

PART FOURTEEN:

THE NARRATIVE OF THE FALL

Every branch of human knowledge has what is called its "universe of discourse," in everyday (unflattering, but realistic) language, its "gobbledygook." This term, coined by the late Congressman Maury Maverick of Texas after the gobbling of turkeys, is defined in standard dictionaries as "inflated, involved, and obscure verbiage characteristic of the pronouncements of officialdom."

Of all the areas of human study, speculative ("systematic") theology, it seems, has turned out to be the most prolific of a jargon that appears to reach no bounds. And in the entire gamut of Biblical teaching there is perhaps no area in which this jargon has grown up in such profusion as in connection with the Biblical Narrative of the Fall. In this area especially, a set of closely inter-related dogmas has been developed and embodied in elaborate creeds and confessions (statements) of faith, formulated and imposed on certain denominations of Christendom solely by *human* authority. These are known as the dogmas of "original sin," "total depravity," "unconditional election and reprobation," "miraculous conversion," and "final perseverance." These are all of one piece: together they constitute the theological mosaic which goes under the name of Calvinism: however, as a matter of fact, they had their sources in the "theology" of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, who died A.D. 430 in North Africa. (It should be explained here that a *doctrine* is a teaching; that a *dogma* is a doctrine to be accepted on the ground that it has been proclaimed by recognized ecclesiastical authority.) It should be noted that not one of the terms and phrases listed above is to be found in the Bible. It cannot be emphasized too much that they are all the vintage of human authority and presumption.

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1. "Original Sin."

This dogma is the basis of the whole Calvinistic system. But what is meant by "original sin"? The dogma is popularly, but simply and factually stated, in the well-known couplet: "In Adam's fall, we sinned all." As clearly stated by Calvin himself (*Institutes*, II, ii, 5): "Therefore all of us who have descended from impure seed, are born infected with the contagion of sin. In fact before we saw the light of this life we were soiled and spotted in God's sight." Or, as set forth in *The Confession of Faith* of the Presbyterian Church (Ch. VI, Sections I-IV): "I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed it to his own glory. II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated: and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin. VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal and eternal." (Note especially the phrase, "both original and actual").

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1 John 3:4 (A.V.), "Sin is transgression of the law"). (A.S.V.), "Sin is lawlessness." Now the subject of sin involves two facts of primary importance, namely, *guilt* and *consequences*; and carelessness in distinguishing between these two facts has produced the ambiguity which has grown up in the use of the term. For example, traditional "theology" has insisted on perpetuating the notion that sin is of two kinds, what is called "original" (universal) sin, and what is called "actual" (personal or individual) sin. However, the crux of the problem involved here is this: Do these two facts of sin, *guilt* and *consequences*, characterize both "original" and "actual" sin? That actual personal sin involves both guilt and consequences is hardly open to question, from the Biblical point of view. But does so-called "original sin" involve *both* guilt and consequences? Or, is there such a thing as *original guilt*? Or, stated in plainer terms, *Is any person ever born into this world guilty of, and hence accountable for, the sin of any of his forbears, Adam included? That every person does suffer the consequences of the sins of the fathers is a fact of human experience. But does anyone inherit the guilt of the sins of the fathers?* Our answer to this question is an unequivocal, No! Such a doctrine is not found in Scripture.

Consider, first, Exo. 20:5-6, "I Jehovah thy God am a jealous god, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." Obviously, we have here an explicit affirmation of the *consequences* of sin: this has rightly been called the first statement of the law of heredity to be found in our literature. As the late Dorothy L. Sayers has written (MM, 19-30): "Much confusion is caused in human affairs by the use of the same word 'law' to describe two very different things: an arbitrary code of behavior based

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on a consensus of human opinion, and a statement of unalterable fact about the nature of the universe. The confusion is at its worst when we come to talk about the 'moral law'. . . . There is a universal moral law, as distinct from a moral code, which consists of certain statements of fact about the nature of man, and by behaving in conformity with which, man enjoys his true freedom. The more closely the moral code agrees with the natural law, the more it makes for freedom in human behavior; the more widely it departs from the natural law, the more it tends to enslave mankind and to produce the catastrophes called 'judgments of God.' The universal moral *law* (or natural law of humanity) is discoverable, like any other law of nature, by experience. It cannot be promulgated, it can only be ascertained, because it is a question not of opinion but of fact. When it has been ascertained, a moral *code* can be drawn up to direct human behavior and prevent men, as far as possible, from doing violence to their own nature. . . . There is a difference between saying: 'If you hold your finger in the fire you will get burned,' and saying, 'if you whistle at your work I shall beat you, because the noise gets on my nerves.' The God of the Christians is too often looked upon as an old gentleman of irritable nerves who beats people for whistling. This is the result of a confusion between arbitrary 'law' and the 'laws' which are statements of fact. Breach of the first is 'punished' by edict; but breach of the second, by judgment." Quoting then the passage from Exodus cited above, this author concludes: "Here is a statement of fact, observed by the Jews and noted as such. From its phrasing it might appear an arbitrary expression of personal feeling. But today, we understand more about the mechanism of the universe, and are able to reinterpret the pronouncement by the 'laws' of heredity and environment. Defy the commandments of the natural law, and the race will perish in a few

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generations; co-operate with them, and the race will flourish for ages to come. That is the fact; whether we like it or not, the universe is made that way. This commandment is interesting because it specifically puts forward the moral *law* as the basis of the moral *code*; *because* God has made the world like this and will not alter it, *therefore* you must not worship your own fantasies, but pay allegiance to the truth." So much for Scripture teaching concerning the consequences of sin; let us keep in mind, however, *that consequences do not constitute guilt*.

Hence we find *the law of guilt* clearly stated elsewhere in Scripture, in Ezek. 18:19-20, as follows: "Yet say ye, Wherefore doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Nothing could be made more explicit than the fact stated in this passage, namely, that *the guilt of sin is a personal matter involving personal responsibility*. A father may go to a gambling den, and, in a single night, gamble away all his material goods, thus reducing his wife and children to poverty. His family would suffer the *consequences* of his act, but there is no court in Heaven or on earth that would hold them guilty of it. This is the very thing that Adam did: He gambled away his whole being—spirit and soul and body—and reduced his posterity to toil, sorrow and death; in a word, he sold himself and them to sin and the Devil. *But, even though all his descendants are suffering from the consequences of his act, this is no evidence that they are to be held accountable for what he did*. Moreover, it was the mission of Christ to remove whatever guilt may have been incurred by the human race, if any at all, as a result

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of Adam's transgression: to remove this guilt *unconditionally* insofar as the innocent and the irresponsible are concerned (Matt. 18:3, 19:14; Luke 18:16-17), but *conditionally* (upon obedience to the terms of the Gospel covenant) insofar as the responsible are concerned (John 20:30-31, Acts 2:38, Rom. 10:9-10, Gal. 3:27).

Certainly it must be admitted that we inherit a weakened constitution, both physical and moral (a will vitiated by self-assertiveness, as someone has put it) as a consequence of the spread of sin and its effects throughout the human family. This is to say that man *is* spiritually corrupted—depraved—to some extent as a result of the inroads of sin. It seems to be much easier for a person to drift the downward way than to climb the upward: the latter requires persistent effort, the former requires no effort at all. This fact was emphasized by our Lord Himself (Matt. 7:13-14). In a word, the range of man's potential for morality or immorality is nothing short of amazing: he can walk among the stars or wallow in the gutter, depending basically on his own choices. As Aristotle has put it so clearly (*Politics* I, 2, Jowett translation): ". . . man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; since armed injustice is the more dangerous, and he is equipped at birth with arms, meant to be used by intelligence and virtue, which he may use for the worst ends. Wherefore, if he have not virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony."

Indeed there seems to be an indefinable relation existing between *spirit* (or mind) and *body*, between the interior and exterior powers, in man, as a result of which the irascible and concupiscible desires—and in consequence the temptations to sin—are stronger in some persons than in others. Brents (GPS, 132): "There are differences of mental power manifested by different persons, growing

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out of a difference in the physical machinery *inherited from our parents*. This we not only admit, but firmly believe: but these do not affect our position in the least. An engine may run a vast amount of well made and properly applied machinery, and thus exhibit great power, but were we to apply the same engine to heavy, cumbersome, unwieldy, unbalanced machinery, it could do but little, though the same man operated it. So a man who has inherited a fine organization, large and well balanced brain, of fine material, will exhibit much more mental power than one who has inherited an imperfect organization of coarse material. But inherited weakness, whether physical or mental, is not sin—no guilt can attach to it—and therefore the differences in mental power spoken of cannot prove the doctrine of total depravity; on the contrary, if they prove anything concerning it, they contradict it, for these differences cannot be the result of total depravity, because all who are totally depraved are, in this respect, exactly alike. There is no comparative degree in *total* depravity.” Certainly we all inherit certain propensities from our parents and ancestors, and in this sense the spiritual potential in any person may be raised or lowered. But let it be repeated for the sake of emphasis *that inherited weakness is not guilt*. Biblical teaching is clear that man is a sinner by virtue of *his own* yielding to the forces of evil. (Cf. Jas. 1:12-15). (Some wag has punned, with reference to the experience of Adam and Eve, that “the fault was not with the apple in the tree but with the *pair* on the ground.” Of course there is no mention of an apple in the Biblical story: that happens to be a Miltonian touch.)

Some would speak of this “inherited weakness” as “derived sinfulness.” Others would try to reduce it to “immaturity,” as, for example, Overstreet in his book, *The Mature Mind*. The “depth” psychologists would have us think of it as “irrationality” having its source in

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“hidden” or “unconscious” motivation. It is interesting to note that Alexander Campbell (CS, ch. 7) affirms the sinfulness and depravity of all men as a consequence of Adam’s fall. “The stream of humanity” is said to be “contaminated at its fountain.” “True, indeed it is; our nature was corrupted by the fall of Adam before it was transmitted to us; and hence that hereditary imbecility to do good, and that proneness to evil, so universally apparent in all human beings. Let no man open his mouth against the transmission of a moral distemper, until he satisfactorily explain the fact, that the special characteristic vices of parents appear in their children as much as the color of their skin, their hair, or the contour of their faces. A disease in the moral constitution of man is as clearly transmissible as any physical taint, if there be any truth in history, biography, or human observation.” Again: “Condemned to natural death, and greatly fallen and depraved in our whole moral constitution though we certainly are, in consequence of the sin of Adam, still, because of the interposition of the second Adam, none are punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord but those who actually and voluntarily sin against a dispensation of mercy under which they are placed: for this is the ‘condemnation of the world that light has come into the world, and men *choose darkness* rather than light, because their deeds are evil.’” A contemporary writer contributes the following pertinent comment (Rushdoony, in *Christian Economics*, July 7, 1964): “Man’s basic and original sin is ‘to be as God, knowing good and evil.’ ‘Knowing’ here has the force of determining, establishing, so that man’s essential sin is to attempt to play God and to legislate creatively and substantively on the nature of morality in terms of his own godhead.” The fact still remains, however, that the notion of inherited guilt—which is our problem here—is not implied in any of these terms, phrases, or concepts.

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The Bible knows no such thing as inherited guilt. Its teaching, from beginning to end, is that *the person is guilty before God for his own personal transgressions only*. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Nature is individualistic throughout: we come into the kingdom of nature one by one, and we go out of it one by one. The same is true in regeneration: one must be born again, as an individual, into the kingdom of grace (John 3:1-7). Sin is personal (individual), and salvation is personal, and final judgment is personal. The Scriptures know no such thing as either sin or salvation by proxy or en masse. (Matt. 2:23, 20:13; Rom. 2:6, 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:25; Rev. 2:23, 20:13, 22:12).

Incidentally, as a corollary of the dogma of "original sin," that of "infant damnation" has arisen. It has been taught and believed, rather extensively, that an infant is born into this state of sin and guilt inherited from Adam and must be received into the New Covenant through the ceremony of patting a few drops of water on its head or face; that, if the baby should die prior to the administration of this "sacrament" (which is generally misnamed a "baptism"), it must surely be regarded as lost, whatever "lost" may mean in such a case. (This is undoubtedly the most meaningless ceremony to which "theology" has ever given birth. It is "baptismal regeneration" pure and simple: whatever efficacy there is in the act must be in the water, because it cannot be in the child's heart: the child does not even know what is going on. In Scripture terms Christian baptism is an immersion—a burial and resurrection, Rom. 6:1-11, Col. 2:12—and hence infant baptism would be infant immersion, as indeed has been practised by the Greek Orthodox denomination from its beginning.) Rom. 5:13—"sin is not imputed when there is no law." Rom. 4:15—"where there is no law, neither is there transgression." Rom. 3:20—"through the law cometh the knowledge of sin," that is, to all who are

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capable of such knowledge (cf. Rom. 7:7). Surely the babe, and even the young child, has no knowledge of moral right and wrong; it is governed largely by impulse, and its responses are reflexive; it is incapable of faith; and therefore it has no need of "baptism for the remission of original sin," no need of salvation from the guilt of sin, but is by virtue of its innocence (or at least by virtue of the Atonement provided once for all at the end of the ages, and provided unconditionally for the innocent and the irresponsible) is prepared for the Spiritual Life of the Hereafter. (Mark 10:14, Matt. 18:3, Luke 18:16, Rom. 5:18-19, I Cor. 15:22-23). The only redemption which the infant is in need of, is redemption from the *consequences* of sin, that is, redemption of the body from physical dissolution in the putting on of immortality (1 Thess. 5:23). May we not reasonably suppose that the little one who dies in infancy will experience the actualization of its personality in the *celestial* environment?

Let us consider, for a moment, some of the Scripture texts which are usually cited to support the dogma of "original sin," etc. (1) *Psa. 14:1 ff., 53:1 ff., Rom. 3:9-18, etc.* In these passages we have the affirmation of the moral corruption of mankind in general, a fact which no sane person would deny. However, there is nothing in these texts that would indicate *inherited guilt*. On the contrary, *the teaching is that men have corrupted themselves by their own evil thoughts and acts.* "They have all turned aside." "They have done abominable works." Their throats—not Adam's—are full of cursing and bitterness. Why blame Adam, or indeed his collective progeny, for this corruption in view of the fact that both the Psalmist and the Apostle are referring here to the *personal sins* of humankind? (2) *Psa. 58:3.* Again the matter under consideration here is personal sin. The wicked are not said to be born astray, but to *go astray*. They themselves work wickedness: their poison is like the poison of

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a serpent. Their poison is not inherited from Adam: it is *their own poison*. (3) *Isa.* 53:6. Note that we have all *gone* astray, not have been *born* astray. (4) *Eph.* 2:1. Note well: through *your* trespasses and sins, not through Adam's sin nor the sins of your parents. (5) *Eph.* 2:3. Those persons who had become Christians at Ephesus had once lived—prior to their conversion—“in the lusts of the flesh,” that is, *their own* flesh, and hence were by nature “children of wrath” while in that state of alienation from God (cf. *John* 3:16-18). Again, the reference is to personal sins, *not to any such thing as inherited guilt*. (6) *Col.* 1:21, 2:13. Note: alienated and enemies in *your* evil works, and dead through *your* trespasses, etc., that is, prior to their conversion to Christ. (7) *Job.* 14:4—“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” This is explained by the preceding verse: “Dont thou open thine eyes on such a one, And bringest me into judgment with thee?” That is, when the period of probation shall have come to an end, the final decree will be (*Rev.* 22:11): “He that is filthy, let him be made filthy still. . . . and he that is holy, let him be made holy still.” That is, then indeed it will be too late: personal destiny having been determined by one's deeds while in the flesh, it will no longer be possible to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. *Luke* 16:26—the “gulf” will have been fixed for ever. (8) *Psa.* 51:5—“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” It is asserted by some commentators that “the fact of congenital depravity is stated here” and in such similar passages as *Job* 14:4, *Psa.* 58:3, etc. “*Congenital depravity*,” however, is *not inherited guilt*. Whatever this obscure passage may mean, it certainly does not signify the imputation of the mother's sin (guilt) to the child. Suppose a woman were to say, “In drunkenness my husband beat me,” would that mean that the wife is guilty of her husband's drunkenness? Or, suppose a child were to say, “In anger my

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father whipped me," would that mean that the child is guilty of the father's anger? Not much indication here of *inherited guilt*, is there? (9) 2 Tim. 3:13—If men are born totally depraved, how could they "wax worse and worse"? (10) Rom. 3:23—"all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." Note that *they have sinned*: it is not said that *they have been born in sin*. If the original corruption of our human character is the cause of all actual transgressions, how came Adam himself to sin? (11) Rom. 14:1-12, Matt. 16:27, 2 Cor. 5:10, Rev. 20:13, etc. These and many other Scriptures of like import clearly teach that each person will be held accountable in the Judgment for his own sins, not for the sin of Adam, nor for the sins of his ancestors. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20).

The authors of *The Jerusalem Bible* make a significant admission (19, note "d"), concerning the divine penalties imposed, as related in the third chapter of Genesis, as follows: "These *penalties* are hereditary; the doctrine of hereditary *guilt* is not clearly stated until St. Paul draws his comparison between the solidarity of all in Christ the Savior, and the solidarity of all in the sinner, Adam, Rm. 5." But—why haul the notion of *inherited guilt* into the content of the fifth chapter of Romans? Certainly Adam's guilt was *his own* guilt, just as my guilt is *my own* guilt, just as every man's guilt is *his own* guilt. There is no reason for assuming from the Apostle's teaching here that anything more is implied than the fact that Adam's posterity all suffer the *consequences* of his rebellion against God. We have already noted that the penalties pronounced upon the serpent, the Woman, and the Man, respectively, were pronounced upon serpentkind, womankind, and mankind. Certainly the Apostle has in mind here primarily the death and resurrection of the body. His teaching is explicit, however, that whatever mankind lost through the disobedience of the First Adam has been regained fully by

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virtue of the obedience of the Second Adam, regained *unconditionally*, let me repeat, insofar as the innocent and the irresponsible are concerned, but regained *conditionally* (on the obedience of faith) insofar as the morally responsible are concerned. Through the Atonement provided by the Only Begotten, for the burden of the sin of mankind (John 1:29, 1 Pet. 2:21-25), through this "one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life" (Rom. 5:18). But the Gift must be personally accepted and appropriated in order to be enjoyed (John 3:16-17, 5:40; Heb. 5:9; 1 John 5:10-12). There is not the slightest intimation in this fifth chapter of Romans of any such notion as that of inherited guilt. It is quite reasonable to hold that the Kingdom of Christ (Reign of Messiah, literally) is more inclusive than the Church of Christ, in the fact that the former takes in the innocent and irresponsible, and the elect of prior Dispensations, all of whom, in the very nature of the case, cannot belong to the Church. (Cf. again Matt. 19:13-14, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17, etc.).

Consider also, in this connection, the words of the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15:20-23. Here the reference is again primarily to the destiny of the corporeal part of the human being, which is the subject under consideration throughout this entire chapter. Here we are told that just as physical death is by Divine appointment universal (cf. Heb. 9:27), so, again by Divine appointment, there will be a universal resurrection and a universal Judgment, the proof of which is made explicit in the bodily resurrection of Christ. (Cf. Rom. 1:4, 8:18-25, 10:9-10, 14:10; Acts 17:30-31; John 5:28-29; Matt. 12:39-42, 25:31-46; 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6; 1 Cor. 15:35-56; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Rev. 20:11-15, etc.).

We repeat, for emphasis: In the very nature of the case, guilt simply cannot be imputed to any person—in any court, Divine or human—for the sin (or crime) of another person. Imputed or inherited guilt is utterly contrary, not

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only to Scripture teaching, but to human experience as well. It can hardly be doubted that the human will is vitiated in varying degrees by self-assertiveness; however, it is only when it is personally exercised in disobedience to God that guilt is incurred. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

2. "Total Depravity."

As the Creed quoted above has it: As a result of the Fall, "our first parents" became "dead in sin, wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body." Again: "From this original corruption whereby we [all their posterity] are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." (Note here the words "wholly" and "utterly"—these admit no qualifications. They mean what they say, or they mean nothing at all. Language could not be plainer.) In the Institutes, the doctrine is affirmed just as positively by Calvin himself. The noblest gifts bestowed upon man at his creation were utterly vitiated by the Fall. Such natural powers as reason and will have been so corrupted that no man is capable of understanding anything aright or willing anything that is good. As a result of his depraved nature, the unregenerated person is wholly unable to bring forth any good spiritual fruit. This corrupt will "cannot strive after the right" (II, ii, 12:271), "cannot move toward good, much less apply itself thereto" (II, iii, 2, 5; 292, 294). "All that proceeds from him is to be imputed to sin" (II, i, 9:253). All alleged "good works" that may have been manifested by human nature simply "deceive us with their vain show" (II, iii, 4; 294). Though natural endowments, they must, nevertheless, arise from unworthy motives, and consequently have no value in acquiring righteousness (justification).

Now we have already conceded that human character is depraved: it is so much easier for a man to drift down-

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ward than to struggle upward. It takes a great measure of moral discernment for a person really to put first things first (Matt. 6:33). Such terms as "immaturity," "irrationality," "missing the mark," etc., are too innocuous, too weak, to describe man's moral state accurately. *He is depraved, to be sure, but he is not totally depraved.* Were he totally depraved, he would be in the same moral state as that of the Devil and his angels; these original rebels, we are told, are "committed to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4), "kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). What kind of bonds? Bonds of total moral and spiritual darkness, bonds of total depravity. These bonds, moreover, are "everlasting": for Satan and his rebel host there is no hope: their moral state is such that they are utterly incapable of faith, repentance, hope, love, or anything good.

There is no support in Biblical teaching for this dogma of human total depravity. The tenor of Scripture teaching is entirely to the contrary. (Review here the Scriptures quoted above in refutation of the dogma of "original sin.") The Apostle writes, 2 Tim. 3:13—"But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse," etc. If men are totally depraved, how could they possibly *wax worse and worse*? As a matter of fact, Jesus Himself completely negates this dogma in His Parable of the Sower (which is, in fact, a Parable of the Soils); cf. Luke 8:4-15. Here He describes the various kinds of soil into which the good seed of the Kingdom—the Word of God—falls: some, He tells us, falls by the wayside only to be trodden under foot or devoured by the birds of the heavens; some falls on rocky ground where it cannot obtain sufficient moisture to put down roots, and hence withers away; and some falls among thorns which grow along with it and choke it to death. But—thanks be to God—some falls on good ground, and brings forth fruit a hundredfold; and the

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good ground, He tells us expressly, is *an honest and good heart* (e.g. Acts 8:27-38, 10:1-8, 10:24-33, etc.) But, according to the Creed, *no man* has an honest and good heart; on the contrary, all men are wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of mind and body, and hence utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil. It becomes obvious that the creed-makers should revise their theories and bring them into line with the teaching of Christ.

It should be noted here that there can be no degrees in *total* depravity; it must be *total* depravity—or nothing. This is definitely an *either-or* proposition. If the Creed is true, then all men are *equally* depraved because they are *totally* depraved. But neither Scripture, nor logic, nor human experience supports such a position. Total depravity, we repeat, is characteristic only of the Devil and his angels: in every son of man there is "a little spark of celestial fire called conscience," unless he himself stifles it and so commits spiritual suicide.

3. "*Miraculous Conversion.*"

But it will be argued by some that these honest and good hearts of which Jesus speaks, necessarily have been made so, have been specifically prepared for the reception of the spiritual seed, by a special operation of Divine grace. Hence, the dogmas of "original sin" and "total depravity" are necessarily complemented in Calvinistic theology by that of "miraculous conversion," a third integral part of the system. That is to say, man is as dead spiritually as Lazarus was physically, and as a special miracle was necessary to raise Lazarus from the dead, so a special miracle must be wrought in the human heart by the Holy Spirit, to incline it to, and prepare it for, the reception of the Gospel message. Lacking this special extraordinary "work of grace," human nature vitiated by the Fall will continue to be indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil. Moreover, evidence of

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this special manifestation of the Spirit will become known to the sinner in the form of a mystical experience: an overwhelming ecstasy, a sign in the heavens, the appearance of an angel, the singing of a choir invisible, or something of the kind. The utmost that the poor sinner can do, under any and all circumstances, to invoke this Divine interposition ("call"), is to pray for it; failing to receive it would mean simply that he is doomed to unconditional reprobation, without hope either in this world or in the world to come. As Minister Jack Cottrell states the case so clearly (*Christian Standard*, January 21, 1967): "What does this aspect of total inability mean? It means that man cannot will to turn to God in faith and repentance until the Holy Spirit works in a special way within him, in a way similar to what we would call 'being born again.' Of course, we all agree that no one can believe until the word of the gospel touches his heart (Romans 10:17). But for Calvin it is much more serious than this. For him, no matter how much external preaching and persuasion are present, all men are blind and deaf to it and no one surrenders to God unless God himself singles him out and bends his heart in a new direction (II, iii, 6: 297f.). Faith is the special gift of God given only to those whom God himself chooses (III, i, 4; 54lf., III, ii, 35:583)." (Eph. 2:8 is usually cited as a proof text for this view. But what is it in this passage that is said to be the "gift of God"? Not faith, of course, except possibly, indirectly, in the sense that faith comes only from some form of contact with the Word which God has given us (Rom. 10:17). It seems obvious, however, that it is the *salvation* about which the Apostle is writing here that is said to be, and is, God's free gift (John 3:16, Rom. 3:4) to those who meet the terms of admission into the New Covenant, the Covenant of Faith: (Rom. 5:1, Heb. 8:10-12). These considerations lead us directly to the next "pillar" of Calvin's theology—

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4. "Unconditional Election and Reprobation."

Again, Cottrell states the case so clearly that no one could improve on his presentation: "Herein lies the necessity for the predestination of certain individuals to salvation apart from any consideration of their response. All men alike are unable to turn to God, regardless of external circumstances. So if anyone at all is to be saved, God himself must give that one the ability to respond to His call. Who decides which ones are to be given this ability? God alone, from all eternity, and on the basis of reasons known only to himself. (This is the Calvinistic predestination with which most people are familiar.) Thus at appropriate times the Holy Spirit opens the hearts of these chosen ones, and they are then able to turn to God. This does not mean that God merely brings His elect ones to the point where they are free to either accept or reject His offer of salvation. Just as God's choice is sovereign, so is His call irresistible. Those who receive the call invariably come; those who do not receive it are totally unable to come or even to want to do so (II, iii, 10: 303f.)." All this, moreover, is said expressly in the Creed to have been purposed by God—directly or indirectly—"to his own glory."

We shall consider subsequently some of the Scripture passages that are usually cited to support this dogma of unconditional election and reprobation. Suffice it to say here, however, that the dogma is certainly derogatory of God. It is difficult to see how God could arbitrarily elect some persons to salvation and others to reprobation unless He is a respecter of persons, and this the Scripture is positive in affirming *that He is not* (Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:7, Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11, Gal. 2:6, Eph. 6:9, Col. 3:25, 1 Pet. 1:17). Moreover, Biblical teaching uniformly asserts, from beginning to end, that God does not coerce the human will or exert pressure to modify—much less to overpower—man's freedom of choice.

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Bible teaching on this subject may best be summarized, it seems to me, as follows: In the first chapter of Genesis, God is introduced to us as the Creator. In the second chapter, man is introduced to us, as he came from the hand of God. In the third chapter, the Devil is introduced to us as the Tempter, the Source of all evil. And so we find man in between God and the Devil; and that is where he has always been, and always will be, in this present world, with the power to choose between the two. There is no doubt, of course, that God *has* power to save each of us *unconditionally* if He wishes to do so. But He does not wish, nor does He choose, to do so. On the other hand God can hardly be considered just should he save man *in his sins*; hence, man must hear, believe, repent and obey, to receive the fulfilment of God's promise to save him. On the other hand, the Devil *does not have* the power to lead any man into ruin unless the latter allows himself to be led to disobey God. God's power (authority) *plus* man's obedience of faith will bring about salvation (election), whereas the Devil's power plus man's yielding to it brings about the latter's condemnation (reprobation). (John 3:16-21; 1 John 3:4-12, 5:10-12, etc.).

An amusing, but very simple and clear explanation of the doctrine of election *as it is given in Scripture* has been preserved for us by one of our pioneer evangelists. As the story goes, Senator Vance of North Carolina was teasing his old colored servant on the subject of religion: the old man had been urging the Senator to become a Christian. The Senator said, "I just don't understand this doctrine of election. I don't know whether I *can* become a Christian because I don't know whether the Lord has elected me or not." "Marse Zeb," answered the old Negro, "I can 'splain dat question ob 'lection. Fust, has yuh 'nounced yo'self as a candidate?" "No, I suppose I haven't," replied the Senator. "Yuh see," said the old servant, "no man eber gwine be 'lected t' office who doan fust 'nounce hisself

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as a candidate. Now yuh-all 'nounce yo'self as a candidate fo' de Lawd's kingdom; den de Lawd he votes fo' yuh, and de debbil he votes agin yuh; and den yuh vote fo' yo'self, and yo' an' de Lawd make a 'jority, and y'all is 'lected." This is the sum and substance of the whole matter. A great campaign is going on all the time—a campaign for the souls of men. On one side, the Leader is Christ, the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10); on the other side, the leader is Satan, the arch-adversary of all mankind (1 Pet. 5:8). The election has already been held (Eph. 1:4, 1 Pet. 1:18-21, Rev. 13:8). Christ voted to save you so that you might enjoy the bliss of fellowship with God in the Hereafter (1 John 1:3, 3:2). The Devil voted to condemn you to Hell. You, like every other accountable human being, therefore, must cast the deciding vote. As the matter stands now, the vote is a tie; and it takes your vote to break the tie. *You either elect or condemn yourself.* The Gospel of Christ is not a power, nor one of the powers, it is *the* power of God unto salvation to every one that believes (Rom. 1:16). God has already sent you a Letter (His Word as revealed in the New Testament) telling you what to do to be saved and what to do to "keep" saved (Acts 2:38, 1 Thess. 2:13, 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Why then should you expect Him to send along a telegram, so to speak, to pressure you into doing what He in His letter commands you to do? The Gospel is a universal amnesty proclamation to all mankind (2 Cor. 5:17-20) offering free pardon to all who will meet the conditions. *But we must meet the conditions if we expect ever to enjoy the free Gift* (John 3:16-17). (Cf. Acts 4:11-12, 2:38; John 10:27-28; 5:40; Rom. 5:1-2, 8:32; Heb. 5:9; 1 John 4:9).

Suffice it to say here, in passing, that Divine election is election to certain *responsibilities*, in the proper discharge of which the corresponding rewards are actualized. Thus to fleshly Israel of old was committed the twofold task of

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preserving the knowledge of the living and true God (monotheism) and preparing the way for the Messianic fulfilment; and to the Church (spiritual Israel) is committed the twofold responsibility of preserving God's truth and proclaiming it throughout the world (1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 24:14, 28:18-20; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:8). Moreover, Divine election, as we shall see later, has reference not to individuals as such, but to a class: the elect are the "whosoever-wills," the non-elect the "whosoever-won'ts" (Rev. 22:17).

5. *Foreordination (Predestination), Foreknowledge, and "Fixity."*

The Greek verb *proorizo* occurs in six places in the New Testament. The rendering in the various versions is an excellent example of the manner in which translators can "foul up" the meaning of a single word. This verb in the Greek means literally "to fix beforehand," "to pre-determine," etc. It occurs two times in Romans (8:29, 30), two times in Ephesians (1:5, 11), once in Acts (4:28) and once in First Corinthians (2:7). In *all* these passages it should be rendered uniformly as "foreordain" or as "predestinate" ("predestine"). The A.S.V. gives it as "foreordain," as it should, in all of them. The King James Version (A.V.) renders the four passages in Romans and Ephesians as "predestinate"; it then gives Acts 2:48 as "determined before," and 1 Cor. 2:7 as "ordained before." Why all this variation? The R.S.V. gives the texts in Romans and Ephesians and the one in Acts as "predestine." Then it proceeds to render 1 Cor. 2:7 as "decreed before." Again, why this absurd variation: why not use the same English word in all six passages?

The distinction between the English words, "predestinate" and "foreordain" is a matter of etymology. "Predestinate" comes from the *Latin*, *pro*, "before," and *destino*, "fix," "determine," etc. This word reflects the influence of the Latin Vulgate on the King James translators (who,

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it will be recalled, Anglicized the Latin *baptizo*, which was in turn a transliteration of the original Greek *baptizo*). The A.S.V. is consistent and correct in rendering the word directly from the Greek as "foreordain," in all instances. Just why the R.S.V. goes back to the Latin equivalent, "predestine," instead of adhering to the Greek original, in the passages in Romans, Ephesians, and Acts, is a mystery to this writer. Moreover, it then compounds the problem by rendering 1 Cor. 2:7 as "decreed before." Why not just use "predestinate," "predetermine," or preferably, "foreordain," and be done with this babel of tongues?

What then is Predestination or Foreordination? Calvin defines the word in his *Institutes* as "the eternal decree of God by which he has determined in himself what he would to become of every individual of mankind. For they all are not created with a similar destiny, but eternal life is foreordained to some, and eternal damnation to others." The doctrine is set forth in the Creed as follows: "By the eternal decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These men and angels thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed and their number is so certain and definite it can neither be increased or diminished." (See note at the end of this part).

It is recognized, of course, that this older version of the dogma has been modified in recent years, as, for example, in the credal statement (published in 1939) referred to in preceding pages herein. However, there are many "die-hards" who still cling to the original version. Perhaps we should consider briefly here the texts most frequently cited to support the old version, such as the following: (1) *Rom. 9:12-13*. Here are two passages from the Old Testament, but blended together by the Apostle. The first is Gen. 25:21-23, the word of Yahweh to Rebekah prior to the birth of Jacob and Esau. We have here a plain

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prophecy and *that it is all it is*: two sons are to be born, namely, Jacob and Esau, and they are to become the progenitors of two nations; moreover, the nation to be sired by the elder is to "serve" the nation to be sired by the younger son. The word of Yahweh has reference here, not to individuals, but to nations. Esau never served Jacob in his entire life—on the contrary, it was Jacob who gave gifts to Esau at the time of their reconciliation (Gen., ch. 33). The over-all meaning of the passage is that God, as He had both perfect right and reason to do, had selected Jacob, and not Esau, to be the ancestor of Messiah. The statement that "the elder shall serve the younger" was simply a prophetic announcement that at a future time the Edomites (descendants of Esau) should become servants of the Israelites (descendants of Jacob): the prophecy is clearly fulfilled in 2 Sam. 8:14. The second quotation in Rom. 9:13, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated," (from Mal. 1:2-3) was uttered several hundred years after both Jacob and Esau were dead. The statement again refers to the two nations or peoples: it simply points out the fact that the Edomites suffered divine retribution because of their sins. (Gen. 32:3; ch. 36; Num. 20:14-21; Isa. 34:5).

(2) Another oft-quoted passage is *Rom. 9:17-18*. On the face of it, this is a "poser," but it is not necessarily so. The question involved here is this: How did God demonstrate His power through the instrumentality of Pharaoh? He did it by bringing the stiffnecked ruler and his people down to the very edge of destruction. But how did God "harden" Pharaoh's heart (Exo. 4:21, 7:3, 14:4, 17)? He did it, not by directly willing it, not even by *permitting* it, as is often stated (because permission implies a certain measure of acquiescence, whereas God abhors evil and does not will it the least bit); He did it *negatively*, that is, by doing nothing to prevent Pharaoh's hardening of his own heart. "Whom he will he hardeneth." How?

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By not exerting pressure to prevent evil men from becoming hardened in the practice of their own evil ways: obviously, to interfere under such circumstances would be equivalent to ruling the moral universe by coercion.

(3) *Rom. 9:20-24*. Here we have the homely example of the clay in the hands of the potter. The reference is drawn from *Jer. 18:1-10*. The lesson is clear. It sometimes occurs that when the potter is turning a vessel on the wheel, the vessel breaks. What is the cause of the break? Certainly it is not that the potter foreordained (willed) it to do so. Rather, *the defect is in the clay*; being of inferior quality it becomes marred in the hands of the potter. In such cases, does the potter cast it off as useless? No. The potter, being a thrifty individual, makes it into another kind of vessel, although one of inferior quality. The potter makes a vessel unto dishonor only when he cannot make anything else out of the clay with which he is working. The clay is not poor because the potter foreordained it to be so; it becomes poor only when internal conditions combine to make it so. The lesson is that the divine Potter's reaction toward an individual or a nation is determined, not by His own arbitrary will, but by the good or evil, whichever it may be, that characterizes the individual or national character. The statement in Jeremiah is an affirmation of the Biblical (providential) "philosophy" of history. (Cf. *John 5:40*, *Matt. 23:37-39*).

(4) *Acts 13:48*. Here the difficulty is with the word "ordained," which certainly is not the best translation. Some, including McGarvey, render it "disposed"; others, pointing up the fact that the verb is in the middle or passive voice, hold that it should be rendered "determined themselves" or "were determined," *i.e.*, by personal decisions; A. T. Robertson translates it "appointed." He states expressly: "There is no evidence that Luke had in mind an *absolutum decretum* of personal salvation. . . . It was sav-

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ing faith that was exercised by those who were appointed unto eternal life, who were ranged on the side of eternal life, who were thus revealed as the subjects of God's grace by the stand that they took on this day for the Lord" (WPNT, III, 200, 201). Obviously the passage emphasizes the fact that in this case it was Gentiles who were *determining themselves* to eternal life by their acceptance of the Gospel message. (Besides, there is no preposition used here, such as *pro*, to indicate "pre" or "fore" ordain, dispose, or determine. The predetermining took place then and there by those who *disposed or appointed themselves* unto life eternal.) The same general idea is conveyed in Acts 16:14—the Lord opened Lydia's heart, obviously, through the instrumentality of the "eternal good news"; as a result of her "giving heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (cf. Luke 24:45). Faith comes only by contact with—by reading or hearing—the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17); the whole missionary and evangelistic enterprise of the church in all ages is predicated on this fact.

(5) *Rom. 8:28-30*. Here we have a clear revelation of one phase of the ultimate design of God's Eternal Purpose, namely, that His elect should ultimately *be conformed to the image of His Son*, that He—the Son—might be the "firstborn among many brethren." The very essence of this Eternal Purpose was that in all things Christ should have the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18, Eph. 1:10), hence that He should be the firstborn from the dead, and that all whom He should purchase with His own precious blood (Acts 20:28) should be redeemed in spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23) and so should ultimately wear the form of His own glorified body (John 17:5; Matt. 17:2; Rom. 2:7, 8:23; Acts 26:13; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:1-10). Lard (CR, 283-284): "When the *prothesis* was before God, He foresaw that certain persons would, when the opportunity was presented, become His children. These in

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purpose He accepted. Moreover, He then determined, which was of course an act of predetermination relative to the thing determined, that in the resurrection their bodies should be of the same form as the glorious body of His Son. As He was predetermined to be like them before He went into the grave, so they were predetermined to be like Him after they come out of it. Thus it will be seen that in the *prothesis* the Father placed before Him, not only the resurrection of Christ, but also the very form He should wear after it. Nor was this all. He there also determined that this form should be the bodily form for all His children." To use this author's terms, nothing is said here of *actuals*; rather, everything is presented as in *prothetic* form, *i.e.*, as *set or determined beforehand*, hence included in God's Eternal Purpose. What then was fore-ordained? The answer is: The class of those who should ultimately be clothed in glory and honor and immortality as distinguished from the class of those who should not (John 5:28-29, Rev. 22:17, Matt. 25:46, Rom. 2:4-11). The foreknowledge, foreordination, calling, justification, and final glorification are considered here only as in God's Purpose (Isa. 46:9-11). "Them also he called," that is, in His Eternal Purpose He called them: "not that He called them in any special sense or special way, or that He called them, and not others: for this is neither asserted nor implied. But He called them, if before Christ, by the preaching of the prophets and other righteous men; or if under Christ, by the gospel; and just as He called them, He called all, the difference being that they voluntarily accepted, while the others wilfully rejected" (*ibid.*, 283). "Upon this acceptance, which consisted in the obedience of belief, God justified them, remitted their sins, and henceforward held them as just. Now what took place here prothetically far back in eternity, is precisely what is now actually taking place every day under Christ" (*ibid.*, 284). (Cf. 2 Thess. 2:14; Rom. 1:16, 10:17; 1 Cor. 4:15, 1 Pet.

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1:23; John 5:40, 7:37, 12:44; 2 Cor. 5:20; Rev. 2:5, 3:20, 22:17). Note the phrase, "from the foundation of the world," Matt. 13:35, 25:34; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:18-21; Rev. 13:8, 17:8). In a word, it was the *plan* that was foreordained, not the *man* (as our oldtime preachers often put it), the *class* (the whosoever wills), not the *individual*. As others have noted, the key verbs here—called, justified, glorified—are all in the past tense; if "actuals" were thus intended rather than the *potentials* envisioned in the Eternal Purpose, the verb "glorify" would need to be in the future tense, "them he shall glorify." Such statements as that found in Phil. 2:3-13, that God works in His saints "both to will and to work, for his good pleasure," are express declarations that ultimate redemption is to be actualized only through man's conformity to the Plan—the foreordained Gospel—which God's grace has provided through the Atoning blood of Christ (1 Cor. 2:2, Heb. 9:23-28). To summarize: God foreknew this *class as such* (yet to be born), the voluntarily obedient, committed to the Spiritual Life, the whosoever wills, His elect; and He foreordained that these should ultimately be conformed to the image of His Son in the Life Everlasting, that is, clothed in glory and honor and incorruption. (Rom. 2:7-8, 10:16; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:22, 4:17; Heb. 5:9; cf. also Matt. 18:3-5, 19:14; Luke 18:15-17, etc.). The passage, Rom. 8:28-30, has no reference whatever to any Divine foreknowledge, foreordination, election, calling, justification, sanctification, or glorification of the *individual* members of this class *as individuals*. (See esp. 1 Tim. 6:13-16).

(6) *Romans, chs. 9, 10, 11.* The same is generally true of this section of the Epistle: it has reference only to the destinies of the progenies of the two children, Jacob and Esau, respectively. JB (281, n.): "Paul's theme of justification by faith led him to speak of the righteousness of Abraham, ch. 4. Similarly here the theme of salvation

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lovingly bestowed by God through the Spirit makes it necessary for him to speak about Israel's case, chs. 9-11, a people which remains unbelieving though it has received the promise of salvation. The subject of these chapters, therefore, is not the problem of individual predestination to glory, or even to faith, but of Israel's part in the development of salvation history, the only problem raised by the statements in the O.T." In 9:11, we are told expressly that God did choose before their birth which of the two sons of Isaac should carry forward the Messianic Line: hence, election in this case was specifically "not of works, but of him that calleth." Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of subsequent history, it did turn out to be one of works (works of faith), in the sense that their respective acts proved the one ancestor (Jacob) to be more worthy of God's favor than the other (Esau). Hence, in view of the fact that men are *predestined to be free*, surely we can not be far wrong in assuming that this superior quality of Jacob's character was foreknown by God from the beginning. Although it may appear at first glance that the choice was an arbitrary one, our human hindsight certainly supports God's foresight in making it. Of course Jacob's character was not anything to brag about, until after his experience at Peniel (Gen. 32:22-32), from which he emerged a changed man with a changed name (Israel), certainly it was of nobler quality than that of Esau, as proved especially by their different attitudes toward such divine rights—and responsibilities—as those of primogeniture (Exo. 13:11-16, Deut. 21:17). Disregard for positive divine ordinances (such as those of the birthright and the paternal blessing, in patriarchal times) is known in Scripture as *profanity* (from *pro*, "outside" or "before," and *fanum*, "temple"), and hence is the vilest insult that can be perpetrated against God—a fact which the sophisticated, the respectable, the worldly wise of humankind are often too biased to understand or at least to be willing to admit.

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This is the charge leveled against Esau: his profanity was such that he blithely and unconcernedly sold his birthright for a bowl of beans (Heb. 12:16—"a mess of meat"). And this general irreligiousness of the paternal character seems to have passed down to his offspring (Num. 20:14-21; Judg. 11:16-17; 2 Sam. 8:14; Psa. 137:7; Ezek. 25:12-14, 35:1-15; Amos 9:11-12, Joel 3:19, Obad. 1-20, etc.).

The Apostle now proceeds to expound the relative destinies of Jews and Gentiles under God's providence. The Jews, his own people, he says, were chosen, not to receive salvation above all others, but to prepare the race for the ministry and work of Messiah, intending that when Messiah came they, and Gentiles as well, should receive salvation by accepting and obeying Him. God did no injustice in choosing the Jews at first to assume their designated tasks in preserving knowledge of the living and true God and in preparing the world for Messiah's advent; neither does He now do any injustice in choosing the Gentiles and rejecting the unbelieving Jews; He has always planned to accept those who should receive His Son and obey Him as their Redeemer, whether Jews or Gentiles, and to reject all who would not do so, as foretold repeatedly by the Old Testament prophets. The Jews made the tragic mistake of seeking justification (and hence of forfeiting their election), not by belief in Christ, but by works of the Law, the one way by which it can never be found. They showed that their zeal was not according to knowledge in their seeking to establish their own doctrine of justification, and this caused them to reject the plan which God had provided. No justification is possible to any person except on the ground of belief in Christ and the benefits of His Atonement; and indeed all may enjoy it, whether Jews or Gentiles, on the same conditions (Rom. 10:1-15, Acts 2:38, Gal. 3:27-29). This is the substance of the Apostle's teaching here, with all its ramifications. There is not the slightest intimation that elec-

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tion means to the Children of Israel that they were forechosen, individually or collectively, to be saved above all other persons; rather, it was election to responsibilities, namely, those connected with preparing the world for Messiah's advent. No intimation of individual or national predestination to special divine favors is to be found in these chapters. Commenting on ch. 11, v. 15, Lard summarizes as follows (CR, 359): "But the future reception of the Jews will not consist in restoring them, as Jews, to their former national prosperity, but in receiving them into the divine favor in virtue of their obedience to Christ. Their condition and state will then be precisely the same as the present condition and state of Christian Gentiles." (But—did not this reception begin on Pentecost, to continue throughout the present Dispensation, on the terms of the New Covenant? [Cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:1-13; Acts 2:37-38; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 3:22-24; Eph. 2:13-18; Gal. 3:27-29].) (Cf. especially Rom. 11:32—"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy on all" [cf. Gal. 3:22, Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2:15-21.] Does not "all flesh" in these texts [cf. Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2:17-21] mean, essentially, without regard to any distinction between Jew and Gentile? Cf. again Eph. 2:13-17).

Professor Donald Nash has summarized so clearly our problem with respect to ch. 9 of Romans and the doctrine of foreordination that this writer could not improve on it. Five principles should be kept in mind, he says, as follows: "(1) If it teaches anything at all about election, it is that those who trust in election shall be lost. (This may sound facetious but it is true. The elect of chapter 9 are the Jews. Paul says they will be lost because they trusted in election of Israel over Esau rather than accepting Christ.) (2) When it speaks of election it is speaking of nations not individuals—the nation of Israel in contrast to the Gentiles. (3) It is dealing with a situation before

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the gospel when it speaks of the election of the Jews. (4) God chooses individuals and nations to carry out His purposes but not to be saved above others. (5) Election in this chapter deals with temporal matters of the preparation for Christ through Israel, now with the matter of one's eternal salvation in the Christian dispensation" (art., "Foreordination in the Plan of God," RH, Nov. 16, 1966).

The plain fact is that in these three chapters of Romans there is not the slightest reference to any foreordination to personal, eternal salvation of individuals as individuals.

(7) Finally, in this connection, let us consider the classic case of the betrayer, Judas Iscariot, one that has been belabored throughout the centuries. See *Matt. 27:1-10*; *Acts 1:15-26*; *John 6:70, 71*; *John 13:2, 17:12*. Note *Acts 1:25*—Judas, we are told here, "fell away" from the apostleship. Thus the question arises: Did Judas "fall away" as a result of an arbitrary Divine ordination? Was he the one person specifically foreordained (elected) to be the betrayer of Christ? Was his identity as the betrayer, as well as his dastardly act, foreknown "from the foundation of the world"? Undoubtedly the betrayal was an integral part of the whole Drama of Redemption: how, then, did this particular person and his particular act fit into the Eternal Purpose? To this point the distinguished contemporary philosopher, Maritain, writes (GPE, 95-96): "The occurrence of certain good things presupposes some sin, *taken collectively and indeterminately*. No martyr without some executioner. The Word was made flesh in order to redeem the world by His sacrifice and His immolation, and this presupposes murderers. On the side of the eternal purposes this supreme act of love and obedience, that is, the immolation of Christ according as it is accepted and willed by Him, and the infinite merits with which it is resplendent, and the redemption that it effects—all the good, at once human and divine, of this immolation is *willed* by God. But He wills all this good without willing

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in any way, either directly or indirectly, the sin committed by the authors of the death of Jesus. This sin remains absolutely outside the field of divine causation—God is absolutely not the cause of it, even the cause *per accidens*.” *God is never under any circumstances the cause of sin* (Jas. 1:13-15). How, then, do we account for Judas’s defection? (1) In the first place, as Maritain goes on to say, given the contributing circumstances, namely, the distorted notion the Jewish leaders, especially the priests, had of Messiah and His mission, their certain venomous reaction to his utterly revolutionary teaching, including His castigation of their sheer formalism and hypocrisy, and the interrelationship of these factors and the politics the Jewish leaders would be compelled to pursue in dealing with the Roman civil authorities, in a word, “the unbearable scandal that Jesus was for the world of the doctors and the public officials, there would be some among them to send Christ to His death, just as in a town where everyone is bilious there will certainly be a fight. That in one manner or in another Jesus would in the end be immolated—this was certain, inevitable” (*ibid.*, 96-97). The story of mankind demonstrates again and again given a complex of certain contributing circumstances, history inevitably repeats itself. (2) Note also the statement of Jesus in John 6:70, 71. Does not His statement here intimate that He, knowing the character of Judas, deliberately called him to the apostleship for the purpose of effecting His own Atoning Sacrifice for the sin of the world (Heb. 12:2, John 1:29)? Certainly Jesus demonstrated repeatedly that He knew the inner thoughts and intents of those whose lives He touched (cf. John 3:1-6, 4:16-18). (3) Finally, note John 13:2, 27; John 8:44, 17:12. Do not these statements by our Lord Himself affirm explicitly that the motivation in the case of Judas was of *diabolical* origin, that is to say, of Satanic suggestion? Surely the Father’s open avouching of the Sonship

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of Jesus following the latter's baptism, and the accompanying identification of Him as Messiah by the Spirit's anointing (John 1:30-34, Acts 10:38), was a direct challenge to the Adversary to do his worst. Satan accepted the challenge, and thereby, we might add, unwittingly sealed his own doom forever. After two failures personally to seduce Jesus into the repudiation of His Atoning Mission (Matt. 4:1-11, 26:36-46; Luke 4:1-13), the Devil (whose knowledge, though superhuman, is not infinite), concluding that his only chance of thwarting God's purposes was to bring about the murder of the One whom he now recognized to be the real oracular woman's Seed (Gen. 3:15, Gal. 3:16). This he did by selecting the most likely agency to accomplish his designs: that agency was Judas Iscariot. And the character of Judas, as portrayed in the Gospel narratives, certainly points to him as the one most amenable to do the ugly business. (We now know, of course, that Satan's colossal blunder was his failure to take into account the Resurrection: this was the event which sealed his eternal destiny in Hell: Heb. 2:14-15, 1 Cor. 15:25-26, Rom. 1:4). (4) Incidentally, could not Judas have repented of his sins and enjoyed redemption on the terms of the New Covenant had his character moved him to such a change of heart and life? Evidently the repentance of Judas was a repentance unto death: it was motivated, not by godly sorrow, but by remorse ("the sorrow of the world"); hence, it was but the ultimate proof of his inner depravity. He had not the slightest notion of Divine mercy and grace; therefore he went out and hung himself (Matt. 27:5, 2 Cor. 7:10, Luke 15:17-21, Acts 1:16-25). (Divine foreknowledge of the acts of Judas does not necessarily imply Divine foreordination of those acts, as we shall see *infra*). It was diabolical pressure (Satanic suggestion), plus his own character, and not Divine foreordination, which prompted Judas to betray his Master.

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Some important questions arise at this point, as follows: (1) In the first place, does the *omniscience* of God include absolute *foreknowledge* of all events, personal as well as cosmic? If God knows what our acts will be before we do them, can we truly be said to be free? It is held generally, and has been, throughout the Christian era, that omniscience does embrace total foreknowledge even of human acts. But this writer holds that the concept is debatable, to say the least. Tabernacled within every human being is the Breath of God which "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Gen. 2:7, Acts 17:25). The Breath of God is a metaphor of the creating and sustaining activity of the Spirit of God. Surely this means that in every person there is an infinitesimal spark of the very being of God; and to the extent that man has, and can exercise, as the personal image of God, the power of choice, he is of a rank above the strictly finite. *To this extent man is predestined to be free.* Of course Infinity can and does foreknow the consequences of human acts, but whether Omniscience includes foreknowledge of just what a man will choose to do, between or among alternatives, under all circumstances, seems to me to be a moot question. (2) In the second place, granting the probability of Divine foreknowledge of human acts, *does this foreknowledge imply fixity*, as often claimed in the lingo of "systematic theology"? Of course not. Suppose I decide to eat a juicy steak to assuage my physical appetite: but suppose that, after due deliberation, I decide, for the sake of my health, not to eat the steak. If I should carry out the first of these actions, God would foreknow what I do; if I should decide to carry out the alternative, again God would foreknow what I do. In the very nature of the case, whichever act I carry out, that is what God would foreknow. In short, my free acts are the events which constitute Divine foreknowledge. Does it not follow, therefore, that the fixity is set by the human act, not by

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God's foreknowledge of it? *It is what I do, that God foreknows.* This brings us to the crux of the problem.

(3) In the third place, then, does Divine *foreknowledge* presuppose Divine *foreordination*? Not necessarily. God may foreknow that I am going to rush out into the street at a certain hour tomorrow and be run over and killed by an automobile driven by a "drunk." But does this mean, necessarily, that God has foreordained my act (or even that He ordained it at the moment of its happening) to which probably my own carelessness has contributed? Does it mean, too, that He has foreordained (or that He ordained at the instant of its occurrence) that the driver of the automobile in question should be intoxicated? It strikes me that it would be silly to answer either of these questions in the affirmative. Moreover, for God to intervene and prevent either my act or this driver's drunkenness and accompanying act would be ruling by coercion; and if He should do this for either or both of us, He would be "duty bound," so to speak, to do the same for all persons under the same circumstances, and this would be ruling the moral universe by force. Had God chosen to exercise His Sovereignty in this arbitrary manner universally, why did He endow man with the power to think, to deliberate, to weigh alternatives, and finally to choose and act. MacIver (STS., 520): "To live is to act; to act is to choose; and to choose is to evaluate." Again I ask: Can choice be made by one who has been created in God's image ever be foreknown, much less foreordained? Akin to this question is another: In the very nature of things, is it possible for God to compel His creatures to love Him? Would such a pressured or coerced response, if possible, ever be love? (Parents know all too well that they cannot compel their own children to love them). And is not the converse true: that it is not possible for God to love a puppet? *Foreknowledge does not necessarily presuppose foreordination. Man is predestined to be free. The same argument presented*

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here applies not only to predestinarianism, but to all forms of predeterminism and fatalism as well. Within the limits of his acquaintanceship with alternatives, man does have freedom of choice. In every human act, three factors are involved. These are the forces of heredity, the forces of environment, and the *personal reaction*. It is the personal reaction that tips the scales toward one alternative above the other. True it is that "the stronger motive wins" in the end. But why so? Because it is the one which, for personal reasons, appeals to me above all others. That is to say, the "I" casts the deciding vote. The person is characterized by self-determination: this means that it is the self which determines its own acts.

Let us look briefly for a moment at some of the ideas which have been put forward in explanation of the problems of Divine foreordination and human freedom. (Freedom we define as the power to act or not to act, or to act in one way instead of another, in a given situation. Voluntariness is the actual exercise of this freedom.) (1) Augustine attempted to solve the problem by basing man's freedom to exercise his will on God's foreknowledge that he will exercise it. He writes (*De Libero Arbitrio*, Bk. III, translated by Burleigh; see KV, 437-441): "Our will would not be will unless it were in our power. Because it is in our power, it is free. We have nothing that is free which is not in our power, and if we have something it cannot be nothing. Hence it is not necessary to deny that God has foreknowledge of all things, while at the same time our wills are our own. God has foreknowledge of our will, so that of which He has foreknowledge must come to pass. In other words, we shall exercise our wills in the future, because He has foreknowledge that we shall do so; and there can be no will or voluntary action unless it be in our power. Hence God has also foreknowledge of our power to will. My power is not taken from me

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by God's foreknowledge. Indeed, I shall be more certainly in possession of my power because He whose foreknowledge is never mistaken, foreknows that I shall have the power."

(2) Thomas Aquinas agrees with Augustine in holding that the man who is guided by his reason is morally and spiritually free. Man, he says, is not governed by instinct as animals are, but is distinguished from them by his power of judgment which is guided by his reason. The reason can determine whether a thing is good or evil and can cause man to act accordingly. The Highest Good (Summum Bonum) is Perfect Happiness: this alone can never be considered evil; and for this reason man wills happiness of necessity. (Of course the Scholastics define Perfect Happiness as ultimate union with God, the union of the righteous mind with the Mind of God in knowledge, and of the righteous will with the Will of God in love. Evil they defined as the privation of good, arising from man's failure—or unwillingness—to distinguish between apparent goods and real goods.) Because man's choice is not of the end, but of the means, the choice is not of the Highest Good, but of particular goods; hence, because his choices are in this area, he chooses freely and not of necessity.

(3) William James contends that if God is thought of as providing for possibilities (Bergson called them *novelties*) within the universe (totality of created being), as well as for actualities, chances may exist which even He does not control. The course of the universe would be fortuitous (hence ambiguous) to a degree, yet the ultimate end would be that which is designed from eternity. This is the doctrine known as *telefinalism*. God would not necessarily know all the details, but only the possibilities, until at the moment or moments at which they occur. James sees man as a creative power *per se* in the determination of the flux of things, although God alone determines the consummation (ultimate end). Cf. Isa. 46:9-11, Acts 3:21.

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(4) The German philosopher, Kant, affirmed the existence of facts lying beyond the bounds of the empirical: these are known by what he called "the ideas of reason"—the concepts necessary to any comprehensive philosophy of life. The exercise of freedom is determined by the law of reason. The will is a cause that belongs only to rational beings and is free in the sense that it is not determined by external causes, but by the autonomous reason alone. It is not necessary, he tells us, to suppose that the category of cause and effect applies beyond the domain of spatio-temporal events. Therefore, since we are bound to believe that the will is free, in order to give reality to the moral life, we can be consistent in holding that the self belongs to the noumenal realm outside the phenomenal order of space and time. Kant endeavors to show on moral grounds that men must believe that they are free members of a rational and spiritual order, and that, as such, they are also immortal. As a practical necessity, he urges, we must believe in a Being (God) who alone can guarantee the fulfilment of our craving for immortality, and so give substance to the moral life. Such beliefs (acts of faith), are necessary postulates of what he calls the "practical reason." (It will be noted that for Kant "immortality" meant only continuance of existence beyond the grave: this, as we have shown on preceding pages herein, is *not* the Biblical doctrine of immortality.)

(5) According to John Locke, the fact that events can be predicted from knowledge of their respective causes does not mean that these causes compel the occurrence of the events. It is true, in theory at least, that a human act can be traced to past causes, if the causes are all fully known. But it is equally true that human actions are, as a rule, unpredictable, because it is impossible to identify all the causal factors involved. When man acts voluntarily, he does what he himself has decided to do. Freedom is abridged only by external forces which can constrain him

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to act contrary to his will. (For example, suppose a robber forces a man to hand over his pocketbook: in such cases the victim does so, *but not willingly*: hence his freedom of action is constrained, but his freedom of will is not affected.) Man could not be free if his will were determined by anything but his personal desire under the guidance of his judgment. Again, this all boils down to the fact that the "I" casts the deciding vote.

(6) The tendency today among physicists is to regard the workings of the cosmos as indeed very probable, but not always determinate. As a consequence of the quantum theory and its ramifications, it is fairly well evident that physical laws do hold true, but only statistically. A principle of spontaneity has been found even in the very core of the atom. It is discovered that both the velocity of an elementary particle and its position in space at the same instant cannot be determined: electrons seem to jump from one orbit to another in an unpredictable manner; moreover, because some signal must be transmitted from the particle to the observer, the very act of scrutiny seems to change what is being scrutinized. This is known as the (Heisenberg) Principle of Uncertainty or Indeterminacy. Max Planck, first proponent of the quantum theory, writes ("Where Is Science Going?" in KV, p. 459): "The fact is that there is a point, one single point in the immeasurable world of mind and matter, where science and therefore every causal method of research is inapplicable, not only on practical grounds but also on logical grounds, and will always remain inapplicable. This point is the individual ego. It is a small point in the universal realm of being: but in itself it is a whole world, embracing our emotional life, our will and our thought. This realm of the ego is at once the source of our deepest suffering and at the same time of our highest happiness. Over this realm no outer power of fate can ever have sway, and we lay aside our own control and responsibility

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over ourselves only with the laying aside of life itself." Sigmund Freud has written in similar vein: "Every psychic association will be strictly determined by the attitudes of the mind, which are unknown to us at the moment they operate . . ." (Quoted by Adler, in *Synopticon*, Vol. II, of the *Great Books* series, p. 1020). Planck concludes (*op. cit.*, pp. 461-462): "Freedom of the will . . . and its independence of the causal chain is a truth that comes from the immediate dictates of the human consciousness. . . . Science thus brings us to the threshold of the ego and there leaves us to ourselves. In the conduct of our lives the causal principle is of little help; for by the iron law of logical consistency we are excluded from laying the causal foundations of our own future or foreseeing the future as definitely resulting from the present. . . . The law of causation is the guiding rule of science, but the Categorical Imperative—that is to say, the dictate of duty—is the guiding rule of life." (Kant's *Categorical Imperative*: "Act in conformity with that maxim, and that maxim only, which you can at the same time will to be a universal law." This, said Kant, is the essence of morality, and from it springs the only true moral motive—obedience to moral law which has no other source than respect for the autonomy of the law itself. This type of action would be the manifestation of the *good will*, and, says Kant, "Nothing in the whole world, or even outside of the world, can possibly be regarded as good without limitation except a good will." His *Practical Imperative*: So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only.)

(8) The Existentialists, in particular those of an atheistic bent, affirm that man is wholly free and responsible, no matter what internal or external factors may seem to bring about his decision. According to Sartre, in a godless universe (one with "no exit") everything is possible:

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hence, man is precisely what he makes of himself; he is "a free and forlorn entity." He cannot put the responsibility for his acts on his passions, nor on circumstances in general, for the simple reason that each person is bound to determine the manner of his reaction and hence is fully responsible for his interpretation of the circumstances involved. "We remind man," Sartre writes, "that there is no lawmaker other than himself, and that in his forlornness he will decide by himself; because we point out that man will fulfill himself as man, not in turning toward himself, but in seeking outside himself a goal which is just this liberation, just this particular fulfilment" (*Exst.*, p. 18). Existentialism of all shades, of course, fairly reeks with *pessimism*.

(9) Maritain, distinguished contemporary philosopher (referred to, *supra*), approaches our problem from an entirely different point of view. God, he contends, does not *foresee*—He *sees*; does not *foreknow*, but *knows*. God's realm is that of *timelessness*: this is essentially what *eternity* is. Hence there is no past, present, or future to God, but only *the everlasting Now*. (Cf. 2 Cor. 6:2; also Exo. 3:14—the Name of Deity, I AM, HE WHO IS). Maritain writes (EE, 87): "God does not foresee things of time, He sees in particular the free options and decisions of the created existent which, in as much as they are free, are absolutely unforeseeable. He sees them at the instant when they take place." Again (GPE, 82): "I have said that the divine purposes are infrustably fixed from all eternity from the fact that God, at the eternal Instant to which all the moments of time are present all together, has freely formed such or such purposes for the world rather than an infinity of other possible purposes, or even no purposes at all, for He was free not to create the world." Again (*ibid.*, 79): "All of this means—and let us mark this well in our minds—that God has the entire course of

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time physically present to His eternal Instant, and that He has it before His eyes in its entirety when He establishes all things from all eternity." Again he writes of "the physical presence of all the moments of time to divine eternity," "that eternity to which all the instants of the life of a man, the last as well as the first, are present together" (*ibid.*, 90, 106). Although it is utterly impossible for the human intellect to grasp the full meaning of this concept, certainly it is a valid one, and one that opens up celestial vistas radiant with possibilities of hope and fruition. I have been convinced for some time that our "bootlegging" of human notions of time into the realm of God's timelessness has projected into human thought many irrelevant questions, questions that are meaningless insofar as actual human experience is concerned. The tendency to think of eternity as a kind of stretched-out time has been, and still is, a source of great confusion: it seems to me that the Beautiful Vision must be essentially *illumination* from which the time element is removed altogether (Matt. 5:8, 1 Cor. 13:12, 2 Cor. 4:18, 1 John 3:2), an illumination, however, which will carry with it the sense of its own *everlastingness*. Time seems to be of little consequence in God's Cosmic Plan. He is portrayed in Scripture as acting by Divine Fiat: sometimes the decree is actualized at the moment of utterance (as, for example, especially in the miracles wrought by Jesus and the Apostles, cf. Luke 7:2; Matt. 7:29, 8:26-27; John 11:43; Acts 2:22, 3:6; Heb. 2:2-4), and at other times actualized gradually (progressively), that is, by means of what we speak of as "secondary causes," or "laws of nature" (cf. Isa. 28:10, Mark 4:28, Gal. 4:4, Psa. 90:4, 2 Pet. 3:8). On the basis of Maritain's view, the prefixes *fore* and *pre* have little significance, except perhaps in accommodation to man's present spatio-temporal environment (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

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(10) To summarize; Predestination or Foreordination in Scripture has reference to the essential factors involved in God's Eternal Purpose; that is, as stated already, to the *plan* rather than to the *man*, to the *class* rather than to the *individual*. We are not surprised, therefore, to note that the Gospel invitations are always clear: they definitely imply that man can come to God by an intelligent response to an intelligent appeal—a procedure that is designated *conversion* (Acts 3:19). This process is essentially *psychological* rather than *mystical*: first the preaching and hearing (1 Cor. 1:21, Rom. 10:17), then, from the hearing to understanding, to believing, to turning and obeying (Isa. 6:9-10; Matt. 13:14-15; Acts 28:26-27; John 1:12-13; Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10, 6:4-6; Matt. 10:32-33; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 3:27). Note the Lord's own precious invitation in Matt. 11:28. Note also Rev. 22:17—"he that will" (A.V., "whosoever will"), "let him take the water of life freely." The *elect* are the *whosoever wills*; and the non-elect are the *whosoever won'ts*. All that ever stands between the sinner and his salvation is his own stubborn will (John 5:20, Matt. 23:37).

One of our pioneer evangelists was invited on occasion to have dinner in a home in which the wife was a strict adherent of the "Primitive Baptist" faith. Her husband had long been trying to convince her that she was in error on the creedal dogma of election, but had failed. He asked the evangelist to try his hand at it. The evangelist considered it a hopeless task, but decided to make the effort anyway. He went to the house. After the dinner had been prepared, the good woman came to the door and invited her husband and his guest to come to the table. The evangelist went with the husband until he came close enough to see the good things on the table; then he abruptly turned back into the sitting room, saying, "I'm not going to eat." The poor woman did not know what to think. She turned pale. She looked at her husband,

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he looked at her, and both looked at the preacher. Finally, she asked: "What's the matter?" The preacher replied: "I'm just not going to eat—that's what's the matter!" The woman was very nervous; neither she nor her husband could understand this discourtesy. "Why won't you eat?" asked the woman. "I am not going to eat simply because you do not want me," replied the evangelist. She looked aghast. "If I had not wanted you as a guest, why would I have prepared this meal?" "Yes," replied the preacher, "but how do I know that you want me? You have not told me that you want me. How do I know that you mean it?" "Surely," answered the woman, "you know it from the fact that I prepared the meal and invited you to be our guest." "You mean it, then, and you really want me?" "Certainly," answered the wife. "Then I will eat." After being seated at the table and offering thanks for the food, the evangelist said: "Now, sister, if I had not come back to your table, that would have been an insult, would it not? And your feelings would have been hurt very much." "Yes, indeed," she replied, "and I don't understand yet what made you act as you did." "My sister," said the evangelist, "I was merely acting out your theology, that's all. The Lord has prepared the Marriage Feast. He has given you the invitation to attend and partake of it. All things are ready. He has prepared this Feast at a great sacrifice and He urges you to come to it. Yet your doctrine tells you that you can't come until He has told you in some mysterious way that *He means it*. Why would He have prepared the Feast and invited you through the Gospel—all at such terrible cost—if He did not mean it?" The good woman saw the point, made the Good Confession and was baptized into Christ.

God has told us clearly in the New Testament Scriptures what we must do to be received into covenant relationship with Him. Sinner friend, do you require Him to send along a special "operation" of the Spirit (a telegram, so to

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speak) to convince you that He means what He says in His Word? God gave His Son, the Son gave His life (John 3:16), and now the Spirit gives you the Word, the Gospel, telling you to believe, repent, confess, and be baptized into Christ. These are the "musts" by which you can appropriate the Gift: you can come to God only in His way and on His terms. All who reject the Gospel call will die without benefit of Divine promise and hence without hope. Their end is everlasting separation from God and all good. "Whosoever will, may come." As the old song has it, "that means everybody, that means you." Come now, and come "just as you are."

6. "Final Perseverance"

This is the last of the complex of dogmas that go to make up what is generally known as Calvinistic theology. In popular parlance it is the notion of "once in grace, always in grace." It is stated in the *Westminster Confession* (1939 edition) as follows: "Those whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. The perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election . . ." As C. H. Spurgeon has put it: "The believer, like a man on ship-board, may fall again and again on the deck, but he will never fall overboard" (quoted by Strong, ST, 885). It would be difficult to find a clearer example of the fallacy of the circular argument than we have here. Those who hold this notion will affirm that a truly regenerated person simply *cannot* fall away, but if it should turn out that someone who has professed regeneration should, later in life, drop out and never come back to the fold, that would be proof that he was never regenerated. This view is the logical corollary of the dogma of unconditional election, which is stated by Strong (ST, 882) as follows: "Election

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of certain individuals to salvation is election to bestow upon them such influences of the Spirit as will lead them not only to accept Christ, but to persevere and be saved. Union with Christ is indissoluble; regeneration is the beginning of a work of new creation, which is declared in justification, and completed in sanctification. All these doctrines are parts of a general scheme, which would come to naught if any single Christian were permitted to fall away." That is to say, the path of the elected is mapped out for them; it can lead nowhere but to Heaven, simply because they have been elected to go to Heaven. (Obviously, *the dogma ignores the fact that the saints enjoy election, justification, and sanctification, only as a result of their own co-operation with God, according to His plan and on His terms, in their living the Spiritual Life.* 2 Pet. 3:18.)

(1) Let us note the Scriptures commonly cited in support of this dogma. (a) *John 10:25-30*. But if a man is among the sheep, it is because he hears and obeys the Lord's voice and follows Him voluntarily, not because the Lord builds a barbed wire fence around the sheepfold to keep him inside. Growing in grace involves a man's *abiding* in Christ and in His Word (*John 8:31-32, 14:15, 15:7, 15:14; 2 John 9*). As long as the Christian diligently follows Christ (*Rom. 12:1-2*), no enemy of God or man can snatch him out of the Father's hand. But the person can snatch himself out of God's hands, just as a stubborn old ram (or goat, *Matt. 25:31-33*) can, and often does, jump over the fence only to be devoured by wolves. (b) *John 5:24*. This is one of the numerous Scriptures in which *hearing* means, not just listening, but also *believing* and *obeying*. After a man becomes a Christian he must be nourished on spiritual food and drink (*John 4:10, 6:63; 1 Cor. 3:2; 1 Pet. 2:2*). But—think of the names on church membership rolls of persons who neglect, or ignore altogether, the Lord's Supper, stewardship, the stated

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assembly, soul-winning, everything vital to the Spiritual Life! They are starving themselves, and if they persist in this course, they will eventually commit *spiritual suicide*. If God were to employ coercive measures (brain-washing?) to restore them, He would, as a matter of consistency, be compelled to do the same in every case; and so again salvation would be made to depend on God's will, and not on man and God working together. This would be contrary to reason and justice. God is not a respecter of persons (Col. 3:25, 1 Pet. 1:17). This dogma, if logically followed, can lead only to the absurdities of Universalism. (c) *Rom. 11:28-29* (A.V.) "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (A.S.V., "are not repented of"). All such matters as pardon, justification, remission, the indwelling Spirit, eternal life, are the gifts—the *favours*—of God bestowed freely out of the abundance of His grace. Does it mean that these favours are bestowed without repentance and obedience on man's part? Certainly not (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30); for God to act thus would be His putting a premium on impenitence and rebelliousness! The A.S.V. gives the correct rendering: the favours of God are bestowed on certain conditions (the keys of the kingdom, Matt. 16:19, John 20:22-23), and from these conditions God will not turn (Acts 2:38). God has concluded both Jew and Gentile under sin that He may manifest His grace to all, Jew and Gentile alike, on the same terms: but all alike must comply with the terms (John 15:7): those who fail to do so cannot expect to receive the fulfilment of the Divine promises. (d) *1 Cor. 10:13*. How true these words! The Christian never faces temptation without God's having provided for him the way of escape. Among these helps in resisting temptation are knowledge of the Word (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; 2 Tim. 2:19, 3:15-16; Rom. 10:8-10); prayer (1 Thess. 5:17); personal confession of sins to God from day to day (1 John 1:9). For every Christian there is the temptation—

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and there is the way of escape. Two doors are open before him: in one stands the devil of pride, rage, lust, beckoning with strong appeals; in the other stands the angel of mercy with outstretched arms. Which door will he enter?—*the answer depends on him; the decision rests with him.* (e) *1 Pet. 1:4-5.* God's saints are guarded *through faith* unto a salvation to be revealed in the last time. But what is this faith: in its real sense, it is an active, living, ever-deepening commitment in spirit and soul and body to the Will of Christ (Rom. 12:1-3). This does not mean that God pressures His elect—by exercising mystical influence upon them from time to time—into maintaining their vital relationship with Him. Such mystical influences are not necessary, because the Word is always at hand, in their mouths and in their hearts, the Word of the Spirit, which is God's power unto regeneration and sanctification (Rom. 10:6-17, Luke 16:27-31, 1 Pet. 3:15). Heaven will be populated only with Overcomers (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). But the allurements of the world, the flesh, and the devil are very powerful, so powerful that oftentimes the very elect permit themselves to be deceived and dragged down into the pit. (f) *Rom. 8:38-39.* This is literally true. There is nothing—absolutely nothing—that can separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; that is, *nothing outside ourselves.* But we can separate ourselves from His blessings if we persist in our backsliding: *we can commit spiritual suicide.* Even though our backsliding grieves His Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30), absolute Justice demands that we suffer the penalty for our impenitence. *The grace of God is indispensable, but it is not irresistible* (Acts 7:51). (g) *1 John 3:9; cf. 1 John 1:9-10.* Concerning 1 John 3:9, Robertson writes (WPNT, VI, 223): “the present active infinitive *hamartanein* can only mean ‘and he cannot go on sinning.’” One who has truly been be-

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gotten of God simply cannot go on sinning *habitually*: though he may fail at times, and surely does, his *disposition* is to do the Will of God.

(2) *Now let us note the Scriptures which expressly assert, or intimate, the possibility of falling away.* 1 Cor. 10:1-12; Luke 9:62; Luke 8:13—note those who receive the word with joy, and for a time believe, but having no root, in time of temptation fall away; Gal. 5:4; 1 Cor. 9:27; 1 Tim. 1:18-19; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26-31, 12:15; 2 Pet. 2:20-22. For the erring Christian, the way back to God is through repentance and prayer (Acts 8:22, 1 John 1:8-10). It is to be noted here that one book of the New Testament tells us what to do to be saved, namely, the books of Acts; but there are twenty-one books telling us what to do to continue and to grow in the Spiritual Life (2 Pet. 3:18). Obviously, *if we could not fall away, most of the New Testament Canon would be useless.*

(3) *Note also those Scriptures which either assert or intimate that spiritual life and growth are contingent upon steadfast discipleship throughout one's life.* John 8:31, 15:4-8; 2 Tim. 3:14; Heb. 2:1—Acts 14:22, 1 Cor. 15:58, Col. 1:23, 2 Thess. 3:13—1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Thess. 3:8, 5:21; Tit. 1:9; Heb. 4:14—Heb. 12:1—2 Pet. 1:10-11—Phil. 3:13-16; Heb. 6:1, 10:23; 2 Tim. 4:6-8—Matt. 10:22, Rev. 2:10—2 Pet. 2:5-7, Gal. 5:22-24. Note that the precious and exceeding great promises of God are only for the Overcomers (2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, etc.). Note Phil. 2:12-13, 1 Cor. 3:9, 2 Cor. 6:1. Spiritual life and growth are achieved by God and man working together, *in God's way*. We as Christians work out our own salvation by continuing steadfastly in His Word; and at the same time God works in us and through us in the sense that His Word directs us and His Spirit sanctifies us. God's part is *sanctification*; man's part is *perseverance*.

(a) There is not a single Scripture which can be cited to support the theory that it is impossible for a Christian

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to fall away. (b) To be sure, it is improbable that one who has truly been converted will fall away, but not impossible by any means. Even a professing Christian can commit spiritual suicide. (c) The natural tendency of human beings is to follow the lines of least resistance, especially in the realm of the spiritual. This dogma encourages such an attitude: it promotes spiritual indolence. It causes men to think, "If I cannot fall away, why should I exert myself too much in cultivating the Spiritual Life? Why not let the matter rest with God?" Let us, rather, instead of waiting for God to do something for us, get busy doing something for God. Let us be up and doing for God, knowing that the night cometh when no man can work (John 9:4, Rom. 13:12).

A backwoods preacher once summarized the doctrine of perseverance in three terse sentences: (1) take hold, (2) hold on, and (3) never let go. This truly is perseverance (Matt. 10:22).

Some years ago a small town newspaper printed the story of two boys who were making their way along the street with a small wagon loaded with scraps of fuel they had picked up in the railroad yards. One boy was ahead pulling—his hat pushed back, eyes sparkling, and himself whistling cheerfully. The other was behind pushing, and whining repeatedly because he stubbed his toes or stepped on a rock or some gravel, or griping because the work was too hard. Finally the boy in front turned and rebuked him in these words: "Of course there's stones in the road! There's always stones and sticks in the road, and a feller's got to get over 'em the best way he can. It don't help for you to howl every time you strike 'em either. Shut your mouth and keep on pushin' and we'll get there." This rebuke was an eloquent sermon in itself. In any area of life, the crown of victory is reserved only for the Overcomers (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

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People fail in this world because they are not firm enough in "stick it out." The same is true, unfortunately, of many who make a profession of Christianity: they do not *will* to continue steadfastly (Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 15:58). The longer I live, the more I am convinced that most of us are *what we will to be*. "Not failure, but low aim is crime"—and sin.

7. *The Divine Problem*

Following man's temptation and fall, the problem before the Divine government was twofold: (1) *that of satisfying offended and violated Justice (Righteousness)*. The law of God, the supreme law of all being, had been trampled under foot by rebellious man. The majesty of the law had to be sustained, else God would have been humiliated in the sight of all intelligent beings, and would have been guilty of putting a premium on sin. The father who never holds his children responsible for their violations of parental authority will soon see all kinds of disorder prevailing in his home. The state (civil society) which does not hold its citizens accountable for violations of the civil law will soon find itself in a condition of hopeless anarchy. Law must be sustained, or it ceases to be law. But, in the case of our first parents, it was the Divine law which had to be sustained, not human law; hence, no offering that the earth or its inhabitants could make would suffice to accomplish this end. (2) *That of overcoming the rebellion in man's heart*. Sin had entered it and separated him from God. No doubt all intelligent creatures thought that man would go the way of the fallen angels. But not so: God loved man too much to allow him to be lost forever, as are the angels who have been reserved in chains of darkness unto the Last Judgment (2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6). (Besides, man had been seduced by the Tempter, whereas the angels who left their first estate had been moved to rebellious anarchy solely by their own interior choice.) Yet how could the rebellious creature—that is, mankind

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in general—ever be won back into reconciliation with God? (2 Cor. 5:17-21). Punishment would not do it, but would only serve to drive him farther and farther away. *There was but one way by which this twofold problem could be resolved, namely, by an offering on the part of Heaven itself, so costly that it would, at the same time, vindicate the majesty of the law violated and fully demonstrate God's immeasurable love for those created in His own image.* Hence, great as the problem was, the solution had already been determined in the councils of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As stated heretofore, the ineffable Gift of God was announced first, in *purpose*, from Adam to Abraham; secondly, in *promise*, from Abraham to Isaiah, thirdly, in *prophecy*, from Isaiah to Malachi, and in *preparation*, from Malachi to Pentecost, A.D. 30; and finally, was actualized in *fact* by the death, burial and resurrection of God's Only Begotten. The sinner who can look on Calvary and not be touched by a feeling of sorrow for his own sins (2 Cor. 7:10) must indeed have put himself beyond the possibility of Divine election. (Gen. 3:15; Gen. 12:3; Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:16; Acts 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Acts 3:18, 26:22-23, 10:43; Matt. 3:2; Luke 24:45-49; John 19:20; Acts 1:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 2:22-36). (Note Robertson Smith, RSFI, 62: "To reconcile the forgiving goodness of God with His absolute justice, is one of the highest problems of spiritual religion, which in Christianity is solved by the doctrine of the atonement.")

The Plan by which man is brought back into relationship with God, with accompanying privileges of worship, meditation, prayer, faith, hope, love, obedience, etc., is comprehended in the term *religion*. The process by which the eternal Word became flesh, that is, took upon Himself the nature of the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2:14-17, Phil. 2:5-11), is expressed by the word *incarnation* (Luke 1:35, John 1:14). The process by which Christ vindicated the majesty of the Divine law which had been violated is

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comprehended in the term *atonement* (*covering*, for the sin of the world, John 1:29; Heb. 9:23-28). The application of this Divine plan to the souls of men, by grace, through faith, includes the processes of *remission*, *justification*, *sanctification*, and *glorification*, all of which taken together, constitute *redemption* (Heb. 9:12). All these processes, moreover, attain fruition in the *Life Everlasting*, Union with God, The Beatific Vision (1 Cor. 13:12, 1 John 3:2).

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N.B.—The two quotes in the third paragraph under section 5 above are from an article by Professor Donald Nash, in *The Restoration Herald*, December, 1966. The article is captioned, "Foreordination In The Plan of God." Professor Nash has been kind enough to inform me that the first excerpt was taken from a compendium of Calvin's *Institutes* entitled "John Calvin on the Christian Faith," appearing as part of the Library of Liberal Arts, Oskar Piest, general editor, and John T. McNeill, editor of this particular work. Published by Bobbs Merrill, Indianapolis, 1957. The latter, in his Introduction, states that his text of Calvin's works is from the seventh edition of John Allen's translation published by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education. The quotation is on p. 92 of the work cited and is from ch. 21 of the *Institutes*, entitled "Eternal Election," or "God's Predestination of Some to Salvation and Others to Destruction."

The quotation from the Creed was taken from the book, *What Americans Believe and How They Worship*, by J. Paul Williams, p. 208, (in which he cited the Constitution of the Northern Presbyterian Church), published by Harper and Row, 1952. Although Williams concludes that this position is no longer held by the majority of groups historically in the stream of Calvinistic theology, Professor Nash writes that "Floyd Hamilton in his commentary on Romans published in 1958, commenting on

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these very verses [Rom. 8:28-29], seemingly holds very dogmatically to this view and could be said to be representative of others." (Nevertheless, it is my conviction that this problem needs to be reviewed thoroughly, at this point in the present text—C.C.C.)

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FOR MEDITATION AND SERMONIZING

Human Attitudes Toward Suffering

Human attitudes toward suffering are varied, such as the following especially:

1. *Denial*, that is, the outright denial of evil in any form. (1) Oriental mysticisms—Brahmanism, Buddhism, Taoism, etc.—agree in regarding life itself as illusion (*maya*). (2) Absolutists in philosophy—those who define the Absolute as the All-embracing—find themselves impaled on the horns of a dilemma of their own making, namely, (a) they must admit that the Absolute, in the sense in which they use the term, *must embrace evil as well as good*, or (b) they must resort to the view that all evil is *illusion* ("illusion of mortal mind"). As the old limerick goes:

There was once a mind healer named Deal,
Who contended that pain isn't real,
But when he sat on a pin
And it punctured his skin,
He said, "Faith, I don't like what I *fancy* I feel."

Of all the Absolutist philosophers, the best example is Spinoza, in whose philosophy ("ethics geometrically demonstrated") the totality of being is pictured as a completely closed system, God Himself being this totality, in which there is no freedom of will whatsoever. (3) But to treat evil as illusion is simply a proof of blindness to the facts of everyday experience. The idea is utterly unrealistic. Not only so, but it is illogical as well. Even

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if a person could convince himself that suffering, for example, is all illusion, that would not make it so. Obviously, an illusion must be an illusion of *something*: an illusion of nothing or nothingness is inconceivable. Moreover, how does this illusion "of mortal mind" originate? And would not the illusion itself partake of the character of evil, in the sense of imperfection or finitude? All that any thinking person needs to do in our time is to read the daily papers with their horrible accounts of murders, riots, vicious sex crimes, kidnappings, violence and lust of every kind, not to mention embezzlements, thefts, robberies, attempted frauds, etc., to realize that all this is *not* illusion: it is stark reality. (4) Closely related to the illusionist attitude is the childish, Pollyanna-like outlook, the ultra-optimistic view which is equally unrealistic. As Browning has put it,

"God's in His heaven,
All's right with the world."

Anyone knows that this is largely sentimentality. True it is that God's in His Heaven, but surely no intelligent person would question the fact that all is *not* right with the world. No—there is evil in the world: there is deceit, treachery, cruelty, suffering, violence, global warfare, etc. But all these things are in the world because *man brought them into the world*. (5) It has been rightly said that man's troubles arise from one or more of three sources: (a) from what a man does to himself, (b) from what others may do to him, and (c) from the physical framework of this temporal world which now is his habitation. From the processes of the physical world around him man is constantly subject to such catastrophic events as droughts, floods, epidemics, earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, tidal waves, hurricanes, etc. But true Christians do not allow themselves to be lured into self-destroying

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pessimism by these catastrophes; they accept them, rather, as inherently characteristic of this terrestrial sphere; hence, like the saints of old, they confess they are but pilgrims here, as by faith they journey toward "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8-16). (Matt. 6:19-20, 2 Cor. 4:16-18, Rom. 8:24-25).

(2) *Escape*. That is, the cowardly attitude of "getting away from it all," or in the lingo of gangland, "taking a run-out powder." (a) Agnosticism is one form of the escapist attitude. As Bob Ingersoll once put it: "I do not say that there is no God; I simply say that I do not know. I do not say that there is no future life; I simply say that I do not know." Of course, on the pretense of the impossibility of reaching a solution, or even a partial solution, of life's most persistent problems (what am I? whence came I? and, whither am I bound?), one, theoretically at least, disavows all responsibility for making an effort to find these solutions. It is so much easier to profess agnosticism than to defend atheism. Someone has remarked that an agnostic is a man who wants to be an atheist, but lacks the "intestinal fortitude" to openly declare his atheism. (b) Since in Oriental cults life is illusion (*maya*), "salvation" becomes a matter of escape from this illusion, escape achieved by the rigid suppression of all individuality and individual desire, by ultimate absorption into "the ocean of undifferentiated energy" (variously known as Brahma, Tao, Unity, The One, etc.). Note the vast difference here between the Eastern and Western views of life. Whereas in the East, life is regarded as illusion, in the West it is held to be man's greatest good, and its highest ends, love and service for God and for our fellow men (Matt. 22:34-40); and salvation is the perfecting of the person's interior life in preparation for ultimate Union (fellowship) with God (Col. 3:3-4, 1 John 3:2-3). Whereas in the East the destiny of the soul is Nirvana

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(absorption into Brahma, Tao, The One, etc.), in the West it is final Union with God—not *absorption* which is essentially the loss of individuality, *but fellowship* of redeemed persons with the personal God, the living and true God, actualized by the living of the Spiritual Life (2 Pet. 3:18)—known Scripturally as the Life Everlasting; or for those who reject God's gift of Redemption, final separation "from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1:9-10, Matt. 25:31-46). It is difficult to see how these completely opposite views can ever flourish in what is wishfully called in one breath "peaceable co-existence," and in the next, "cold war." Obviously this is one instance in which "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" (Kipling). (c) Many try to escape frustration or adversity by resort to alcohol ("drowning their sorrows in the flowing bowl"), or to narcotic drugs, including the latest, LSD, by means of which Satan truly fashions himself into an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Many resort to the psychiatrist. Tennessee Williams, for example, in an issue of a well-known magazine not so long ago, was reported as confessing that he suffered great periods of depression. What does he do about them? "I now rely mainly on drink and pills," he said. "My intake of liquor is about a fifth a day—half of a fifth of bourbon and half of a fifth of vodka." To combat insomnia, "I take up to four sleeping pills." The dramatist tells us that when he is at home in Manhattan, he treats himself to long periods of adjustments: "My analyst helps me, and without him I'd be sunk. I go to him five times a week." Someone has rightly said that the neurotic builds air castles, the psychotic lives in them, and the psychoanalyst collects the rent. (d) Another form of escape is known as *hedonism*, which is the undisciplined pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh. Biography abounds with the names of literateurs, and other artists, who have

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spent their lives violating every moral law "in the books," and who manifest no respect for anyone, not even for themselves. For the hedonist, sex is not to be associated with sin—it is to be regarded as a kind of "fun thing." Among devotees of this "persuasion," all kinds of sex perversion are pursued with the avidity that is not to be found even among brutes. The pitiful Oscar Wilde evidently tries to tell us that Dorian Gray, in an attempt to kill his conscience, killed himself. But was not this a fictional treatment of an autobiographical fact? Somerset Maugham's wife had to leave him finally because she could no longer tolerate his homosexuality. The novelist's nephew, Robin Maugham, quotes his uncle as saying: "I've been such a fool. My greatest mistake was this: I tried to persuade myself that I was three-quarters moral and that only a quarter of me was queer—whereas really it was the other way round." (See the nephew's *Somerset and All the Maughams*). Isadora Duncan, the noted dancer, is described as "one of the most libertine, hedonistic American expatriates of the early twentieth century." Theodore Dreiser, one of the first protagonists of what is generally called "realism" in our day, is described as "a complex, evil, deceitful, selfish, pathological liar, a woman-obsessed writer, guilty of all the sins" (see Swanberg's *Dreiser*). The inability of the mentally ill to distinguish between fantasy and reality is one of the ghosts who haunt the characters in Albee's play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and, it is well said, "their self-destructive diatribe provides the melodramatic action." The title of this play is derived, obviously, from this same (shall we call it?) tragic frailty which characterized the career of Virginia Woolf herself, who, we are told, suffered from mental illness and intermittent suicide drives, until finally she drowned herself. Albee seems to have patterned much of his literary output along this same quasi-schizophrenic line,

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of course with heavy emphasis on sex (geared to the tinkling of coins at the box office). (For an excellent statement of the escapist attitude toward life's vicissitudes, the reader is referred to a letter written by a female character, "Grace Dexter," to her sister, in a book by the late Lloyd Douglas, entitled *Green Light*). (e) Finally, the escapist attitude may take the form of outward (assumed) *nonchalance*, what is called "gay imperturbability." (This is expressed perfectly by "Peter Alden," one of the leading characters in Santayana's novel, *The Last Puritan*). This is the who-cares, what-difference-does-it-make response to life. Everything we do is futile; we may as well take the vicissitudes of life lying down; so why kick against the pricks? If trouble doesn't come in at the back door and strike one down, it is bound to come in, sooner or later, by the front door, to cause one to be carried away in a hearse. So, why not say with Popeye, "I yam what I yam," and let it go at that. Of course nonchalance is just another form of "whistling in the dark." No person can go through life always suppressing the basic problems of the meaning of it all: they obtrude themselves repeatedly despite what men may think or say or do: like Banquo's ghost they will not "down."

3. *Rebellion*. For example, the poetry of Walt Whitman, or Swinburne's "Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things." It is also clearly expressed in Henley's poem, *Invictus*: "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." One can almost hear the poet's chest-thumping as he wrote these lines; naturally, he committed suicide. The world owes me a living, shouts the human rebel, and if it does not give me a living (on easy terms, of course), I will become an anarchist, a "Communist," a beatnik, a hippie, or a kook, a hater of mankind. I will grow long hair and let my face become concealed behind a dirty beard, and I will go about the streets, barefoot, greasy and unwashed, hurling impreca-

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tions at everybody and everything. I will be the "demonstrator" of all "demonstrators," the strictest conformist of all conformists. I insist on being consumed with self-pity on meeting "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" which are hurled at me by that elusive nondescript something called "Fate" or "Destiny." I will project the blame for life's troubles on the hormones, on the Subconscious, on the Unconscious ("hidden motives"), on an unpleasant childhood, even on "the old Adam in me"; or I will even "curse God and die," as old Job was urged to do. *Orgies of self-pity terminate only in personality rot.* The history of the race is replete with the names of those rebels who have walked "in the way of Cain" (Jude 11) who himself cried out in the ignorance of despair: "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:13). "Papa Hemingway" is reported to have said to his friend, Hotchner, "There won't be another spring. If I can't exist on my own terms, then existence is impossible. That is how I've lived, and that is how I *must* live." And so, suffering with cancer, he "shuffled off this mortal coil." But who ever did, or ever will, "exist on his own terms"? Life is not built that way. (For other rebels who have walked in the way of Cain, read especially Eugene O'Neill's last play, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, autobiographical in character; or Mark Twain's bitter diatribe against religion, published posthumously; or Jean-Paul Sartre's play, *No Exit*). Truly, "Good understanding giveth favor, But the way of the transgressor is hard" (Prov. 13:15). This no doubt would be the testimony of all the rebels, from Satan or Prometheus or Mother Eve, to Jean-Paul Sartre of our own time.

4. *Pessimism, skepticism, positivism, etc.* Skepticism and pessimism usually go together: the notion that the cosmos is meaningless is almost certain to breed the corollary view that human life is simply an exercise in futility. Positivism

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is but a more "sophisticated" form of skepticism: it is the view that knowledge is to be obtained only from "observable and measurable facts"; negatively, it is the denial of the validity of faith. Comte, the founder of Positivism (as a system), who wanted to be remembered as the originator of what he called "the religion of humanity," was in and out of mental institutions at various times. Clarence Darrow was reported as making the statement that "life is not worth living": it is to be noted, however, that he lived out his own life to its natural end. The arch-pessimist (and woman-hater) in the history of philosophy was Arthur Schopenhauer. For him, the world of events (phenomena) was objectified will. This universal will, he affirmed, is simply a blind striving by all living things to keep themselves in existence, but to no purpose whatever except "to keep on keeping on." (Incidentally, Schopenhauer was repudiated by his mother in his childhood: the incident serves to illustrate the fact that pessimism is usually the by-product of some emotional trauma). This notion that the world is meaningless, that life is futility, that we are here just because we are here, has persisted throughout all human history, becoming especially pronounced in periods of declining morality and morale. It finds expression in the numerous representations of human life as but a kind of stage play, a good show, a *Vanity Fair*; as schoed and re-echoed in the ancient book of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity." (However, it should be noted that the Preacher's deep-seated faith asserted itself in a later passage: see Eccl. 1:2, and 12:7). (Cf. Christian's experience in the town of *Vanity Fair* on his pilgrimage to the Celestial City, in Bunyan's great allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*; also the title of Thackeray's greatest novel, *Vanity Fair*). Shakespeare caused the doomed Macbeth to soliloquize in these well-known words:

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"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

(Of course, this does not mean necessarily that the foregoing verses expressed Shakespeare's attitude toward life. As a matter of fact, in his various plays he set forth, always in exquisite language, practically all the views of life that men have ever held or ever could hold). James Thomson, a third-rate poet of the nineteenth century, echoed the credo of this Cult of Fertility in these verses:

"The world rolls round for ever like a mill;
It grinds out death and life and good and ill;
It has no purpose, heart or mind or will . . ."
(*The City of Dreadful Night*)

And about a century ago, Matthew Arnold wrote:

"Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die."
(From "Rugby Chapel")

Was it not Voltaire who dubbed the Earth "the lunatic asylum of the universe"?

This morbid notion of the meaninglessness of life and the very futility of living, has dominated both fiction and drama for the past half-century, and no doubt accounts

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for the fact that contemporary literature, on the whole, has very little humor in it. Both writers and their writings are ponderously earthy, so deadly serious, so intellectually dense, that there is no climate in which the Comic Spirit can find a habitation. This Cult of Futility originated with Ibsen in the drama, and with Thomas Hardy in the novel. It is either explicit or implicit in the plays of O'Neill, Arthur Miller, Albee, Tennessee Williams, and other lesser lights, the playwrights who have dominated Broadway in recent decades. (Williams has done about as good a job of out-Freuding Freud as Euripides did twenty-four hundred years ago). Saturated with the same motif are the novels of Dreiser, Maugham, Lewis, Steinbeck, Faulkner, Hemingway, Caldwell, Farrell, James Jones, Salinger, Mailer and others of like outlook: these are the authors who have produced most of the fiction with which the literary markets of the world have been deluged in our day. (It will be recalled that Cronshaw's carpet, in Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, is offered as an explicit analogy of the purposelessness of life). I suppose, however, that the last word in pessimism has been spoken by the self-proclaimed atheistic existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, in his tragic confession that for him life is only a vacuum with "no exit" signs. What a terrible world this would be if this view were to prevail universally!

To summarize: The literary lights of the first half of our century are certainly not to be distinguished for even moderately high moral standards. Their works reek with obscenity, pornography, homosexuality, sheer human depravity of every kind and description. We are reminded here of the comment attributed to an English professor in one of our universities that most contemporary literature, including the novel as well as the drama, is either neurotic, erotic, or tommyrotic. One is reminded also of the title of an essay by Lin Yutang, published in *Saturday Review* not so long ago, "Do American Writers Shun Happiness?"

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5. The Christian accepts the vicissitudes of life as *disciplinary*. As a matter of fact, the difference between the *nominal* Christian and the *true* Christian is brought to light at this point: to the nominal Christian, suffering is "a savor from death unto death"; to the true Christian it is "a savor from life unto life" (2 Cor. 2:16). Like the preaching of the Gospel, some persons are hardened by it, others are moved to the godly sorrow that leads them to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). I am reminded of the mother, a professed church member, who lost her daughter. The daughter was a brilliant girl and an accomplished pianist. The mother, in a spirit of rebellion amounting to sheer petulance, closed the daughter's piano, locked it, and never allowed it to be heard in that home from the day of her daughter's death. This woman acted like a spoiled child: she should have had a spanking. This, however, in all likelihood would be the nominal Christian's reaction to suffering: he would, as Job was importuned by his wife to do, renounce God and die; that is, *really* die, by committing spiritual suicide. Not so the true Christian. He knows that Scripture does not even intimate that the saints shall be spared the adversities of this world simply by virtue of their having espoused the Spiritual Life; hence he does not pray to be relieved of these adversities; rather, he prays for the strength to bear them when they come. He understands that the rains of God fall on the just and the unjust alike, that the wheat and the tares must grow together until the harvest (Matt. 5:45, 13: 24-30). He remembers always those other meaningful words of Jesus: "In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). He understands that if it was necessary for the Author of his salvation to be made perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10), he too must accept the disciplinary service of suffering as a necessary means to his attainment of ultimate holiness (2 Cor. 4:16-18, Heb. 12:1-13). He

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utilizes adversity to this very end, and so, in the finality of this temporal life, he achieves the victory of faith that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4, 2 Tim. 4:6-8). Let all Christians, therefore, keep in mind these verses by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, entitled "Gethsemane":

"Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
Bridged over by our broken dreams;
Behind the misty cap of years,
Behind the great salt fount of tears,
The garden lies. Strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way.
All paths that have been, or shall be,
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

"All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate,
Must kneel alone in the darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
'Not mine, but Thine!'—who only pray,
'Let this cup pass!'—and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane."

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REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART FOURTEEN

1. List the dogmas included in theological jargon about the Fall.
2. Distinguish between a doctrine and a dogma.
3. State the dogma of "original sin."
4. State the Bible definition of sin, and state where it is found.
5. In what Scripture do we find the doctrine of the *consequences* of sin? What is the substance of this doctrine?
6. In what Scripture do we find the doctrine of the *guilt* of sin? State the substance of this doctrine.

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7. Does the Bible teach anywhere the notion of *inherited guilt*?
8. Explain what is meant by the statement that sin is personal.
9. Give the substance of Dorothy L. Sayers' discussion of moral law, emphasizing the distinction between moral law and moral code.
10. Do consequences ever imply inherited guilt?
11. Explain what Christ's Atoning Sacrifice accomplished *unconditionally*, and for whom? And what it accomplished *conditionally*, and for whom?
12. Summarize Dr. Brents' analysis of "inherited weakness" in man.
13. Summarize Campbell's statements on human depravity.
14. What relations do you see between immaturity, irrationality, and depravity?
15. State Aristotle's analysis of man.
16. What has always been man's predominant sin?
17. Is there any such thing intimated in Scripture as sin or salvation by proxy or en masse?
18. State the theological dogma of "infant damnation."
19. How did so-called "infant baptism" originate?
20. Just what is *de facto* infant baptism?
21. Show why these doctrines and practices are unscriptural.
22. State the Scriptures usually cited to support the dogma of "original sin," and point out the fallacies in these interpretations.
23. Explain why guilt can be the result only of a personal and voluntary act.
24. Is "congenital depravity" in any sense the same as inherited guilt?
25. Explain the Apostle's teaching in the fifth chapter of Romans, and in 1 Cor. 15:20-23, relative to the fall of Adam and the corresponding recovery in Christ.

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26. How is the Kingdom of Christ evidently more inclusive than the Church of Christ?
27. In what way specifically is sin necessarily incurred?
28. Explain the Calvinistic dogma of "total depravity."
29. According to Scripture, what creatures only are totally depraved?
30. List and explain the Scriptures which refute the dogma of the total depravity of man.
31. What bearing has the Parable of the Soils on this problem?
32. Explain the dogma of "miraculous conversion."
33. Explain Ephesians 2:8.
34. Explain the dogma of "unconditional election and reprobation."
35. What is declared in Scripture to be the power of God unto salvation to all who believe?
36. How, according to Scripture, are persons made believers?
37. In view of the fact that God has sent us the letter, so to speak, to tell us what to do to be saved, is it reasonable to expect him to follow up with a telegram to convince us that He meant what He has said in the letter?
38. Give examples to show how Divine election is election to *responsibilities*.
39. Distinguish the etymology of the word "foreordain" from that of the word "predestine" or "predestinate."
40. Explain Rom. 9:12-13, Rom. 9:17-18, Rom. 9:20-24, Acts 13:48, Rom. 8:28-30, in relation to the dogma of "unconditional election and reprobation."
41. Explain the Apostle's teaching in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans with reference to the Scripture doctrine of Divine election.
42. Explain what is meant by the statement that foreordination and election have reference to the plan and not to the man, to the class and not to the in-

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dividual. What *Plan* is indicated here? What class is indicated?

43. On what ground do we today adjudge the Divine election of Jacob over Esau to have been the right choice?
44. Discuss thoroughly the doctrine of predestination in relation to Judas' betrayal of Jesus.
45. State Maritain's explanation of this problem.
46. Is it necessarily true that Divine omniscience includes Divine foreknowledge of all events both cosmic and personal? Explain your answer.
47. If man is predestined to be free, what does Divine foreknowledge include.
48. Is it necessarily true that Divine foreknowledge presupposes Divine foreordination? Explain your answer.
49. Give Augustine's explanation of the relation of Divine foreordination to human freedom.
50. How did Thomas Aquinas deal with this problem?
51. What was the explanation suggested by William James?
52. State the views of Kant and of John Locke on the question of human freedom of will.
53. How does Max Planck, the physicist, deal with this problem?
54. What does Freud have to say about it?
55. How do the Existentialists deal with it?
56. Give Maritain's resolution of the problem in relation to the corollary problem of *time*.
57. Show how conversion is presented in Scripture as a *psychological* process rather than a *mystical* process.
58. What is the dogma of "final perseverance"?
59. List the Scriptures usually cited to support this dogma, and point out the interpretative fallacy in each case.
60. Cite the important Scripture passages which assert, or at least intimate, the possibility of falling away.

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61. Cite the Scriptures which either affirm or intimate that spiritual life and growth are contingent on steadfast discipleship.
62. Explain: "The grace of God is indispensable, but is not irresistible."
63. What was the twofold problem before the Divine government in respect to man's temptation and fall?
64. Show how the Vicarious Atonement provided by the Son of God was designed to resolve this problem.
65. Explain what is meant by remission, justification, sanctification, glorification, and redemption.
66. Explain what is meant by the Beatific Vision.
67. State and discuss some of the more common human attitudes toward physical evil in its various forms.
68. What is the over-all motif which seems to permeate the literature of our day and time? Give examples.
69. Explain what is meant by the Cult of Futility.
70. What is the attitude of the true Christian toward the fact of physical evil in its various forms?