

2002

# J. Budziszewski: The Revenge of Conscience Study Guide

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## Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven Alan, "J. Budziszewski: The Revenge of Conscience Study Guide" (2002). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 121. [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov\\_fac\\_pubs/121](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/121)

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**J. BUDZISZEWSKI: THE REVENGE OF CONSCIENCE  
STUDY GUIDE, 2000-2002  
Steven Alan Samson**

**PREFACE: ESCAPE FROM NIHILISM**

**Outline**

- A. THE AUTHOR'S EARLIER NIHILISM (ix-xii)
  - 1. His Original Arguments for **Nihilism** [denial of objective truth] [cf. Scruton's culture of repudiation]
    - a. Denial of personal responsibility: no free will → fatalism
    - b. Denial of good and evil: no responsibility → no truth
  - 2. Practical Nihilism Linked with a Practical Atheism
  - 3. Holes in His Arguments in Favor of Nihilism
    - a. False assumptions about free will and causality
    - b. Self-referential incoherence undermined basis for reasoning
  - 4. A Personal Note
    - a. His arguments for nihilism rationalized his prior commitment
    - b. He saw the holes in his arguments even at the time
  - 5. How Modern Ethics Goes About the Matter Backwards
    - a. The problem of sin has more to do with will than knowledge
  - 6. Author's Nihilism Was False Because It Was Incoherent; His Motive Bad Because His Arguments Were a Self-Serving Smokescreen
- B. THE REAL REASONS THE AUTHOR BECAME A NIHILIST (xii-xiv)
  - 1. Radical Politics: Different Ideas for Redeeming the World → Alienation from God and Loss of Common Sense
  - 2. Sin Led to a Search for Reasons to Doubt God's Existence
  - 3. False Anthropology Taught in School
  - 4. Moral Propositions Demoted from Fact to Opinion
  - 5. Disbelieving in God as a Form of Payback
  - 6. Confusion of Science with a Materialist Worldview
  - 7. Influence of the Philosophy of **Friedrich Nietzsche**: Meaninglessness of Things
  - 8. Pride [One of the Seven Deadly Sins]
- C. HOW THE AUTHOR ESCAPED FROM NIHILISM (xiv-xvii)
  - 1. Different Ways of Going Wrong: Some People Rob and Kill; Others Abuse Drugs and Sex
  - 2. A Strong Mind that Refuses the Call to Serve God Has Its Own Way of Going Wrong: It Gets Stupid
    - a. Stupidity of Intellectual Pride
    - b. Agony of Going into Deep Denial about Love and Reality
  - 3. Turning Point: a Greater Feeling of Horror about Himself
  - 4. Budziszewski's Approach to **Natural Law Theory**
    - a. Specialization in the ways we suppress [hold down] the truth in unrighteousness [See Rom. 1:3]
    - b. Common ground: Philosophies of denial must assume the very first principles they deny [What we can't **not** know] [cf. R. J. Rushdoony's "inescapable concepts"]
    - b. Author's qualifications: His own rescue from self-deception taught him about self-deception

## Study Questions

1. What arguments did the author originally make in favor of nihilism? Why does he now regard these arguments as mere rationalizations? What is it that modern ethics gets backwards? (ix-xi)
2. Why did the author really become a nihilist? Thought question: Is nihilism now an integral part of the intellectual climate, -- the popular culture? (xi-xv)
3. How did Budziszewski escape nihilism? [Note Rom. 7:24-25. "Mind" here refers to the mind of Christ; "flesh" to the man controlled by sin.] How does he characterize his contribution to natural law theory? (xv-xvii)

## Review

reasons for author's nihilism      Friedrich Nietzsche      author's approach to natural theory

# CHAPTER ONE: THE FALLEN CITY (APOLOGION)

## Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (5-7)
  1. **Paradox of Fallenness:** Man as a Beauty Ruined
  2. Objections to Christian Reflections on Politics and Original Sin
    - a. God has no place in political theory; scholars must impersonate atheists [note pluralist view, pp. 8-9]
    - b. **Pluralism** is seen as an unprecedented intellectual condition, but Babel is really the enduring condition of the fallen human race
- B. THE ILLUSION OF NEUTRALITY (7-10)
  1. The **Classical Way** of Affirming Absolute Values [Approach to Ethics]
    - a. **Apologetical:** Takes a position and argues its merits
    - b. **Noetic:** Appeals to shared knowledge
    - c. Therefore: It regards one who professes ignorance of a moral precept as really holding down his guilty knowledge
    - d. Consequences of Denying First Principles: Any culture in deep moral denial must come to its senses or collapse
  2. The **Pluralist Way** [cf. Author's Original Arguments for Nihilism]
    - a. **Anoetic:** Appeals to shared ignorance – question everything!
    - b. **Anapologetical:** Adopts a posture of neutrality, tolerance
    - c. Therefore: It objects to Christianity as merely a point of view and merely fools itself about starting- and ending-points
    - d. Consequences of Pluralism: By taking the surrounding Babel at face value it functions merely as a license to be arbitrary
- C. THE FALL OF MAN (10-14)
  1. Question: Why Go Back to Original Sin? Answer: The Three Great Troubles of Public Life Are All Results of the Fall.
    - a. Ethical: We misbehave
    - b. Intellectual: We mis-think by doing wrong and calling it right
    - c. Strategic: Our toils to rectify sin are twisted by sin
  2. How We Think about the Malady of Original Sin [There is only one hope because we cannot fix ourselves] [see Christ's healing, p. 13; moral renewal, p. 49; and putting on the mind of Christ, p. 137]
    - a. In America the most prevalent ideologies ignore it (**Denial**)
      - 1) **Progressivism** (salvation through government): The *hubris*

[the pride that leads to destruction] of experts has erected an **imperium** of judges and bureaucrats [see pp. 58-61 on **filtration** as a strategy for promoting the common good and ch. 6 on liberalism] [see also Minogue on political moralism and Bastiat on legal plunder]

- 2) **Libertarianism** (salvation through the market): The **cupiditas** of insatiable consumption [see p. 67-68 on the **love of wealth** as a motive for promoting the common good and **mammonism**, pp. 119-21]
  - b. Ideologies that dominate the universities – Marxism and feminism – locate it in real conflict but in the process merely indict their own interests
  - c. Postmodernism recognizes the defects of other ideologies but merely offers a **metanarrative** of its own [see pp. 81-86]
  - d. Our hope then must be in God, who stands outside our broken interests
3. Answers to Other Objections
  - a. Only Christ claimed to heal us
  - b. Faith is a gift; righteousness is not a matter of works
  - c. Faith can be corrupted [see p. 19: “the perversion of the best is the worst”], so the Church requires divine help
  - d. Scripture provides a vantage for judging political programs
- D. EXPLAINING OURSELVES (14-19)
  1. The Fallen City (Apologion): Purpose Is to Find Out What It Means to Be Good and Broken [i.e., having a **depraved conscience**]
  2. The Revenge of Conscience: Why We Decay so Quickly
  3. The Illusion of Moral Neutrality: A Way of Escaping Responsibility by Adopting a Strategy of Incoherence
  4. Politics of Virtues, Government of Knaves: A Repertory of Ways to “Get Around” What We Cannot Fix
  5. The Problem with **Communitarianism**: Failure of the Notion of Shared Community Values
  6. The Problem with **Liberalism**: A Compendium of Its Moral Errors
  7. The Problem with **Conservatism**: A Digest of Its Moral Errors
  8. Why We Kill the Weak: The Bad Can Only Be Understood from the Good; We Kill When Good Impulses Are Only Bent, Not Destroyed [cf. C. S. Lewis’s Space Trilogy and the “bent” man Weston]
  9. The Fallen City (Reprise and Charge): A Call to Stir Up the Memory of Special Revelation and the Knowledge of General Revelation
  10. Conclusion: A Cautionary Note
    - a. Politics itself is not redemptive
    - b. The perversion of the best is the worst

### Study Questions

1. What reasons are usually given for objecting to a Christian approach to the study of politics? Distinguish the Classical way of affirming absolute values from the Pluralist way. How would you answer the Pluralist position, which often professes “neutrality” and “objectivity?” (5-10)
2. What is some of the evidence for original sin? What are some of the ways we tend to think about (and often evade) this malady? How does the author answer the four other objections? (10-14)
3. The first two chapters get to the heart of the matter: How is a depraved conscience different from both genuine ignorance and honest recognition? Why do we (individuals and societies) decay so quickly? (14-15)

4. How does the author approach Pluralism, constitutional government, communitarianism, liberalism, conservatism, and the culture of death? What is the author's purpose in examining the moral errors and self-deceptions of worldly ideologies? Identify the task of Christians and the idolatries that may deceive them. (15-19)

### Review

differences in the classical vs. pluralist approaches to ethics  
 apologetical noetic  
 Progressivism

how we think about original sin  
 anapologetical anoetic  
 Libertarianism

## CHAPTER TWO: THE REVENGE OF CONSCIENCE

### Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (20-22)
  1. The Way Sin Runs Its Course
    - a. Stages of Sin: temptation, toleration, approval
    - b. Stages of Denial: euphemism, avoidance, forgetfulness
    - c. Illustration of these patterns in the house of death: *e.g.*, James Watson [co-discoverer of DNA], Ernest van den Haag [politically conservative sociologist]
  2. Why Do Things Get Worse So Fast? [Weakness vs. Strength]
    - a. The Usual Explanation: the **passive conscience** is mainly a restraint that is weakened by neglect
    - b. Its Usual Partner (or Corollary): the conscience comes from culture and is built in us from outside
    - c. Neither explanation can account for the sheer dynamism of wickedness
    - d. A Different Explanation: The **depraved conscience** is an active force that comes from within and that can drive us on
- B. THE SHAPE OF CONSCIENCE (22-26)
  1. The Higher Law View
    - a. A Law Written on the Heart (**Natural Law**, general revelation): cf. Jer. 1:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12; Rom. 2:15
      - (1) Pagan Illustration: **Antigone** vs. the tyrant [the Investiture Contest raised similar issues in the Middle Ages through the abuse of papal interdicts and imperial decrees]
    - b. Stronger and More Consistent Biblical Tradition of Verbal Revelation (special revelation)
    - c. Two Parts: **general revelation (Noahide Commandments)** makes us aware of God and His requirements; **special revelation** tells us how to solve the problem
  2. Natural Law Is Also Unconsciously Presupposed -- Even When Consciously **Denied** -- by Modern Secular Thinkers [cf. R. J., Rushdoony's Inescapable Concepts]
    - a. Illustration: an inconsistency in **utilitarianism** and its arguments in favor of the greatest happiness
  3. Summary of Natural Law by **Thomas Aquinas**
    - a. The **ineffaceable core principles** of the moral law are the same for all "both as to rectitude and as to knowledge." "These are the laws we *can't not* know."
    - b. All secondary or **derived principles** are derived from this core by **deduction** or with the help of **prudence**

- 4 Two Other Views
  - a. **Moral relativism** denies the rectitude (rightness) of the core principles: “things do not get worse, only different” (moral nihilism)
  - b. **Mere moral realism** accepts their rightness but denies there is anything we *can't not* know (epistemological nihilism)
  - c. Critique: If the traditional view is true, then our decline is owed not to moral ignorance but to moral suppression [a matter of will rather than knowledge]
- C. MORAL CONFUSION (26-27)
  1. Why Doesn't This View Make It Harder to Explain Why Things Are So Quickly Getting Worse? A Review of Some Facts:
    - a. Illustrations: The tissue of contradictions surrounding abortion, teenage sex, and assisted suicide
  2. We Restrict What We Allow (Often with a Guilty Conscience) Because We Know It Is Wrong But Do Not Want to Give It Up [It May Require Legal Permission, Licensing, or Regulation]
- D. THE FORCE OF CONSCIENCE (27-32)
  1. If the Law Written on Our Hearts Can Be Repressed, We Cannot Count on It to Restrain Us from Doing Wrong
    - a. Holding conscience down merely distorts and redirects its force
    - b. Guilt, guilty knowledge, and guilty feelings are not the same thing, but **guilty knowledge** produces certain **objective needs**
    - c. Repentance can satisfy these four needs but suppression only displaces them, generating the impulse to further wrong
  2. The **Need to Confess** Arises from Transgression against the Truth
    - a. Confession can be inverted to serve the ends of advocacy
  3. The **Need to Atone** Arises from the Knowledge of a Debt that Must Be Paid
    - a. But one betrayal may lead to more
  4. The **Need for Reconciliation** Arises from the Fact that Guilt Cuts Us Off from God and Man
    - a. **Compensation** Violation of a basic human bond leads the burdened conscience to instantly establish an abnormal one (co-dependency) [criminal organizations insure loyalty by making members accomplices in crimes]
    - b. **Recruitment** Transgressors strive to gather a substitute community around themselves or require society to submit [cf. Minogue] [terrorist strategy: al-Qaeda attacks have been designed to attract recruits]
  5. Unhooked from Justice, the **Need for Justification** Becomes Rationalization, a Very Dangerous Game
    - a. The problem is that the ordinances are interdependent, so we cannot suppress one without rearranging the others
    - b. Some rationalizations for sexual promiscuity may be socially protected but deflecting blame may lead to false witness
    - c. Invention of **private definitions** of marriage [cf. Judges 21:25] makes the cultural protection of real marriage more difficult
    - d. Implications of a generic right to marry and to have children
- E. MULTIPLYING TRANSGRESSIONS (32-35)
  1. Case Study: An Unwanted Pregnancy
    - a. First Option: Getting rid of the evidence
  2. Justifying Abortion: Four Options [Stages of Denial, Rationalizations]
    - a. Deny the act is deliberate, deny that it kills, denies that its victims are human, or deny that wrong must not be done
    - b. Option number three leads down a slippery slope by inventing another criterion of humanity
  3. Applying the criteria of personhood and deliberative rationality leads to dehumanization

- a. Thus conscience has its revenge by driving us into a pitiless system of **moral castes**
- 4. Consequences: Sin ramifies (branches out) but it cannot reproduce except by taking over the machinery of the conscience [similarly, homosexuals reproduce through recruitment]
  - a. The weakness of evil is that it must rationalize
  - b. Its strength is that it can, *i.e.*, redirect the conscience
- E. NATURAL CONSEQUENCES (35-38)
  - 1. Law Is a Form of Discipline that Compels through Fear of Punishment (Thomas Aquinas)
    - a. In the case of natural law it means suffering the natural consequences of its violation
  - 2. Two **Diminishers** of This Disciplinary Effect
    - a. **Time lag**: Consequences may only be felt generations later
    - b. **Attempts to escape consequences**: *e.g.*, social insurance programs may encourage improvidence (see p. 25 on mere moral realism)
  - 3. **Axiom**: We Cannot Alter Human Nature
  - 4. **Corollary**: Our Contrivances Can Delay or Worsen the Natural Consequences of Breaking the Natural Law But Not Cancel Them
    - a. They alter incentives: *e.g.*, contraceptives
    - b. They encourage wishful thinking
    - c. They reverse the force of example
    - d. They transform thought into a confused libertarianism
  - 5. Redirection of the Law
    - a. Illustration: **Planned Parenthood v. Casey**
    - b. Message: It would be unfair to change the rules again [Rosenstock-Huussy cites Anselm of Lucca to the contrary in *Out of Revolution*, p. 523]
  - 6. Since the Cultural Penalty Will Be More Crushing When It Comes, We Must Learn Four Hard Lessons
    - a. Acknowledge natural law as a true and universal morality
    - b. Be on guard against legal attempts to circumvent it
    - c. Fear the natural consequences of their violation
    - d. Forbear from further attempts to compensate for immorality
  - 7. We Have Enthroned the Tyranny of Our Vices and It's Time to Pray
    - a. We do not want to read the letters on the heart, because they burn; but they do burn, so at last we must read them

### Study Questions

1. Why do things get worse so fast? How does the Jewish and Christian tradition of natural law differ from the pagan and secular traditions? What is the ethic of utilitarianism? (20-22)
2. How does the traditional, natural law understanding of conscience differ from that of two alternatives: moral relativism and mere moral realism? What makes the problem of moral decline volitional (a matter of will) rather than cognitive (a matter of knowledge or reason)? [Plato divides the soul into three parts and each part has its distinct virtue: reason or "calculation" (*logismos*) = wisdom; will or "spiritedness" (*thumos*) = courage, and desire or "appetite" (*epithumia*) = moderation. By analogy, these correspond to the head, the heart, and the stomach.] Illustrate the problem by examining the "tissue of contradictions" in the section on Moral Confusion. (22-27)
3. Identify four objective needs that result from guilty knowledge and discuss how they may be displaced when guilt is suppressed rather than repented. What accounts for the strength of displaced (abnormal) impulses, as with compensation, recruitment, and

unconventional marriages? (27-32)

4. When ordinary rationalization fails, what are some of the options for suppressing a bad conscience, as in the case of an unmarried young woman who becomes pregnant? How does the urge to justify abortion drive us toward a system of moral castes? How does sin breed? (32-35)
5. Just as the conscience may be occupied and colonized by sin, how may the disciplinary effects of natural consequences also be diminished? What are some long-term consequences of violating the laws of sex? Why do our attempts to avoid the natural consequences of breaking the natural law make them worse? How does the Court's ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) demonstrate that even an allegedly private right has public consequences? What can we do in response? (35-38)

### Review

stages of sin	conscience	Antigone
types of revelation	utilitarianism	Thomas Aquinas
core vs. derived principles	moral relativism	mere moral realism
objective needs produced by guilty knowledge		compensation
recruitment	multiplying transgressions	Noahide
Commandments		
diminishers of the disciplinary effects of natural consequences		natural law

## CHAPTER THREE: THE ILLUSION OF MORAL NEUTRALITY

### Outline

- A. THE MYTH OF NEUTRALITY (39-41)
  1. **Nietzsche's** Charge of Hypocrisy: If Men Took God Seriously, They Would Still Be Burning Heretics at the Stake
    - a. Two groups agree: ordinary bigots and the reactionaries of the cultural elite ("modern backlash") [cf. Scruton's culture of repudiation]
  2. Reactionaries "Love" **Tolerance** But Strangle It in Their Embrace
    - a. Their Credo: Intolerance is the consequence of public moral commitments; therefore, morality must be a private affair
    - b. Tolerance is equated with moral neutrality, autonomy, rights
    - c. Illustrations: **Michael Oakeshott's** Governing, **John Rawls's** Veil of Ignorance, **Jürgen Habermas's** Ideal Speech Situation
    - d. Inconsistency of the advocates of this inconceivable Neutrality [cf. the anoetic, anapologetic nihilism of the Pluralists, pp.8-9]
- B. UNDERSTANDING TOLERANCE (41-47)
  1. What Is Tolerance?
    - a. It is wrong to tolerate rather than suppress certain harmful deeds, such as rape; but it is wrong to suppress rather than tolerate other harms, such as false opinions
  2. Why Do We Sometimes Tolerate an Evil?
    - a. Wrong Answer: Skepticism [the Pluralist approach]
      - 1) Three types of skeptics and their attitudes toward debate (utter skeptic, partial skeptic, non-skeptic)
    - b. Right Answer: To prevent graver evils or advance greater goods [the Classical approach]



3. Paradox of Tolerance
  - a. The goods protected by suppression may be different from those injured by it, as in the cases of truth and peace; this requires right judgment of the priority of these goods (greater vs. lesser), which is a matter of circumstance
  - b. Alternatively, the goods that are protected by suppression may be the same as those harmed by it; this requires right judgment of ends against mistaken means, which is a constant
  - c. Therefore, the **constant element** in the practice of tolerance (or intolerance) is right (or false) judgment in the protection of ends against mistaken means
4. Intolerance Can Err in Two Directions
  - a. **Error of Softheadedness**: an excess of indulgence
  - b. **Error of Narrowmindedness**: a deficiency of indulgence
5. Location of True Tolerance Determined on a Case-by-Case Basis
6. KEY POINT: A Formal Definition of Tolerance in **Three Propositions**
  - a. Tolerance **cannot be neutral** about what is good [the classical as opposed to the pluralist view]
  - b. Tolerance is a **moral virtue** of the **Aristotelian** type, *i.e.*, a mean between two opposed vices
  - c. The circumstantial element in its practice is right judgment in the protection of greater ends against lesser ends, which is a matter of **practical wisdom** rather than utilitarianism, which is based on hedonism (the pleasure principle).
7. What Is Gained from This Definition
  - a. Insight into how tolerance might be taught
  - b. Insight into how religious toleration is possible
- C. TEACHING TOLERANCE (47-50)
  1. Interdependence of All Moral Virtues (**Aristotle**)
    - a. Every moral virtue depends on practical wisdom; if practical wisdom is impaired, then every moral virtue is impaired
    - b. Illustration: relationship between courage, practical wisdom, and every other moral virtue
  2. Classic Thesis of the Unity of the Virtues
    - a. All moral virtues (spokes) are connected at the hub (practical wisdom) as well as at the rim, which is upheld by all virtues
    - b. Tolerance is thus one of the moral virtues and depends on all the others
    - c. Implications for the cultivation of virtuous citizens: the unity of the virtues works in only one direction (progress must be made toward all)
    - d. Consequently, tolerance cannot be taught unless all the rest are taught as well
    - e. The folly of **compensation** [see pp. 29, 61-63]
  3. The Only Cure for Moral Collapse Is Moral Renewal, on All Fronts Simultaneously
    - a. More than education, we need redemption
    - b. Virtues are deeply ingrained "habits," complex dispositions of character
    - c. Virtues are much more than readiness to follow the rules
    - d. The virtue of tolerance cannot be transmitted by a mere "fix"
- D. RELIGIOUS TOLERATION (50-54)
  1. Definition of Religion
    - a. Religion is an **ultimate concern** or **unconditioned loyalty**
    - b. "Religious" vs. "secular" is a false dichotomy
    - c. Religion is either acknowledged, unacknowledged, or incomplete
    - d. No one escapes ceding ultimacy to something [see Rushdoony on sovereignty as an inescapable concept]
  2. Religious Tolerance Is Not Possible Unless One's Ultimate Concern Commands

It or Allows It

- a. **St. Hilary of Poitiers:** "God does not want unwilling worship, nor does He require a forced repentance"
    - 1) God also sets limits to what is tolerated
  - b. Other examples: **Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Vladimir Lenin, John Rawls**
3. What You Can Tolerate Pivots on Your Ultimate Concern
    - a. **Social consensus** [civil society] is possible only where different zones of tolerance overlap
  4. Growing Divergence of These Zones
    - a. Consensus vanishes and culture wars intensify
    - b. True tolerance is not well tolerated
    - c. "Although the God of some of the disputants ordains that they love and persuade their opponents, the idols of some of the others ordain no such thing."

### Study Questions

1. What kind of "tolerance" is preached by the cultural elite, *i.e.*, reactionaries of the philosophical right as well as the philosophical left? How well do they practice their vaunted "neutrality"? (39-41)
2. How does tolerance differ from skepticism? What is the real reason we sometimes tolerate evils? What is the constant element in the practice of tolerance? What two opposed errors or vices characterize intolerance? How may we determine the location of true tolerance? (41-45)
3. Identify three components of a formal definition of tolerance. What makes the moral virtues interdependent? What are its implications for correcting problems with any one of them? (45-50)
4. What is religion? Is tolerance an expression of religion? What happens when zones of tolerance between contending concerns no longer intersect? (50-54)

### Review

Friedrich Nietzsche  
errors of intolerance  
unity of the virtues

types of skeptics  
definition of tolerance  
definition of religion

reasons for tolerance  
Aristotle  
culture wars

## CHAPTER FOUR: POLITICS OF VIRTUES, GOVERNMENT OF KNAVES

### Outline

- A. POLITICS OF VIRTUES (55-56)
  1. **Hillary Clinton's** Politics of Virtue: Compassion as a High-Tax Welfare State [cf. William Graham Sumner's Forgotten Man]
  2. **Joseph de Maistre:** One Cannot Expect Liberty, Justice, or Concern for the Common Good Where Knaves Rule a Rabble
  3. For Denying The Atonement a Man May Be Faithless, But For Denying Its Need He Is Insane
  4. The Single Greatest Problem of Politics and Its Proposed Solutions

- a. How Can We Make Government Promote the Common Good When There Is So Little Virtue To Be Found?
  - b. Seven Solutions That Fall Short; But One Must Make Do
- B. DETERRENCE (56-58)
- 1. Inhibition of Acts of Vice by the Threat of Legal Punishment
    - a. Target: acts of vice, not vice proper
    - b. Object: the common good, not the personal good
  - 2. Limited Effectiveness: It Works Well Only Where the Effects of Depravity Are Incomplete
    - a. It exploits **guilt** [the residue of virtue] rather than fear; it shores up a faltering conscience, but it presupposes conscience
    - b. The guardians themselves -- whether policemen or lawmakers -- must be men of **public virtue** [see p. 59]
    - c. **David Hume** observed that men act less virtuously in their public capacities than in their private because they are driven less by a craven for goodness than by a desire for **honor** [see pp. 130-31]
    - d. The scarcer the virtue, the weaker the deterrent: Hamburger Helper analogy
- C. FILTRATION (58-61)
- 1. The Practice of Recruiting Officeholders Disproportionately from among the Most Virtuous [cf. Plato, Aristotle, James Madison]
  - 2. Four Filtration Strategies
    - a. **Ascription**: meritorious characteristics, such as lineage, natural-born citizenship, minimal age
    - b. **Achievement**: e.g., the *cursus honorum*, presidential primaries
    - c. **Examination**, e.g., civil service exam
    - d. **Approbation**
  - 3. Ways in Which Filters Can Backfire
    - a. Ranking may awaken **envy**
    - b. Ambition [see Madison] -- "fire in the belly" -- may mean the love of power and the lust of domination (St. Augustine)
    - c. Problem of wise fools: lack of discernment
    - d. Advances in the techniques of evasion: **James Madison's** enlargement of territory only leads to larger-scale factions
    - e. The **vesting of interests**: permanent, nonpartisan civil service reinterprets professionalism in terms of survival, growth, and expansion of mission [see p. 11 on the *imperium* of judges and bureaucrats resulting from Progressivism]
  - 4. Pendulum Quality of Some of Our Reforms
    - a. e.g., Progressive Era replacement of caucuses with primaries [an achievement strategy]
- D. COMPENSATION (61-63) -- See also p. 29
- 1. Organization of Citizens So That Excess and Deficiency Correct Each Other
    - a. Wherever there are differences, there must be coordination
  - 2. **Composition of Fragmentary Insights** as a Compensation for Defects of Judgment, *i.e.*, for Seeing Only Part of the Picture [This a rationale for a representative assembly
    - a. Political scientists find that more is explained by the "**aggregation of preferences**," whereby politicians take "cues" rather counsel from their colleagues
  - 3. **Weaving** as a Compensation for Defects of Passion, *i.e.*, through Excess or Deficiency
    - a. **Plato's statesman** was a weaver of opposite civic temperaments (fear tempers fire, fire tempers fear)
    - b. Problem: the mean and the midpoint are different in policy
    - c. In order to weave successfully, the statesman must have virtue entire

[the problem also with deterrence]

- E. BALANCE (63-66)
  - 1. Setting of Selfish Groups Against Each Other So as to **Check Vice** and **Give Leverage to Virtue**
  - 2. Preconditions
    - a. Constitutional advantages of each group must be equalized
    - b. Straddling every important cleavage, a middle or third group must be made secure [cf. Aristotle's middle class]
    - c. Opposing groups must have incentives to court this middle
  - 3. Refuting the Charge of **Gridlock**: Competition between Extremes in the Presence of a Middle May Favor Enlarging the Middle
  - 4. Harder to Dismiss Other Flaws in the Classical Strategy of Balance
  - 5. Bottom Line: Balance Cannot Plausibly Give Us Justice and Good Order in the Complete Absence of Virtue
  - 6. Aristotle's View: An Otherwise Voiceless Group -- Truly Virtuous or Imitative of It -- Gains Leverage When Cast in the Role of Balancer
- F. CHANNELING (66-68)
  - 1. Non-Virtuous Motives Are Shaped and Directed So That They Give Rise to the Same Behavior to Which Virtue Would Give Rise
    - a. e.g., Aristotle's middle class and its **desire for security**
  - 2. The **Desire for Independence** May Imitate Virtue
    - a. Independence in Business (**Alexander Hamilton**)
    - b. Independence in Farming (**Thomas Jefferson**)
    - c. Commercial vs. Agrarian Visions of the Republic
  - 3. The Keenest Republican Theories of Channeling Feature Both Institutional and Moral Requirements
    - a. **Augustine**: Roman love of glory required a society of fixed statuses and an arena for competition in quest of glory
    - b. **Adam Smith** and **Alexis de Tocqueville**: Commercial love of wealth requires a society without fixed statuses and an arena for competition in the pursuit of gain
  - 4. Moral Requirements: Each Represents a Strategy of Stretching Rather Than Substituting for Virtue
    - a. Augustine: **Nobility** must have a desire for **glory** as well as a sense of what merits it
    - b. Adam Smith: **Entrepreneurs** must have both a desire for gain [profit motive] as well as a sense of restraint
    - c. Tocqueville: **Citizens** must pursue "self-interest rightly understood" [the Golden Rule]
  - 5. Otherwise:
    - a. Nobles are as apt to seek fame by fraudulent means as by fair, following **Niccolo Machiavelli's** advice
    - b. Businessmen are as apt to collude as to compete, following **mercantilist** advice
    - c. Citizens are just as apt to pursue license as liberty, following **demagogic** advice
  - 6. Only Augustine Perceived the Paradox That Channeling Entails
    - a. Channeling accommodates as well as manipulates the sub-virtuous motives with which it deals
    - b. [Gresham's Law -- that bad (debased) money drives out the good -- also applies to the moral coin of the realm]
- G. INCULCATION (68-70)
  - 1. Government Tries to Teach Virtue Directly through Law
  - 2. Law Cannot Be Neutral; Everything a Government Does Is Founded on Some Understanding of What Is Good [cf. Rushdoony: "All law is an establishment of religion]

- a. No law can fail to have effect on **character**
- b. Lesson: Protect the true teachers of virtue; get out of their way; and be sure not to make men *worse*
- c. The true teachers are church and family
- 3. The State Is a Target of Partisan Interests, So It Should Defer to Church and Family
- 4. The State Should Also Defer to Church and Family Because of the Nature of Moral Development
  - a. Moral development is not an arithmetic process as shown by
    - 1) **The Paradox of the Treacherous Good:** Bad qualities always depend on *imperfectly* good ones for their vigor [see p. the Asymmetry Principle, p. 126]. Lesson: A man must be *turned around* (converted); he must repent.
    - 2) **The Paradox of Elevation:** Since we imitate virtue by *channeling* vices, apparent improvement in one dimension can mask a long-run worsening. Lesson: A man must be turned in the *right direction*; he needs the Word of God [see pp. 13, 49]
    - 3) **The Paradox of Countervailing Vice:** The cure of a channeled vice may open the door to others that are even worse. Lesson: A man must be *transformed*; he needs God's grace.
  - 5. Repentance, Revelation, and Grace Are Far Beyond the Scope of Law, Which Is the Doom of Official Inculcation
- H. SUBSIDIARITY (70-72) -- similar to Abraham Kuyper's Sphere Sovereignty [see p. 118]
  - 1. Government Honors Virtue and Protects Its Teachers, But Without Attempting to Take Their Place
  - 2. Character of the State's Role as *Subsidium* (Help)
    - a. A State That Forgoes Inculcation Has Not Thereby Denied Its Influence on Character; It Has Agreed Not to Usurp the Role of Parents and Church
    - b. The State Must Avoid Making Family Dependent Through Welfare and Making the Church Pregnant with Its Purposes [see meddling, pp. 118-19; spoiled prudence, pp. 128-29]
    - c. **G. K. Chesterton** on the usurpations of the modern socialist state
  - 3. Bottom Line: The State Must Get Out of the Way of the True Teachers of Virtue and Keep Other Things from Getting into Their Way [cf. Rom. 13]

### Study Questions

1. What is the target of deterrence? What does it assume? What is Hume's explanation why men act less virtuously in their public than in their private capacities?
2. Identify four types of filtration? How may this strategy backfire? How may defects of judgment and passion be compensated? Why is a strategy of constitutional balance inadequate to the task? What was Aristotle's view?
3. What forms of channeling did Augustine, Adam Smith, and Tocqueville recommend? What are some of the paradoxes of inculcation? What do people need more substitutes for virtue? What is the proper role of the state?

### Review

what deterrence presupposes	Hume on public virtue	filtration strategies
compensation	types of rectitude and their deviations	(constitutional) balance
Aristotle	channeling	Augustine on the love of glory
Adam Smith	Alexis de Tocqueville	paradoxes of inculcation

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE PROBLEM WITH COMMUNITARIANISM

### Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (73-75)
  - 1. The Story of a People or Nation Lies at the Heart of the Christian Faith
    - a. Members of the redeemed community are to respect earthly governors but their citizenship is in heaven; but they do not owe their former commonwealths their final allegiance
    - b. The pageantry and shadow play for the patriotic songs and rituals of the temporal City all trade on a longing which no earthly commonwealth can satisfy
    - c. The Christian is sharply at odds with any program to make the temporal community the starting point for political theory
  - 2. Three Varieties of Communitarianism
    - a. **Demonic:** The community itself is the source of value
    - b. **Accountable:** The community submits itself to values of which it is not the source but can be identified by all
    - c. **Narrative:** Here the values *cannot* be identified by all
- B. DEMONIC AND ACCOUNTABLE COMMUNITARIANISM (75-81)
  - 1. Demonic Communitarianism is the discredited ideology of the *Volk* or People associated with National Socialism that made the community itself the source of value and criterion of truth [cf. Athens and the trial of Socrates]
    - a. It was an idolatry that demanded sacrifices of blood
    - b. Paganism disguised in Christian colors: Lies can become powerful only in the disguise of truths
    - c. [Fascism, Marxist-Leninism, and other radical ideologies are similarly demonic]
  - 2. Accountable Communitarianism believes that communal values must be judged by external and overriding criteria
    - a. **Amitai Etzioni** and the *Responsive Communitarian Platform*
    - b. Problem: so-called "American values" are a watery compromise among warring political subcultures
  - 3. Natural Law Theory: As a source of value it is problematic because its earliest antecedents are all pagan
    - a. Biblical issues: the heart is abnormal, not normative
    - b. Nature (**physis**): Paul on strong passions, nature, depraved mind
    - c. Thomas Aquinas: question of how far the mind has fallen
    - d. Question of whether natural doctrine can provide a common ground: **subsidiarity** in *Quadragesimo anno*, 1931
  - 4. The Principle of Subsidiarity is pro-community but anti-collectivist
    - a. Its basis is the honor due persons on account of their being made in the image of God (*imago Dei*)
    - b. The Church, not the state, is called the Body of Christ
  - 5. Different Christian understandings
    - a. The Catholic approach reasons backward to Creation: What clues to the divine designed have survived the corruption of human nature?
    - b. The Reformers doubted that the law written on the heart was sufficient to guide or motivate
    - c. Reformed approach reasons forwards from the Fall: What follows from

- the bare fact that human nature is corrupt?
- d. Both projects left much to be desired
- C. NARRATIVE COMMUNITARIANISM [cf. Moral Realism] (81-86)
1. There May Be a Shared Human Experience, Proponents Admit, But the Only Resource for Interpreting It Is the Tale His Community Tells of Itself (e.g., Exodus, Revolution, Death and Resurrection, Poor Boys Making Good)
    - a. This story tells how life should be lived and identified the proper object of unconditioned loyalty (i.e., sovereignty)
    - b. It sets the boundaries of the community [e.g., the West]
    - c. That which makes sense of the shared experience is not itself a shared experience; that which makes common humanity intelligible is not itself common to all humanity [e.g., the western canon of Great Books] [cf. Reinhold Niebuhr's presuppositionalism, p. 123]
  2. On This View, Even Natural Law Is Merely Part of Some Community's Story
    - a. e.g., Paul's reference to the Noahide Law can be seen as a **mishnah** (rabbinic commentary rather than divine inspiration)
    - b. e.g., **Thomas Hobbes's** and **Samuel Pufendorf's** citation of the story of the Fall
    - c. Danger of relativism, e.g., Alasdair MacIntyre
  3. Contrast: The Christian Narrative of **Stanley Hauerwas** and **William H. Willimon**
  4. Author's Position: A Law Is Written on the Tablets of the Heart But It Is a Far Cry from Knowing Something to Acknowledging It
  5. Problem of **Denial**
    - a. Thomas Aquinas: When reason is perverted, the **secondary principles** of the natural law can be blotted out of the heart [see p. 24 on derived principles]
    - b. Taxonomy of the perversions of reason: passion, evil habit, evil disposition of nature, vicious custom, evil persuasion
    - c. Remarkable phenomenon of the 20th Century: the rise of entire political movements devoted to the rationalization of a particular sin [cf. E. Michael Jones, *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior*, 1993]
    - d. God gives all such over to a reprobate mind [Rom. 1:28]
  6. Paying the Price for Rationalization
    - a. e.g., Post-Abortion Stress Syndrome
    - b. Instruction in ethics is no remedy; it can aid rationalization
  7. The Polity Is a Community of Communities
    - a. Any communitarianism feasible for the polity may be reached only by tactical mutual accommodation
    - b. It can only be reached among communities whose stories permit some common ground
    - c. Secular humanists have their own counter-accommodation

### Study Questions

1. What is the character of the communitarianism found in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible? In his *City of God*, Augustine distinguish between the eternal and the temporal City. What three varieties of communitarianism -- all relating to the temporal City -- are distinguished by the author.
2. What was it that made monsters of the Nazis (as well as their spiritual kin)? What criteria are used by accountable communitarians in determining what constitute American values? Why are they unsatisfactory?
3. What are some of the weaknesses of natural law theory? How do Paul and Thomas

Aquinas treat the subject? How may the Catholic principle of subsidiarity be understood? The Protestant Reformers took what different view? Why did this project also leave much to be desired? [See also sphere sovereignty, p. 118]

4. What are some of the different "narratives" or stories around which a communitarianism may be formed? What are the characteristics of such a narrative? Why from this view would natural law merely be part of some community's story?
5. How do Hauerwas and Willimon extricate themselves from the relativism that snares communitarians like MacIntyre? What "perversions of reason" did Aquinas believe could blot out knowledge of the secondary or derived principles of natural law? Characterize the "new natural law" of Hobbes, Pufendorf, and other moderns?
6. Give some examples of the price paid for rationalization (or denial). If a polity is a community of communities, what political role must be played by tactical mutual accommodation?

### Review

types of communitarianism  
nature in the New Testament  
view of the Reformers

Platform's American values  
Aquinas on the mind  
"new natural law"

subsidiarity  
Aquinas: perversions of reason

## CHAPTER SIX: THE PROBLEM WITH LIBERALISM

### Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (87-90)
  1. Politicized Christianity: A Tale of Two Congregations
  2. The Christian Faith Stands in Judgment Upon Worldly Regimes and Ideologies
    - a. Lawful submission to the "powers that be" may mere obedience or, in a republic, even active participation
    - b. A Christian may be in a tactical but not a strategic alliance with liberals and conservatives
  3. Political Liberalism: Its Meanings
    - a. Constitutional government with a representative legislature and generous liberties
    - b. In political economy: a competitive, self-regulating government with minimal government interference
    - c. Colloquially: the contemporary variety of government-driven social reformism
  4. Thesis: Liberalism Is a Deeply Flawed Compendium of Moral Confusion [cf. Kenneth Minogue's political moralism]
    - a. Author offers a critique of the most obvious intellectual causes and moral errors
- B. PROPITIATIONISM (90-91)
  1. Premise: I Should Do Unto Others as They Want Rather Than Need
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: I should do unto others as they need
  2. Innumerable Factions Compete to Become Government Clientele
    - a. It encourages the growth of government subsidies and other programs [cf. Minogue's dependency; Bastiat's legal plunder]
    - b. It makes capitulation to demands a moral duty [cf. one version of Kant's categorical imperative: Act in such a way that if all others were to act as you, everything would be well]



3. This Is a Misunderstanding of the Golden Rule, Which Involves Free Subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven, Not Strangers
- C. EXPROPRIATIONISM (91-93)
1. Premise: I May Take from Others to Help the Needy (or Even the Merely Wanty), Giving Nothing of My Own: The Robin Hood Fallacy [This resembles the utilitarian view -- see p. 24]
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: I should give of my own to help the needy, taking from no one
  2. Expropriation Would Be Wrong Even If Each of Its Causes Were Good [cf. Bastiat's legal plunder]
  3. Government Subsidies May Make Good Causes Suffer [see Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*]
    - a. Taking money by force weakens both the means and the motive for people to give freely
    - b. Government usually distorts good causes in the act of absorbing them [e.g., when the state becomes a church]
- D. SOLIPSISM (93-95)
1. Premise: Human Beings Make Themselves, Belong to Themselves, and Have Value in and of Themselves [Self-Deification]
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: Man is made in the image of God; it was the serpent who said "ye shall be as gods"
  2. Classical Liberalism Was Not Always Solipsistic
    - a. **John Locke** roots our dignity in God;
    - b. But **Immanuel Kant** makes us out to be gods ourselves, having unconditional value [Here is another version of Kant's categorical imperative: So act as to treat humanity in every case as an end, never only as a means]
    - c. Consequences of Kantian Solipsism: Since not everyone can have unconditional value, some become more equal than others [see George Orwell, *Animal Farm*]
  3. Only by the Light of a Moral Code Can We Tell What Counts as Using Others
  4. Christian Rebuttal: The One Who Alone Possesses Unconditional Value Sacrificed Himself That We May Live and Commanded Us to Love One Another as He Has Loved Us
- E. ABSOLUTIONISM (95-96)
1. Premise: We Cannot Be Blamed When We Violate the Moral Law
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: We must be blamed because we are morally responsible beings [but God loves a contrite heart]
  2. Selective Exoneration of Certified "Victims" [According to Varying Degrees of Out-Caste Status]
    - a. Critics of absolutionism are blamed for the sins of those whom they refuse to absolve [cf. Rushdoony's doctrine of selective depravity]
  3. It Is Cruel, Harsh, and Malicious; It Speaks of Love, But Justifies Evil
- F. PERFECTIONISM (96-98)
1. Premise: Human Effort Is Adequate to Cure Human Evil
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: Our sin, like our guilt, can be erased only by the grace of God through faith in Christ
  2. Examples: The War to End All Wars and The War on Poverty
    - a. Its statements include the Humanist Manifestos [It is also a theological temptation: see B. B. Warfield's *Perfectionism*]
- G. UNIVERSALISM [uniformitarianianism] (98-99)
1. Premise: The Human Race Forms a Harmony Whose Divisions [Diversity] Are Ultimately Either Unreal or Unimportant
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: This harmony has been smashed by sin and cannot be fully healed by any means short of conversion
  2. Divisions Are Unreal: Pantheism

3. Divisions Are Unimportant: Myopia [cf. Balance, pp. 63-66]
    - a. Instead, we have different wants, gods, sins, and gifts
  4. Rise of the (New Age) Facilitator or Therapist
    - a. The technology of reconciliation too often becomes a technology of domination (by creating dependency) [see Minogue on dependency and political moralism]
- H. NEUTRALISM (99-101)
1. Premise: The Virtue of Tolerance Requires Suspending Judgments About Good and Evil [see pp. 39-40 on Neutrality]
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: This virtue requires making judgments about good and evil [we judge acts, not souls, p. 96] [Only a person with convictions has a genuine possibility of being tolerant, cf. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism*, p. 19]
  2. Three Components of Neutralism (indifference)
    - a. **The Quantitative Fallacy:** The more you tolerate, the more tolerant you are [a form of utilitarianism, which has as its object maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain; the greatest good for the greatest number]
    - b. **The Skeptical Fallacy:** The more you doubt, the more tolerant you are [cf. the "cultural elite," p. 39, and Scruton's culture of repudiation]
    - c. **The Apologetic Fallacy:** The more pusillanimous (lacking courage, wishy-washy) you are, the more tolerant you are
  3. If Consistent Neutralism Is Self-Refuting, Why Is It So Persistent?
    - a. It is never practiced consistently; it is used selectively as a weapon for demoralizing Christians and other opponents [like the doctrine of selective depravity]
      - 1) Selective neutralism remembers itself only long enough to condemn the defenders of life
    - b. It encourages the illusion that we can escape from moral responsibility for (or the consequences of) our beliefs and decisions
  4. Rebuttal: There Is No Evading the Requirement of Knowing the Truth and Acting Upon It
- I. COLLECTIVISM (101-03)
1. Premise: The State Is More Important to the Child Than the Family
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: The family is more important to the child than the state
  2. Hypocrisy and Circumlocution Usually Smooth over the Rough Implications of This Point
    - a. Shiela Marie Sumey case [later, in her thirties, she opposed similar legislation]
  3. Pre-Collectivist Family Law: Limited State Intervention in Cases of Abuse
  4. Regnant Political Class Assumes That Normal Families Are Characterized by a Conflict Rather Than a Harmony of Interests
    - a. Reassuring bromides, such as children's rights
    - b. These do nothing to empower children; they only empower mandarins [political moralism]
- J. DESPERATE GESTURES (103-05)
1. The Desperationist Acts to Relieve His Own Pain: the Urge to Do Something, Anything
    - a. The moral errors of liberalism are fortified with opiates [liberalism is the opiate of the intellectuals]

### Study Questions

1. Identify three meanings of "political liberalism"? How do they differ in practice? How do both propitiationism and expropriationism tend to favor expansion of government programs? What are some of the consequences of subsidizing good causes? What are

- the proper functions of government?
2. How does Christianity avoid the vicious of circle solipsism? [Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* is an example of philosophical solipsism] How did Locke and Kant differ on the matter of not using others for our own ends? Dietrich Bonhoeffer distinguished between cheap and costly grace: How does absolutism resemble the first? What are some of the unhappy consequences of political perfectionism? [As an example, Hugo Grotius believed that just wars may be fought unsparingly]
  3. How has universalism come to substitute for the Gospel through the "helping professions"? [cf. the religion of John Dewey's *A Common Faith*] How does each of the three fallacies of neutralism explode itself? Why is this moral fallacy so persistent?
  4. How has collectivism altered family law? What is the psychological dynamic that drives the fallacy of desperate gestures? In what lies the power of political liberalism?

### Review

meanings of political liberalism	propitiationism	expropriationism
Robin Hood fallacy	subsidy of good causes	solipsism
John Locke	Immanuel Kant	absolutism
perfectionism	universalism	neutralism
quantitative fallacy	skeptical fallacy	apologetic fallacy
collectivism	desperate gestures	

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE PROBLEM WITH CONSERVATISM

### Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (106-07)
  1. The Danger Is in Conservative Ideology
  2. A Minor Difficulty in Setting Forth Its Moral Errors Is the Ambiguity of the Term "Conservatism"
- B. CIVIL RELIGIONISM (108-09)
  1. Premise: America Is a Chosen Nation and Its Projects Are a Proper Focus of Religious Aspiration
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: America Is But One Nation Among Many
  2. Four Stages in the Development of Our Civil Religion
    - a. Church's role as a City Upon a Hill passed by a special covenant to an uncorrupted remnant of the faithful [cf. John Winthrop's sermon aboard the Arbella, 1630]
    - b. National sense of a covenant with God just before the Revolution [cf. Samuel Langdon's election sermon of 1775]
    - c. Nationalistic sense of manifest destiny in the early and middle republic increasingly displaced Christianity
    - d. Secularization of the rhetoric of the faith is married with increasing hostility to the substance of Christianity [Revolutions often preserve the forms of the old order]
  3. The Mistake in Each of These Stages Is Confusing America with Zion
- C. INSTRUMENTALISM (109-11)
  1. Premise: Faith Should Be Used for the Ends of the State
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: Believers should certainly be good citizens, but faith



3. Problem of Determining Where the Business of One Party Ends and the Business of Another Begins
  - a. **Subsidiarity**
  - b. **Sphere Sovereignty**
4. No Definition of Meddling or Intrusion Can Work in a Neutral Way
  - a. Forbidding moral judgments will not keep busybodies out of other people's hair
- H. MAMMONISM (119-21)
  1. Premise: Wealth Is the Object of the Commonwealth
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: Wealth is a snare, and its continual increase even worse
  2. Ancient Roman View: Virtue Makes Republic Prosper, Leading to Love of Wealth, Loss of Virtue, and the Fall of the Republic [cf. Mancur Olson on the decline of nations]
  3. Example: **Russell Conwell's *Acre of Diamonds***
  4. Capitalist Type of Economy May Be Superior to the Alternatives But It Depends on a Moral Spirit It Cannot Supply and May Weaken [What happens when all that is left is "The Whiff from an Empty Bottle"?]
    - a. It is a parasite on the faith [cf. Rushdoony on the parasitism of the Gambler State]
- I. MERITISM (121-23)
  1. Premise: I Should Do Unto Others as They Deserve
    - a. Christian Rejoinder: In what we most need, we are helpless; the grace of God is an undeserved gift; therefore, I should do unto others not as they deserve, but as they need
  2. Aristotle: Vices Tend to Come in Pairs
    - a. Meritism is the opposite of and a recoil from propitiationism
    - b. The one emphasizes justice at the expense of mercy; the other favors mercy at the expense of justice
  3. Christian View: Justice and Mercy Are Corollaries That Must Be United, But This Requires Sacrifice
    - a. They are united in the Atonement
    - b. All of us at all times need and receive many things that we do not deserve
    - c. Subsidies are not what is needed; they infantilize their supposed beneficiaries, thus debasing them
    - d. Christians must be prepared to pay the price
- J. THE RIGHT REFERENCE GROUP (123-24)
  1. One Must Have a Standard by Which to Identify the True and Good [cf. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?*]
    - a. Niebuhr's Presuppositionalism: Every estimate of values involves some criterion of value which cannot be arrived at empirically
  2. Citizenship Is an Obligation of the Faith
    - a. The Christian's primary mode of politics is witness
    - b. It is not by the world that the world is moved

### Study Questions

1. Identify the stages in the development of an American civil religion. A judgment call: Where do they seem most clearly to part from Christianity? How is Rousseau's instrumentalism of the left matched in the American tradition? Moralism (such as Minogue's political moralism) is another substitute for the Christian faith. Where does a Christian draw the line?
2. Illustrate: The peculiar thing about the American variety of Caesarism is that . . . it simply refuses to acknowledge *any* laws of God. How has the Supreme Court shattered

tradition only to establish one of its own, *i.e.*, legal precedent through a declaration of *stare decisis* (let the decision stand)?

3. How are subsidiarity and sphere sovereignty intended to prevent meddling? [James Madison's checks and balances principle, though also a form of channeling, was intended to force office-holders to defend their turf]. Mammonism was earlier introduced under channeling. Why is it more like to corrupt than protect? What was the moral context of Adam Smith's invisible hand?
4. How is meritism the opposite of propitiationism? How does each miss the mark? What is the duty of the Christian citizen?

### Review

stages of civil religionism

*Lynch v. Donnelly*

*Employment Division v. Smith (II)*

neutralism

mammonism

instrumentalism

moralism

Reinhold Niebuhr

subsidiarity

Russell Conwell

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Caesarism

traditionalism

sphere sovereignty

meritism

## CHAPTER EIGHT: WHY WE KILL THE WEAK

### Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (125-26)
  1. The **Asymmetry Principle**
    - a. One can only understand the bad from the good, not the good from the bad
  2. In Augustine's Day, the **Manichaeans** Proposed a Different Principle
    - a. Premise: Evil Is a Primordial Reality
    - b. Why This Cannot Be True: Everything Bad Is Just a Good Thing Spoiled
      - 1) We cannot draw a presence from an absence, something from nothing
- B. SPOILED PITY (127)
  1. **Rousseau**: Pity Is an Innate Repugnance to See One's Fellow Suffer
    - a. It causes a sympathetic reaction that makes it ultimately self-regarding [see Rushdoony, *The Politics of Guilt and Pity*]
  2. Rousseau's Definition Misses the Point; Pity Should Move Us to Render What Aid We Can
    - a. Instead, Rousseau's works well as a definition of spoiled pity
- C. SPOILED PRUDENCE (128-29)
  1. Plato's Communistic System Was Proposed Tongue-in-Cheek
    - a. We need homes, not warrens, families, not orphanages, and belongings, not tribal hordes
  2. Prudence: We Are Stewards of What God Has Given Us
    - a. Prudence is good judgment and conscientious care for the things and persons entrusted to me
  3. Spoiled Prudence Is the Urge to Control, to Be a Busybody
    - a. Since the bad impulse to control is parasitic on the good impulse, it is difficult to shame busybodies: they become morally indignant
    - b. It maintains I have a right to protect myself from the distraction of other people's suffering, to manipulate them for my convenience
- D. SPOILED AMENITY (129-30)

1. Amenity, or Complaisance, Is the Impulse Every Person Has to Accommodate Himself to All the Rest
  - a. Its sanctions include fear of rejection and the desire to belong; these are the training wheels of the moral impulse
  - b. A mature person accommodates himself to others from concern for their legitimate interests
  - c. Mature amenity draws a boundary
2. Stunted Amenity Cannot Stop Accommodating
  - a. But it is not simply self-regard; it draws strength from the very sense of obligation it corrupts
- E. SPOILED HONOR (130-31)
  1. To Honor Someone Is to Show Him the Reverence Due to Him as a Fellow Image of God
    - a. It is the best vaccine against the urge to control them
  2. Spoiled Honor Does Not Treat Another as a Moral Being
- F. SPOILED REMORSE (131-32)
  1. Guilt Is an Objective Reality; Remorse Is Its Subjective Counterpart, Intended to Prod Us into Recognition of Our Sin and Repentance from It
  2. Remorse Can Be Displaced. Like Every Other Moral Impulse
    - a. It may seek alleviation in other ways, including murder
  3. Spoiled Remorse Is a Motive for Abortion as Well as Killing the Sick and Old
- G. SPOILED LOVE (132-33)
  1. Love Is a Perfect Determination of the Will to Further the True Good of Another Person
    - a. Love may miss the mark in either of two ways
      - 1) Love is *weak* if the will is unsteady (a fault of *omission*)
      - 2) Love is spoiled if the understanding is bent (a fault of *commission*)
  2. One Mode: What Stunts My Charity Is a Failure to Understand the Involvement of Each Human Person in All the Others [branding the helpless as useless eaters]
  3. Another Mode: What Stunts My Charity Is a Failure to Understand the Good of Affliction [such as chastisement]
- H. THE SPOILED SENSE OF JUSTICE (133-34)
  1. The Sense of Justice Is the Desire to See That Each Is Given His Due
    - a. A spoiled sense of justice can make me feel justified in mistreating someone weak I think has hurt me in the past
    - b. Indulgence May Generate a Feeling of Entitlement
  2. The Guilty Conscience Tends to Call Spoiled Justice to Its Aid by **Inventing Grievances**
- I. THE ROAD TO HELL (134-35)
  1. The Main Problem Is That *All* Wrongs Are Done from Good Motives -- We Plead Extenuating Circumstances
    - a. Without good motives to corrupt, there could be no wrongdoing at all

### Study Questions

1. What is the Asymmetry Principle? How does Manichaeism differ from Christianity? How is its view of evil necessarily wrong?
2. What is wrong with Rousseau's idea of pity? With busybodiness? How does spoiled remorse work? How are the two modes of spoiled love?

### Review

Asymmetry Principle

Manichaeism

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

# CHAPTER NINE: THE FALLEN CITY (REPRISE AND CHARGE)

## Outline

- A. INTRODUCTION (136-38)
  - 1. Tenuous Position of Christians in the World
    - a. As Marx said of panics in the market, all that is solid melts into air
  - 2. Responsibility of Every Christian
    - a. Put on the mind of Christ
    - b. Carry that mind into the post-Christian public square [apologetics, see p. 7 on the classical way]
  - 3. Vanities That Hinder Putting on the Mind of Christ
    - a. Quietism
    - b. Positivism
    - c. Accommodationism
- B. WITNESS (138-41)
  - 1. Christians May Be Either Evangelists or Sustainers by Vocation
  - 2. We Have a Common Ground through Common Grace
  - 3. Five Ways God Reveals His Moral Requirements
    - a. Conscience
    - b. Godward Longing
    - c. Handiwork of God
    - d. Harvest
    - e. Design
  - 4. Most Defenses of Moral Evil Reflect Self-Deception Rather Than Real Intellectual Difficulties
  - 5. Natural Law Is Really Known and Really Suppressed
  - 6. The People of Our Generation Press Down Not Only the Present Knowledge of General Revelation But Also the Troubling Memory of Special Revelation
    - a. Christians need to stir up the present knowledge and arouse the troubling memory
- C. STIRRING UP KNOWLEDGE AND MEMORY (142-45)
  - 1. Turn Back the Question
  - 2. Dissipate Smoke
  - 3. Connect the Dots
  - 4. Release the Catch
  - 5. Playback the Tape
  - 6. Call Attention to the Obvious
  - 7. Tighten the Noose
  - 8. Wait for an Opportunity

## Study Questions

- 1. What vanities hinder putting on the mind of Christ? What are various ways God reveals His moral requirements? What is needed to bring people to face the truth? What are some specifics?

## Review

quietism, positivism, accommodationism

ways of reversing the suppression of knowledge