sup> Imhotep, the deified physician, became the god of all physicians.<sup>24</sup> Isis, “great of magic,” was the god who healed children.<sup>25</sup> Khonshu, the personification of “soul-energy,” had power to cast out demons and heal diseases.<sup>26</sup> And Serapis, the iatromantic deity, healed through dreams, oracles, magic and other mystical means.<sup>27</sup>

It was from this synergistic paganism that Jehovah, the covenant God of the Bible, or Yahweh, to use the Hebrew designation, supernaturally delivered his people Israel. This Exodus from Egypt is the focal point of the Old Testament revelation. It was through these mighty acts of revelation that Yahweh revealed himself to Israel as their divine healer, a surgeon and physician (Hebrew: *rp*).<sup>28</sup> The *locus classicus* of this revelation is Exodus 15:22–27, with particular reference to v. 26:

If you are careful to obey the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, paying attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not inflict on you any of the diseases I inflicted on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord your Healer (*rôphê*).

This has to be seen against the background of the highly developed magical-medical polytheistic milieu of Israel’s past in Egypt with all its healing deities; it also looks ahead to the coming conflict with the Syrian-Canaanite healing deities.<sup>29</sup>

The conflict here, it should be noted, is not between God, or Yahweh to use the Hebrew name, and human physicians, but rather between Yahweh and all other healing deities. To have any other Healer than Yahweh would be in religious conflict with strict monotheism. This principle applies to that controversial passage in 2 Chronicles 16:12, where King Asa of Judah did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians (made [oracular] inquiry of the pagan physicians).<sup>30</sup> It is difficult to understand why some medical historians use this passage as evidence to prove that the Bible denigrates the use of medicine and physicians.<sup>31</sup> C.

children because he is the life-giving god, the breath of life in the nose of every creature . . . [He is] the Shepherd . . . If one of his herd is afflicted by disease he manifests himself as the great Healer.” Amun-Re is also hailed as “lord of life and health.”

23. Eusebius, *Preparation for the gospel*, 10:6.

24. W. A. Jayne, *Healing Gods*, p. 62f.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 64f. Michael Brown, *loc. cit.*, p. 283, adds that: “Jayne’s citation there of the prayer to Isis found in the Ebers Papyrus is instructive in that Isis, the ‘great enchantress,’ was asked to heal the suppliant and save him from ‘all evil things of darkness,’ while at the same time Re and Osiris were called on to promote the healing manifestations in the sick man’s body. Thus, we have here religion, magic, and medicine (the quote, being taken as it were, from the Ebers Papyrus) in one short and representative prayer. Among other prominent magician-healers, Thoth is worthy of special mention.”

26. *Ibid.*, p. 68f.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 77f.

28. For a word study of the three Hebrew letters, *Resh*, *Pe*, and *Aleph* (*rp*), that form the root of the Hebrew verb “to heal” and the noun “healer,” “surgeon” and “physician,” and with particular emphasis where and how this word is used in various passages throughout the Old Testament, see *Lexicon in Testamenti Libros* (Eds. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner), p. 903. 29. Brown, Michael, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

30. This phrase, “made oracular inquiry of the pagan physicians,” is our own literal translation based on both the meaning of the Hebrew *DARAS Be*, the context of the passage and a comparison with other passages in the OT that use the same phrase. Cf. 1 Chron. 10:13b–14 regarding King Saul: “He even consulted and inquired of a medium, but he did not inquire of the LORD so he put him to death.”

31. For a moderate example of this negative view, see Klaus Seybold and Ulrich Mueller in *Sickness and Healing*, p. 23.

F. Keil correctly notes, “It is not the mere inquiring of the physicians which is here censured, but only the godless manner in which Asa trusted in the physicians.”<sup>32</sup> It has nothing to do with the use of means or those we would classify as physicians today.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, one recent commentator on 1 and 2 Chronicles has stated:

The view that God is the supreme physician . . . is prevalent throughout the Scriptures, as well as the conviction that illness is divinely inflicted. The turning to God for cure is attested abundantly throughout the Bible, *nowhere, however, do we find a negative attitude towards human medicine or human attempts to heal.*<sup>34</sup> (Emphasis added)

In the light of dozens of such passages in the Old Testament, it becomes apparent that obedience to Yahweh’s laws was understood to be the sure path to a healthy, abundant life. Moses underscored this when he wrote: “they are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land . . .” (Dt. 32:47). Gordon Wenham, in his commentary on Leviticus, adds: “What is envisaged is a happy life in which man enjoys God’s bounty of health, children, friends and prosperity. Keeping the law is the path to divine blessing, to a happy and fulfilled life in the present.”<sup>35</sup>

The Old Testament teaching is that, in general, one cannot enjoy a happy life without a healthy life. Indeed, as Fred Rosner points out, “Of the 613 biblical commandments and prohibitions, no less than 213 are health rules imposed in the form of rigorously observed ceremonial rites.”<sup>36</sup>

Even though many scholars, in that genre of biblical studies known as higher criticism, make much out of comparing Yahweh with the other healing gods of the nations around Israel, the comparison soon breaks down. The deities of all the other nations of the ancient world, whether Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Canaanite, Syrian, Hittite, Greek or Roman were capricious, moody, lustful, engaging in obscene sexual orgies and themselves subject to sickness. H. W. Haggard, in his interesting study entitled *The Doctor in History*, notes: “The gods of Egypt, like men, might suffer from disease . . . When a god was stricken with disease he turned for aid to his friends among the gods.”<sup>37</sup> There is never the slightest hint that Yahweh suffered, or was subject to, such weaknesses. He promised to accompany his people, remain with them, and manifest himself to them as their divine Healer. The later prophets and poets testified, “He will not grow tired nor weary, and his understanding no one can fathom” (Is. 40:28b); “He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121:4).

When Israel broke covenant with Yahweh and was sent into exile, one of the reasons given was that, “You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the

32. Keil, C. F. *The Second Book of Chronicles* in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary Series, p. 370. Keil rightly stresses the fact that the Hebrew *DARAS Be* for “inquiry” is always oracular or religious in nature. Many commentators miss this point altogether, thereby concluding that the physicians spoken of here were of a non-religious nature.

33. Samuel Kottek, *Medicine and Hygiene in the Works of Flavius Josephus*, pp. 25–26.

34. Michael Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 277–8, where he quotes from S. Japhet’s commentary on 1 and 2 Chronicles, p. 738.

35. Gordon Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 253.

36. Fred Rosner, *Medicine in the Bible and the Talmud*, p. 9.

37. Fred Haggard, *The Doctor in History*, pp. 44–45.

injured” (Ezek. 34:4). The heart of Old Testament ethics is not just a written code, but a personal relationship between man and God and man and man expressed in a covenant.

Shortly after some of the deported Jews returned to their homeland after their captivity in Babylon, towards the close of the sixth century B.C., the oral interpretations of the Torah began to take shape and give rise to Judaism.<sup>38</sup> This oral interpretation of the Torah was later codified in written form and became the library, known as the Talmud, of legal and extralegal commentary on and application of biblical law and narrative. During this period the Rabbis concluded that the Torah gave permission, even making it obligatory, for the physician to heal based upon the phrase “and see that he is completely healed” (Ex. 21:19). Although healing lies only with God, He does give physicians the wherewithal to heal by earthly or natural means.<sup>39</sup>

The Jewish attitude towards physicians and the responsibilities for patients to seek medical aid is beautifully described in the Apocrypha by Ben-Sira. We shall quote just a few verses:

Honor a physician before need of him  
Him also hath God appointed.  
From God a physician getteth wisdom . . .  
God bringeth out medicines from the earth  
And let a prudent man not refuse them . . .  
My son, in sickness be not negligent  
Pray unto God, for he will heal . . .  
He that sinneth against his maker  
Will behave himself proudly against a physician.  
(Ecclesiasticus 38)

To be sure, a few of the minor sects like the Karaites totally rejected the permissibility of human healing because (so they concluded) it interfered with the divine will. Most Jews, however, had a very practical way to get around these tensions. Rabbi Feldman tells a story of the Rabbi who, on seeing a man deathly sick and in need of help, decided to fulfill his obligation and give the man a few coins. Before doing so, however, he confessed to his fellow Rabbi that he might be interfering with the eternal plan of God if he did so. Caught in this dilemma, he asked his fellow Rabbi if he could help him. His friend agreed that he could. He just advised him to be an atheist for a few seconds and give him the coins!<sup>40</sup>

## 2. *The New Testament*

The fact that our civilisation is known as Judeo-Christian is indicative of the close connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Most of our institutions and professions which make up our society have functioned within this common Judeo-Christian heritage. The reason for this, of course, is that Christianity, growing out of its Jewish roots, encompasses every department of life. The Holy Scriptures make it very clear to us that any area of life that does not come under the dominion, authority and Lordship of the God who revealed himself in these Scriptures is idolatrous. John Hutchison is perfectly correct when he explains that, for the Christian: “. . . religion is not one aspect or department of life besides the others, as modern

secular thought likes to believe; it consists rather in the orientation of all human life absolute.”<sup>41</sup>

Many today want to abolish any religion based on absolutes without giving any definition to the religion that will replace it. The fact that religion is a universal phenomenon seems to escape them; no people anywhere in the world at any time have been found without religion.<sup>42</sup> Culture is nothing more than religion externalised. Even the 1980 preface to the *Humanist Manifestoes* says, “Humanism is a philosophical, religious, and moral point of view.”<sup>43</sup> Paul Tillich brings the whole thing together for us in one succinct sentence: “Religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion.”<sup>44</sup>

It was the basic doctrines of the OT that were presupposed by Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and the early Church. Its strict monotheism, its divine infallibility, its record of Yahweh’s universal, absolute and eternal law as summarised in the Ten Commandments and the theology of the covenant, were all foundational to the NT and the early Church. Here, already contained for them, were the eternal foundations of the moral order of a Christian society.

When Jesus did assert his own ethical authority, it was to condemn legalism and to insist that the real meaning of the law was not simply to curb and control external actions, but to radically alter inward attitudes and motives.

The *locus classicus* for this is found in the Sermon on the Mount: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil (Greek: *plerosai*) them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, nor the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished” (Mt. 5:17–18).<sup>45</sup>

The exact meaning of the word “fulfil” has been discussed by scholars for centuries. No matter how precisely it is defined, however, it must always include: “to obey,” “to establish,” and “to give full meaning”; it also conveys the meaning to make something operative and to give the power to do so. Thayer, in his Greek Lexicon, adds this note of explanation: “. . . universally and absolutely, to fulfil, i.e. to cause God’s will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God’s promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfilment.”<sup>46</sup>

Here we have the two words that define the unity of the two testaments: promise and fulfilment. Here we also have the reason for St. Augustine’s famous dictum that the NT is hidden in the Old and the OT is revealed in the New.

For the first Jewish followers of Jesus, or Messianic Jews—to describe them more accurately in their historical context—his coming did not mark the beginning of a new religion called Christianity. On the contrary, they saw his coming as the fulfilment of all the promises and expectations of their sacred Scriptures.<sup>47</sup> When they saw the crippled cured, the dumb speaking, the lame walking and the blind seeing, they “praised the God of Israel” (Mt. 15:31). After Jesus raised the widow’s son, St. Luke records that the crowd

41. John Hutchison, *Faith, Reason and Existence*, p. 211.

42. William Howells, *The Heathens—Primitive Man and His Religion*, p. 11.

43. *Humanist Manifestoes I and II*. Ed. Paul Kurtz, p. 3.

44. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, p. 57.

45. All NT quotations will be taken from the *New International Version* unless otherwise indicated.

46. J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of New Testament*, p. 519.

47. R. G. Witty, *Divine Healing*, p. 53f.

38. *The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 670.

39. Julius Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, p. 25.

40. David Feldman, *Health and Medicine in the Jewish Tradition*, p. 18.

was “filled with awe and praised God. ‘A great prophet has appeared among us,’ they said. God has come to help his people.” (Lk. 7:11–15). The kingdom of God, with all its healing and transforming power, had suddenly broken into human history.<sup>48</sup> The proof of Jesus’ power and glory as the one and only son of God, or the OT-promised Messiah, was recognised more than anything else through his healing ministry.<sup>49</sup>

When the Apostles were sent out on their first preaching mission, they were given “authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness” (Mt. 10:1, cf. 10:7–8; Mk. 6:7, 12–13; Lk. 9:1–2; 10:8–9). St Luke describes this mission as follows: “they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere” (9:16). We could give numerous examples to show that this was the pattern for the whole apostolic period (e.g. Acts 8:5–8). Among the most distinguishing marks of the new Messianic age, so the Hebrew prophets foretold (cf. Is. 30:26), would be the restoration of the maimed and the healing of the sick.<sup>50</sup>

When John the Baptist had doubts about the authenticity of Jesus as the Messiah foretold by the prophets, he sent two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus directly. The answer of Jesus, recorded identically by both St. Matthew and St. Luke, was: “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor” (Lk. 7:22–23).

Here Jesus associates his healing ministry with signs confirming his Messiahship. For him, sickness and disease was something that had no place in the kingdom of God he was to inaugurate. He believed that, like sin, sickness and disease had moral and spiritual roots in the kingdom of Satan, which he was sent into the world to destroy. Adolf Harnack explains it as follows: “To him all evil, all misery, is something terrible; it is part of the great realm of Satan . . . He knows that progress is possible only by overcoming weakness and healing diseases.”<sup>51</sup>

It is very emphatic in the NT that when Jesus came in contact with sickness he had to do something about it. The “good news” he came to proclaim was to rid man of sin and its effects in every area of man’s life, including sickness. With him human need and suffering took precedence over everything; in spite of his many clashes with the religious and political authorities, the common people “listened to him with delight” (Mk. 12:37). J. D. Crossan explains why they were so delighted with his teaching:

He speaks about the rule of God, and they listen as much from curiosity as anything else. They know all about rule and power, about kingdom and empire, but they know it in terms of tax and debt, malnutrition and sickness, agrarian oppression and demonic possession. What, they really want to know, can this kingdom of

God do for a lame child, a blind parent, a demented soul screaming its tortured isolation among the graves that mark the edges of the village?<sup>52</sup>

The rest of the NT and the success of the early Church provides the answer to these oppressive forces that are as real today as they ever were.

Basically, Jesus taught that it was man’s alienation from God that was the root cause of human suffering, even though there may be mitigating circumstances over which he may or may not have some control. When Jesus of Nazareth entered this world, the visible evidence of sin, sickness and suffering was universal. It has been rightly said that, “suffering is the great common denominator among human beings. Everyone has an experience of profound hurt and loneliness and suffering.”<sup>53</sup>

From the NT perspective there is a close correlation between sin and sickness. For some, their sickness was specifically related to their sin (cf. Jn. 5:14); for others it was clearly unrelated to any transgression on their part (e.g. Jn. 9:1–3). All deserved judgment and death (cf. Lk. 13:1–6); all, therefore, need the Great Physician’s touch (cf. Mt. 9:9–13). “But when the time had fully come, God sent his son,” as St Paul puts it, to freely offer to all who would repent and believe, liberty from both sin and sickness. When Jesus first announced his mission in his home synagogue at Nazareth, he read a portion of Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming messianic age (61:1–2):

The spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to release the oppressed  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor . . .  
Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. (Lk. 4:18–20)

One commentator expresses the power and beauty of Jesus’ jubilee proclamation as follows: “Jubilee release is not spiritualized into forgiveness of sins, but neither can it be resolved into a program of social reform. It encompasses spiritual restoration, moral transformation, rescue from demonic oppression, and release from illness and disability.”<sup>54</sup>

Jesus’ healing ministry was predicated upon the conviction that his heavenly Father had empowered him to heal both soul and body. The Gospel records portray him as the omnipotent physician with power to heal all of man’s spiritual, physical and even mental infirmities.<sup>55</sup> His healing power and saving power was one and the same. Jesus the Saviour cannot be divorced from Jesus the Healer. Harnack

48. For an excellent short exposition of the meaning of “The Kingdom of God,” see G. Ladd, “The kingdom of God,” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 3:23–29; for a more definitive study, see Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming Kingdom*.

49. C. L. Blomberg, “Healing,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, pp. 298–307.

50. Central to this concept of restoration and healing is the Hebrew root *rp* (“to heal/to restore”) along with its cognate Hebrew root *chbs* (“to bind up”). It is informative to note that “this represents the largest concentration of occurrence of this root in any one literary genre in the Hebrew Bible.” See Michael Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

51. Adolf Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, p. 60.

52. J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*, p. xi.

53. Daniel J. Simundson, *Faith Under Fire*, p. 9.

54. Michael Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 403, quoting from Nolland’s commentary on St. Luke’s gospel.

55. Daniel J. Simundson, “Mental Health and the Bible,” *World and World*, 9, 1989, pp. 140–146. Although mental healing is a very important part of Biblical healing it is beyond the scope of our study to deal with it as a separate category. For the importance of God in healing most of the mental ills of mankind see Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 273; Karl Menninger, *Man Against Himself*, p. 81 talks about the “life instinct” and the “death instinct” common to us all. One cannot but help see the similarity between these modern psychiatrists and St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, particularly chapter 7.

refers to the indivisibility of this unity when he reminds us that “he did his work as Saviour or Healer . . . The first three gospels depict him as physician of souls and body, and the Saviour or Healer of men.”<sup>56</sup> It is absolutely essential to keep this in mind because it is his activity as both Saviour and Healer that clearly sets him apart from all other healers in the ancient world when comparisons are made.<sup>57</sup>

The one Greek word<sup>58</sup> in the NT that helps us, probably more than any other word, in our understanding of its teaching on the subject of healing is *sozein*. Let us look at this word, which means “to save,” “to rescue,” “to deliver,” and “to preserve from danger.”<sup>59</sup> This was cognate with *soter* (saviour), one of the most common epithets of Jesus in keeping with his saving and healing mission (Mt 1:21) and *soteria* (salvation). It should be kept in mind that in the ancient world when devotees viewed their deity as saviour, healer and deliverer, it was all part of one inclusive concept. Likewise, in the NT, it was a word that was all inclusive. In the Gospels, therefore, Jesus was regarded as Saviour from sin, sickness, death, eternal destruction and demons.<sup>60</sup> One exegetical dictionary describes this as follows: “That from which one is saved . . . include mortal dangers, death, disease, possession, sin and alienation from God, and eternal ruin.”<sup>61</sup>

Another feature the Gospel records as integral to the healing miracles of Jesus was his compassion. It is specifically recorded that, “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick” (Mt. 14:14).<sup>62</sup> This, of course, reflects his Father’s acts of mercy and grace in the healing of the sick as expressed in Psalms 6 and 103, which have as their background the healing of serious illness. When the word “compassion” (*splanchnon*) is used with the many acts of healing in the Gospels, it is used in two distinct ways. On the one hand “the term reflects the totality of divine mercy to which human compassion is a proper response;” and on the other hand the word has

messianic overtones which reflect the very heart of God towards sick and suffering humanity.<sup>63</sup> Michael Brown is correct when he points out that:

This insight would suggest strongly that, just as it is right and fitting for the church to lead the way in performing acts of mercy for the hungry, impoverished, and socially and politically oppressed, so also it is right and fitting for the church to lead the way in the ministry of healing for the sick—both by natural and supernatural means.<sup>64</sup>

For both the OT and the NT everything must be put in the context of faith in Jesus as Messiah and belief in the truthfulness of his word. This faith, however, is more than just mental assent or a profession. Faith in the biblical sense implies a costly demand resulting from a spiritual transformation involving personal commitment and a personal relationship with Jesus as the anointed of God.<sup>65</sup>

## II. THE EARLY CHURCH PERIOD: FROM THE FIRST CENTURY TO SAINT AUGUSTINE (A.D. 100–430)

When Christianity, as a healing religion, began to spread throughout the Greco-Roman world it came into conflict with a pagan healing tradition that had been firmly established for centuries. Its chief rival was Asklepios—Aesculapius to the Romans—the most prominent healing deity in the ancient Greco-Roman pantheon.

Like most religious figures his origin is obscure, but by the fifth century B.C. his cult had been firmly established throughout the Mediterranean world as inscriptional evidence indicates.<sup>66</sup> Asklepios was originally a human physician,<sup>67</sup> made the son of Apollo by both Hesiod and Pindar.<sup>68</sup> He became the chief healing deity of the famous shrine at Epidauros and recognised as demi-god at Athens. He was finally venerated as the great healing god Aesculapius at Rome.<sup>69</sup>

His reputation did not stop with healing, but broadened and increased until he was recognised as both deliverer and saviour (*soter*) as well as healer.<sup>70</sup> His cult was so widespread, his fame so universal, and his healing power so famous that Asklepios “was regarded by the early Christians as the chief competitor of Christ because of his remarkable similarity in role and teaching to the Great Physician.”<sup>71</sup> It is important to keep in mind that in the world of the NT any deity venerated as healer was also venerated as saviour. For the Christians, therefore, Jesus was both Saviour (*soter*) and Physician (*iatros*).

Many famous names in the ancient world—the stoic Epictetus (fl. A.D. 120), the emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121–180), and the physician Galen (fl. A.D. 175)—spoke in glowing terms of the healing and benevolent power of Asklepios, while denigrating Christianity. He was referred to

56. Adolf Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, p. 101. It is interesting to note that the chapter where this is found is entitled “The Gospel of the Saviour and of Salvation;” the German title is “Das Evangelium vom Heiland und von der Heilung,” which could be translated “The Gospel of the Healer and Healing.”

57. William Manson, *Jesus the Messiah*, p. 35. Manson points out that the two words commonly used in the NT to describe Jesus’ power are *dunamis* and *exousia*, both used interchangeably. Both refer to the power and authority of God at work in the world as perfectly revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Mk. 1:27; 2:10; 12:24; Mt. 28:18; Lk 5:17; Acts 2:22; 10:38; and Rom 1:4). It was this power that Jesus passed on to his disciples, enabling them to heal (Mk 3:15; Acts 1:8; 3:12; and 1 Cor 2:4). Manson further points out that in the contemporary Hellenistic world someone with *exousia* possessed both superhuman wisdom and supernatural power.

58. For a fuller, non-technical exposition of the various Greek words used in conjunction with the subject of healing see C. J. Hemer, “Medicine in the New Testament World,” *Medicine and the Bible*, p. 43ff.

59. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, pp. 1132–1140.

60. For the classical study of the phenomenon of demonology in the NT, see William M. Alexander (M.D.), *Demonic Possession in the New Testament: Its Historical, Medical, and Theological Aspects*. For a detailed historical picture, see T. K. Oesterreich, *Possession, Demonic and Other*. For actual case studies on demonic possession from non-Christian cultures, see John L. Nevius, *Demon Possession and Allied Themes*. For a more contemporary treatment in light of modern views on mental illness, see S. Vernon McCasland, *By the Finger of God*.

61. Michael Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 405, where he quotes from W. Radl in *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3:319–321.

62. Morton Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity*, pp. 52–103; Kelsey is especially strong in expounding the relevance of the compassionate element in Jesus’ healing ministry.

63. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, pp. 1067–1069.

64. Michael Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

65. R. T. France, “Faith,” *Dictionary of Jesus and Gospels*, pp. 223–226.

66. H. C. Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World*, pp. 78–104.

67. Homer, *The Iliad*, 2:731.

68. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 106.

69. Walter A. Jayne, *op. cit.*, p. 240f.

70. H. C. Kee, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–94.

71. Darrel Amundsen, and Gary Ferngren, “Medicine and religion: pre-Christian antiquity,” *Health/Medicine and the Faith Traditions*, p. 80.

as the “most philanthropic of the gods.”<sup>72</sup> Galen confessed that he was a servant of Aesculapius “since he saved me when I had the deadly condition of an abscess.”<sup>73</sup>

The early Christian apologists answered by charging that the cures made by the pagan gods that corresponded to the cures of Christ were instigated by demons. Justin Martyr (c. A.D. 100–165) wrote that when the demons “learned that it had been foretold that He (Christ) should heal every sickness and raise the dead they produced Aesculapius.”<sup>74</sup> Tertullian (c. A.D. 160–220) called Asklepios a “dangerous beast.”<sup>75</sup> Lactantius (c. A.D. 240 to c. 320) said that his birth was a disgrace to Apollo<sup>76</sup> and Eusebius of Caesarea (c. A.D. 265–c. 339) looked upon him as a “destroyer of souls.”<sup>77</sup>

Due to the complexity of the subject we shall, for the most part, leave aside the matter of supernatural healing claimed by both pagan and Christian writers during this period.<sup>78</sup> The question that remains may be stated as follows: What were the ordinary means of caring and curing that won the day for Christianity? We can partially answer this by comparing the Christian world-view with the pagan world view as each related to the care of the sick.

The one word that largely governed the care of the sick in the pagan world was *philanthropia* (philanthropy). Ludwig Edelstein, at least to some extent, defines this word for us in his lecture in honour of Sir William Osler, presented to the Faculty of Medicine, McGill University, on December 5, 1955.<sup>79</sup> In this lecture, Edelstein quotes the well-known line from the pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *Precepts*: “For where there is love of man (*philanthropia*) there is also love of the art (*philotechnia*) (ch. 6).”<sup>80</sup> He does so in order to show that Osler himself had read too much into this maxim. Osler had said that he saw evidence of the Greek physician’s “love of humanity associated with the love of his craft—*philanthropia* and *philotechnia*—the joy of working joined in each one to a true love of his brother.”<sup>81</sup> Edelstein reminded his audience that Osler had read back into the word *philanthropia* a meaning that it did not originally have; and if scrutinised in its wider context, Edelstein concludes that “it means no more than a certain friendliness of disposition, a kindness, as opposed to any misanthropic attitude.”<sup>82</sup> In the Hippo-

cratic Corpus, therefore, *philanthropia* indicates no more than politeness, kindness and a decent feeling toward others; in reality, not a very powerful concept as a moral imperative.

Our term “philanthropy” is derived from the Greek word *philanthropia*, which literally means a general “love of mankind.”<sup>83</sup> The word originally meant a generosity of rulers towards subjects; a friendly relationship between States. The world always carried with it an element of condescension that brought praise to the giver on behalf of the recipients.<sup>84</sup> This has little to do with the biblical ethic as Jesus points out when he said of such benefactors, “they have received their reward in full” (Mt. 6:2). From the pagan perspective, the same holds true, as Cicero (106–43 B.C.) observes, when he wrote:

It is quite clear that most people are generous in their gifts not so much by natural inclination as by reason of the lure of honor—they simply want to be seen as beneficent.<sup>85</sup>

It is quite evident that philanthropy in the Greco-Roman world did not include private charity, nor did it include any personal concern for the sick orphans or widows.<sup>86</sup> The Greco-Roman deities showed little concern for those in need, only for the rich and powerful who could offer them sacrifices. As Amundsen and Ferngren point out: “It was on a *quid-pro-quo* basis that pity might serve as a motive for giving; the giver hoped that, should he ever be in need, he might expect pity and aid because he had earned it by displaying pity himself.”<sup>87</sup>

The idea is succinctly summed up in the one line attributed to Aristotle by his biographer, Diogenes Laertius: “I give not to the man, but to mankind.”<sup>88</sup> This was characteristic of society at large as W. W. Tearn points out: “Broadly speaking, pity for the poor had little place in the normal Greek character, and consequently for the poor as such, no provision usually existed . . . there was nothing corresponding to our mass or privately organised charities and hospitals.”<sup>89</sup>

Philanthropy being communal and based upon a *quid-pro-quo* principle, no distinction was made between those in need and others. Furthermore, since the poor and the sick could not return favours given them, they were considered unworthy of receiving them. Greco-Roman philanthropy was statist, impersonal and utilitarian. Peter Singer’s society would be something like this.

It is because of such connotations that the writers of the NT and the early Church Fathers seldom used the word *philanthropia*<sup>90</sup> to describe love in the Christian sense. They

72. For a quick reference these relevant passages may be found in one source: E. & L. Edelstein, *Asclepius*. For Epictetus’ *Dissertationes* IV.8, 28 and 29, see *Asclepius*, Vol. 1, p. 205; for the Marcus Aurelius quotation, see p. 113.

73. E. & L. Edelstein, *Ibid.*, p. 263.

74. Justin Martyr, *I Apology*, 54, Vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. From this point on, all references to *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* will be abbreviated ANF.

75. Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, II.14, Vol. 4, ANF.

76. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, I.10, Vol. 7, ANF.

77. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini*, III, 56.

78. The subject of miracles is so complex it would need special attention to do it justice. The question revolves around one basic problem: Did the miraculous powers of healing Christ gave to his followers that knew him in the flesh cease when they died, or have they always been present, or at least available, throughout the history of the Church? For the classic exposition for the cessationist position see B. B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*; for an insightful short article, see Gary B. Ferngren, “early Christian as a Religion of Healing,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Spring (1992), Vol. 66, No. 1. For a challenge to the cessationist view, see G. S. Grieg and K. N. Springer, eds., *The Kingdom and The Power*, and J. Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*.

79. The full lecture is included in Edelstein’s *Ancient Medicine*, under the title “The Professional Ethics of the Greek Physician,” p. 319f.

80. Ludwig Edelstein, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 320.

81. In *The Old Humanities and the New Science*, and quoted by Edelstein in *Ancient Medicine*, pp. 319–320.

82. L. Edelstein, *Ibid.*, p. 320.

83. For a full exposition of the word, see J. Ferguson, *Moral Values of the Ancient World*, pp. 102–117.

84. Darrel Amundsen and Gary Ferngren, “Philanthropy in medicine: some historical perspectives,” *Benevolence and Health Care*, p. 2.

85. Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.14.44; Aulus Gellius (fl. A.D. 150) tells us that the same holds true for Rome inasmuch as the Latin word *humanitas* is commonly taken to have the same meaning as the Greek *philanthropia* which, according to him, signifies “a kind of friendly spirit and good feeling towards all men without distinction.” See his *Noctes Atticae*, (LCL), 13.17.1.

86. A. R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome*, pp. 77–88.

87. Darrel Amundsen, and Gary Ferngren, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

88. Digoenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 5.21.

89. William W. Tearn, & G. T. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilization*, p. 110.

90. The word was used later by Christians, particularly in the east, but only after it had taken on the meaning contained in the word *agape*. For an excellent short account of this process, see *Encyclopaedia of Bioethics*, Vol. 3, pp. 1519–1520.

chose the seldom-used word *agape* and gave it a new and distinctive Christian meaning.<sup>91</sup> It was rooted in the very nature of God's love towards mankind as shown in the Incarnation: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (Jn 3:16). Moreover, since God was the active agent in sending his son, *agape* is an active principle in that the love of God requires a response in man's love toward his brothers and sisters (Mt. 22:36–40): "All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments," said Jesus. When asked specifically how Christian love is to be shown and to whom, his answer is contained in the parable of the good Samaritan along with the admonition, "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:25–37). William Barclay describes it as follows: "*agape* is the spirit which says: 'No matter what any man does to me, I will never seek to do harm to him; I will never set out for revenge; I will always seek nothing but his highest good'."<sup>92</sup>

This *agape* was absolutely essential in carrying out the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18–20). One of the commands Christians were to obey was to "heal (*therapeuo*) the sick" (Lk 10:9). Often we let the miraculous in the NT overshadow the ordinary meaning of this word which is "to restore the sick to health by serving, caring and treating."<sup>93</sup> The emphasis can be on giving treatment, with or without any reference to healing.<sup>94</sup>

As Christians spread this revolutionary concept of *agape* throughout the Greco-Roman world they found a medical ethical tradition in harmony with their own, namely that of Hippocrates. This Hippocratic tradition, however, represented only a small segment of medical opinion. Edelstein points out that:

Medical writings, from the time of Hippocrates down to that of Galen, give evidence of the violation of almost every one of its injunctions . . . At the end of antiquity a decided change took place. Medical practice began to conform to that state of affairs which the Oath had envisaged . . . Small wonder! A new religion arose that changed the very foundation of ancient civilization . . . Christianity found itself in agreement with its principles . . . as early as in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" the command was given: "Thou shalt not procure abortion; nor commit infanticide."<sup>95</sup>

Very early in her life the Church set up agencies to deal with every sphere of life. They had their own courts, schools, exchequers and hospitals. It was their faith that dominated every area of life; to have any area of life outside the Lordship of Christ was considered idolatry. The reason behind the violent Roman persecutions of the third century was not religious, but rather that, as the charge read, the Christian Church was—*imperium in imperio*—a sovereignty within a sovereignty; an absolute authority within the jurisdiction of another. It was because they were regarded as politically subversive that they had to be destroyed. Stewart Perowne describes the cause of the violent persecution under the Emperor Valerian (A.D. 257) as follows: "Once again, it was the Christian *society*, not the Christian *faith*, which was

proscribed as illicit; the persecution was, as usual, based on political and economic, not on religious or theological grounds."<sup>96</sup>

Both Justin Martyr<sup>97</sup> (c. 100–165) and Tertullian<sup>98</sup> (c. 165–220) taught that all believers should visit the sick; this was an imperative, as Christ himself had pointed out: "I was sick and you looked after me . . . whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me" (Mt. 25:36, 40). The verb "to look after" (*episkeptomai*), in its context here, means "to care for in order to help or benefit;"<sup>99</sup> in late antiquity it was the word used to describe a physician's visit to a patient.<sup>100</sup> The Church's exchequer had funds designated especially for the sick who were too poor to pay for treatment.<sup>101</sup> The deacons and deaconesses of the Church, who were largely responsible for administering this aid, were also responsible for the staffing of the orphanages, hospitals, leprosaridae and other charitable institutions established by the Church.<sup>102</sup> Henry Sigerist describes it as follows:

It remained for Christianity to introduce the most revolutionary and decisive change in the attitude of society towards the sick. Christianity came into the world as a religion of healing, as the joyful Gospel of the Redeemer and of Redemption. It addressed itself to the disinherited, to the sick and afflicted and promised them healing, a restoration both spiritual and physical . . . It became the duty of the Christian to attend to the sick and poor of the community . . . The social position of the sick man became fundamentally different from what it had been before. He assumed a preferential position which has been his ever since.<sup>103</sup>

About half way through the third century a devastating plague ravaged the empire, and the Christians responded with a heroism previously unknown in the ancient world. This was particularly noticeable in that the Christians had just passed through a period of intense, cruel and vicious persecution. A letter, written by Dionysius bishop of Alexandria, describing the Christian response to this plague, has been preserved for us. Dionysius observed the following:

The most, at all events, of our brethren in their exceeding love and affection for the brotherhood were unsparing of themselves and cleave to one another, visiting the sick without a thought as to the danger, assiduously ministering to them, tending them in Christ, and so most gladly departed this life along with them: being infected with the disease from others, drawing upon themselves the sickness from their neighbours, and willingly taking over their pains.<sup>104</sup>

The pagans, on the other hand, were terrified by the plague; they even abandoned their own relatives by dragging them out into the streets before they were dead, hoping they would be picked up and cared for by the Christians.<sup>105</sup>

Due to the devastating effects of the plague, there appeared an unofficial body of Christians known as the

96. Stewart Perowne, *Caesars and Saints: The Evolution of the Christian State*, p. 145.

97. Justin Martyr, *Epist. Ad Zen. Et Seren.*, 17. (ANF Vol. 1).

98. Tertullian, *Ad Uxor.*, 2.4. (ANF Vol. 4).

99. J. H. Thayer, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

100. Darrel Amundsen, and Gary Ferngren, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

101. Justin Martyr, *Apologia*, 1.67.

102. Demetrios Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare*, p. 68.

103. Henry Sigerist, *Civilization and Disease*, pp. 69–70.

104. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, (LCL), Vol. 2, 7.22, p. 185.

105. Eusebius, *op. cit.*, 7.22, pp. 187–188.

91. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, pp. 5–10.

92. William Barclay, *More New Testament Words*, p. 16.

93. J. H. Thayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 288–9.

94. William M. Ramsay, *Luke the Physician*, p. 16.

95. Ludwig Edelstein, *Hippocratic Oath: Text Translation and Interpretation*, pp. 63–64; for the quotation Edelstein takes from the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," see *The Apostolic Fathers, LCL*, Vol. 1, pp. 310–312.

*Parabolani* (“the reckless ones”) who, in spite of the risk involved, devoted themselves especially to the care of all plague victims.<sup>106</sup>

During the great plague of the next century their care, not only for their own, but for their pagan persecutors as well, was noticed even by the Emperor Julian (361–363) who remarked that “the impious Galileans support not only their own poor but ours as well.”<sup>107</sup> This was quite remarkable in that there was, in general, no ethical motivation for this kind of charity in the ancient world up until this time.<sup>108</sup>

It was the Christian concern for those who bore God’s image (*imago Dei*), even though defaced by sin,<sup>109</sup> and motivated by love (*agape*) as displayed in Christ that gave rise to the establishment of the first hospitals (*xenodochia*) in the fourth century.<sup>110</sup>

Probably the best known of these was the Basileias, founded about 372 by Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Gregory of Nazianzus (330–389) has left us a first-hand account of a personal visit. He says:

Go forth a little from the city, and behold the city, the treasure-house of godliness . . . in which disease is investigated and sympathy provided . . . We have no longer to look on the fearful and pitiable sight of men like corpses before death, with the greater part of their limbs dead (from leprosy), driven from cities, from dwellings, from public places, from water-courses . . . Basil it was more than anyone who persuaded those who are men not to scorn men, nor to dishonour Christ the head of all by their inhumanity towards human beings.<sup>111</sup>

### III. THE MIDDLE AGES (A.D. 500–1500)

The Middle Ages are normally divided into two distinct periods. First, the early period (500–1050) and second, the high or late period (1050–1500). The perjorative term “dark” is often used to refer to the early period. The reason for this is more religious or philosophical than historical. Many non-Christian historians found these ages “dark” because Hellenism was absent and Christianity became more dominant. The “darkness,” then, is the “Christian” interlude between the collapse of the old Greco-Roman culture and its revival at about the time Peter Abelard (1079–1142) reintroduced Aristotle into non-Byzantine Europe.<sup>112</sup>

This term “dark ages” is a loose concept which any man may define according to his own prejudice. Some retreat from the term “Dark Ages” began when the term “Medieval Period” was used to indicate that at least some culture was in existence before the Renaissance. William Carroll Bark reminds us that it was the frontier spirit that dominated this early period. He pointed out that it was

. . . a working, striving society, impelled to pioneer, forced to experiment, often making mistakes but also drawing upon the

energies of its people much more fully than its predecessors, and eventually allowing them much fuller and freer scope for development. That condition, events, and peoples came together as they did in the early Middle Ages was extremely fortunate for the present heirs of the Western tradition.<sup>113</sup>

This idea of “darkness” has also been postulated by several medical historians, as though there were a clear break between Greco-Roman medicine and that practised during the early medieval period. For example, Charles Singer wrote that, during this early period, “men lacked a motive for living . . . Monkish medicine had no thought save for the immediate relief of the patient. All theoretical knowledge was permitted to lapse.”<sup>114</sup> Lately, however, this view has been seriously challenged. For example, George Sarton has rightly pointed out that those “dark ages” were “never so dark as our ignorance of them.”<sup>115</sup>

The reason for this tension was due, in large measure, to Aristotle, who compartmentalised medicine into two distinct categories: namely, the practice of medicine (the art) and the theory of medicine (the science).<sup>116</sup> In his study entitled *Ancient Medicine*, Ludwig Edelstein rightly defines the result of this when he tells us that “Greek science advocated at all times assumptions about an invisible world of law and order; it was theoretical rather than practical.”<sup>117</sup>

The Romans, being more practical than the Greeks, did not take to the Greek tomes on theoretical medicine. Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23/24 to 79) laments the fact that many Roman medical practitioners in his day could not even read the Greek medical works; he railed against Roman physicians, saying that they “acquired their knowledge from our dangers, making experiments at the cost of our lives. Only a physician can commit homicide with complete impunity.”<sup>118</sup> It was probably this dichotomy which gave rise to that humorous distinction often made between Greece and Rome; namely, that the Greeks were famous for their brains and the Romans for their drains.

The failure of the humanistic pagan world-view was in its inability to bring the practical and the theoretical together. Indeed, given its presuppositions, it could never have done so. It was largely due to this failure that Edelstein concluded that ancient science was in a state of serious decay by A.D. 200.<sup>119</sup>

The important point to be made here is that as Christianity divided into its eastern and western halves, the western (or Latin) half stressed the practical, while the eastern (or Greek) half stressed the theoretical.<sup>120</sup> This division, however, was only partially true, due to a common faith, particu-

113. William C. Bark, *Origins of Medieval World*, as quoted by R. J. Rushdoony, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

114. Charles Singer, *A Short Story of Medicine*, pp. 61–62. Other scholars who accept the idea of the “dark ages” in medicine are Erwin H. Ackernecht, *A Short History of Medicine*, and Arturo Castiglioni, *A History of Medicine*.

115. George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Vol. 1, p. 17. Other scholars who have challenged this view are Loren C. MacKinney, “A Half Century of Medieval Medical Historiography in America,” *Medievalia et humanistica*, 7, (1952), 18–42; and John M. Riddle, “Theory and Practice in Medieval Medicine,” *Viator*, Vol. 5, No. 51 (1974), 157–184.

116. Aristotle, *Politics*, (LCL), 1282a3.

117. Ludwig Edelstein, “Recent Trends in the Interpretation of Greek Science,” *op. cit.*, p. 421.

118. Pliny, *Natural History*, (LCL), 29.8.17–18.

119. Ludwig Edelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

120. John M. Riddle, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

106. *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 747.

107. Julian, *Letters*, Vol. 3, (LCL), p. 71.

108. Darrel Amundsen, and Gary Ferngren, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–12.

109. For a most excellent and scholarly discussion of the influence of this doctrine, see Gary B. Ferngren, “The Imago Dei and the Sanctity of Life: The Origin of an Idea,” *Euthanasia and the Newborn*, pp. 23–42.

110. Timothy S. Miller, *Birth of Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 73.

111. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 20*, as quoted by Darrel Amundsen and Gary Ferngren in “The Early Christian Tradition,” *Caring and Curing*, p. 49.

112. Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey*, p. 261.

larly in the biblical doctrines of the *imago Dei* and *agape*. Compassion for the sick was that common feature of both eastern and western Christianity that manifested itself in a manner previously unknown in Greco-Roman medical ethics.

We have already seen that in the east the Church established the first hospitals and charitable institutions. These gave asylum even to lepers, who were hopeless and helpless outcasts of society.<sup>121</sup> These institutions continue to grow and flourish throughout the middle ages, even under Turkish rule (1453–1850). The Turks, unlike their Christian subjects, disliked activities such as caring for the sick and the practice of medicine.<sup>122</sup> It is evident therefore that the eastern Greek Christians were not completely given to the theory of medicine, giving more attention to the practice of medicine as an art.

One cannot consider the early Middle Ages without giving some attention to Augustine of Hippo (354–430). Adolph Harnack does not overstate the case when he points out that Augustine's importance in the history of the Church and dogma lies in his giving to the west a system of ethics that was specifically Christian.<sup>123</sup>

The Greco-Roman view was that history was an endless cycle. To the Greeks, the origin of everything that existed was constant strife resulting in chaos which brought about a new beginning. The soul of man was caught up in a ceaseless transmigration. "War is the father and king of all . . . Strife is justice," said Heraclitus.<sup>124</sup> This pagan belief had left man facing the world without God, with only his free will. Even this eventually disappeared, and man's hope came to rest in "luck" (*fortuna*). It was Augustine's teaching on the sovereignty of God that gave man a new birth of freedom. C. N. Cochrane explains Augustine's contribution as follows:

. . . with the disappearance from Christian thought of the classical antithesis between "man" and the "environment," there disappears also the possibility of such a conflict. The destiny of man is, indeed, determined, but neither by a soulless mechanism nor by the fiat of an arbitrary or capricious power external to himself. For the laws which govern physical (nature), like those which govern human nature, are equally the laws of God.<sup>125</sup>

Augustine's sermons abound with illustrations portraying Christ as the Divine Physician—*Christus medicus*—and the Healer of all mankind's spiritual diseases.<sup>126</sup> The human physician, then, manifests the spirit of *agape*, of Christ-like compassion, in his care of the sick, especially the poor and destitute, without any thought of reward or fear of contagion.<sup>127</sup>

121. Richard Palmer, "The Church, Leprosy and Plague in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *The Church and Healing*, p. 81.

122. Stanley S. Harakas, "The Eastern Orthodox Tradition," *Caring and Curing*, p. 162. For a detailed study of Byzantine medicine see John Scarborough, ed., *Symposium on Byzantine Medicine*. For some excellent shorter articles, see Mary E. Keenan, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Early Byzantine Medicine," pp. 8–30 and "Gregory of Nyssa and the Medical Profession," pp. 150–161. See also Demetrios Constantelos, "Medicine, Byzantine," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 8, p. 244.

123. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, pp. 317–318; where the quotation from Harnack may be found.

124. W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: The Classical Mind*, p. 16.

125. Charles N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, p. 368.

126. Rudolph Arbesmann, "The Concept of 'Christus medicus' in St Augustine," p. 28.

127. Augustine, *Sermones*, 175.8f.

Many of Augustine's letters are written to physicians who happen to be close personal friends. In one letter he mentions his friend, Gennadius, a physician, as a man "of devout mind, kind and generous heart, and untiring compassion, as shown by his care of the poor."<sup>128</sup> Mary Keenan tells us that "The brief glimpses which Augustine affords us of his friends and acquaintances among the physicians of his day reveals them as men of noble character and of high professional ideals."<sup>129</sup> Augustine, in one of his sermons, actually encouraged the theoretical study of medicine. He even went so far as to categorically state that it would be cruelty indeed if the physician wished only to practise his art apart from a theoretical knowledge of the subject.<sup>130</sup> His one and only criticism was of the anatomists who, in their cruel zeal for science, practiced dissection, not only on the bodies of the dead by robbing graves, but sometimes on the living as well.<sup>131</sup>

One of Augustine's great legacies is the special care he gave to handicapped children. According to him, God created each child in his own image; it was God who gave the miracle of life at conception, formed each body in the womb and providentially brought it into this world. All newborn children, therefore, were to be preserved, irrespective of the circumstances of their conception, physical condition or mental ability. Even the child born of a prostitute, he contended, is sometimes adopted by God as his own son or daughter;<sup>132</sup> a child born of adultery is no less a creature of God than any other.<sup>133</sup>

Almost from the beginning the early Christians, and later in the early Middle Ages the Church, made it known there was an alternative to infanticide and the aborting of the unborn. The alternative was that Christians would take the unwanted children into their own homes. Monastic records indicate that defective and unwanted children were often left to the care of the Church.<sup>134</sup>

It has often been charged by many modern medical historians that the Church of the Middle Ages was opposed to the practice of medicine. This is an error that is found in many modern histories of medicine which otherwise appear to be quite scholarly. After listing the various Church councils and the edicts that followed, one scholar concluded that: "The general effect was, unfortunately, not only to stop the monks from practising, but to extend the special odium of these decrees to the whole medical profession."<sup>135</sup> This is only a half truth. Many modern texts on medical history contradict each other when naming the councils in which this prohibition was supposedly decreed; the same contradiction also applies to the types of clergy.

An excellent example of these errors is found in Andrew Dickson White's book, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*:

128. Augustine, *Epistles*, 159. 129. Mary Keenan, "Augustine and the Medical Profession," p. 169.

130. Augustine, *Sermon*, 156.2. 131. Augustine, *City of God*, 22.24.

132. Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, 6.43.

133. Augustine, *Ibid.*, 3.16.

134. J. E. Boswell, *Expositio and oblatio: The Abandonment of Children and the Ancient and Medieval Family*, pp. 17–33.

135. Fielding H. Garrison, *An Introduction to the History of Medicine*, p. 168. See also Robert S. Lopez, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 373; Robert Margotta, *The Story of Medicine*, p. 146; Max Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, p. 40; J. H. Bass, *Outlines of the History of Medicine and the Medical Profession*, p. 253; and Theodor Puschmann, *A History of Medical Education*, p. 280.

. . . one of the main objections developed in the Modern Ages against anatomical studies was the maxim that “the Church abhors the shedding of blood.” On this ground, in 1248, the Council of Le Mans forbade surgery to monks. Many other councils did the same . . . So deeply was this idea rooted in the mind of the universal Church that for over a thousand years surgery was considered dishonourable.<sup>136</sup>

T. C. Albutt in his book contradicts White when he states that it was at the Council of Tours that this “sinister and perfidious”—*ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*—was decreed.<sup>137</sup>

It soon became apparent that in the midst of this scholarly quagmire of confusion and inaccuracy, one would be forced to leave these secondary sources altogether and turn to the primary sources for help. This would be next to impossible for most of us to attempt. Fortunately, Professor Darrel Amundsen has done this for us in an excellent and scholarly study entitled, “Medieval Canon Law on Medical and Surgical Practice by the Clergy.”<sup>138</sup>

During the twelfth century there was a “shift in values within the traditional scheme of the cardinal vices.”<sup>139</sup> The sin of pride as the foremost of vices was gradually giving way to the sin of avarice. The various Church councils attempted to curb this vice of avarice. It was never aimed directly at the medical profession, even though it did affect it to some extent. One scholar summed it up as follows: “In practice, clerics had engaged in secular pursuits from the time of the early Church onwards, and gradually, in theory, the canonists came to apply one criterion, i.e., of motive, whether such work was undertaken for a genuine need (*necessitas*) or selfish gain (*turpe lucrum*).”<sup>140</sup>

The prohibitions contained in the various councils during the late Middle Ages applied only to the regular clergy, i.e. those who had taken a vow to withdraw from secular affairs. Amundsen concludes: “The specific prohibition against the study and practice of medicine did not apply to a sizable segment of the clergy and it is hardly a wholesale condemnation of the practice of medicine by clerics.”<sup>141</sup>

What shall we say about the “sinister and perfidious” *ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*, which is sometimes attributed to the Council of Tours and sometimes to canon 18 of Lateran IV? According to C. H. Talbot, it is no more than a literary ghost. He explains as follows:

The famous phrase *Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*, which has been quoted by every writer on medicine for the past two hundred years as the reason for the separation of surgery from medicine, is not to be found either in the text of the Council of Tours, 1163 A.D. (to

which they all attribute it) or in any other Church Council. It cannot be found in the Decretals of the Popes nor in any of the medieval commentaries on canon law. It is a literary ghost.

Talbot goes on to explain that it owes its existence to Quesnay, the uncritical historian of the Faculty of Surgeons at Paris who, in 1774, translated the French into Latin and inserted it into the text. No earlier source for this sentence can be found.<sup>142</sup> We trust this fallacy will, from now on, be laid to rest permanently.

#### IV. THE MODERN AGE (A.D. 1500 TO THE PRESENT)

Andrew Dickson White persevered in his allegation that “theological dogmas” continued to be among the greatest stumbling blocks to the growth of modern medical science even into the modern age. He cites the case of Andreas Vesalius, whose work in the sixteenth century set a new standard for human anatomy. According to White, Vesalius incurred “ecclesiastical censure,” and “in the search for real knowledge he risked the most terrible dangers, and especially the charge of sacrilege, founded upon the teaching of the church for ages.”<sup>143</sup> The fact is that during the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, dissections met with little interference from the Church; in some cases religious authorities even permitted Vesalius the use of Church buildings as anatomical theatres.<sup>144</sup>

The religious response to inoculation and vaccination against smallpox presents a similar pattern. A curious twist developed in New England in 1721, when the brilliant Puritan theologian Cotton Mather initiated the first American trials of inoculation. He was opposed by a leading Boston physician who argued that the procedure was not only unsafe, but irreligious because it interfered with God’s will.<sup>145</sup>

When the use of chloroform during childbirth was first introduced in Edinburgh in the 1840s by James Young Simpson, there was some mild opposition on theological grounds. In this case, even White admits, it was the powerful preaching of that notable Scottish Presbyterian theologian Thomas Chalmers that turned the tide of public opinion in Simpson’s favour.<sup>146</sup>

The nineteenth-century movement to clean up filthy and disease-ridden cities, on both sides of the Atlantic, drew much of its force from individuals motivated by Christian piety. Many saw a direct link between filth, disease and moral degeneration. It was John H. Griscom, a Quaker physician, who led the fight in New York City to improve the health of the working poor. In both Europe and North America the Christian concern to improve health by sanitation improved the lives of millions of people.<sup>147</sup>

136. Andrew Dickson White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, Vol. II, pp. 31–32.

137. T. C. Albutt, *The Historical Relations of Medicine and Surgery to the End of Sixteenth Century*, p. 21.

138. This is chapter 8 in Professor Amundsen’s book entitled *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*; this article can also be found in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 52, (Spring 1978) No. 1. The writer is indebted to Professor Amundsen for almost all of the material dealing with this subject at this point. We would conclude that this article, indeed his entire book mentioned above, is indispensable for a proper understanding of medical history during the medieval period.

139. L. K. Little, “Pride Goes Before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom,” 76:16.

140. J. Gilchrist, *The Church and Economic Activity in the Middle Ages*, p. 25.

141. Darrel Amundsen, *op. cit.*, p. 20 in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*.

142. C. H. Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England*, p. 55.

143. Andrew Dickson White, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 50.

144. Mary N. Alston, “The Attitude of the Church Towards Dissection Before 1500,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 16 (1944): 221–238.

145. Otho T. Beall, Jr. and Richard H. Shryock, *Cotton Mather: First Significant Figure in American Medicine*, p. 104f; John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America*, p. 30f. See also Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, pp. 345–366.

146. Andrew Dickson White, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 62–63.

147. Charles E. Rosenberg, and S. Carroll, “Pietism and the origins of the American public health movement: a note on John H.

During the sixteenth century medical science became more empirical in its observations about most of the diseases common to mankind. Even when discussing the plague, the most feared of all diseases, a theological explanation did not preclude natural causes nor the treatment and the use of natural remedies. The French surgeon Ambroise Pare confided that trying to find “the natural causes of the plague” kept him so busy that he would have to leave the ultimate causes to the theologians.<sup>148</sup> It is not surprising that most physicians did not deny a supernatural component to disease inasmuch as most physicians were also Christians.<sup>149</sup>

During the eighteenth century there arose a movement known as the Enlightenment, whose aim was the ultimate destruction of Christianity. If the movement has not succeeded in this, it has been effective in greatly diminishing the influence of Christianity on science in general, and health care in particular. Karl Barth describes this movement as “a system founded upon the presupposition of faith in the omnipotence of human ability.”<sup>150</sup> Like Christianity it is a religion; like Christianity it has a creed which can be written down, partly at least, as follows:

There is no God. There is, in fact, nothing besides the physical cosmos that science investigates. Human beings, since they are a part of this cosmos, are physical things and therefore do not survive death. Human beings are, in fact animals among other animals and differ from other animals only in being more complex. Like other animals, they are a product of uncaring and unconscious physical processes that did not have them, or anything else, in mind. There is, therefore, nothing external to humanity that is capable of conferring meaning or purpose on human existence. In the end, the only evil is pain and the only good is pleasure . . .<sup>151</sup>

Like Christianity there are various enlightenment “denominations” to choose from: Socialism, Marxism, Logical Positivism, Freudianism, Behaviorism, and Existentialism just to name a few.<sup>152</sup>

One of the more forceful critiques of the main tenets of the Enlightenment we have seen recently has come from the pen of Professor Peter van Inwagen in his essay “Quam Dilecta,” contained in *God and the Philosophers* edited by Thomas V. Morris. This is the narrative of his own pilgrimage from atheism to faith in Christ. Van Inwagen begins his critique with the following observation: “The Enlightenment has had its chance with me, and I have found it wanting. I once was one of its adherents, and now I am an apostate. On the level of intellectual argument and evidence, it leaves a lot to be desired. And its social consequences have been horrible.”<sup>153</sup>

Griscom and Robert M. Hartley, “*Journal of the History of Medical and Allied Sciences*, 23 (1968): 16–35. For the continuing influence of Christianity in the twentieth century, see John Etting, *The Germ of Laziness: Rockefeller Philanthropy and Public Health in the New South*.

148. Paul H. Kocher, “The idea of God in Elizabethan medicine,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 11 (1950), p. 29.

149. Ronald L. Numbers, and Ronald C. Sawyer, “Medicine and Christianity in the modern world,” *Health/Medicine and the Faith Traditions*, p. 138.

150. J. D. Douglas, “Enlightenment,” *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 343.

151. Thomas V. Morris, (ed.), *God and the Philosophers*, p. 49.

152. For information on just how and on what grounds some of these “denominations” launch their attack, see Elton Trueblood, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 161f.

153. Peter van Inwagen, “Quam Dilecta,” *God and the Philosophers*, p. 50.

The first matter discussed in this critique is that of congruency. The Enlightenment view of the universe, constructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was that the universe was infinite in space and time, and consisted entirely of matter in motion. Today this view is impossible. Van Inwagen says, “Present day science gives us a universe that began to exist a specific number of years ago and may well be spatially finite.”<sup>154</sup> The Enlightenment theory that humanity is continuous with other terrestrial animals is nothing more than “a very funny idea.”<sup>155</sup> He also takes issue with Andrew Dickson White’s thesis that the Church has been at war with science from the beginning. Van Inwagen, on the other hand, points out that:

There has been little persecution of science by the Church. There is nothing in the history of the relations of science and Christianity that can be compared with the Lysenko era in Soviet biology or the condition of science in Germany under the Nazis . . . I would suggest that the Christian world view of the High Middle Ages produced a mental climate that made the birth of science possible.<sup>156</sup>

The single and most important congruency is that all humans are deeply, radically evil; which may, indeed, be only potential but nonetheless real. The Enlightenment, of course, does not accept this thesis and, because of this, is unable to present a realistic view of the human condition past and present. Van Inwagen observes that: “It is extremely unfortunate that some Christians have abandoned the doctrine of original sin. As someone, Chesterton perhaps, remarked, they have abandoned the only Christian dogma that can actually be empirically proved.”<sup>157</sup>

Another argument van Inwagen brings forward is the statement of Christ in Mt. 7:20: “by their fruits you will recognise them.” To see the fruits of the Enlightenment in its purest form, one has to look at those who have consciously and deliberately separated themselves from any Christian influence, and who have held the reins of political power. The examples given are the terrors of the French Revolution, Germany and Russia under Hitler and Stalin, and Pol Pot’s experiment in social engineering in the 1970s. His conclusion is that:

In the end, the Enlightenment cannot survive; even if (by the standards of the world) it should destroy the Church, what replaces the Church at the social and cultural level will destroy the enlightenment. Saturn’s children will devour him. Those who doubt this should reflect on the actual fate of liberal humanism under Hitler or on the probable fate of liberal humanism under a politically established age of Aquarius or under a triumphalist reign of “theory” in the universities.<sup>158</sup>

One of the best examples of Enlightenment thinking may be found in a recent study in the field of bioethics entitled *Should the Baby Live: The Problem of Handicapped Infants*, co-authored by Helga Kushe and Peter Singer. Their position is boldly stated: “We think that some infants with severe disabilities should be killed.”<sup>159</sup> Apparently, by their own admission, it becomes evident that their term “severe” is much more severe than one might imagine when they seem obliged to add that “this recommendation may cause par-

154. *Ibid.*, p. 50. 155. *Ibid.*, p. 52. 156. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 55. 158. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.

159. As quoted by Nigel Cameron in *The New Medicine: Life and Death After Hippocrates*, p. 115.

ticular offense to readers who were themselves born with disabilities, perhaps even the same disabilities we are discussing.”<sup>160</sup>

The thrust of the book is the complete repudiation of our Hippocratic/Judeo-Christian ethical tradition, coupled with an exaltation of that type of medical ethics practised in the pagan world before the rise of Christianity, which included abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. They commend cultures in which infanticide is accepted and practised within the confines of ethical morality.<sup>161</sup> Kushe and Singer maintain that the Judeo-Christian tradition is the deviant one.<sup>162</sup> Then they go on to ask the question, “Why do we take a view so different from that of the majority of human societies?”<sup>163</sup> The villain, of course, is Christianity. To prove their point, they quote from W. H. E. Lecky’s *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*:

Considered as immortal beings, destined for the extremes of happiness or of misery, and united to one another by a special community of redemption, the first and most manifest duty of the Christian man was to look upon his fellow men as sacred beings, and from this notion grew up the eminently Christian idea of the sanctity of all human life . . . it was one of the most important services of Christianity that besides quickening greatly our benevolent affections it definitely and dogmatically asserted the sinfulness of all destruction of human life as a matter of amusement or of simple convenience, and thereby formed a new standard higher than any which then existed in the world . . . this minute and scrupulous care for human life and human virtue in the humblest form, in the slave, the gladiator, the savage, or the infant was indeed wholly foreign to the genius of Paganism. It was produced by the Christian doctrine of the inestimable value of each immortal soul.<sup>164</sup>

Central to a proper understanding of Christian ethics, particularly as they have a bearing on health care, is the doctrine that man was created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). John Calvin, in the sixteenth century, states that there can be no true knowledge of man except within the framework of a true knowledge of God.<sup>165</sup> He is very clear on this when he states: “It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself.”<sup>166</sup>

In the twentieth century the *imago Dei* has received extensive treatment by both the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth, and the German Lutheran theologian Helmut Thielicke. Barth places high value on human life because it is a creation of God. It is on this basis that he rejects both abortion and euthanasia.<sup>167</sup>

For Thielicke, however, human dignity is enhanced by the fact that man is a creation of God and the fact that Christ died for him. Man is a divine creation and, as such, stands

under the protection of God and partakes of the majesty of him who bestows it.<sup>168</sup>

Gary Ferngren sees the issue very clearly when he observes that: “One may doubt that the idea of the sanctity of life in its traditional form can continue to exist divorced from the theological concept of the *imago Dei*. It is likely that it will maintain its influence in a pluralistic age like our own only so long as the Judeo-Christian tradition that gave it birth continues to be a living force that is capable of relating in a meaningful way its belief in the transcendent value of all human life to contemporary (and increasingly difficult) issues in bio-medical ethics.”<sup>169</sup> *C&S*

168. Helmut Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, Vol. I, p. 172.

169. Gary Ferngren, “The *imago Dei* and the sanctity of life: the origins of an idea,” *Euthanasia and the Newborn*, p. 42.

160. Also quoted by Nigel Cameron, *ibid.*, p. 111.

161. Helga Kushe, and Peter Singer, *Should the Baby Live? The Problem of Handicapped Infants*, p. 110.

162. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

163. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

164. William E. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, Vol. 2, pp. 18, 20, 34.

165. For an excellent short study of Calvin’s understanding of the *imago Dei*, see Thomas F. Torrance, *Calvin’s Doctrine of Man*.

166. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.1.2.

167. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, pp. 324–397; of special interest concerning a number of bio-ethical issues, see “The Protection of Life,” pp. 397–470.

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