

BIBLICAL TERRANOMICS

ESSAYS IN CHRISTIAN DOMINION

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THE FAILURE OF PROTESTANTISM

When historians a thousand years hence look back at our time, they will describe it as the end of the Protestant era. Today, our leaders do not accept that inevitability. They have argued that the decline of our civilization has occurred because of a departure from Protestant principles. There is a large measure of truth to such arguments. However, these "defenders of the faith" are struck dumb when we ask *why* that departure has happened. It is not enough to say that a return to certain "first principles" or confessional statements from a healthier time will cure our ills. The cure for cancer does not come from a simple choice to live our old life style when our bodies were young, vibrant and strong. Indeed, age has a way of testing the wisdom of our habits.

Likewise with the opinions of men upon faith and morals - they are all tested by the fires of time. A civilization is rarely destroyed by external forces. Civilizations decay from the inadequacy of their first principles. When their implications are worked out over time, they produce social distortions which end in self-destruction.

I do not think anyone will disagree that "Christendom" is gone. Unless you want to count the pomp of Britain's royal court as somehow a bastion of Christian rule, there is no place on Earth where the people are free to obey the Law of God.

And what of "Western Civilization"? It still faces extermination at the hands of a duplicitous communism. Yes, it is an external threat, but one of the West's own making.

The existence of Communism proves the failure of Western Civilization. At the moment, the West is dancing around the Soviet version of the Trojan Horse. We have long forgotten Khrushchev's oath that they would win "without firing a shot". The Berlin Wall was dismantled because the West has become sufficiently socialist that it is no longer a threat. All Ten Planks of Marx's "Communist Manifesto" are integral parts of American society. Today, they are as American as motherhood used to be, and apple pie

before it was replaced by yogurt. If you do not believe me, try to abolish the public schools or refuse to pay income taxes - both a part of the Manifesto. You will be branded a "right-wing kook". The enemy is among us, and he does not need Soviet tanks. Your local sheriff will be sufficient.

Communism was the necessary result of the Protestant Reformation. By and large, Protestants have denied the "incompleteness of the will" (e.g. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox) - thus, man responds to external manipulations. Institutional remedies - such as provided by the clergy, magistrates, scholars, and professionals - have been looked upon as the best for solving social problems. Men have ascribed messianic roles to their institutions: royal dynasties, constitutions, political parties, revivals, missions, education, science, medicine, and so on. Each profession has had its turn at saving the human race. The Protestantism of the European Continent has promoted the notion of human or representative mediators of God's grace. Communism, of course, with its "Vanguard of the Revolution," is the preeminent, although perverse, expression of this elitist attitude.

There was a glimmer of hope in the Anabaptist branches sired by Hus and Wycliffe, but they have fallen for an extreme individualism - sometimes non-revolutionary (as in the Mennonites) and sometimes revolutionary (as in Cromwell). These branches operate in terms of voluntarism, contract-ism, and fraternal societies - all fragile institutions.

The various currents of thought are difficult to trace and their exact results are impossible to identify. Too many mitigating facts muddy the water. Virtually any religious group can claim its system has not failed because it has never had a fair shake. We can always say, "it would have worked, only if we were in charge."

Nevertheless, the bottom line is that Protestantism has had five hundred years to establish itself and mature. In the last two hundred years, it has lived unmolested upon American soil. Even America, the bastion of Protestantism, is more the result of Providence and geography than any virtue or genius of man. I do not dismiss our heritage. We must always find the good in our past, retain it, and if possible, build upon it. However, I think the judgment of history will not find Protestantism to be so glorious. ***An end-product analysis requires the conclusion that the Protestant Reformation has been a colossal failure.***

We have yet to build a civilization which exceeds the cultural maturity of the Nestorian world, or even the glory of Byzantium. Yes, our technology is greater, but civilization is not measured by its technological achievements. Rather, the distinctions and harmony in social relationships are the true measure.

The Roman Catholics feared that if the Protestants had their way and everyone were allowed to read the Bible and interpret it for themselves, then the world would become atheist. We cannot deny, that in the aftermath of Darwin and the Higher Critics, they were right. Hermeneutical anarchy produced sectarianism. Sectarianism produced agnosticism. Agnosticism led to secularism, and secularism, of course, has produced, at least, a practical atheism. The world goes about its business as if there were no God.

A healthy society can survive a plague or an earthquake, even an invasion. A healthy civilization will have the resiliency to transform its conquerors. Why has not Christendom survived in the West? What internal contradictions have created these destructive distortions? What internal acids have eaten out its inward parts?

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever that we may do all the words of this law.

- Deuteronomy 29:29

The problem with Protestantism is that it is too infatuated with metaphysics and cosmic questions: in other words, Heaven. It inherited the bug from the Catholic Scholastics of the Medieval period. They, in turn, got it from the Gnostics. For the Protestants, the Bible was another talisman, a Book of Code. They quickly lost interest in ethics and instead pursued Utopia.

Our Protestant age has adopted "abominomianism": the hatred of God's law. Christians will sooner serve the Beast of Revelation than obey the Bible. And as a society, we are still intoxicated with Plato's myth that a perfect society can be created by human reason. Our people now see the ethics of the Old Testament as too primitive, crude, or even barbaric. Yet, as I have said elsewhere, human reason has produced the bloodiest century in the history of mankind - our own enlightened age. Lenin's famous last words were "What more could we have done?" If this is the end product of an earnest intellect, then let's be done with the intellect.

One of the paragraphs in my Confessional Statement says,

We are allodial. We teach that man's dominion task cannot occur outside the context of the land (Genesis 1:29). His accountability in that calling is directly to God (Romans 14:4; 1 Corinthians 11:3).

A consequence of the Gnostic heresy in the Church has been the denial of man's physical reality in favor of this spiritual essence. Gnosticism has been a constant source of "other-worldly" sentiments. Consequently, the fleshly concerns of sex, the soil, and government have been viewed with contempt or indifference. The resulting vacuum in ethics has led to revolt and distortions: deviant sex, communism, monasticism, and so on.

That is why metaphysics and not ethics has been the focus of intellectual disciplines. Better to find cures than change lifestyles. The Protestant "ethic" is one of domination, rather than dominion. It wants man to impose his will on nature, even his own nature, which is contrary to design. It believes that nature is a clean slate and can be manipulated into anything man wants.

Mankind is still grasping for divinity just like our first parents. We are more interested in getting out of the *mortal* fix we are in, rather than the *moral* fix. We refuse to submit to the yoke of the only immortal one - our Designer. This rebellion against

God's order is seen in Protestant cultures where there is an infatuated study of theology (the study of God's person) and a total neglect of theonomy (the study of God's law). Soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) takes greater precedence over terranomics (land law). We continue to seek the unknowable, while the revealed will of God gathers dust from neglect. Most theologians can give lengthy discourses on the Atonement or Election, but cannot talk thirty seconds on Biblical Case Law.

The witness of the Scriptures is that man is flesh, not spirit (Genesis 3:19; 6:3). Unlike the angels, his life is in the blood, not in the psyche (Leviticus 17:14). Man is a creature of the earth and is called to be God's image bearer - that is, to exercise dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:29; Psalm 8). Without man's rule, the earth becomes waste and void. It needs dominion, not domination.

God has set forth the family as His agent in this dominion task. Therefore, the right to property (to dominion) resides in individual men, not men in groups. It is a flagrant violation of that mandate for men to share ownership collectively in the land: corporatism, statism, ecclesiasticalism, and institutionalism. The legal fiction of artificial persons is at war with the family and God's order. A truly Christian social philosophy and terranomic is one in which each family, headed by the man, has a parcel of earth that is their own. From that parcel, they gain their sustenance. From there, they worship God. And there, they are judged by Him. Artificial persons are clever means to escape accountability.

Christians need to return to the discipline of the land. Ever since the Cain, mankind has evaded God's rod and fled into the man-made world of the cities. And womankind has fled the patriarchal family for socialist equality.

Biblical terranomics has been criticized for being fit for only an agrarian society, not the glorious industrial empires with which Protestantism has blessed us. And that is true. Biblical land law does not fit current urban realities, nor does it fit the urban family.

In response, I must say, that if urbanism has rendered the Bible obsolete or distorted beyond recognition, then let us forsake urbanism, not the Bible. Let us be done with our skyscrapers, our cathedrals, our seminaries, our street missions, and our factories - monuments to the glory of man. Let us return to toiling with the soil, by hand, if necessary, to stay out of debt. Bring on some old-fashioned, lusty sex, unsanitized by birth control. Bring on the babies.

Stack a pile of rocks and worship there in "spirit and in truth". Let us not deceive ourselves; our modern Sodoms have corrupted us. Our saltiness is gone. Our presence is no longer redemptive.

Leave the cities to the sodomites and God's judgments. Let us return to the land and start a new civilization upon better foundations.

- James W. Stivers