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## The Appropriateness of Clerical Garb

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Whenever the subject of clerical garb is addressed, the objection most frequently raised questions whether or not the New Testament enjoins the use of special dress for elders in the church. I believe that, in order to respond to such a statement, it is essential to understand that the New Testament alone does not determine our practice, but the whole Bible when taken within the context of the New Covenant. Moreover, I hold that there is enough confirming evidence in the Scriptures to call for the Church of Jesus Christ to once again adopt clerical garb for its ordained elders.

**Germaine** to this whole matter is the crucial distinction existing between something done out of necessity and something done for the well-being of the Church. By advocating clerical dress, I am not advocating its **impositional** use; clerical attire is intended to promote the continued well-being of the Church, but it is not necessary for the continued existence of the Church. There is an **incontrovert-**

ible difference between doing something that enhances the life of the Church, such as clerical dress, and something that is essential to it, such as the administration of the Sacraments.

Three characteristics generally distinguish any true Church: the proclamation of the Word of God, the administration of the Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and the presence of church government. Remove any one and the Church crumbles. Beyond these minimal requirements, the adoption of certain godly practices makes her more visible to the world, thereby manifesting the earthly Lordship openly before that world, the most common example being the local Church building.

The Church should always desire increased visibility, because as she becomes more prominent, she also assumes a position as a more consistent witness to the worldwide scope of Christ's redemptive conquests. From the Bible, Christians know that when the Lord Jesus Christ completed his work of reconciliation and ascended to the right hand of God the Father, the Lord God, as Owner, irrevocably reclaimed his property. Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, restored his **people** to their rightful position as subduers of the earth, in order for them to carry out the Great Commission and the cultural mandate, which together reestablished the world under the care of restored (redeemed) man. By acquiring property and placing buildings upon such property, the Church of God visibly demonstrates the restoration of the true order, with Jesus as the royal king and his people as the appointed trustees.

The manifestation of Christ's ownership of the world is not only exemplified in the Church's possession of land, but also by individuals, families, associations, and other forms of government who acknowledge Christ as King of Kings.

Owning property and church buildings is not necessary for a Church's existence; nevertheless, it is advantageous and desirable. I believe that this observation applies equally to the issue of clerical

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garb: it increases the visibility of the Church's officers in the same desirable way.

More important, however, is how the Scriptures treat this issue of clerical dress. I believe that not only is such attire discussed in the Bible, but that the Scriptures assume elders to be clothed in distinctive vestments.

Let me defend that assertion by first quoting Hebrews 9:23: "Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but *the heavenly things themselves with hefter sacrifices than these*" (NKJV, emphasis mine). This verse, as well as many others in Hebrews concerning the **Levitical** system of worship, shows that **earthly worship** must be patterned after the actual worship of God in **heaven**. The various types of sacrifices – burnt, sin, grain, and peace "**offerings**" – represent various aspects of the great archetypal offering performed by Christ once and for all. Christians, though, must **still** provide sacrificial offerings, only now through themselves (the burnt offering), confession of sin (the sin offering), and tithes and freewill gifts (the grain and heave offering). In addition, Christians are to partake of the communion or covenant-peace meal (the peace offering). Consequently, it can be seen that only the application has changed; the worship pattern **remains** intact.

Can Christians then legitimately assert that ecclesiastical vestments worn by the **Levitical** priest should also be worn by elders in the New Covenant ministry, based on the **covenantal** principle of worship just outlined? I think so, and no objection which cites a "unique" priesthood of **all** believers in the New Covenant can dismantle the argument. The Bible shows a priesthood of all believers in the Old Covenant, consequently upholding the **principle** of **covenantal** worship. Compare Exodus 19:6 with I Peter 2:9. The former passage states unequivocally that the children of Israel, and not just the **Levites**, were **a** kingdom of priests. This same point is repeated in the I Peter passage.

It is important to note that, within both the Old and New Covenants, there are special and general priests. The Levites were special priests within the general priesthood of believers, while the elders (in the New Covenant) are special priests within the general priesthood of believers. The same leadership positions exist in both testaments.

Implied throughout this whole discussion is the justifiable assumption that Christians are to do on earth that which has been revealed in heaven (Matthew 6:10, Luke 11:2). The Lord God gave the Church a rich supply of commandments regarding how Christians are to live their lives, in special worship on the Lord's Day and in their vocations on the remaining six days (in fulfillment of the cultural mandate). In addition, the Lord provided distinctive apparel for the clergy, just as the **Levitical** priesthood distinguished themselves from the other children of Israel: clothing that was worn through-

out the course of the week, not just during worship services (I Samuel 22:18).

The book of Revelation provides essential information concerning life in heaven before the throne of God. Compare Revelation 4:4 with Revelation 6:11: Here is a comparison between what dress the elders of God wear and what clothing the rest of the saints wear. The elders are described as wearing crowns of gold and adorned in white robes, while the saints are depicted as wearing only the white robes. Here, as in the case of the Levites, clothing symbolizes a man's calling.

I believe that the evangelical church in the United States has allowed herself to be influenced by the whims of the society around her in this matter. Rather than recognizing that there are always distinctions among people, most have swallowed the egalitarian notion of total equality. All too often this false philosophy has influenced the Church in the twentieth century. Historic Christianity has always recognized distinctions in calling and vocation, and that these differences are marked by clothing and uniforms.

If clothing and calling are not related or important, then it would be safe to say that the elders in the Church should be free to dress as they please. I believe, however, that everybody views clothing as important. I would even venture to say that if a pastor were to preside over a worship service wearing Bermuda shorts, the entire congregation would be visibly upset.

Do Christians really believe ministers look better in business suits or sports jackets because they then resemble the congregation? The elders in the Church, while performing their functions as bishops and undershepherds, are not to imitate businessmen, college professors, or other members of the congregation, but rather are to appear as ministers of God. Why does the evangelical Church find it so difficult to accept distinctive clerical dress for elders when they have no difficulty accepting it for other professions: policeman, doctors, judges, firemen, and countless others?

Christians need to be honest and not just reject clerical vestments because Roman Catholic and liberal Protestant clergy wear them. Instead, Christians need desperately to see that the clerical dress shows the watching world how the ministers of God function as "**visible**" men, recognized by all of God's people, and therefore, ordained openly to win the world to King Jesus.

One man commented that nowhere in the Gospels can anyone find a passage where Jesus is said to wear special dress. This objection subtly overlooks the reality of Christ's ascension, that the One who sits at the right hand of the **Father** is adorned in special and beautiful clothing. Elders who are called to represent our great King should imitate Christ in both his earthly ministry and his exalted one.

I have attempted briefly to comment on the subject of clerical garb and to show its relevance to the twentieth century Church. For this brief treatise, I am indebted to such men as **Rev. Ray Sutton**, **Rev. James Jordan**, **Mr. Thomas Howard**, and **Mr. William Kirk Kilpatrick** for their thought

provoking articles and books. Christians need to read these men's works in order to see what they have to say to the Church today. May the Lord God continue to bless Christ's bride in the **days**, **months**, and **years** to come, as she provides a clear and visible witness to the world.

## Orthodox Christianity and" the Millenarian Heresy

by DAVID CHILTON

What is the position of the historic, orthodox Church on the question of the Millennium? Can the doctrine of the Church be accurately described as either postmillennialist or **amillennialist**? In general, the difference between those traditionally called "**amils**" and those traditionally called "**postmils**" has been set in terms of their interpretations of the "thousand years" (in Latin, *millennium*) of Revelation 20. "**Amils**" have usually seen this text as a reference to the condition of the saints reigning in heaven, while "**postmils**" have understood it as a description of the saints' dominion on earth. As we shall see, however, this way of framing the question can actually obscure some very important facts about the **Christian** view of "the Millennium." If we wish to gain an understanding of the orthodox position, we must understand that the answer to this question cannot be determined **primarily** by the exegesis of particular texts. For example, "amillennialists" often disagree with each other about the precise nature of the resurrection(s) in Revelation 20 (to cite only one of several major points in dispute). And Benjamin **Warfield**, perhaps the premier "postmillennialist" scholar of the early part of this century, proposed an exegesis of Revelation 20 which most theologians would consider to be classically "**amillennialist**!"

Our framing of the question, therefore, should be broad enough to account for the diversity of approach among the various **amil** and **postmil** camps. In essence, the question of the Millennium centers on the **mediatorial** Kingdom of Christ: When did (or **will**) **Christ's** Kingdom begin? And once we pose the question this way, something amazing happens – something almost unheard of in Christian circles: Unity! From the Day of Pentecost onward, orthodox Christians have recognized that Christ's reign began at His Resurrection/Ascension and continues until all things have been thoroughly subdued under His feet, as St. Peter clearly declared (Acts 2:30-36). "The Millennium" is thus simply the Kingdom of Christ. It was inaugurated at Christ's First Advent, has been in existence for almost two thousand years, and will go on until Christ's Second Advent at the Last Day. in "**millennial**" terminology, this means that the return of Christ and the resurrection of all men will take

place **after** "the Millennium." In this **objective** sense, therefore, **orthodox Christianity has always been postmillennialist**. That is to say, regardless of how "the Millennium" has been conceived (whether in a heavenly or an earthly sense) — i.e., regardless of the *technics/exegesis* of certain points in Revelation 20- orthodox Christians have always confessed that Jesus Christ will return **after** ("**post**") Christ's **mediatorial** reign has come to an end. In this sense, all "**amils**" are also "postmils."

At the same time, **orthodox Christianity has always been amillennial**. The historic Church has always rejected the heresy of **Millenarianism** (in past centuries, this was called **chiliasm**, meaning *thousand-year-ism*). The notion that the reign of Christ is something wholly future, to be brought in by some great social cataclysm, is not a Christian doctrine. It is an unorthodox teaching, espoused by heretical sects on the fringes of the Christian Church. Now, **Millenarianism** can take two general forms. It can be either **Premillenarianism** (with the Second Coming as the cataclysm that ushers in the Millennium), or **Postmillenarianism** (with the Social Revolution as the cataclysm). Examples of the **first** branch of **Chiliasm** would be, of course, the **Ebionite** movement of the Early Church period, and the modern Dispensationalism of the **Scofield-Ryrie** school. Examples of the **Postmillenarian** heresy would be easy to name as well: the **Münster Revolt** of 1534, Nazism, and Marxism (whether "Christian" or otherwise). Orthodox Christianity rejects both forms of the **Millenarian** heresy. Christianity opposes the notion of any new redemptive cataclysm occurring before the Last Judgment. Christianity is anti-revolutionary. Thus, while Christians have always looked forward to the salvation of the world, believing that Christ died and rose again for that purpose, they have also seen the Kingdom's work as a leavening influence, gradually transforming the world into the image of God. **The definitive cataclysm has already taken place, in the finished work of Christ.** Depending on the specific question being asked, therefore, orthodox Christianity can be considered either **amillennial** or postmillennial – because, in reality, it is both.

# Horror

by RAY R. SUTTON

Percy and Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, and Dr. John **Polidori** were confined to the shores of Lake Geneva for two weeks in June, 1816. A **two-week-long** downpour of rain forced them to remain. During their stay, the group began to read some German ghost stories from the book ***Fantasmagoria***.

One day the situation suddenly got out of hand. Dr. **Polidori** recorded in his diary the following: "After tea, 12 o'clock, we really began to talk ghosts. Lord Byron read some verses of Coleridge's 'Christabel,' [the part about] the witch's breast; when silence ensued, Shelley, suddenly shrieking, and putting his hands to his head, ran out of the room with a candle. [1] threw water in his face and after gave him ether. He was looking at Mrs. Shelley, and suddenly thought of a woman he had heard of who had eyes instead of nipples; which, taking hold of his mind, horrified **him**."<sup>1</sup>

**Strange** as this event was, the meeting of these figures produced two of the "basic **20th** century models for horror, *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. It seems they had a contest to see who could write the best story. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* won. Dr. **Polidori**, probably under the influence of Byron's *The Burial*, wrote a short piece, *Vampyre*. Several years later, at the turn of the century, Brain Stoker produced *Dracula*. Stephen King's thesis is that Stoker thoroughly researched his work and that Lord Byron was probably the literary **great-grandfather** of the "*Dracula*" **story**. King states that Byron died helping Greek insurgents fight the Turks just eight years after the Lake Geneva meeting. Not coincidentally to King, the legendary Count Dracula boasts to Jonathan **Harker** that he drove the Turks from **Transylvania**.<sup>2</sup>

So, the meeting of these literary figures profoundly affected an entire field of literature. They are two of three characters that dominate horror books and movies. But there's a third.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is about a man who wanted to tame the beast within. Instead, he became a beast, a werewolf. Although Mr. Hyde did not physically appear to be a beast, as he did in the movie version, he behaved like a man possessed of a beast. Of course, the werewolf figure is found all through **occultic** literature. Stevenson just

developed the idea as a psychological force that is part of the "dual nature" thesis.

The house where Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde lived was like a giant head. Stevenson describes the house as "two stories high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower story and a blind *forehead* of discolored wall in the upper; and bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid **negligence**."<sup>3</sup> The house had two doors: one on the front side of the street where respectable society entered, and the other on the back side where tramps and the decadent **trafficked**. So, Mr. Hyde was the dark side of Dr. Jekyll that had always wanted to go out the back door where proper **society** would not dare set foot, but where hypocritical Victorian England wanted to go.

Stevenson's character completed a **horrorific** trio. Their influence should not be underestimated. Horror has become quite popular. Just go to any video store and look at the "horror section." You'll find that it probably occupies, next to or along with the pornography section, about one third of the store's inventory. We have become a civilization obsessed with horror. Why?

We should not be surprised that the answer goes back to the **fall** of Satan. He wanted to "be like the most high God" (Is. 14: 14). Satan was not content to be a **creature**. He wanted to be the **creator**. He desired to **transcend** his being and become what he could never become, God.

All horror goes back to this idea. Take the three main characters for example. *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *Werewolf* are each examples of man's attempt to transcend his being. Each tries to become more than a man. This obsession has captured a civilization.

The Apostle Paul gives a remarkable command to the Corinthian Church. He says, "Act like men" (I Cor. **16:13**). God created man to be a man, not God or beast. Ironically, when man tries to become God, he becomes a beast, like the ancient King Nebuchadnezzar. The coming of Christ transformed a beastly humanity into true humanity. Only through Christ can man become true man. **Only** through Christ can man be delivered from the horror of his failure to be God.

1. Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Berkley, 1981), p. 61. Dr. Polidori's comment is cited by King.

2. *Ibid.* p. 62.

3. Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Logan, Iowa: The Perfection Form Company, [1978], p. 2.

# Today's Vampiric Spirit

by GEORGE GRANT

One of the most interesting historical studies to appear on the American scene in recent years is Raymond T. McNally's book, *Dracula Was A Woman*. Subtitled "In Search of the Blood Countess of Transylvania," and published by McGraw-Hill, the book is no pulpy **potboiler** of pubescent horror. On the contrary, it is a careful, scholarly investigation back through time for the roots of the vampires and werewolves in Central European folklore and occultism.

*Dracula Was A Woman* presents the true history of Countess Elizabeth **Bathory**, the ancient "vampire" of **Transylvania**. Taking clues from the Irish author Brain Stoker's diaries and notes for his own famous *Dracula*, McNally tracks down the legendary Blood Countess through both primary and secondary sources long neglected in the deep, dark recesses of the **Transylvanian** and Rumanian forests. In so doing, he is able to separate the actual woman from the legendary vampire, but in the end the recreated tale proves even more horrifying than the myth.

According to most accounts, the royal Hungarian murdered close to 700 young women between 1600 and 1611, in the belief that their blood would keep her young. Previously untranslated Latin and Hungarian feudal records from that stormy **post-Ottoman/pre-Hapsburg** period show conclusively that the aging Countess actually would bathe and shower in her victims' blood, hoping to restore her skin to youthful vigor and freshness. She reportedly had vampire and werewolf aberrations as **well**, because she reputedly tore into the flesh of the now-drained corpses with her teeth.

Of course, as demonically brutal and horrid as the events of Elizabeth Bathory's life are, they are not particularly unique in human history. The Bavarian and Mongol and Hun peoples have been notorious for producing any number of fanatically-driven brutes throughout history. Cases

in point: **Attila** the Hun, Ivan the Terrible, Frederick the Great, Karl Marx, Adolf Hitler, and even Josef Stalin, whose exploits make the "Countess look the part of a tame amateur.

The Blood Countess had nothing over **Idi Amin**, **Pahlavi** Shah, and Phen Om Pen. But then, the Blood Countess has nothing over those in our own day who have made trafficking in aborted babies big business. Horrid barbarism parades happily unnoticed through the cosmopolitan corridors of our "**Carlylian**" culture. Today's **vampiric** spirit is not cloaked in the arcane and esoteric ritual of some conspiratorial coven. Today's blood countesses trade in slick Parisian cosmetics and **haute** couture, not in dragons' teeth and newts' eyes. French cosmetic companies hark back to the **Transylvanian** body-snatcher mentality, producing rejuvenating **skincare** products from the flesh of children **killed** in the abortion holocaust. Instead of ensconcing themselves in some dark and dismal **Transylvanian** castle, those that **vampirically** plunder in order to satiate their vanity-stoked blood-lust sit high above the throngs in chic Park Avenue apartments, So Ho flats, and Malibu condos. They play the part of Dracula, violating all sanctity by sucking life from the innocents in hopes of smoothing a wrinkled brow or a dimpled chin.

In just eleven years, the Blood Countess slaughtered nearly 700 young women for the sake of vanity, for the sake of convenience, for the sake of self-gratification. But today's **vampiric** spirit has claimed close to 17 million young lives. Ah . . . progress! Three cheers for the advances of modern times!

(George Grant is one of the pastors of Believer's Fellowship Reformed Bible Church, Humble, Texas. This essay is a transcript from Rev. Grant's daily radio broadcast, "The Christian Worldview." For information concerning this program and how you might get it broadcast in your area, write to The Christian Worldview, 410 South Ave. D, **Humble**, TX 77338.)

## The Inevitability of Humanist Decline

by GARY DEMAR

Will the ungodly dominate culture? A cursory reading of 2 Timothy 3 would seem to indicate that the ungodly will prevail and the influence of the godly will decline. Upon further study, however, the reader will notice a different conclusion on the part of the apostle Paul. Paul compares the **progress** of the ungodly in Timothy's day with that of Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian sorcerer priests

who opposed Moses (cf. Exodus 7:11): "But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, as **also** that of those two came to be" (2 Timothy 3:9). While **it** is true that there is an **attempt** by the ungodly to dominate culture, in fact, however, "they will not make further progress," their fling **with** ungodliness is only temporary (cf. Remans 1:18-32). The Christian, therefore, can

remain optimistic even if he sees the actions of the ungodly **increasing**. In time, if Christians remain faithful in influencing their world with the gospel, the actions of the ungodly will self-destruct.

Paul, however, does not allow the Christian to remain passive as the ungodly self-destruct. Timothy has followed Paul's "teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, [and] sufferings" (2 Timothy 3:10-11) and he calls on us to do the same (vv. 16-17). While the ungodly expend their spiritual capital in present-oriented living, and therefore have nothing saved for the future, the Christian is to develop future-oriented spiritual capital to replace the bankrupt culture of humanism with a **Christ-centered** society. Notice that the characteristics of the ungodly are all self-directed and short-lived, summarized by this phrase: "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (v. 4). Sin has its pleasure for a short period of **time**: "He who loves pleasure will become a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not become rich" (Proverbs 21:17). The love of pleasure is not an investment in the future.

The characteristics of the godly are future directed, foregoing the lure of present pleasures for the benefit of future productivity. Teaching, conduct, **purpose**, faith, patience, love, and perseverance take time and energy from the present but will result in future reward. For example, the farmer could consume **all** of his harvested grain in a year's time and therefore have nothing left to plant for the following year. By consuming only enough grain to feed his family and storing reserves of grain for a potential poor crop and some for

planting, he guarantees his family security and a dominion status for the future. While the present oriented consumer is furiously looking for a way to feed his family, the future-oriented farmer is able to spend his free time exercising godly dominion in his culture. Moreover, even set-backs like persecutions and sufferings should not deter the **future-oriented** Christian because "out of them **all** the Lord" delivers us (2 Timothy 3:11). In the same way, the future-oriented farmer is able to suffer the effects of a bad harvest because his store of goods allows him to live until the time of the next harvest. The effects of a bad harvest for the **present-oriented** consumer are disastrous. He has no reserves, and therefore no hope for the future.

If the Christian only looks at what is presently happening he will lose his hope of ever being a cultural influence because he **will** see that "evil men and **imposters** will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13) as something permanent. The deception "is theirs and those who are blinded by their own sensuous desires. But we must also remember the previous words of Paul: "But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all" (v. 9). Short-term it looks as if the ungodly will prevail. Christians, however, must begin to think long-term; while the ungodly burn themselves out, the godly steadily influence their world: "You, however, **continue** in the things you have learned and become convinced of" (v. 14). In time the effects of dominion will be seen: "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary" (Galatians 6:9).

## Misleading Analogies: Roadblocks to Reconstruction

by JAMES B. JORDAN

Misleading analogies have plagued the Church for many centuries, and continue to impede thought today. This brief essay analyzes two slogans common in conservative Christian circles, wherein misleading analogies lead to rhetorical excess.

No. 1. "**To send your children to a public school is to offer them up to Molech.**" This is a fine example of a rhetorical argument. It draws an analogy between sending one's child off to be educated by pagans, and sacrificing one's child to the fires of an idol. As an analogy it has much to commend itself. If, however, we begin to reason from this analogy, we can be misled. Allow me to criticize this statement, to show what I mean.

First, public education is not necessarily pagan education. [It has only been in recent years that state schools have become non-Christian, or even anti-Christian. Thus, while state-sponsored education is itself problematic, it is not the main problem we are dealing with when we talk about today's

public schools. The main problem is humanism.

Second, offering children to **Molech** meant killing them and offering their blood in a religious rite of worship to an idol. Christians who send their children to public schools are engaging in an action which is considerably less serious (though still very **serious!**). It is not an act of worship, nor is the child killed. Thus, the analogy is not sound at all points.

Third, if the analogy were absolute, then any parent who dared to "offer his child to **Molech**" by sending him to a public school would have to be excommunicated from the Church. Moreover, anyone who dared to teach in such schools would also have to be excommunicated for being a **Molech** worshipper. But we don't do that, do we? And that's because we realize that education is in fact not the same as worship, and that the public schools, bad as they are, are not totally **demonized**.

Fourth, public schools do vary somewhat from

community to community. Some are worse than others. Also, the need to shelter and protect grade school children means that Christian schools are an absolute necessity. But, if there is simply no money for it, and no other option possible, is it *as bad* to send children to public high schools, assuming that there is a Bible club and a Christian sub-culture operating there? Many Christian schools have had to face the financial barrier of cutting off at the eighth grade, and letting graduates go to the public school, though with fear and trembling. Rhetoric did not help in such circumstances.

What should we say, then? Christians have an obligation to rear their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord *to the best of their ability*. Churches should help *to the best of their God-given ability*. Such circumstantial considerations are missing when rhetorical excess takes place.

No. 2. *"Taxation is theft from the people, and to receive government help is to participate in theft."* Here again is a striking rhetorical analogy. The problem is that, from a Biblical point of view, the analogy is false. The analogy is only possible on the premise of a libertarian social-contract view of the state: We have given power to a certain group of people, and they are abusing it to rob us. The Bible teaches that God establishes the state, and that God has given to the state the right to tax, even to tax heavily, and taxation is not theft. God advises us not to centralize the state (1 Sam. 8; and see my commentary on the book of Judges), but once such a state is set up (and we in America have set it up), the state has the right and power to tax. Such taxation may be oppressive, but it is not theft.

If it is indeed true that the government is "stealing from the people," then it is positively sinful for us to use any government service whatsoever, including roads and mails. After all, the state has "stolen" money from the **people** in order to maintain its monopoly on the mails and on roads. But, we

don't **actually** refuse to use the mail (which could easily be handled much better under free enterprise), which proves we do not actually believe this rhetoric.

So, soberly and carefully, what do we mean? We mean that Christians should avoid the use of statist services as *much as possible*, and the Church should help them avoid statist services *as much as possible*. If, however, avoidance is not possible, then in such circumstances the Christian may make use of what is available. In doubtful cases, the Church elders should rule on the case. A man fell off a roof. He was not insured, and his medical costs totalled \$50,000.00. He had no family that could help, and his small church had nowhere near enough money to help. The church's elders ruled that he might apply for government aid. In this way, "meat sacrificed to **idols**" was sanctified (this being another analogy, by the way).

"Well, we don't have any choice about using the Postal Service. We do have a choice about welfare." Not so. It is possible to send letters using private delivery services (such as Purolator, Federal Express, etc.). It costs several dollars, but if you are a purist, naturally you'll be willing to pay that extra money rather than join hands with the state in "stealing" from the people.

Neither a state-run postal service nor a **state-run welfare** system is desirable or ideal, to say the least! We must work to overcome and replace both. To do so involves sober, careful thought, and a long haul operation. Flaming rhetoric does not help the cause.

Rhetorical excess lacks Biblical sobriety and despises the God-given rules of language and thought, and thus does not image the Word of God to the world. Rhetorical excess and misleading analogies obscure clear thought, and prevent the people of God from maturing in wisdom. We are all guilty of it, especially in the heat of battle, but we ought to avoid it as much as possible.

## COMING SOON . . .

Future issues of *The Geneva Review* will continue John Frame's series on the Doctrine of the Word, and regular commentaries by Ray Sutton, George Grant, and Gary DeMar.

David Chilton will begin a series of studies on "The Last Days." One of the more controversial aspects of Chilton's recent book, *Paradise Restored*, was his assertion that the phrase "last days" always has reference to the period between Pentecost and Holocaust, between A.D. 30 and A.D. 70. David will be exploring this issue in depth, taking up each Biblical passage in turn.

James Jordan will begin a series of studies in Genesis, examining the chapter verse by verse from a Biblical theological standpoint. Genesis 1 not only tells us *how God created the world* (in six days), but also shows us the basic framework and structure of the world. This is the framework in which all Biblical symbolism and prophecy is set, and so an understanding of the details of Genesis 1 is essential to a theological understanding of the rest of the Bible.

Jordan will also begin a series called "Extending the Stakes," an introduction to various books and authors not normally read by conservative protestants, but who have important and challenging things to say to us. Jordan will point out the strengths and weaknesses, as he sees them, and thus help us in coming to grips with some of the most important thinkers in Christendom today. First up: the conservative and highly evangelical Russian Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann.

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# The Doctrine of the Word of God

by JOHN M. FRAME

(Professor Frame teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. These outlines are from his course on the Doctrine of the Word of God. Prof. Frame has graciously consented to our making these notes available to a wider audience through *The Geneva Review*. They are not to be regarded as a published work, but as notes on a "work in progress.")

## INTRODUCTION: THE REFORMED FAITH AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

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### A. *The Reformed Faith is Evangelical*

1. 'evangelical': one who professes historic, protestant Christianity.

- a. God is a person, infinitely wise, just, good, true, powerful, the ultimate reality, deserving unquestioned worship and obedience, who made the world out of nothing.
  - b. Man, made in the image of "God, wilfully disobeyed God's command, and thereby became worthy of death. From that time on, all human beings save Jesus Christ have been guilty of sin before God.
  - c. Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, became man. He was (literally, really) born of a virgin; he worked miracles; he fulfilled prophecy; he suffered and died for our sin, bearing its guilt and penalty; he was raised physically from the dead; he will come again (literally, physically) to judge the world and to gather his people.
  - d. Salvation from sin comes to us not by our good works, but by receiving the free gift of God by faith. Saving faith receives the sacrifice of Christ as our sacrifice, as our only basis for fellowship with God. And such saving faith inevitably motivates us to obedience.
  - e. Scripture is the Word of God, which makes us wise to salvation.
  - f. Prayer is not mere meditation or self-improvement, but a genuine conversation with our creator and redeemer. In prayer we praise God, give thanks, ask forgiveness, and make requests which bring concrete changes in the world.
2. Not all protestants are evangelical. Many denominations, seminaries, other organizations are under control of people who do not hold to the above historic doctrines.

Substitutes:

- a. God is "beyond personality," "beyond good and evil," does not demand obedience or punish sin or answer prayer.
  - b. Sin is not disobedience to a law external to man, but alienation from others and from one's own true humanity.
  - c. Jesus was a man who was in various ways aligned with God. Literal miracles and resurrection are impossible, but symbolic of some higher reality.
  - d. Salvation comes not through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, or through faith in Christ as the exclusive way of salvation. Either all are saved, or the "saved" are those who adhere to various ethical and political program.
  - e. Scripture is a human writing, fallible and prone to error, which somehow communicates a divine message.
  - f. Prayer is essentially self-referential.
3. "Evangelical" and "Reformed"
- a. All-reformed are evangelical, but not all evangelical are reformed. The reformed share the evangelical heritage, but they hold to some doctrines "that are not held by all evangelical.
  - b. It is wrong, therefore, to use the term "evangelical" to mean "non-reformed" (*contra* C. Van Til, *Christian Theory of Knowledge*, p. 194). It is important that there be a term which designates the unity between reformed and non-reformed people who share the convictions listed above. F. Schaeffer rightly points-out that the great chasm of our time is between Bible-believing Christians and all others, not between reformed and non-reformed Christians. The best term to mark the basic unity (and the basic chasm) is the term "evangelical."
  - c. Reformed Christianity, then, is a type of evangelicalism. We shall argue that it is the most biblical, the most consistent form of evangelicalism, "evangelicalism come into its own," to paraphrase Warfield. Yet it stands in fundamental, profound unity with all evangelicals, and against all deniers of the evangelical truth. There is too much bitter polemic in reformed circles against non-reformed evangelical. There is need for more brotherly understanding and love.