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I loathe and despise your festivals;
Your meetings for sacrifice give me no pleasure...
Let me have no more of your noisy hymns;
My ears are closed to the music of your harps.
Instead, let justice roll on like a mighty river,
And integrity flow like a never-failing stream!

Amos 5:21,23,24. (Phillips)

The call of Amos for social justice could be no more timely than for today. How the Lord must despise all our talk about the deeper spiritual life when we continually divorce ourselves from the desperate needs of humanity all around us! How can we possibly with a clear conscience worship daily in chapel and sing our hymns of faith and not be concerned with justice and mercy? Can faith and piety be expressed in seclusion from the world of reality? Can we love God whom we have not seen when we shrink from involvement with our fellow man whom we have seen? For what is love other than active involvement? Surely love cannot be static!

This is why I went to Selma. The overwhelming injustices in our American society demand the concern first of all of every person who would call himself Christian. For Christian commitment is no commitment unless it is people oriented. I arrived in Selma the day before the march began. The Little Brown Chapel and its immediate surroundings were swarming with people and the air was tingling with excitement. I was greeted with warm enthusiasm and shown where to register and was given a place to stay. Meals were served continuously in the basements of the Little Brown Chapel and at the First Baptist Church just down the block. All day long people kept pouring in from every state in the Union.

Out of the whole experience, the thing that impressed me the most was the warmth and friendliness that was manifest by all. I could not help but compare it to the life of the New Testament Church. We all lived together, ate together, and shared everything in common. Everyone loved everyone and conversations and friendships grew up spontaneously. We all were there for the same great purpose. We all knew what we came to accomplish and we knew how we were going to accomplish it. Our unity was truly magnificent.

That evening we gathered together in the Little Brown Chapel for a mass meeting. It was crammed to overflowing with people sitting and standing in the windows, the aisles, the choir loft, and every available inch of space (for more than four hours). We listened to a dozen or more speakers and sang until we were hoarse, and we would love to have stayed longer. Each speaker spoke out of deep conviction with a ring of sincerity that gripped each one of us. They reached heights of oratory that can only come out of a movement inspired by an urgent cause. All of us—including nuns, peasants, priests, humanists, ministers, professors, and students—responded enthusiastically with bursts of applause and

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BRUCE CRAPUCHETTES is a senior at FTS. He received a BS in Science at Wheaton College in 1959. He was one of the 30 people from outside Alabama who participated in the Selma march.
OPEN LETTER TO IR. HUBBARD

Dear Dr. Hubbard:

The editors of the opinion wish to express their appreciation to you for your comments at the conclusion of last Friday's chapel. We concur in toto with the evaluations which you offered and with the plans which you, as President, have suggested to the Fuller community. We are greatly pleased with the announcement of the appointment to the faculty of Mr. Jaymes Morgan as instructor in systematic theology and social ethics beginning in the Fall of 1966. To the plans for the recruitment of Negro students for service within the Church of Jesus Christ we can only add our most hearty approval.

We are most pleased with the call to the student body and to the Social Action Committee for a program in which we as a seminary can contribute to the social needs of our own city. To the formulation of these plans, in all aspects, the opinion pledges its support. A Fall issue of the opinion shall concern itself with the issues which you have raised.

Again, we thank you for the clear, incisive manner in which you have called the seminary to a position of responsibility and action in the area of the Church and society.

Sincerely,
The Editors

EDITORIAL

This issue of the opinion proves to be one of the more stimulating. It ranges from Stringfellow to Selma, picking up the Sovereignty of God for discussion on the way.

Drs. Bromiley and Roddy reflect the mixedness with which most of us received Mr. Stringfellow. Yet while it seems clear that almost no one accepted his point of view without qualification, there may have been some who rejected the viewpoint and the man without much serious thought. It seems clear also that Stringfellow made most people feel quite uncomfortable. And in light of this we might do well to think again of the role of the Gadfly and the Midwife. They are there to stir the sleeping steed, as Socrates said, and to bring the child into the new world of light. Often we wish to slap the fly so it will quit troubling us. Often we wonder whether we can bear the pangs of childbirth. We rise in holy disgust against the extremist and the oversimplifier. But the danger is that we will use these traits as excuses to dismiss the issues raised, and then settle down into the sugar-plum depths of our apathetic sleep. Sometimes it takes a huge boot in a soft spot to wake up the slumbering steed.

C.L.S.
THE STRINGFELLOW MEETINGS
by Dr. Clarence S. Roddy

I have been asked to give my reactions to the Stringfellow meetings. My reactions are mixed and confused, reminiscent of the young fellow who saw his mother-in-law go over the cliff in his new Continental. Frankly, I was disappointed! Perhaps the prior buildup was too exaggerated! Possibly, his recent illness left him with little emotional vitality. Not withstanding these liabilities, it was disquieting to hear a Barrister of the Law indulge so freely in wild generalizations based upon insufficient data, and oversimplifications in dealing with the tragic illness of the social life of our day. His gratuitous remarks concerning the Birchers, the American Steel Industry, and the American Red Cross were exceedingly demagogic, reminding me of the extreme remarks of Robert Welsh from the same platform.

For one reared on the old classic social reformers, such as Wilberforce, Buxton, Fry, John Howard, and the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, in England, and the doughty Americans Shington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, Booker T. Washington, and Owen R. Lovejoy (my boyhood pastor), it was a bit of a let down. Nevertheless I was compelled to listen, and to listen with respect! This man is COMMITTED to his cause! He is INVOLVED! I am certain that his writings reveal him at his best. His first three lectures I found interesting but neither convincing nor soul stirring. His fourth message on "Money and the Ethics of Conformity" was superb, being both interesting, convincing and challenging to any who take their commitment to Christ seriously.

DR. CLARENCE S. RODDY is Professor of Homiletics and Practical Theology at FTS.

IMPRESSIONS OF MR. STRINGFELLOW
by Dr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley

To judge from his lectures, Mr. Stringfellow had two main theses. The first is that social action must be grounded in sound theology, and second, that the church is committed to social action as an essential part of its work and witness. With these theses I am sure that most Christians will readily concur.

Mr. Stringfellow also offered a few more detailed suggestions. He pointed to the bearing of baptism on social action. He claimed racialism as the predominant domestic issue. He also stressed the critical significance of money. Here again it would seem that there is little cause for dissent in principle.

What room is there, then, for qualification? A few points of varying degrees of importance spring to mind.

In presentation the lectures proved to be surprisingly dull. Apart from the occasional provocative remark, they pursued a placid course. While this is preferable to bombast, it hardly seems to be a worthy reflection of so important and exciting a theme.

But was the content really exciting? Theologically, it was the very reverse. In the last twenty years some of the most stimulating work has been done in the field of theological ethics. Barth and Thielicke in particular have opened up the great themes of law and gospel, indicative and imperative, the Babel world and the Noahic covenant, the two kingdoms and eschatology. One could have hoped for at least an echo of these trumpet blasts.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 4

DR. GEOFFREY W. BROMILEY is Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at FTS.
Historically, too, one has the sense of a lost opportunity. An Episcopalian in an Evangelical seminary might have spared at least a passing thought for the classical age of social action, the age of Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, of anti-slavery agitation and factory acts, prison and penal reform, education and temperance, the age which produced stronger resolutions and more dynamic action than the Social Gospel has ever done, or seems likely to do. We were not warmed at our own hearth.

Finally, there was a lack of perspective. Social concern was not properly related to the total diaconate. It was presented in a way which might easily make of it a passing fad or fancy, eccentric to the whole. This is part of the theological problem, for fundamental here is the understanding of ministry. It also reflects the historical weakness. Evangelicals in the past had a vital and active social concern just because they also had a vital evangelistic and missionary concern. These concerns were not competitive or autonomous; they were integrated and complementary.

To sum up, the statement of the basic theses is welcome. Welcome, too, are the specific insights. Yet it is my hope that we shall not rest content with this surface material, and above all that we shall not become the victims of a mere transitory, exaggerated, and unintegrated enthusiasm. Mr. Stringfellow has opened a way. It will demand much theological work and serious historical study. But if it is followed on these terms, it could lead us again, perhaps on a maturer theological foundation, to that happy totality of ministry, which marked the classical Evangelicalism of a century ago.

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IMPRESSIONS FROM SELMA (continued)

Vocal agreements in a wild spontaneity that had its own dignity. But most moving of all was the obvious spiritual depth that flavored every moment. The deep commitment that the leadership had to God and the mass involvement of the clergy representing the whole nation, forced many to re-evaluate for the first time their ideas on the existence of God. And then for our closing song we all stood holding hands, black and white together, and a tingling chill ran through my spine as we swayed back and forth and a thousand voices rang out verse after verse of "We Shall Overcome." I shall never forget this moving and powerful experience.

In direct contrast to all of this was the belligerent attitude of the white Alabamians who gathered along the route of the march to shout their scorn and wave their Confederate flags. "Yankee trash go home!" "We hate niggers!" "Why the hell don't you nigger lovers go home!" These along with many obscene cat calls and gestures were the order of the day. But triumphantly we kept marching, looking straight ahead with the knowledge that we were destined to victory.

We had all gone through a thorough orientation program of the philosophy and techniques of non-violent action. We were prepared for the worst and were willing, if needs be, to die for our cause. Radical evil can only be cured through applying radical love. Non-violence helps to cause the attacker to see who he really is and therefore helps in his redemption. We realized that we could not change all individuals but that through the redemption of society the unchanged human individuals could not find a place. Our ultimate protection was in the spirit, for it was only as Selma stood valiantly and persistently that she was able to touch the conscience of the nation.

Thousands upon thousands joined to swell our ranks as we approached the capital city of Montgomery until we numbered more than thirty thousand. It was thrilling to see the wild reception as we wound our way through the negro section of town. Viewing us as their liberating army, adults were moved to tears, while children, catching the excitement, ran gaily along side. Right up to the capital building we marched to end our great demonstration in a magnificent mass rally and to present our petition to Governor George Wallace. But he was not there. All
That we met was a regiment of armed soldiers standing beneath the Confederate flag symbolizing the "sovereign" state of Alabama as still in rebellion.

The busses, trains, and planes were jammed to capacity as everyone sought passage for home. But the job was far from being accomplished and it was too easy to leave. I stood thoughtfully and prayerfully for a long time in the midst of the confusion of leaving people hurrying in all directions. It was so simple to be in a fifty mile march and then go home. But what about the struggling people left behind? Would we quickly forget them until another crisis would arise to show their continuing need? In throws of decision I both bought a ticket and later cashed it in again before I allowed reality and other responsibilities of life to cause me to leave. But I will never be the same person again and I hope I will never forget.

What did I learn through it all? Space is not sufficient for me to tell. But I have begun to realize anew the deep implications of Christian love, and that it is absolutely impossible to live the Christian life without becoming completely involved in the society within which we live.

A NOTE ON ULTIMATES
by Philip McIlhany

The choice of an ultimate cannot be justified by an appeal to evidence of a communicable sort. Ultimates are not demonstrable; worse they are incomprehensible.

The Christian apologetic, a la Edward John Carnell, for example, involves at its foundation the premise of an existing freedom of human will. That premise cannot be validated. When one makes a decision, e.g. to walk across the street, we properly ask why, or on what basis did he choose such? Answering that question, e.g. because he wanted to get to the other side, we again ask why, why did he want such? Each answer involves a causal agent: to arrive at a final answer is to find a final cause and leaves one's actions finally determined.

It will not do to say that to act freely is simply to act in accordance with one's nature. Since one's nature is what it is because of something else (the creation by Divine Being, the chance coming together of certain chemicals, or whatever one might believe here), this yet leaves us with ultimate determinism.

Neither will it do to set up a causal chain which will emerge extrinsic to man's being, e.g. to go from a man's choice to his intellect or emotion, to his heredity or to God and on. One must then accept an infinite series or stop somewhere, either of which, as long as it is without the being of man, leaves him ultimately determined.

If we postulate meaningful human moral freedom, we cannot ask why a man chooses. We cannot finally ask why he chooses what he does. To be undetermined is to be left with an uncaused choice; which seems to logically reduce all to a matter of chance. To be finally left to chance, however, leaves one's activity devoid of personal significance.

On the other hand, we cannot accept the absence of this moral freedom. To assert a belief in any kind of ultimate determinism is epistemologically meaningless and psychologically debilitating.

To express a belief in ultimate determinism is to state that there is no such thing as belief. For if the determinist is right, his very holding to that assertion is in itself determined and therefore not to be dignified by the term belief. Any evidence he offers in support of a final necessity ordering man's thought is simply evidence that there can be no knowledge or communication of objective data. Who is to say that one man's set of necessary responses is in more logical order than another?
another's, and that his conclusions are thus of greater validity? Proof of non-
freedom would be proof that proof does not exist. Such determinism, further, would
make all thinking and action personally meaningless.

The dilemma stands and cannot be resolved by any synthesis of extremes. Either
an answer to the final why of a man's behavior exists or it does not. If it does,
where is his freedom? If it does not, what difference does it make?

Any metaphysical starting point can be reduced to a similar vacuum. Such dif-
culty is evidenced in the fundamental lack of consensus in metaphysical judgments.
We could get rather ready agreement from the vast majority of observers on the
existence of Carnegie Hall. No such agreement is to be had on the existence of God.
For there is no data which when properly evaluated will resolve the problem of
ultimates as illustrated by the freedom-determinism issue.

Yet it appears one must choose. Either I postulate freedom or I do not. Either
I opt for God or I do not. It is here that one must be careful that he does not
demand that reality satisfy his personal needs. We dare not say that because per-
sonal happiness demands personal immortality such immortality must be ours. We
cannot say that because one's psychological balance may demand his perception of
an ordered, meaningful universe the state of affairs so conforms. We will probably
develop a weltanschaung to satisfy our needs. We must remember, however, that it
was so chosen and that such satisfaction does not imply its correspondence to real-
ity.

The problem is further complicated once an ultimate has been embraced. Defi-
nitions are then in order; and their implications must be delineated. We are faced
with uncountable alternatives. Granted that one could escape subjective distortion
in the evaluation process—and, of course, one cannot—he lacks the objective tools
to soundly weigh all, or even a few, of the options. For example, I do not consider
myself qualified to make valid judgment on the case for the authority of the Bishop
of Rome, as found in the Catholic Encyclopedia, and the case for the authority of
Christian canonical scripture, as outlined by Benjamin B. Warfield. The degree of
certainty with which anyone can judge such is open to question. Granted, however,
that a certain individual could make a reasonably probable judgment on the above,
he faces scores of like evaluations which will certainly escape his particular
range of competence. Given the finitude of mankind and the limitations of the in-
dividual, any given person's judgment as to what is most probably true about the
fundamental issues of existence will be quite tenuous.

It may be pointed out that one has no choice but to trust his evaluation of
probabilities in the 'booming, buzzing confusion.' Granting that, we are yet faced wi-
the fact that the ultimates, upon which we ground our conclusions, hang in a vacuum.
As we are thrust back into the initially discussed problem of ultimates, we are left
in a suspension of judgment.

Suspended judgment stands as an operational definition of skepticism. Skepti-
cism, of course, is a paradoxical position: one cannot know anything; one cannot
know that one cannot know anything. One cannot assert anything; one cannot assert
that one cannot assert anything. He cannot act; he cannot not act. He cannot
choose; he cannot not choose. Thus the human predicament.

A spirit sped
Through spaces of night;
And as he sped, he called,
"God! God!"
He went through valleys
Of black death-slime,
Ever calling,
"God! God!"
Their echoes
From crevice and cavern
Mocked him:
"God! God! God!"
Fleetly into the plains
Of space
He went, ever calling,
"God! God!"
Eventually, then, he
screamed,
Mad in denial,
"Ah, there is no God!"
A swift hand,
A sword from the sky,
Smote him,
And he was dead.

-Stephen Crane
The McIlney essay is an excellent statement of the problem, but the conclusion is understated. In effect the argument shows that skepticism is the outcome, not only of the dilemma concerning freedom, but also of every other conceivable problem. Since we can reach no logically hard conclusions, let's quit! Let's not even get embroiled in philosophical debates, theological dialogues or political controversy! Let's rule a moratorium on bull-sessions, panel discussions and opinion magazines! And never say "I will" to any suitor, or any business contract, or even to a dinner invitation! Since reliable decisions are impossible, make none at all! Relapse instead into the actionless state of a spineless, impersonal object.

This is the sort of reductio ad absurdum argued by Augustine, relished by Kierkegaard, and admitted by Bertrand Russell. Skepticism, they repeatedly insist, simply is not a live option for either serious thought or meaningful living. What, then, shall we do? A reductio ad absurdum is a dead-end street. We must retrace our steps. How did we get into the cul de sac? Where in the argument could we have gone astray?

One possibility is this. McIlney's dilemma is compounded by the introduction of related problems, other than that of freedom itself. The first step in logical analysis is always a breakdown into constituent problems. I note the following ingredients:

1. Does a Christian apologetic properly presuppose "an existing freedom of human will"? (a) I am inclined to agree that not just Christian apologetics but Christianity itself and not only apologetics but philosophical and scientific and artistic work of any sort--even McIlney's essay--presupposes human freedom. (b) I smell a rat in the term "human will," as if it were an isolable faculty, intermittently related to other faculties and organs as to detachable causes. Freedom, both Biblically and psychologically, is primarily attributable to the human person as a functional unity. Confusion at this point engenders confusion elsewhere; it breeds voluntarist intellectualist disputes; it sends us off on wild-goose chases in search of arguments for an "undetermined will" which, qua will-alone and therefore qua undetermined, just doesn't exist. It creates a fictitious "problem of free will" by posing a faulty disjunction: free or determined; a pseudo-metaphysical problem spawned, as Wittgenstein tried to teach us, by the misleading pictures embedded in our language. The problem of freedom is, I think, mislocated when focussed on "decision," "choice," or "free will." I therefore reject the issue McIlney addresses as grossly misconceived.

2. Is (a) a caused action (b) determined, and an (a') uncaused action (b') undetermined? Throughout the essay, this is assumed. In fact, paragraph 5 states further that what is (b') undetermined is (c) "a matter of chance," and chance activities are (d) "devoid of personal significance."

(1) What is meant by (a) "cause"? Which of Aristotle's 4 varieties? Or (as I think he means) is it confined to the mechanical-type causes bequeathed to us by the Renaissance and Enlightenment, thanks to the misleading mechanistic picture they embedded in our language for us? Or is it the "prehensive" cause of a Whitehead? Aristotle and Whitehead and Temple (others as well) conceived of "causation" in ways that did not exclude freedom but helped us see it in relation to the role of persons in the value-fulfilling processes of history.

(2) What is (c) "chance"? As used here, the term is the antithesis of "cause." But of course some exponents of freedom will insist that these are not all-inclusive alternatives (i) if "caused" means "caused mechanistically like the movements of
billiard balls or the responses of behaviorists" then chance is non-mechanistic behavior. But freedom then cannot be identified with either chance or caused activity. This can be argued both phenomenologically and linguistically. (Incidentally, I observe no reference at all to the tremendous contributions of recent phenomenologists in so much of the literature on this subject. We're still far too bound to the posterity of Hume.) (ii) Is (c) "chance" a freak of nature, popped in through some twentieth-century chinks in the determinist armor, chinks sanctified by appeals to Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle? Or (iii) the sort of "unplanned" activity Aristotle speaks of? Aristotle is careful to point out that neither (ii) freaks nor (iii) the unplanned are uncaused, so that "caused" and "chance" are not antitheses. Then is chance (iv) the unpredictable, yet caused? Even if it is, it is by this definition not uncaused. I conclude that even if freedom is uncaused (which I doubt) it is not "by chance" and therefore (if this follows) meaningless.

3. Are (c) chance activities (d) "devoid of personal significance"? Surely not--read Sartre for a thousand and one examples. At a chance meeting with some acquaintance, I "chance" to make some remarks about his health and about the busy day I have had. It makes sense to ask about the causes of these remarks--to psychoanalyze me, perhaps. They may have been unplanned remarks, but they still reveal something of my interest in other people and my absorption in work. They serve as forms of self expression. They reveal me and my values. I kick myself afterwards for the way I said it. I wonder why ever I called him "husky" instead of using some more delicate term. "Just like me," I groan, "I could have predicted it." "Chance," you say? Maybe, depending on your definition, but still loaded with personal significance.

3. "Either an answer exists or it does not." So true; but whoever supposes that an answer must be (a) within our immediate reach, (b) knowable in full? The apostle confessed to seeing "through a glass darkly" and to knowing "in part." Fragmentary and fuzzy understanding is still helpful and something to be thankful for; it stops us short of skepticism. And in a way any philosophical position, good or bad, is simply a progress report.

It seems to be assumed that either we have proofs or we must be skeptics, as if arguments proceed ex nihilo to irrefutable demonstrations of the whole furniture of heaven and earth, Q.E.D. and all that stuff. I question whether any irrefutable proofs of this sort are available on anything. Metaphysics does not start with axioms a la Descartes. A metaphysical position is rather the elaboration of a vision, a perspective on life, a great hypothesis, and logically it never gets beyond the hypothesis stage. Of course (1) metaphysicians disagree, for disagreement is the essence of philosophic inquiry, it is the "communication" which Jaspers prizes both as a vaccine against rationalistic and voluntaristic dogmatism, and as a path to enlarged visions of the Reality that transcends the fragmentary glimpses of historical men. Of course (2) since we cannot hold all hypotheses, all world-views, we exercise our freedom in relation to them. But this calls not for less thought but for more, not for despair but for the development of truth-criteria, recognizing all the time the lack of logical finality in the conclusions they recommend. And, of course (3) ever since the Sophists and the Pyrrhonic skeptics, men have pointed accusingly to the equipollence of metaphysical arguments. I'm not convinced they are ever really equipollent, but however that may be, I am convinced that he who reads philosophical disagreement as a sign of philosophical impotence, has failed both to take the measure of man and to relive the history of philosophy in his own mind. He does not understand the philosophic enterprise. If we have difficulty with freedom, we might be well advised to reexamine the thought of the ages, and then to watch the further unfolding of intellectual inquiry. It is too soon in history for skepticism.

My recommendations, then, are as follows:
1. Divide the problem into its constituent parts.
2. Define your terms.
3. Avoid the misleading pictures embedded in ordinary language.
1. Examine the history of thought, not to find the answer, but to understand what light we have to date on the problem.
2. Stay tuned to intellectual inquiry. Right now we could make more use of phenomenology and linguistic analysis. In any case, it's too soon for skepticism.
3. I suggest a provisional definition of freedom, not as in determinism nor as simply "free choice," but rather as value-determinism, a structure of human existence that is never fully actualized but is most evident in mature persons who by their espousal of values transcend both the passion of the moment and the slavery of habit. This seems to be the most meaningful and fruitful direction for exploration right now.

**CHALLENGE TO A TITAN**

Atlas — son of the stars,
Pillar of the universe —
Whose massive shoulders,
Born to strength,
Empowered by strain,
Propped infinite weight of worlds and heav'ns:

Mighty Atlas, behold me!
For I shall be stronger than you.
Behold me bear,
Bound on my heart,
A greater weight than thine.
Behold me, born of Almighty Jah;
Behold me flex beneath my load.

Atlas, weakling;
A mountain took thy place;
Only God dying can take mine.

by Norman A. Bert

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**ON HUMAN FREEDOM AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY**

**by Thomas B. Talbott**

Christians who dare to defend the reality of free will soon discover themselves confronted by a mountain of difficulties and learned objections, not the least of which is the charge that they have denied the sovereignty of God. Genuine human autonomy, which for the purposes of this discussion I shall describe (not define) as the power of contrary choice, implies the existence of certain events which are not determined by God; that is, one is metaphysically free only to the extend that
he escapes Divine control. We cannot avoid this perilous consequence. Freedom which is not freedom from Divine control, whatever kind of freedom it may be, does not involve the power of contrary choice. The problem of free will is thus a difficult one. In what sense is it even meaningful to speak of metaphysical freedom? Granted the intelligibility of this concept, in what sense is it meaningful to speak of created autonomous wills? Would not the existence of free will imply God's finitude? And what is the relationship of the philosophical concept of freedom to the Biblical data? These questions are admittedly complex; indeed, they are sufficiently complex that, if the opponent of free will is permitted to wander indiscriminately from one to the other, he shall surely win the battle. This we must not allow him to do. We must force him to discuss one issue at a time, and it is with this in mind that the present discussion is limited to a single question: "Can a belief in free will be reconciled to a belief in divine sovereignty?" It is my conviction that it can.

The opposition, of course, will be powerful. The tendency within Calvinistic circles is to deny man the power of contrary choice in order to safeguard God's sovereignty. When the Reformed thinker calls God "sovereign," he usually means that throughout the universe there is not one fact or event the existence of which is contingent upon anything but the explicit will of God. Every event that occurs does so occur for precisely this reason: God in his wisdom decreed that it should occur. If a man chooses to kill another, this act of violence is caused by God who, in virtue of his control over the man's will, renders him incapable of choosing otherwise; and if the man repents, this act is likewise ordained by God. "Consistent absolutists...deny that God has limited himself in any way. He can still do anything; in particular he can and does control the choices of created wills."¹

Clearly, defined in this way, the sovereignty of God negates the very possibility of genuine human freedom, for by definition a free act is one which is initiated by an agent whose motives are inspired not by another mind, but by the operations of his own freedom. There is...a contradiction in saying that God has made us so that we shall of necessity act in a certain way, and that we are genuinely independent persons in relation to him. If all our thoughts and actions are divinely predestined, however free and morally responsible we may seem to be to ourselves, we cannot be free and morally responsible in the sight of God, but must instead be his helpless puppets. Such "freedom" is like that of a patient acting out a series of post-hypnotic suggestions; he appears, even to himself, to be free, but his volitions have actually been predetermined by another will, that of the hypnotist, in relation to whom the patient is not a free agent.²

We are thus confronted by two mutually exclusive concepts, both of which cannot simultaneously be held by a rational mind. Either we must reject the view that God stands in direct causal connection with every event that occurs, or we have already rejected the concept of free will. Some, of course, will tenaciously maintain the truth of both, but as might be expected their unconvincing dogmatism will lead only to chaos. By affirming the truth of both sides of a contradiction, one sacrifices the law of self contradiction and consequently loses the very criterion by which truth may be judged from falsity. If the Bible must be believed at the expense of the law of self contradiction, the price is too high to pay; for the price of belief


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has been the loss of the principle necessary for understanding anything, including
the Bible. By sacrificing the law of self contradiction at one point it is sacri­
ficed at all points; there being no criterion by which to determine when it is
applicable and when it is not. The statement "God loves his people" may imply that
"God hates his people." The only result is chaos.

Now in the heat of controversy, let us not forget that the contradiction appar­
tently facing us exists in part as a matter of definition. In my view, it need not
exist. To demonstrate this I shall make a proposal for which I shall not argue;
the purpose of the proposal being to show that the sovereignty of God can be ex­
pressed in such a way that it does not contradict the idea of human freedom. My
proposal is this: God's character consists of perfect Wisdom, Justice, and Truth.
He is sovereign because He is the Creator of all substance and the Source of all
power. However, there are some events the existence of which is contingent upon
factors other than the explicit will of God, even though God is the source of power
for their occurrence. God is sovereign because he is the possessor and delegator of
all power, not because He was unable to create human freedom. By creating man with
the capacity of freedom, God created an agent with the delegated power to initiate
actions which are not determined by the will of the Creator. But this in itself is
the will of the Creator. It is the explicit will of God that there exist in man
motives and their consequences contingent upon nothing but the operations of human
freedom. Strictly speaking, then, nothing exists against the will of God in the
sense that God is powerless to prevent its occurrence, but some events are permitted
of which God is neither directly the cause nor indirectly the cause of the cause.
Although God created free will, He is neither the cause of the actions initiated by
freedom, nor indirectly the cause of the free decisions determining those actions.
To deny God the power to create such an independent force is itself to deny God his
sovereignty.

The significance of this argument (which certainly is not original with me) is
missed amazingly often. It is one thing to assert that a belief in free will is
inconsistent with Biblical data, but it is another thing to argue on philosophical
grounds that a belief in free will is inconsistent with the concept of God's omnip­
tonence. Notice the manner in which Mr. Loraine Boettner characterizes the problem.

God has lost none of His power, and it is highly dishonoring to Him
to suppose that He is struggling along with the human race doing the
best He can but unable to accomplish His purposes. The Arminian idea
which assumes that the serious intentions of God may in some cases
be defeated, and that man, who is not only a creature but a sinful
creature, can exercise veto power over the plans of almighty God, is
in striking contrast with the Biblical idea of His immeasurable great­
ness and exaltation by which he is removed from all the weaknesses of
humanity....To suppose that His plans fail and that He strives to no
effect, is to reduce him to the level of His creatures.3

We have before us, of course, a pure caricature. Those of us who defend the
autonomous character of the human will need not argue that God has lost some of His
power, nor that conditions prevent Him from doing His will. If the Divine purpose
is to offer salvation to those who, by the operations of their own freedom, are
willing to accept, how is human freedom a limitation of God's power? In what sense
does the view that God offers mercy to all by electing to save those who repent
imply that man is capable of defeating the intentions of God? It is meaningless to
argue that the purposes of God are cancelled by the existence of freely inspired
motives when God's purpose is for man to exercise his freedom. To be sure, the
exegetical evidence may ultimately fall on the side of the Calvinists; but although
the scope of this essay does not include a consideration of the exegetical problem,
we must not forget the bearing which philosophical discussion has on exegesis.

3. Loraine Boettner, Studies in Theology, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947),
p. 319.
understand how freedom operates. He understands that freedom operates independently
of Divine control, and that the decisions arrived at by freedom are not predictable
even in principle. Not even God can predict a freely inspired decision beforehand.
This does not, however, effect God's omniscience. We have already shown that since
God is not a time-bound creature, his knowledge of our future is not predictive in
nature. All of space and time exists before the mind of God as an eternal intuition.
God's knowledge of our future is identical in kind with his knowledge of our past.

One need not fear that God has lost any of his power, or that he has lost con­
trol of the universe. First, God alone is the creator of man's freedom. The capac­
ity of free choice is a power delegated by God to man. All power is from God.
Second, God has the power to overcome man's freedom at any given instant, but the
Divine character prevents him from continually invading human privacy in order to
control man's will. Third, God has decreed that man ex ercise his freedom, so that
those actions contingent upon the operations of freedom do not violate the Divine
purpose. To be sure, there are many actions which God prefers that freedom not pro­
duce; but the existence of such actions in no way violates the Divine purpose, be­
cause God wills to permit them if the decisions arrived at by freedom produce them.
And, finally, the creation of independent forces in the universe does not release
God from his control over the historical process. God's immeasurable sovereignty
is proven by the fact that he is capable of allowing to exist freely inspired mo­
tives and their immediate consequences, and he is yet able to adapt these conse­
quences to the production of his own historical goals. God is not merely a Prime
Mover. He continually superintends and interacts with history. "It is through the
instrumentality of free, morally-conceived decisions and value judgments that God
superintends history's movement."6

6. Edward John Carnell, An Introduction to Christian Apologetics, (Grand

BOOK REVIEW
The Whole Person in a Broken World by Paul Tournier
by Mary Enos

In most of his writings Dr. Tournier deals with the problems of individual
patients; but in this book he turns to the sickness of the world. He hypothesizes
that the sickness follows from repression of man's spirit as civilization has been
cut off from its spiritual sources.

In place of the spiritual, religious and poetic view of the world, mankind has
introduced a scientific, realistic and economic view (as if in rebellion to the
philosophy of the late middle ages which tried to confine life and all culture to
a rigid system derived from faith). The modern world frequently accuses the church
of being the inhibitor of freedom of thought and being. (Tournier acknowledges
the problem of the church's historical withdrawal from the world; yet he maintains
that the church remains the only spiritual guide, which can give direction to men's
minds, finding the fundamental problems and bringing understanding to them).

Tournier sees world development as parallel to that of the individual who in his
adolescent years, questions everything learned in childhood; then gradually redis­
covers an integrating and mature faith. However, if integration does not occur
(he contends that this has happened to the world) there results a "neurosis of de­
fiance," especially defiance toward the authority of others and of God.

In the Western World's neurosis, metaphysical intuition, poetic inspiration
and supernatural revelation are repressed, and the attempt is made to build society
upon material realities and objective knowledge. The attitude is to let specialists
take care of philosophical, artistic, moral and religious problems. However, the

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problems of value and of feeling, which society tells man are unimportant, cannot be wholly suppressed or eliminated; man cherishes a justified intuition that the need for love, spiritual loneliness, fear of death, the riddle of evil, and the mystery of God are important.

The cure for the world's neurosis is an integration of faith and life in each person. When man suppressed the spirit, he suppressed the means of communication between God and himself. In reality he yearns for a renewed spiritual life which the repression has not been able to eliminate. Ironically, the repressed always returns to consciousness in disguised forms, e.g. a repressed spiritual faith may show up as scientific materialism.

Existing spiritual values no longer have a decisive influence on the destiny of culture. The schism between spiritual and temporal realities has resulted in a dogma which says that one's private life with its religious ideas has no affect on one's public role; therefore divorces and adulterers make laws for the protection of the family and dishonest business men sit in committees of economic advisors.

Our culture is without spiritual orientation. The tyrannical domination of the church stimulated the expedience of church-state separation. It will now be necessary to find a new harmony between the church and society, between the spirit and the body, which will result in freedom and spiritual maturity.

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