

the Gospel, to establish the Church, and to unite both Jews and Gentiles in that Church, the one Body of Christ (Eph. 3:1-12). All questions as to what course the Creative Process would have taken in case man had never experienced sin are beside the point and irrelevant to the present discussion. We are concerned here only with what actually did happen, is happening, and will happen, in the light of Scripture teaching.

Therefore, we are now ready to study the work done by the Holy Spirit preparatory to the inauguration of the second phase of the Creative Process; that is, preparatory to the death, resurrection and coronation of Christ, and the establishment of the New Institution, the Christian System; in a word, the work of the Holy Spirit under the Old Covenant, or throughout the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations.

2. The Dispensations of Revealed Religion

Every human being is a nexus of certain lifelong relationships into which he enters naturally at birth. He does not choose these relationships, nor can he successfully escape them. He is born into them, and he sustains them throughout this present life. They are inherent to the order of creation to which humanity belongs.

The first of these relationships is that of *dependence upon God*, as creature upon Creator. Man is a creature. He is dependent upon Nature and upon Nature's God for the ground he walks on, the air he breathes, the water he drinks, and the food by which his physical life is sustained. The second of these relationships is that of *equality with his fellow-men*. "All men are created equal," affirms our Declaration of Independence. What does this mean? Obviously, men are not equal physically, nor are they equal intellectually or morally; as a matter of fact, they are not even born with equal potentialities. How, then, are they equal? They are equal only in the sense that all have been created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and one man's "soul" or "life" is, therefore, worth as much as another's in the sight of God. Hence Christ died for all alike, and all alike may be justified by faith in Him. The basis of equality among human beings is spiritual and only spiritual. Incidentally, this article of faith underlies every phase of our Western culture, and the moment we depart

from it we are on the way to every form of totalitarianism, cruelty and excess imaginable. The third of these natural human relationships is that of *stewardship in respect to all sub-human orders of being*. Man is lord tenant of the earth. God said to him at creation: "Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). "Intrinsically and essentially we find in man an order of subordination of his vegetative to his sensitive, and of his sensitive to his rational life. Extrinsically and essentially we find man a *contingent* being with a relationship of dependence upon God, and a *proprietary* being with a relationship of stewardship over irrational beings as their extrinsic end."¹ Certainly these are facts corroborated by ordinary observation and experience.

These basic relationships are natural, and being natural they are ordained of God. From each of them, moreover, issues a human duty or obligation. From the fact of man's stewardship over the lower orders stems the obligation on his part of making use of them for his physical sustenance and well-being, in order that he may utilize in turn the concomitants of his physical life for the attainment of his proper ultimate end, namely, union with God or Everlasting Life. From the fact of every man's equality with his fellow-man in the sight of God arises the obligation on his part of dealing justly with his fellows, or treating them even as he would be treated by them in turn. This, of course, is the essence of the Golden Rule. And from the fact of man's dependence upon God issues the human obligation of rendering to God the internal and external honor and worship that is due Him as the Giver of all perfect gifts. For "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (Jas. 1:17). Moreover, whether or not individual men acknowledge these relationships and discharge the obligations respectively attached to them, the facts remain that the relationships exist and that the obligations are binding upon all mankind. For both the relationships and their corresponding obligations are established by the Natural Moral Law of

1. Ignatius W. Cox, S.J., *Liberty, Its Use and Abuse*, p. 36.

God and no human being can escape his responsibility with respect to them.

Again, from the obligation on man's part of rendering unto God the internal and external honor and worship that is due Him arises the necessity for the ordinances of true religion. For obviously it is exclusively the prerogative of the One worshiped to specify the means and appointments whereby He will receive the worshiper into fellowship with Himself, that is, the ordinances by means of which creaturely honor and worship will be acceptable to Him. The God of the Bible is essentially a covenant God. He overtures and reveals the terms upon which He will receive men into covenant relationship with Himself; men hear, weigh, decide and accept the terms; and the result is reconciliation and holy fellowship between creature and Creator. All this is included in the word "religion." That is to say, true religion is that system of faith and practice which embraces the appointments of Divine grace and the corresponding acts of human faith whereby the schism occasioned by sin is healed, and man is bound anew to his God in holy fellowship. Whatever may have been said to the contrary, by ancient or modern writers, the traditional view that the word "religion" derives from the Latin *religo*—infinitive form, *religare*, meaning "to bind anew" or "to bind back"—is in harmony with the teaching of the Bible throughout. The word "religion" obviously belongs to that family which includes such words as "ligate," "ligation," "ligament," "ligature," etc., all of which express the idea of a *binding*. Hence, religion, in the proper sense of the term, is a *binding anew* of man to God, and the essence of religion is reconciliation. Moreover, the Scriptures teach clearly that this "binding anew" was to be wrought out in Christ. Our Christ is the Divine Ladder connecting earth with heaven: the great Antitype of the ladder of Jacob's dream-vision at Bethel (Gen. 28:12, John 1:51). Col. 1:19, 20—"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens." 2 Cor. 5:18-20: "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto him-

self, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." By the pronouns "we" and "us" Paul has reference here, of course, to the ministry of the Apostles. Again, Eph. 1:3-10: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth," etc.

True religion being in essence reconciliation, the elements thereof have been the same in all ages, namely, an Altar, a Sacrifice, and a Priesthood. Moreover, the progressive revelation of the elements of true religion, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, was effected historically in harmony with the social and political development of the race. Hence religion, in actual practice, like society and government, was at first patriarchal or family religion. The altar, consisting of earth, or of earth and stones together, piled up wherever the patriarch happened to pitch his tents, was a family altar; the sacrifice was a sacrifice on behalf of the family; and the patriarch, or father of the family, which oftentimes included several generations, officiated as priest. This form of worship prevailed throughout the Patriarchal Dispensation, which extended from Adam to Moses.

Incidentally, it should be explained here that Dispensations change with a change in the priesthood. Therefore when the seed of Abraham became so numerous as to necessitate a tribal, and subsequently a national, political organization, at

this time the old patriarchal religion gave way to a national religion, with an altar, a sacrifice and a priesthood for the whole nation. This national priesthood had its inception with the appointment of Aaron, the brother of Moses, as high priest, and the setting aside of the tribe of Levi to the subordinate priesthood. This system prevailed throughout the Jewish Dispensation, which extended from Moses to the death of Christ.

Now the present Dispensation "of the fulness of the times," which is that of the Holy Spirit, began with the ratification of the New Covenant by the atoning death of Christ, and will extend undoubtedly to His second advent. In this Dispensation, corresponding historically to the spread of the race over the whole earth, religion has of necessity become universalized and refined, *i.e.*, spiritualized, or divested of rite and ceremony. Christ Himself is Altar, Sacrifice, and High Priest, for all the elect of God, who themselves constitute a royal priesthood, a priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6, 5:10). Upon the altar of His perfect Divine nature, He, as officiating High Priest, through the Eternal Spirit offered up to God His perfect human nature: "once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27, 28). Language could hardly be plainer: the present Dispensation will come to an end with the Second Coming of Christ, and that event will take place, we are told elsewhere (Matt. 24:14), only when the Gospel of the Kingdom shall have been preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations.

It should be made clear, in this connection, that these three systems—the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian—did not evolve one out of the other. On the contrary, all three came directly from God, at proper intervals, by revelation of the Spirit. Moreover, each was a distinct advance upon its predecessor. The Patriarchal era, for instance, has been called "the starlight age," the Jewish "the moonlight age," and the Christian "the sunlight age," of God's dealings with man. Just as there is no light in our universe more powerful and more perfect than that furnished by the sun, so the light

provided by the Christian revelation, that is, the revelation given us by the Spirit through Christ and the Apostles, is just as powerful and perfect spiritually. Nothing can be, nothing ever will be, added to it. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:1-4, Jude 3).

3. The Spirit in the Antediluvian World

The Patriarchal Dispensation, as stated *supra*, extended from Adam to Moses. The history of this Dispensation is recorded in the book of Genesis.

No sooner had our first parents yielded to temptation and fallen into a state of rebellion against God, than the first intimation of the Divine Plan of Redemption was given to the world in the mysterious oracle of Gen. 3:15, in the curse pronounced upon the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This oracle tells us that God's Plan for the redemption of sinful man was centered in the life and death of the Seed of a woman,—One who, according to subsequent revelation, was to be, according to the flesh, *the Seed of a woman exclusively* (Matt. 1:18-23, Luke 1:26-38, Gal. 4:4-5). Whereas the Old Serpent, according to the oracle, would succeed only in bruising the heel of the woman's Seed, that is, would succeed only in harassing Him without ever gaining a signal victory, the Seed of the woman, on the other hand, would eventually bruise (literally, *crush*) the Serpent's head; in a word, He is to emerge from the age-long moral conflict completely victorious over the Devil and his rebel host. The Divine Plan of the Ages will be consummated only when Satan and all his kind shall have been segregated in Hell for ever and all traces of evil shall have been removed from God's universe (Matt. 25:41; Acts 3:19-21; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10, 13-15, etc.). The content of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is the record of the successive events of significance in this moral conflict which is contemporaneous with the temporal process itself.

The Scripture story of the antediluvian age is that of the increase and ultimate intermingling of the lines of Cain and Seth. The Cainites were a brilliant people—builders of cities,