

OCCUPY!

Vol. II, No. 9

September 1980

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THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD; THE SALT OF THE EARTH

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"Ye are the light of the world. Ye are the salt of the earth." This is the description of men whose views and conduct are the result of the inspiration of Jesus Christ. All time attests its truth. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people," and must, if persisted in, pave the way to their final destruction. This divine maxim has been exemplified in all the old seats of human population, and is borne onward in the spirit of prophetic admonition from age to age. The voice of history is lifted in repeated accents of solemn warning, and rolls in thunderblasts its own great lesson upon the ear of nations.

But while, without doubt, there has been, and is now, the presence of an evangelical power in this republic, that has left its impress and its influence upon our institutions and our society, it cannot and ought not to be denied that the nation as it stands today is far below that moral and religious condition which constitutes the essential safety, prosperity, and honor of any people. It is sadly true that a very large proportion of the population are strangers to the genuine spirit of the Christian religion, and almost, if not altogether, unacquainted even with the history of its facts and the extent of its influence in the land of our inheritance. The standing complaint of human degeneracy remains against us. Causes have been operating—and of late years with fearful rapidity and strength—to produce a state of moral obliquity and practical atheism among us, appalling in magnitude and of alarming consequence.

It has become of late quite customary to sneer at the puritanism of our fathers, and to speak with contempt of the severity of their manners and the bigotry of their faith. This impious treatment; by the present corruptors of society, of a generation of men whose lofty principles and illustrious virtues they seem utterly unable to comprehend, is well adapted not only to arouse the deepset indignation, but also to excite the most lively concern.

Sources of Apostasy

There are two quarters from which these evil influences chiefly proceed. A class of men without conscience, and reckless of all moral restraint, have gained ascendancy in public favor, and assume from their prominent position to mould and direct the public sentiment of the nation. Their general influence upon the public morals has been like the wind of the desert-poisonous, withering, and destructive. Another and very large class of men moving in the lower walks of life form a significant element of our American population, whose hard and vicious instincts, gratified without compunction and paraded everywhere in the most offensive manner, would seem to render them well nigh incapable of reformation. Apparently insensible to all the nobler sentiments of

public morality and virtue, and ever ready to perform their congenial part in the general demoralization, they demand that all the higher classes shall pander to their depraved appetites, as the price of their patronage and support. In this reciprocal play of the baser passions the common principles of morality are daily sacrificed, and the strong and the weak join hands in carrying down the nation to the very verge of ruin. No man can observe the conditions of society in our country, and the obvious impulses of human conduct, without feeling that the perils against which the fathers warned us, and which have been so faithfully and constantly pointed out by the ministers of religion, have, notwithstanding, increased at a fearful rate, without seeing that the most alarming departures from the standard of individual rectitude and social integrity have occurred among us within the century that is past.

And, while every period has exhibited the signs of public degeneracy, none in our history presents more fearful proofs of the impiety and obduracy of great masses of the people. We have abandoned, in great measure, the faith and practice of our ancestors, in putting aside from their lawful supremacy the Christian ordinances and doctrines. The natural result is, that we have corrupted our ways in all the circles of society and in all the pursuits of life. We have become as a field rank with the growth of all the vices and heaped with the pollution of mighty crimes. The rigid training of former times through family government, discipline, and instruction has been greatly relaxed, if not in many cases wholly neglected. Indeed, there are multitudes of parents in the land who from physical and moral causes are totally unfit to have the care of the children to whom they have given birth: so that a generation of human beings is growing up in one of the most favored regions of the globe, whose preparation for the responsibilities of their age and mission has been sadly at fault, and whose precocity in levity, mischief, and insubordination already equals the vitiating examples that are set before them. The education of the nation is going forward with rapid strides, but it is in a lamentable degree under the auspices of immorality and irreligion, alike in the high and the low places of the community. The unblushing venality and brazen wickedness of a large portion of the conductors of the public press and of the public men of the country have strongly tended to demoralize the nation, to undermine the foundations and destroy the influence of Christian discipline, and to turn the mind and heart of many to infidelity and licentiousness.

The same baleful spirit has moved upon the fountains of human learning and science, and so secularized the philosophy of the times as to have set the high faculty of human reason at variance with the sacred majesty of religion, and to have plunged thousands

upon thousands of our young men into a sea of splendid sophistry and subtlety and all the ruinous speculation of a proud but vain imagination. Meanwhile, from the hearts of multitudes the dignity of honest labor and the dictates of a sober and frugal economy have died out, on the one hand increasing pauperism and crime and lending to misfortune the aggravation of human improvidence, and on the other fostering habits of false show, and thus increasing the temptation to deception, fraud, speculation, and all the dishonesties of the most pampered extravagance and excess. Moreover, the wanton neglect or abuse of our providential blessings, and the unconscious apostasy from every sentiment of purity and virtue, have served greatly to defile and degrade the mind of a large portion of the community, and fill the centers of population with a low and vulgar herd, who throng the open temples of obscenity and infamy. Thus the materials are prepared for human guilt and wretchedness, whose catalogue of crimes and woes exhaust the power of language to express them.

Beyond all this, political controversy and partisan strife for the reins and spoils of power, conducted without principle, and reeking with abuse, have taken so fierce a form as often to have driven the best men from the arena and left the worst upon the field. The selfish and profligate stand forward to control the nominations and elections to office, and afterwards gamble with its duties and obligations without shame and without remorse . . . Thus, while we claim to be a free government, we have cherished institutions in our midst which are a mockery of the name of liberty and have become our standing shame and curse in the sight of the whole world. Involved in a criminality so grave, we have not failed to exhibit its usual concomitants—arrogance and self-conceit. Our vast facilities of production, trade, and transportation have filled us with high notions of our superiority, and at the same time degraded us to dispositions of covetousness and cruelty . . . Our unparalleled liberty has degenerated into dissolute indulgence; we have been so long without the burdens of government as to have almost forgotten the price of our birthright and to have cast away the only safeguards of its continuance: we have proved ourselves unworthy of our inheritance, in our contempt of that virtue which alone affords protection to society, in our blind disregard of the Christian foundations on which alone the great interests of a nation permanently rest. Thus, at last, a majority of the people have grown wholly unmindful of the authority and prerogative of God, and of the duties we owe to him and to his creatures. The true life and soul of Christianity has been to a great degree emasculated, and the very titles of Jehovah and the tokens of his awful majesty in the earth have become to multitudes among us as idle and unmeaning as the Grecian myths, used, indeed, to furbish a paragraph with classic elegance or round a period with sonorous emphasis, but completely divested of those great, grand, solemn, and glorious thoughts which never can dwell with vulgarity, profanation, and irreverence.

Of what avail, then, is it for the enemies of a spiritual religion to attempt to delude us with the vain pretense that the true progress of mankind implies the rejection of the bible as the divinely inspired word of God, and the denial of its authority in the affairs of men, and that in the onward march of civilization the dogmas of the Christian Church have become obsolete—that the human mind has outgrown its restrictions, and can no longer be controlled by its discipline or instructed by its counsels? And of what avail is it, by mocking at the sober habits and simple virtues of a purer age, to prepare society for the frightful scenes of its own dissolution? Here still are the great and solemn realities of life, here are the giant evils with which men have to grapple, and which, in 'despite of all the levities and impieties of an epicurean philosophy, cannot be treated as idle dreams, the vagrant fancies of a distempered mind. And in the effort to ignore both the mischiefs and the remedy of our subverted moral condition by the scoffing infidelity and the specious skepticism of our times, the nation with all its treasure has already been brought to the verge of destruction.

Every intelligent man knows it; every honest man confesses it. And yet the signals of evil omen are not removed. The spirit that humbles a nation before the God of heaven and supplies the conditions of the Divine interposition for our salvation has been strangely wanting to the people; while men are everywhere found among us who leave no means unused to bring the religion of our fathers into contempt, and to cut the nation loose from all her moorings in the ancient faith of martyrs and apostles. The men that do this, whether in the refuse that reeks from the daily press, or in the more pretentious eloquence of the forum, or in the more elaborate and finished chapters of the periodical, or in the more purulent and high-wrought pages of fiction that curse and corrupt the literature of the day, are the deadly enemies of the human soul not only in its relations to the present life, but also in its aspirations for the life to come. They are likewise the malignant and felonious torch-bearers of infidelity, setting the temple of our American greatness on fire, giving our heritage to the flames, and lighting a mighty people into the abyss of self-destruction.

Light and Salt

Whoever, therefore, contributes his labor to raise a barrier against so vast and deplorable a calamity to ourselves and the world, whoever lifts his voice like a trumpet in admonition and warning of the danger, and especially whoever can succeed in recalling the mind of the nation to the Christian annals of the republic, in bringing back to the freshly opened fountains of the early inspiration the weary and exhausted body of the people, that they may once more be refreshed and strengthened, once more commune with the great principles, sentiments, achievements, and characters of former times, and be imbued with a sense of the value and importance of their recognition and imitation, will have rendered a noble service, and may justly be regarded as a public benefactor. For the facts of our past history, inspired by the faith of the Christian religion, authenticated and supported as they are by unquestionable proofs, comprise a body of evidence which no well-regulated mind can resist as to the divinity of the Christian religion itself and the reality of a superintending Providence over all the affairs of men. At the same time, they serve to acquaint us with the very purest and loftiest sentiments of the most illustrious men of America in every generation, and with an unbroken chain of testimony in regard to the influence of Christianity upon our national destiny from the beginning until now.

Now, if, under such conditions, Christianity should resume her sway and bring the masses of the nation back to the pure and simple virtues and to the stern and heroic spirit which marked the age of our Revolutionary fathers, it will prove to be a moral miracle equal to her first triumphs in apostolic days. Yet to this object all good men should devote their energies and their prayers. In the firm conviction that virtue must finally be supreme, and that a wise and beneficent Providence has designed this continent to be the theatre of the yet more glorious conquests of Christianity, it is the mission and the duty of all friends of evangelical truth to combine in the attempt to hold and appropriate this country, with its resources, monuments, and institutions, for an empire devoted to the spread of God's kingdom in the earth, and the universal reign of Jesus Christ.

And it is high time that we had begun to see our duty and to feel our obligation. God's great "judgments are already in the land:" shall not its inhabitants begin "to learn righteousness"? The associated moral and spiritual power of a Christian people ought now to be making itself felt in every part of the land and in all that concerns the existence and welfare of the country. It is the settled conviction of many of the most intelligent and purest minds that the time has come when the Christian people of America should take into their own hands the work of reclaiming the government and wielding its power more decisively for the glory of God and the

highest good of human nature, and that for this purpose the true and the good should sternly separate themselves from all connection with the openly vicious and corrupt, and from all countenance and support of those whose life and example will not bear the scrutiny of common decency and morality. And if in a representative government like ours there must be political divisions, and a conflict of the suffrages of the people, let there be a Christian party—a party that will not sustain by their sympathy or their votes men who are known to be in sentiment and life, by precept and example, unchristian and untrue to the great principles of the Christian faith; for the highest treason of which mankind are capable is treason against the authority and law of the Divine government itself; and the most deadly enemies to human government are they who, with a great pretense of loyalty, are nevertheless daily insulting the majesty of Him who has power to destroy nations at his will.

The fountain of political turbulence and corruption undoubtedly lies in the primary assemblies of the people, as conducted upon the principles of party caucus, which for a long period has amounted to little else than a system of chicanery and venality too humiliating to describe. This kind of imposition upon the free action of American citizenship has been carried to such an extent as well nigh to neutralize the title of suffrage itself, and make of the boasted ballot-box a mockery of American privilege. For the caucus, then, let the Church be substituted—not anyone sect or denomination of Christians, but the whole Church catholic—not with a view to exciting mutual jealousies and creating hostile prejudices, but standing on the platform of Christian character supposed to be exemplified in the sincere adherents of every Christian Church. Let the weight of every vote tell what is the conviction, the intelligent, sober and matured judgment, of the Christian mind of this nation as to the value to our country of personal integrity and upright manhood. If it were well established that such would be the policy of the truly Christian portion of the people in all the Christian churches of the country, the very fact would carry with it a moral influence which even the most brazen and unscrupulous politician could not altogether despise or resist. Christian duty requires us also to set our faces as a flint against the current of social and moral degradation which flows in the popular fashions, tastes, customs, and amusements of the day—in the factitious and dishonest principles of business life—in the whole circle of immoral and dangerous practices and pursuits which ensnare the multitude and draw them to ruin. We must be more diligent and faithful in the early years of childhood. Christian parents must resume the discipline and religious training over their

sons and daughters which prevailed in the earlier and purer days of the republic. And all the departments of government must be filled with men who will administer their power for the suppression of whatever is deleterious in its influence, and for the encouragement of whatever is of a beneficent and elevating tendency. The Church of Christ must purge itself of worthless members, who now, through the laxity of discipline, continue a scandal and a reproach, cumbering its progress and dragging down its sacred name into the dust. All the educational and eleemosynary institutions and organizations of the times should be pervaded by the ruling spirit of the Christian faith, and quickened and animated by the living principle of evangelical purity and power. In the liberal professions and in all the stations of political prominence from which decidedly Christian men have been pushed aside, partly through their own timidity and partly by the audacity of bold and scheming demagogues, there must be made an earnest and persevering effort to establish the tried and faithful representatives of a higher morality and a more stainless character.

In all these respects the evils of our delinquency have been multiplying from year to year. Christian men have been unwilling or afraid to unite upon the distinctive principles of a common Christianity, and have shrunk from the sacrifice, scarcely ready to suffer whatever of temporary defeat, expense, or reproach it might cost, and tamely submitting to be overruled by the boldness, the assiduity and energy of the evil-minded who assume to control and dictate the public policy and manners of the nation. In this way we have been swiftly sinking into the grossest perversions of ethical truth and the obligations of duty. We have confounded almost every distinction in morals; “we have put good for evil, and evil for good; we have called bittersweet, and darkness light.”

This is the spectacle which America presents to the world at the present moment. And were it not relieved by some brighter hues of Christian hope, by the spirit of an earnest and patriotic ardor, by the stupendous and heroic sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of men and women who freely lay all they possess on the altar of their country, and finally, by the consciousness of the rectitude of our cause, our firm reliance on providential direction, and the assurance of the glorious purposes of God to be accomplished through this dreary and dreadful passage of the nation's history, it would be indeed the darkest and the saddest chapter yet recorded in the book of time.

Editor's Note These profoundly stirring words, from his "Introduction" to *Civil*

were penned in 1863.

THE WAR AND THE CHURCH

Archie

It is obvious that we live, in the words of the old Chinese curse, in interesting times. Of course, living in a universe of warfare between the armies of Christ and those of Satan, the Christian always lives in interesting times. But sometimes are more interesting than others, and the present crisis of our civilization ensures and accents our interest in the political and economic events of our times.

The Battle of the '80s

Since God's word and law speak to all areas of life authoritatively, all areas of governmental policy are important to Christians, for God requires us to occupy, to have dominion for Him, under His word and law, in all areas of life (Luke 19:13; Gen. 1:28, Matt. 25: 14-30). The destructive and threatening effects of decades of humanistic economics and foreign and military policy are by now becoming frighteningly evident to many Americans these

are already key issues of the '80s. Of least interest to the general public, even the "conservative public, is a many-faceted battle which will inevitably occupy many Christians in the decade ahead, a battle which strikes right to the heart of the economic, military and foreign policy battles of the past and future. This battle is just emerging into the Christian consciousness, but it is foundational to battles in the other areas, for it is the functional heart of the continuing battle between Christ and Satan. It is the battle for the Church.

As Ethelbert Stauffer's great work, *Christ and the Caesars* (Philadelphia The Westminster Press, [1952] 1955), has shown, the fundamental issue in this enduring battle is both enduring and theological: Who is Lord? Christ, or Caesar? To the pagan mind, Caesar, the state, as the highest locus of power (God being excluded), must be lord. It follows that the word and law of the state, as the locus of authority and power, must be over all areas of man's

activity Whether the state is ruled by one, a few, or many is fundamentally irrelevant: the assumption is that the great god government must have final authority over all individuals and Institutions in society. Since Plato and the Greeks in ancient times, pagan thinkers and rulers have sought control over the famous pleas of Antigone have been heeded only by isolated intellectuals. Since Machiavelli in early modern times, modern pagans have sought to revive the claims of Caesars to rule over not only religion in general, but especially the Church. The goal is control and manipulation of the Church by the state as a means of social, economic, political, ideological and ultimately religious control.

With the ugly flowering of modern Humanism, this pagan design has become more openly stated. With the accession of Humanists to power it has been enacted, often by way of blood and terror.

In America, the triumph of Humanism has been slower than in Europe and, thanks to the attenuating but lingering influence of Christian assumptions and teachings on politics, milder. But Humanism in America has come into its own, governmentally, in proportion as Christians have retreated from culture and politics to the church, the family and the eschatological rooftop, denying the Lord's Dominion Charter (Gen. 1 :28; Luke 19:13) and waiting for the Tribulation or the Rapture.

Facing minimal opposition, the Humanists have, true to their perverse form of dominion-urge, sought to occupy the Church for the great god Man. Through welfarism they have robbed the many and corrupted their morals. Through statist education they have indoctrinated our youth with Humanist dogmas and prepared them for the rise of the savior-state which now threatens to destroy the Church. Through philosophy and vain deceit they have perverted the scope and functioning of our constitutional government. Through welfarism, easy divorce laws, statist education, economic regulations, taxation, inflation, abortion and "planned parenthood" they have attacked the family, a second God-ordained institution. Through the ERA, "Women's Liberation", "Gay Liberation" and the "International Year of the Child" they have further undermined the family. Now they seek to redefine and reshape it along pagan pluralistic lines, via the White House Conference on Families.

The Church is the remaining biblical institution. The Humanists have not forgotten it, for it is the very heart of the Christian system of instruction and discipline. It has not been attacked sooner because the other two-thirds of the biblical-institutional system had to be undermined first. But now that the Humanists are moving they are attacking swiftly, on at least three fronts.

The most obvious movement has been against Christian schools, at all levels. From the first, licensing and accreditation have been a fundamental ploy, and a false one. Of late, as in the infamous IRS activities of the last few years, the phony issue of racial and minority group composition has been utilized. Now the Humanists are making tactical use of zoning regulations and building codes to prevent churches from establishing Christian schools. And, of course, there is the perversely "creative" use of "discrimination on the basis of creed:" refuse to hire a homosexual to teach in your Christian school and you are guilty of this grievous "sin" before the state. These actions are being taken by state and local governments, as well as our pseudo-saviors in Washington. Humanists are closer than you think.

They are also moving against various traditional and biblical Church ministries. The claim of Texas to have authority to license

Lester Roloff's runaway children's home is an important example. The issue here is the same as that in the case of Christian schools. Does the state have the right to license the Church and its ministries? On the assumption that it does, California—an important testing ground for humanistic programs and precedents—is now moving to license pastors to counsel members of their own congregations. On the same assumption, reports Dr. David Giss of the Christian Law Association, two states are now claiming the right to license Sunday School teachers! What is the root of this Humanistic assumption? the belief that Caesar, not Christ is Lord.

The humanistic assault on church property and that on church policy are further related applications of this ungodly doctrine. The California government is now claiming the right to tax church property. Your Sunday School building. Your sanctuary. More accurately, God's buildings, in which you meet and worship. And the infamous decision of the Supreme Court in the "Worldwide Church of God" case is even more frightening. Precedent has now been established for governments to take control of the property and government of a church: to seize control of the church's resources, give them to a minority of the congregation, even though they are not members in good standing, oust the church's pastor and replace them with new teaching leaders chosen by the state.

The fundamental issue underlying all of this political controversy is theological: Who is Lord? Christ, or Caesar, Christ, or the State? For the Bible-believing Christian, the answer is obvious, and so is the call to action.

These manifestations of the worship of the state, of the desire for total power and control, and of the hostility of Humanists to Christianity are not signs of the coming of the Tribulation, nor of the Rapture. Rather, they are evidences of the audacity of the Humanists and the apathy or ignorance of the Christians.

There are many signs of possibilities for victory in the battle for the Church by the armies of Christ. The theological and intellectual foundations have been laid in the works of a number of Christian scholars, philosophically, politically, economically, educationally, and doctrinally. Theologically conservative denominations are growing. The Christian Law Association is growing, and a Christian organization similar to the ACLU in function is being formed. Conservatism is growing in popularity among the populace, and with it a dedication to reversal of the direction of our governments growth and policies. Best yet, the Christian school movement is burgeoning beyond the ability of the statist to control, and is serving as a vehicle for involvement of Christian parents in the defense of their schools and their (God's) children. Best of all, the Christian school movement is acting as a catalyst to get Christians to re-think all things in terms of the only infallible standard of faith and practice: Holy Scripture.

We live in a time of crisis, but a time of crisis is also a time of opportunity. The peril is dire, but we have a God who answers prayer, a Holy Spirit who rules and overrules in the hearts and affairs of men and nations. And we have a Christ who gives us His law as the standard for man's actions (Matt.5:17-19), who requires us to observe and teach all things that he has commanded us to do (Matt. 28: 19-20), who assures us that our labors for the Lord will not be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58), and who proclaims that He will put down all rule, all authority and all power, ruling until he has put all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15:24-28). The Church and the victory are the Lord's; the opportunity and the duty are ours.

Occupy is published every month by the Institute for Christian Economics, a non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization. It is mailed free of charge to those who ask to be put on the mailing list. Subscriptions: P.O. Box 25, Sterling, VA 22170. Donations are fully tax deductible; checks should be made out to Institute for Christian Economics.