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NAMES AND IDENTITY IN GRAHAM GREENE'S NOVELS

GRAHAM GREENE'S LANDSCAPE IS BY NOW familiar to most of us as a blasted heath with the blasting still continuing in the background. His characters live, love, betray one another and die under his motto, “For this is Hell, nor are we out of it.” What compounds the Greene hero's tragedy is that while he is aware that he is in hell, he is also aware that there is a heaven; this heaven is a barely perceived, undefined realm of existence from which he is excluded because he is unable to imagine it fully. The Greene hero, like Dr. Faustus, lives with the tormenting awareness of his own desolation. The Greene priests who sum up suicides and murderers hint at the possibility of mercy in another life, but for this life, Greene's heroes are damned.

The blame for this damnation does not rest with the hero alone, because a whole complex of social and psychological factors condition the Greene hero's crucial choices. One most significant such factor which appears again and again in Greene's stories and novels is lack of identity. The characters are robbed of a sense of self by a variety of circumstances. They have unknown or deserting fathers, they have no homes, they have no heritage, and they have no regular occupations; they seem to have been generated spontaneously on Greene's barren landscape. The Greene hero bumbles through life looking for any kind of guidepost, any continuity, and finding nothing but false signals and wrong directions. The suggestion may be that the true signals and right directions do exist, but because the Greene hero has no sense of self on which to base an accurate idea of the world, all his moves are false steps.

GREENE EMPHASIZES THE IDENTITY PROBLEM in his stories by the unusual ways he names his characters, giving them nicknames, multiple names, initials. Not only do the Greene characters' names define them, but the characters have strong attitudes about their own names and those of others. To the Greene hero, the world's unreality is reflected in his inability to name it, and he cannot name it because he himself has no real name. A typical example of this problem is found in the title story of the collection "May We Borrow Your Husband." The story describes a sad, nameless waif whose personal insecurity contributes to her husband being seduced away from her by homosexuals. She has only a nickname, "Poopy," which suggests her wilted insignificance. When the detached middle-aged narrator would try to help her he cannot, because he does not know her name. The story epitomizes the name-identity problem in Greene: naming implies commitment and clarity, but the Greene hero flounders in an uncommitted and muddled world. All the old signposts are down.

Some variations on the name-identity theme are found in analyzing the use of names in three novels, each of which describes a Greene hero's typical journey toward despair. These are This Gun for Hire, Brighton Rock, and The Comedians. These novels were chosen virtually at random, because Greene treats the same issues in all his novels, and the name-identity question could as easily have been discussed in The Confidential Agent, The Ministry of Fear, or any number of other stories. The names change, but their function remains the same. Greene gives his characters names which describe their mental landscapes, and he lets their attitudes toward their names and others' show their desperate, futile attempts to define themselves with reference to their worlds.

This Gun for Hire concerns a contract murderer's hesitating and ineffective steps toward self-redefinition. In this novel there is a parallel between hero and anti-hero, both named James. James Raven, the hired gun, goes by his last name, which represents his identity. His heritage consists of violence and hatred: a father who was hanged, a mother who committed suicide, a brutal boarding school. He believes that because of his heritage


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he is what he is, a bird of prey. At the novel's beginning he commits two murders. In his flight he falls in love with Anne Crowder, the hero's girl. This softening proves his undoing, for having lost his negative identity, he has no other to take its place.

Raven clearly thinks of himself as "Raven"; he seems reluctant to divulge his first name, and no one ever calls him by it. In fact, we know it only from a poster. He evades Anne's question about it.

"I don't take any stock in homes," Raven said. "I've been in one."
"Tell me about it. What's your name?"
"You know my name. You've seen it in the papers."
"I mean your Christian name."
"Christian. That's a good joke, that one. Do you think anyone ever turns the other cheek these days?"
He tapped the barrel of the automatic resentfully on the cinder floor. "Not a chance."2

Raven avoids naming others as well. At first he feels no remorse for the murders he has committed; he de-personalizes people in his thoughts, thinking of those he has killed as "the minister" and "the secretary." When love of Anne has softened him and made him feel guilt, he tries to name his victim, but he does not know the name he needs.

He said, "I'll see you again—sometime," and when she mechanically reassured him, "Yes," he laughed with his aching despair. "Not likely, after I've killed. . . ." But he didn't even know the man's name. (p. 208)

The opposite of James Raven is James Mather, who, as a policeman and a conventionally "good" person, is untroubled by conflict and, it would seem, sensitivity. Mather believes in and exemplifies the internal order Raven lacks. Mather's identity is quite clear to himself and to others. He can easily be read by his girl, who finds it inappropriate to give him a nickname.

He learnt, for instance, the name and address of the local papers, the 
Nottwich Journal and the Nottwich Guardian. . . . He discovered the park, a place of dull wilted trees and palings and gravel paths for perambulators. Any of these facts might be of use, and they humanized the map of Nottwich so that he could think of it in terms of people, just as he thought of London, when he was on a job, in terms of Charlie's and Joe's. (p. 109)

While Raven dehumanizes by avoiding names, Mather humanizes by naming. But Mather's view of the world is of course an oversimplification. When Anne has betrayed Raven to his death, Mather is unable to understand the complexities of the situation, but can see only that his girl is safe and crime has been punished. For James Mather it's a simple world.

The issue of the name appears in other areas of this novel as well. Raven has been hired by a man who calls himself Cholmondeley. If Raven has a "bad" name and Marcus a "good" one, Cholmondeley has none. He is a fat effete cipher who spends most of his time eating sweets.

Raven said, "I thought you were never coming, Mr. Chol-mon-deley," pronouncing every syllable. "Chumley, my dear man, Chumley," Mr. Cholmondeley corrected him.
"It doesn't matter how it's pronounced. I don't suppose it's your own name."
"After all, I chose it," Mr. Cholmondeley said.
His ring flashed under the great inverted bowls of light as he turned the pages of the menu. "Have a parfait."(p. 12)

Cholmondeley has other names, and we never learn his real one. He seems to have no identity; he is a self-created caricature. Appropriately, he is only a middleman. He works for the senile steel magnate Sir Marcus, whose origin is also obscure.

His [Sir Marcus's] name did not appear at all in Who's Who, and an enterprising journalist who had once tried to write his life found extraordinary gaps in registers: it wasn't possible to follow any rumour to its source. (p. 168)

The characters' names suggest the grade and type of their evil. Raven is a trained bird of prey working for the caricature Cholmondeley, and behind them all is Sir Marcus, like Dante's slobbering devil presiding over Hell. And also as in Dante, the evil is far more realistic than the good. We don't quite believe in the stolid anonymous Detective Sergeant James Mather who gets the girl, but Raven is real.

THE NAME-IDENTITY QUESTION IS ALSO treated in Brighton Rock, which, like This Gun for Hire, describes a murder, then the pursuit of, and finally, the destruction of the murderer. Few characters have their own names in Brighton Rock, and the multiple names and nicknames illustrate problems in self-definition.

The first part of the novel is like a morality play. A former gang member named Hale is being hunted down by Death—in the form of the novel's main character, bent on revenge. The surroundings of gay, seedy Brighton contrast sharply with the seriousness of the death-hunt. Hale is limited in his attempt at flight because he wants to keep his unimportant job, in which he, using the name Kolley Kibber, hands out cards to the public for a newspaper promotion. Like other Greene characters, Hale is sensitive about names; in trying to shield his own, he attempts to preserve his shadowy identity.

What's your name?"
"Fred." He said it automatically: it was the name

he always gave to chance acquaintances; from some obscure motive of secrecy he shielded his own name, Charles; from childhood he had loved secrecy, a hiding place, the dark; but it was in the dark he had met Kite, the Boy, Cubitt, the whole mob. Hale desperately pins his hope for survival on the companionship of the sensual Ida, who, rather like Fellowship in Everyman, deserts him. "Fred" Hale, a man with small knowledge of himself or of the world, dies trying to protect what little identity he has.

After Hale's death the focus shifts to the conflict between his killer, Pinkie, and Ida, who would revenge Hale although she did not save him. The character developed in most detail is Pinkie. Pinkie thinks a great deal about his identity. Like Raven, he comes from sordidness. He was born in Nelson Place, a poor Catholic ghetto where his witnessing of his parents' "Saturday night exercise" left him with a lasting aversion to sex and to intimacy of any kind. His hatred of sex and his substitution of cruelty for intimacy are perhaps the most significant facets of his personality. In a sense, Pinkie, too, has no identity; he has rejected the values of Nelson Place, but has only negative values to substitute for them. His state of mind is suggested by the condition of Paradise Piece, his childhood home.

Half Paradise Piece had been torn up as if by bomb bursts: the children played about the steep slope of rubble; a piece of fireplace showed houses had once been there. . . . His home was gone: a flat place among the rubble may have marked its hearth; the room at the bend of the stairs where the Saturday night exercise had taken place was just air. (p. 140)

There is no real name given for Pinkie; he is usually called "the Boy," an epithet even more impersonal than his nickname. Of course Pinkie is no "boy" as the word is usually understood, for he is a calculating killer at seventeen. Yet his very existence suggests perhaps that the innocence of childhood is illusory. In one way, however, Pinkie really is a "boy," for he looks at the world without understanding it, with all the rage and hatred of the betrayed child.

Most of Brighton Rock is, then, about the second manhunt; Ida, the embodiment of Law and Order, Right and Wrong, chases down the Boy. The pursuit is complicated by Pinkie's struggle to remain evil. Like Raven, Pinkie is softened by attraction to a woman. To save his skin he must marry a witness, Rose, a waitress also from Nelson Place who is as good as he is evil. Occasionally, he feels stirrings of pity for her. But his evil is too strong and too habitual to be overcome. The suggestion seems to be that if he could accept through Rose his real identity, his Nelson Place heritage, then he could be saved. But he does not; he is still "the Boy" at his death.

Brighton Rock is filled with nicknames, which often suggest fragmented lives. There is Kite, Pinkie's only father figure and the man Hale betrayed to his death. Pinkie has patterned his life after that of the ascetic gang leader in order to make his life style as different from Nelson Place's as possible. But Pinkie hardly knew Kite, and copies only his mannerisms. Besides Kite there are Dallow, Cubitt, Spicer, and others, all vague figures who live in the world of evil just below the carefree surface of Brighton. This use of nicknames adds to the allegorical tone of the novel. Around the central conflicts (between Ida and Pinkie and between Pinkie's habitual self and his ineffective better nature) hover the unnamed, incomplete characters, like abstractions emptied of content. The story is a negative morality play: it describes the journey of the Boy, Hell already in his mind, toward his final damnation, assisted by Vices. It is the Boy's drunken lawyer who quotes, "For this is Hell, nor are we out of it."

There are a few characters in the novel who have real names. The waitress Rose, the only unequivocally good character in the novel, has a simple name which suggests her natural and spontaneous acceptance of life. She makes no attempt to deny or to hide her Nelson Place heritage. Other named characters include Ida Arnold and her friend Phil Corkery. These people believe in themselves and in Right and Wrong; they never glance below the surface of things. In Greene's world they are neither good nor evil, but merely ignorant. For such people—as for James Mather—there are no ambiguities. In Greene's novels, then, to have a real name means to have a sense of self, but it may be a false sense of self.

IN THE COMEDIANS, THE NAME-IDENTITY question is made more explicit and is in fact one of the main foci of the novel. The three main characters are named Brown, Smith, and Jones, phony-sounding names for three men who turn out to be not quite real. The main character, Brown, is struck by the irony of the name situation. When he first notices the coincidence, he says, "Smith, Jones, and Brown,—the situation was improbable. I had a half-right to my name, but had he?" Later on, he comments, "Again I was aware of the three names, interchangeable like comic masks in a farce." (p. 17) The three characters' experiences in the Haiti of Papa Doc show their various ways of being not real.

Brown's preoccupation with his own name is associated with his sense of not belonging anywhere. Like Raven and Pinkie, he has no acceptable heritage to mold himself by. His capricious mother never took much interest in him, and left him to be educated by priests. His father he knows nothing about: "The man she had chosen for my father left Monte Carlo before my birth. Perhaps his

3 Brighton Rock, p. 13. Subsequent references by page number in text.

name was Brown. There is a ring of truth in the name Brown—she wasn’t usually so modest in her choice." (p. 52) Besides not knowing whether his name is really his, Brown has no homeland. "I was born in Monaco. . . . That is almost the same as being a citizen of nowhere." (p. 223) In his youth, he had a chance to choose a solid identity for himself by becoming a priest. But he did not enter the priesthood; he left to wander through the world without any sense of self. He has another opportunity for an identity of sorts: as a hotel owner he could affirm his vague identity as a transient by ministering to transients, providing them a pleasure-dome. But even this is denied him by Papa Doc’s regime. He is truly "a citizen of nowhere," wandering through the world playing temporarily whatever roles he falls into.

The name Brown has another suggestion: Brown lives in a brown world. In all the roles he plays, in all the events with which chance involves him, he sees the world cynically. Because he does not believe in himself, he has no belief in others. He invariably suspects the worst possible motivation for any action. His mistress says to him,

"My dear, try to believe we exist when you aren’t there. We’re independent of you. None of us is like you fancy we are. Perhaps it wouldn’t matter much if your thoughts were not so dark, always so dark. . . . It’s a dark Brown world you live in. I’m sorry for you." (p. 219)

Finally, his false suspicions of another cause him to send a friend to his death. And not even the realization that he has caused a death is enough to awaken Brown to reality. He is still without a sense of self and therefore without a viewpoint from which to judge the world rightly. Appropriately, at the end Brown, who is unable to commit himself to life, becomes an undertaker’s assistant.

Brown sees Smith and Jones as like himself because they too are unreal. Jones is a petty crook with grandiose romantic ideas and a limited understanding of the world. Jones also has a low self-image. Unlike Brown, Jones knows that the name he goes by is not his real one, but an alias. What Jones wants most is respectability, but he believes that attaining it is impossible. He divides the world into "toffs" and "tarts." Describing the distinction to Brown, he says,

"The toffs have a settled job or a good income. They have a stake somewhere like you have in your hotel. The tarts—we, we pick a living here and there—in saloon-bars. We keep our ears open and our eyes skinned."

"You live on your wits, is that it?"

"Or we die of them often enough."

"And the toffs—haven’t they any wits?"

"They don’t need wits. They have reason, intelligence, character." (p. 18)

Tarts may pretend to be toffs, but they cannot become toffs. Jones, like Brown, lives in a world he has created. Jones divides everything into unrealistically clear-cut categories. He places himself among the bad, and cannot see any possibility of change for himself. He lies about himself and finally dies to protect his romanticized image of himself as a war hero. All during his life, he is tortured by the discrepancy between what he would like to be and what he is, and he never sees that the world is more various than his rigid categories would allow.

Although Smith’s name is really Smith, he too is unreal. His middle name Abel represents his role as the innocent brother. Smith’s sense of self is a false one; he has created himself. Totally idealistic, Smith simply does not see anything which would stand in the way of his plans. His goal is to bring vegetarianism to Haiti, thus preventing the "acidity" and resulting violence which he believes meat-eating causes. Smith once ran for President "on the vegetarian ticket"; now he plays the role of the Presidential Candidate in Haiti, allowing himself to be squired around and treated as a visiting dignitary. He chats about vegetarianism with grotesque barbarians, overlooking squalor and horror on every side of him. Smith misses all the ironies. In contrast with Brown, who treats everything as a joke, Smith takes trivia seriously.

None of the three "comedians" succeeds in defining himself in terms of the world. Brown translates all he sees into bad. Smith sees only the good. Jones sees bad and good but has false ideas about their nature. All misperceive themselves and external reality. Smith, Jones, and Brown are contrasted with other characters like Dr. Magiot, the black doctor struggling realistically with his country’s problems. For Dr. Magiot, the world is real.

**THE NAME-IDENTITY ISSUE AS IT APPEARS in these and other Greene novels defines the insoluble problem mentioned earlier: if a person has no sense of self (represented in the stories by a single, "real" name), then he can have no feeling of positive participation in the world. For to have the "I-thou" realtionship with humanity, the "I" must exist. In part because of the uncertainty and desolation of their worlds, Greene’s characters do not have this sense of self. And rather than choose a pattern from the inadequate material offered to them, they resign themselves to the hopelessness of complete lack of identity, believing themselves caught by fate. Dr. Faustus is in a sense damned for a failure of the imagination. So too are Greene’s heroes, who are unable to compensate for their lack by observation and honest discovery. Because they believe that some people are simply born into a wrong relationship with the world, it becomes true for them, and they are trapped. The characters’ names and attitudes towards naming show the variety of unreal ways of perceiving the self in the world, misconceptions which lead to entrapment, discouragement, and despair. [1]
CHRISTIANS AND POLITICS

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PUBLIC POLICY.

THERE ARE OCCASIONS WHEN ONE concludes that the best thing for Christians to do about politics is leave it alone. A small personal example may illustrate.

Some years ago my congregation sent me as delegate to a regional convention of one of the major North American Lutheran church bodies. The main controversy at the convention involved a motion declaring the church’s support of a guaranteed annual income. That recommendation coincided with my own inclinations, but I found myself reading the particular motion on the floor with increasing dismay. The difficulty began with the preamble, an extended commentary consisting of equal parts social gospel theology and crackpot political economy. Support of the motion on the basis of the preamble would entail a view of capitalism as an utter occpation and an identifcation of the apostolic faith with a particularly simple-minded version of social democracy. The motion itself set the projected guaranteed income at an impossibly high level, supporting its position with spurious statistical argument and inflamed moral rhetoric. All in all—as I put it to my fellow delegates—it appeared that the economic analysis in the motion had been prepared by theologians and the theological justification by economists.

Things turned out all right in the end. After extended and heated debate and a thoroughly confusing series of motions and countermotions, the convention threw out the preamble, eliminated any mention of a precise income level, and retained a simple statement of support for the principle itself. Yet no one could be confident it had all been worth it. The delegates had expended a great deal of time and psychic energy considering a motion that, whatever its intrinsic value, would carry no influence whatever out in the real political world and which, in the way it was debated and the forms in which it was cast, could edify neither church nor world.

This minor instance exemplifies the feckless and inept manner in which the church so often deals with politics and public policy. The decline of the Christian church, which involves at its heart a decline of faith, is nowhere more clear than in its involvement in political matters. The problem is not as is so often supposed, that the church lacks boldness in addressing social issues. The most casual perusal of the political statements of the National and World Councils of Churches or of the Boards for Social Action of the various denominations reveals that the problem is more an excess of bold witness than any lack. On everything from minimum wage laws to the B-1 bomber to the equal rights amendment and on into infinity the churches are willing to proclaim with great confidence and specificity just what it is that God’s word requires. The church in addressing the world does not characteristically lack boldness; it unfortunately does too often lack wisdom, knowledge, intellectual and moral integrity, or even simple common sense. Everyone knows in advance what most mainline churches will say on most political issues and hardly anyone pays any attention.

WHAT LENDS IRONY TO THE CHURCH’S assured manner in dealing with politics is the
contrast with its contemporary approach to theology. Clerics who speak with a modesty bordering on agnosticism concerning fundamental matters of faith suddenly acquire the most serene certitude when explicating the gospel’s ethical imperatives for political life. Indeed one can, without being entirely whimsical, posit for American churches a law of the inverse ratio between theological and political assurance. We are forever being told by modern theologians what the Biblical faith specifies for political and social arrangements, but the substance of the faith itself seems to become ever more problematic. Orthodox faith withers as political engagement blooms. (All this applies in reverse—roughly speaking at least—to the nation’s evangelicals; they, however, while increasingly significant in numbers, have but minimal influence in the intellectual leadership of American Christianity. One finds few evangelicals at prestigious seminaries or as generally recognized spokespersons for American religion.)

Despite the maladroit and faithless way in which the church frequently confronts political issues, most Christians would be unhappy with a solution that solved the problem by ignoring it or by willing it into oblivion. Politics is important to our lives, which means that it cannot be insignificant to our Christian life. We must, if we are to take our faith seriously, apply it in a serious way to the things that make a difference to us, and politics, whether we want it to or not, does make a difference. Yet, when in the practice the church seems so regularly to bungle the job of relating faith to political life, either by elevating secular political preferences into mandates of the gospel or by reducing the gospel’s transcendent perspectives to political pieties, the temptation to separate religion entirely from politics becomes most beguiling.

It is in the face of this dilemma that Richard John Neuhaus’s new book Christian Faith and Public Policy, comes as such a distinct, if not wholly unqualified, blessing. This is, in brief, a very good book (good enough to make one wish it were even better) and a most useful one as well. Its usefulness consists not only in its seriousness of perspective and debate but also in a coherent and continuous structure of argument which proceeds systematically from theological assumptions to ethical principles to political positions. Too often theological works on politics argue either at a level of abstraction so rarified as to remove them from political reality or in a mode of discourse scarcely distinguishable from secular assumptions and preoccupations. Neuhaus keeps his theological and political perspectives tied together and treats both with depth and sophistication. If he does not entirely succeed in deriving his politics from his theology, his attempt is nonetheless valuable and instructive.

NEUHAUS’S APPROACH TO POLITICS appears to arise directly from the circumstances of his personal situation. He is a Lutheran parish pastor with a deep commitment to the Catholic tradition of the Christian faith. He is also a deeply engaged social critic and political activist. In these non-complementary circumstances lie the problem: Christian orthodoxy in general and Lutheranism in particular have frequently been identified with political quietism, while serious social and political thought in modern America remains overwhelmingly secular. Neuhaus insists on remaining in both his worlds and refuses to sacrifice one to the other. This is the dynamic behind his major role in the Hartford Appeal of a few years back, in which he and like-minded religious intellectuals, while reaffirming their commitment to significant social change, emphasized the transcendent nature of religion and warned against the conflation of religious truth with purely humanist perspectives. Faith is related to social action, the Hartford signers argued, but is not coextensive with it and must retain its distinctive—and finally ultimate—integrity.

Neuhaus wants a politics rooted finally in Christian conviction, one that, because of that conviction, is urgent in its hopes and practice but is at the same time free from the fanatical or apocalyptic temptations that can so easily afflict Christian political engagement. He is careful to avoid absolute claims for his own convictions and insights. In working on this study, he informs us, he was “newly impressed by the elements of risk, fallibility, contingency, and awareness of ignorance that must mark thoughtful engagement in public affairs.” Too often, he goes on, “what passes for prophetic pronouncement is merely the posturing of unwarranted certitude.” Moreover, the church in its worship life looks ultimately to a reality that transcends any of this world’s political arrangements; its sacramental celebrations “are exercises in the politics of the ultimate to which all other politics are penultimate.”

At the same time, however, Neuhaus insists on the urgent, even redemptive, nature of political life and suggests that whatever the dangers of Christians confusing their personal political preferences with the requirements of the gospel, “the greater and more common sin . . . is to be paralyzed by uncertainty.” In the same vein, he
argues that “although there is a danger of manipulating sacred symbols for partisan purposes, the much more common temptation is the evasion of the controversial or the use of sacred symbols to reinforce the legitimacy of the status quo.” What the church must always remember, Neuhaus concludes, is that God is active in the world and that the political arrangements of the secular order are indeed penultimate: “the present political task participates, by the grace and power of God, in the ultimate re-ordering of reality that is his work in history and that will be consummated in the kingdom of God.”

Neuhaus’s theological aim, then, is to find a rationale for a politics at once urgent and provisional, free alike from Christian resignation and Christian fanaticism. He finds it in a traditional place: the image of two kingdoms of God. The two kingdoms model—expressed historically in various ways as the left and right hands of God or as the distinctive realms of creation and redemption, justice and love, law and gospel—has fallen into disfavor among many Christian ethicists because of its presumed tendency to quietism and withdrawal. Neuhaus presents it, however, not as a way of walling off sacred from secular or of dividing Christian life into separate compartments but as a metaphor for the tension between what he terms the “nowness” and “not yetness” of human history. Neuhaus’s thinking about sacred and secular alike is always dialectical. He means the two kingdoms to express not “a static formula of coexistence” between church and world but the unresolvable and creative tension between history and eschatology, between what is and what is to be, between society’s demonic and redemptive possibilities. The two kingdoms are distinguished in principle but overlapping and interpenetrating in practice even as, in similar metaphor, the kingdom of God already is and is yet to come. It is Neuhaus’s hope that his eschatologically-based formulation of the two kingdoms will suggest “both the integral nature of politics to the hope for salvation and, at the same time, the modestly ‘proleptic’ nature of political action at this provisional moment in our relationship of the oncoming kingdom of God.”

HAVING BRIEFLY SKETCHED HIS THEOLOGICAL presuppositions (readers interested in a fuller—and more radical—statement of Neuhaus’s fundamental assumptions should consult his earlier Time Toward Home [New York: Seabury, 1975]), Neuhaus goes on to describe nine ways in which the church can help relate faith to public policy: prayer and proclamation, cultivation of civil virtue and piety, the internal politics of the Christian community, individual Christian vocations, research and education, advocacy by groups and individuals, corporate statements, official leadership, and political implementation. From there he proceeds to an outline of 57 general ethical principles or “testings for decision” in political action; and then, finally, he presents a wide-ranging and inclusive, if necessarily compressed, survey of the major issues of contemporary public policy. In assessing his conclusions, it is perhaps useful to reverse Neuhaus’s own procedure and move backwards from his politics to his theology.

It is not possible, even in capsule form, to summarize Neuhaus’s positions on the major political issues of the age. He attempts to impose some degree of thematic unity by positing three basic presuppositions for testing policy: enthusiasm for pluralism, commitment to a fully-democratic process of decision-making, and examination of issues particularly in terms of their impact “upon the poor, the marginal, and the outcast.” (The wording of the last point is of the sort that usually warns us of impending bathos; in this case, this is fortunately not so.) Neuhaus’s general stance might best be described as post-liberal—a modish term, but difficult to avoid in this instance. More often that not, his political views fall on the left side of the spectrum (though they do so less consistently than expected or than one suspects would have been the case a few years ago), but he very seldom dispenses conventional liberal wisdom and is frequently skeptical of the standard secular pieties. In fact—and this is most surprising for one who not long ago was seriously considering the need for a revolution in America—Neuhaus at times sounds suspiciously like a neo-conservative. He appears to be one of those radicals, or former radicals, who finds it easier to get along with conservatives than with liberals.

At any rate, his comments on specific issues, whether one agrees with them or not, are normally intelligent, perceptive, and sensitive to complexity and ambiguity. One experiences difficulty with Neuhaus less over his particular political positions than with his efforts to connect those policy preferences to his theological assumptions.

Neuhaus argues reasonably that it is unnecessary that Christians find “an explicit theological or
scriptural warrant” for every political position they take. He recognizes the role of reason and of simple prudence in political life, and he acknowledges as well that most political issues involve enough moral ambiguity that Christians of equal moral passion and insight may legitimately come to differing conclusions concerning them. These concessions, however, come into at least partial conflict with Neuhaus’s concern that Christians, collectively as well as individually, should regularly involve themselves in political life as Christians and should do so, moreover, from an explicitly theological perspective: “Protest or advocacy that is offered in the name of the church or of the Christian faith must be clearly related to the Word of God, both law and gospel, by which the community of faith lives and offers itself in service to the world.”

The difficulties which arise from these contrasting emphases take varying forms. On not infrequent occasions, Neuhaus’s policy positions cannot sustain the churchly warrant suggested for them. Take, for example, his views on migrant agricultural labor.

The churches should strongly support the extension of labor protections to agricultural workers. This includes the necessary right to operate “closed union shops,” although we need to recognize some of the individual injustices this may create.

Whatever one’s views on the issue itself, it is difficult in the extreme to find a theological or moral imperative that would require arguing that “the churches should” support closed union shops for farm workers or anybody else. Surely this is an occasion for prudential judgment and not one that should be confused or muddied by assigning moral necessity to one side or the other.

There are other areas in which Neuhaus’s moral imperatives, while less capricious and more plausible, remain open to serious question or at least require greater elaboration. He argues that the churches must “persistently, boldly and uncompromisingly” oppose the “morally intolerable” assumptions of mutual assured destruction on which current strategic planning rests. Instinctively, we rush to agree: the balance of terror that currently guards the peace between the US and the USSR is indeed morally absurd, even monstrous. Yet that does not necessarily make it “morally intolerable,” not, at least, if one believes that Christians must actively involve themselves even in those terrible areas of political life in which there exist among available alternatives no good choices. In such circumstances, that which is unavoidable cannot be morally intolerable, and there is a good case to be made that in the current or reasonably foreseeable state of Soviet-American relations no plausible alternative exists to the balance of terror. (Déente does not change this; it in fact depends in considerable part directly upon it.)

History cannot be undone or reconstituted simply by act of will. Neuhaus wants the churches to challenge “the climate of fear or complacency” that in his view prevents the consideration of strategic alternatives, but that appraisal suggests a backwards view of things. Our nuclear dilemma arises out of the history of international relations—and of technological changes—since 1917. It is not simply an irrational creation of moral idiots; nor is it subject to resolution simply through moral urgency. One cannot, as Neuhaus wants to, reject pacifism, accept the reality of the US as a responsible world power, acknowledge the legitimacy of pursuit of the national interest—and then insist on a stance of absolute moral rejection of a policy that in existing circumstances flows naturally from those stipulations. Neuhaus suggests as his alternative steps in the direction of unilateral disarmament, but it is difficult to believe that anyone with a realistic view of Soviet intentions or assumptions could prescribe any such moral duty to those charged with protection of America’s security and survival.

Here as elsewhere, Neuhaus appears to want things both ways. He admits that we face “excruciating dilemmas” for which there are no easy solutions; yet he wants at the same time to assume a stance of moral boldness and clarity. His analyses admit over and over that things are not simple, but his prescriptions don’t always reflect that knowledge.

On some rare occasions, on the other hand, Neuhaus strangely holds back from making the clear moral claims that certain issues call for and that seem, moreover, to follow from his own analysis. Thus he shows in an excellent brief discussion that Christians must look on abortion with great moral repugnance and that no competing “rights” can override the right to life, and yet his policy recommendations waffle around among suggestions that “some Christians believe” in one solution while “other Christians strongly support” other positions and that “yet others would favor” a third approach. After appearing finally to take a firm stand (“public policy on abortion should have a clear and emphatic bias toward preserving the life of the unborn”) he abruptly and lamely retreats: “How such a policy might be established, or even if it is possible, is the subject of continuing debate.”
Neuhaus's reticence here is both uncharacteristic and unnecessary.

THE UNDERLYING ISSUE IN ALL THESE cases is the problematic one of relating policy positions to theological and moral assumptions. So often—and instances large and small could easily be multiplied—Neuhaus's choices appear simply random or idiosyncratic. The problem is not that Neuhaus is a particularly arbitrary or incoherent thinker, for he is neither. The problem emerges rather from the exercise itself. Neuhaus understands this: he concedes that while his policy preferences follow plausibly from his theological and moral assumptions, they do not do so necessarily. Here is the heart of the matter. For if Christians of comparable knowledge and moral sense can legitimately come to opposing conclusions on most issues, what does it mean to speak of Christian positions on those issues? And if Christians cannot with reasonable confidence say "thus saith the Lord" on most policy matters, why then assume that the churches should frequently and boldly speak out on them?

There is a distinction to be made between the necessity for choice and the necessity for Christian choice. We are required to make many decisions, even many important ones, where the word of God offers no clear advice. It is one thing to argue that no significant area of life falls outside Christian concern, but quite another to suppose that Christian faith and piety offer clear guides for all significant choices. It is worth recalling the ancient wisdom that political philosophy consists of finding reasons for doing things we want to do instinctively, and it damages the social bond to inflame politics by confusing our instincts with God's requirements. Invoking transcendent and absolute claims where there is no clear requirement or justification for them renders impossible the civility and tolerance necessary to reasoned democratic discourse.

Neuhaus understands all this and makes rhetorical concessions to much of it. Yet his dialectical tensions regularly find an activist resolution. He finds less danger in Christians speaking from their faith when they should not than in refraining from doing so when they should. For Christians to be "paralyzed with uncertainty" is, in his view, a failure of courage and of faith: "it is the refusal to live and act, also in the political realm, in radical dependence upon God's forgiving and correcting love." But the significant question is not whether Christians should act, but whether they should act with the explicit or implicit assumption of Christian sanction for their acts. God's "forgiving and correcting love" applies to our sins, not to our honest failures of knowledge and understanding or our lack of wisdom. Most political mistakes involve error, not sin; the answer to inadequate politics is not forgiveness and grace but better political judgment.

A SIMILAR LINE OF ARGUMENT APPLIES to Neuhaus's comments on uncertainty and courage. He subtitles his book, "thinking and acting in the courage of uncertainty." But again the point is not whether we act, but the basis upon which we do so. One can argue against Neuhaus that claiming to discern the will of God in an ambiguous situation involves not courage but lack of humility. We have to act, and we have to seek God's will for our actions, but our ignorance is such and the ambiguity and complexity of the moral life are such that we very often must act without being able confidently to invoke God's will in our defense. That being the case, in most discrete political situations Christians will act essentially out of the same calculations of prudence and reason as do secularists (however different their ultimate motives and rationale may be). Neuhaus grants that our understanding of God's word is fallible and uncertain, and that most political decisions are exercises in prudential choice; yet at the same time he wants the Christian churches to act regularly in political affairs and to do so directly out of their faith and piety. There are times when his dialectical tensions look suspiciously like contradictions: the warnings of caution and contingency lack meaning up against all those specific injunctions as to what the churches "should" do on given issues.

There are excellent practical reasons for suggesting that the churches could do with less assurance in applying God's will to specific political cases. In the first place, by earnestly proclaiming God's preferences on an astonishingly inclusive range of issues, the churches overload and finally trivialize political piety. It seems obvious that the political impact of the churches would be greater if they limited themselves to those issues of major importance where the moral imperatives are relatively clear. By claiming to discern the will of God for every issue under the sun the churches simply appear morally arrogant and politically foolish.
There is also the matter of ideological partisanship, which Neuhaus notes but does not sufficiently emphasize. The simple, documentable fact is that too many national and international church bodies regularly apply the word of God to political issues in a manner that is partial, selective, and often crudely tendentious. The casual and arbitrary way in which the churches attach God's name to the prevailing preferences of the political Left or Right approaches blasphemy. (For the mainline churches, the identification is overwhelmingly with the Left; the fundamentalist and Bible churches, though they tend to be essentially apolitical, usually lean Right when addressing political matters.) One major reason for the leadership-lay gap on socio-political issues in so many churches today is the laity's anger and frustration over being fed a diet of partisan political biases which they are told they must swallow in the name of the Lord. Thus when the church does have truly prophetic words to utter at certain critical moments, those genuine morsels of bread lie lifeless and unheeded among all the stones that have preceded them. If the church wants to be heard in the world, or even by its own members, it will have to stop debasing its own moral coin through triviality and tendentiousness.

Neuhaus's political preferences follow no party line and he has himself spoken out against selective moral indignation and ideological manipulation of Christian social concern. He remains, nonetheless, committed on theological grounds to a more intimate and direct relationship between religious faith and public policy than is normal for those operating out of two kingdoms assumptions. The key here, as noted previously, is the eschatological basis of his version of the two kingdoms. His basic categories of "now" and "not yet" exist in tension, but their interconnection is more significant for Neuhaus's politics than is their distinctiveness. As he concedes, his formulation "assumes a more unified notion of history and the salvation promised to history" than does the classic two kingdoms tradition rooted in St. Augustine. (A far more explicit statement of the unity of history and eschatology may be found in Time Toward Home.)

IN THE PARTIAL MERGING OF HISTORY and eschatology, Neuhaus creates a basis for speaking of "the integral nature of politics to the hope for salvation." In Time Toward Home he goes so far as to argue that "all of history is redemptive history or none of history is redeemed," though he appears somewhat to draw back from that extreme position in the present study. The eschatological note in Christian Faith and Public Policy is always qualified by warnings of provisionality, but it remains essential to providing the tone of urgency in Neuhaus's political analysis. Thus he argues that while the Christian focuses ultimately on the promised kingdom of the future (prefigured in the Risen Christ and experienced and celebrated now in the holy Eucharist), that future focus infuses our understanding of the present and therefore "in no way detracts from the urgency" of our political tasks. For Neuhaus, political life in the order of creation does not lack for redemptive activity or significance.

The eschatological theme appears relatively unobjectionable until one attempts to apply it seriously. Then it seems to say either too much or too little. The problem is that post-apostolic history reveals no discernible pattern of eschatological meaning. (At one point in Time Toward Home Neuhaus speaks of "the unfolding revelation of history's purpose," but it seems certain he would disavow the doctrine of moral progress implicit in any full elaboration of that phrase.) Since this is so and since we have in any case only the vaguest idea of what the End Time might consist in, it seems not finally to mean very much to base political urgency in eschatological hopes. If we could discern the End Time in any way that has substantive political meaning, it would not make sense for us to do so provisionally or tentatively; if we can not, we do better to leave it largely to the realm of Christian mystery and hope and to find purpose for our politics elsewhere. A political slogan of a few years back warned against "immanentizing the Eschaton." That warning still holds, and if the Eschaton is neither immanent nor (so far as we know) imminent, then one wonders what it can add to political discourse beyond a certain rhetorical flourish.

In one way, this may state the case too strongly. It might well be argued that however vague our knowledge of final things, we do know in at least general outline the goods for which men universally strive and which might, in shorthand terms, be described as their eschatological hopes: peace, freedom, love, abundance, etc. But, as Neuhaus concedes, even if we can agree on our political ends we have no easy way of relating those ends to specific means. We know racial discrimination is morally wrong; we don't necessarily know that school busing or employment quotas are thereby required. The means-ends confusion in fact creates some of our most arrogant and destructive forms of political activity, particularly the assumption of so many that because their program posits as its purpose
the achievement of peace and freedom those who oppose that program are not just wrong-headed but immoral. (There is also a theological problem here. For the Christian the things of the End Time are of God's choosing and God's doing. It is dangerous to relate our political ends and means, in however modified or qualified a manner, to God's ultimate purposes. In Christian orthodoxy, salvation is a suprahistorical and suprapolitical event.)

In most cases, the direct political lessons that the Christian draws from his faith are negative ones. He learns from God's law the things that men and nations must not do, which is to say he learns the limits of permissible political activity. Christians will be able more confidently to describe injustice than to prescribe justice; they can discern history's demonic elements far more readily than its redemptive ones. The emphasis on the negative arises not from any misanthropic bias, but from the Christian's steady view of man's fallen condition and of the frailties and fallibilities that issue from that condition. A very large amount of the sentimentality in our politics would evaporate instantly if the implications of original sin for public policy were understood. Luther's simple insight should be reiterated regularly to all those who play a major role in forming and guiding our political life: it is not necessary nor even possible to run the state by the gospel. The Christian magistrate does not forgive the duly convicted man before him seventy times seven: he throws him in the slammer. (And if extenuating circumstances lead him not to do so, he acts "compassionately" not out of the gospel but in the application of fair justice.) Not all political activity is negative, of course. Opportunities exist for improving social arrangements in various ways—and these call for full use of our energies and talents—but always the knowledge of human nature will guide Christians away from utopian illusions and back to the understanding of the proximate and limited nature of man's striving for the good.

It should not be inferred that Neuhaus rejects these traditional Lutheran insights. Indeed, while he might formulate them differently, he affirms many, even most, of them. Yet he wants at the same time to find theological sanction for a more programmatic model of Christian political activity than is normally derived from two kingdoms thinking. The argument here should not be confused. The point is not that Christians should not be activist or should not have ideological preferences; it is rather that in the great majority of cases it is not possible to find clear moral/theological sanction for particular actions or particular preferences. Even activism itself is not mandated by Christian faith, though it is currently most unfashionable to make that point. A variety of styles of political piety may legitimately be inferred from the New Testament witness, and one of those legitimate styles is Christian resignation. If all Christians adopted that style, of course, the results would be disastrous, but so also would it be disastrous if all Christians became political activists. There are few political visions more chilling than that of a totally politicized community. One cannot disagree with Neuhaus's argument for the urgency of political life, but politics is urgent for the Christian in the same way as all of life is urgent. It has no peculiar urgency of its own.

Where Neuhaus goes wrong, in the above view, is in adopting a version of two kingdoms thinking that goes contrary to some of its basic intentions. The purpose of two kingdoms thought is to distinguish between our political ends, which are proximate, and our hopes for salvation, which are ultimate. Neuhaus accepts this distinction in theory, but then so fuses history and eschatology as to insist on "the integral nature of politics to the hope for salvation." It is difficult, within two kingdoms assumptions, to know just what that statement might mean, even as it is difficult to understand how "the present political task participates . . . in the ultimate re-ordering of reality that is [God's] work in history." One is further puzzled by Neuhaus's argument that the Christian's focus on the ultimate reign of God detracts "in no way" from the urgency of the here and now. If one accepts as the Christian's final destiny the transcendent kingdom of God, then that would seem to relativize everything short of that kingdom of grace.

**NEUHAUS IS LUTHERAN ENOUGH TO**

NEUHAUS IS LUTHERAN ENOUGH TO find two kingdoms thought necessary to responsible Christian political life; he is at the same time politically engaged enough to resist its conservatizing implications. But those implications are there. It is not the case, of course, that Lutherans must be conservatives, but wherever we position ourselves on the ideological spectrum, two kingdoms assumptions will make us more philosophically conservative than we otherwise would be. Neuhaus himself provides an excellent illustration of this principle. As already indicated, *Time Toward Home* is theologically and politically more radical than *Christian Faith and Public Policy*; it is no accident (as the Marxists used to say) that

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the earlier book explicitly rejects two kingdoms thought while the later one explicitly affirms its. The same conservatizing dynamic can be observed in the spirit of the Hartford Appeal, which, as its radical critics correctly suggested (over Neuhaus's objections), had moderating political implications.

The struggle over the two kingdoms holds major significance for the definition of the church's ministry. We hear constantly these days that the church must minister to the "whole man." On its face, that view is unobjectionable—we must address all of our neighbor's needs—but in practice the slogan can serve to deny the intention of two kingdoms doctrine. Man is whole; he is not undifferentiated. The argument that it is meaningless or even pernicious to distinguish between men's physical and spiritual natures is empirically dubious and theologically dangerous. The church's divinely-inspired and peculiar mandate is to proclaim the gospel, and it is not somehow all one process to offer a man bread and to forgive his sins. The failure to distinguish those actions makes neither political nor theological sense. It is terribly important that men's material needs be met, and so the church includes that in its ministry; but it is the forgiveness of sins alone that is of ultimate importance. This is why the church, even in its moments of deepest political involvement, will always be other-minded. Christian theology is not based in materialist assumptions; we know the root of man's alienation and we know as well that that alienation exists independently of his material situation. This perspective in no way negates or minimizes the church's social ministry, but it does place it in a distinctive context.

How then should Christians act in political life? Variously, for one thing. One of Neuhaus's most attractive emphases is his encouragement of political pluralism within the church as well as in the wider society. (Although, as already indicated, his frequent specification of what the churches "should" do on given issues seems to conflict with the pluralist argument.) There is no theological necessity for Christians to agree on political issues or even on general ideological orientation. God's word does not tell us whether to be conservatives, liberals, or radicals. It tells us that we must care for our neighbors and work for the general welfare, but it does not in most cases prescribe the manner of our caring or define precisely the nature of the common good.

IF POLITICAL PLURALISM IS A VIRTUE—or at least an inevitability—among individual Christians, that has significant implications for the church as a collectivity. Here Neuhaus fails us to some extent: one wishes he had given closer attention to differences between individual and collective realms. The ethical and practical problems vary considerably between the two and so their respective political imperatives are not always consonant. The Christian as responsible citizen must make political choices in situations where the church may properly remain neutral or silent.

The distinction is important. Neuhaus is correct in arguing that "loving service is inseparable from the church's authentic existence," but that does not mean that political activity is the most obvious or best form for that service to take. The individual Christian remains politically responsible whether or not the issue before him affords a clear moral/theological choice; the church does not. In fact, it can be argued that where it is not clear that the church should speak, it is clear that the church should not speak. As Neuhaus notes, advocacy offered in the name of the church should be grounded in the church's faith. The church is not just another pressure or interest group. It presumes to speak in the name of the Lord, and that, as Neuhaus puts it, "is an awesome responsibility," one that must be exercised with the greatest care. If the church speaks out on public issues on other than compelling moral/theological grounds, it confuses its mission and purpose and divides the body of Christ unnecessarily. If it trivializes or politicizes God's word, it speaks its Lord's name in vain.

This is not a prescription for political quietism, not, at least, if that term is meant to deny the relevance of God's word for the political order. The argument that the church ought to apply God's word to politics more discriminatingly and carefully than it currently does is not a call to the church to ignore politics or to live its life in some "sacred" sanctuary removed from the real and "secular" world outside its gates. The occasions for the necessary corporate political witness of the church may be less frequent than activist clerics suppose, but they do arise. There is nothing in the legitimate uses of two kingdoms thought to justify or mitigate the failure of the churches to speak out against Nazi philosophy or practice, even as there is nothing in that thought to excuse racial discrimination or misuse of power or oppression of the weak. There are conflict situations in which the moral weight lies clearly on one side, and in those situations the church must speak firmly and without hesitation. Aside from those moments of necessary moral speaking and acting, the church will most usefully involve itself in politics by assisting individual Christians and smaller groups within the church in their political vocations. What the
church has to offer is not specialized knowledge or lessons in political substance and strategy; those things are in general better obtained elsewhere. The church does, however, have a special duty to alert Christians to the moral/theological implications of political behavior, a duty which is now, in the man, performed eagerly but very badly.

Rather than issuing grand moral pronouncements that normally reflect more fervor than competence, the church would better use its energies in instructing its members in the very exacting and complex art of applying moral judgment to political action. It would be useful, for example, for the churches to distribute for individual, group, and congregational use balanced analytical essays or firmly argued debates by knowledgeable people on the moral implications of specific issues. This would encourage individual Christians to accept the responsibility for making their own moral choices. It would also help remind everyone that most political issues are morally arguable, and that political morality is more often ambiguous and uncertain than clear and precise.

It is currently the great failure of the churches in the political realm that they so often confuse moral earnestness with moral seriousness. In every other area of knowledge, we concede that the more we learn about a given subject, the more we come to see its complexity. Yet in morality, particularly political morality, we so often talk as if the reverse were true. We confuse moral rhetoric and gesture with moral substance, and we accept as our premier moralists our most terrible simplifiers. Surely it is obvious by now that not everything said in the name of love is loving or lovely and not everything proclaimed as liberation in fact liberates. By the same token, the meaning of "social justice" is not self-evident and people of comparable good will and understanding can have very different conceptions of what it consists of and how it might be achieved.

**ONE OF THE UNFORTunate LEGACIES** of the civil rights and antiwar movements is the notion that most political issues are morally simple, and that moral exhortation is therefore the most important ingredient of purposeful political activity. But neither the premise nor the conclusion is true. Even when we can be reasonably assured as to the morally-preferable goal in a given situation, we will find ourselves, in most cases, legitimately disagreeing as to how that goal might be reached. Much of political life is ironic: we accomplish other than what we intend, and our unanticipated consequences often run counter to our original purposes. It is not easy to combine recognition of moral ambiguity with the need for positive political action, but the frustrations of responsible moral behavior exist in the nature of things; they cannot be avoided or transcended.

Moral humility is a useful lesson, not in order that moral obligations might be evaded but that we might explicitly recognize the limits of our moral knowledge and behavior. It is the burden of moral life—even more in politics than elsewhere—that we are required to choose even though our ignorance and frailty make correct choice problematic. It does nothing to ease that burden to make the choices appear simpler than they are. In the existing situation, moral arguments tend more frequently to cloud issues than to illuminate them. The problem is not that moral arguments do not belong in politics, but that the relationship of morality to politics is infinitely more complex than we would like it to be. The churches should help us recognize that dilemma, not attempt to preach or pray it out of existence.

This means the church should not say more than it knows, however great the temptation. When it is unsure, it should admit it. Nor need it, where appropriate, fear keeping silent. It should never bind consciences prematurely or unnecessarily. On issues where the moral balance is unclear—which is most often the case—reason and prudence may be allowed to prevail: Christians need not undervalue the uses of secularity. It is precisely the importance of moral issues in politics that requires that they be treated with high seriousness and not applied lightly or inappropriately. All of which means that the church in addressing politics needs more toughness— not in the way it acts but in the way it thinks.

In working its way through the thicket of political morality, the church needs all the help it can get, which is why Neuhaus’s book is so welcome. Its combination of theological depth and political insight is all too rare, and while individual readers will quarrel with certain of its conclusions, they will recognize that it deals in a sophisticated manner with the necessary questions. Lutheran political activists are in relatively short supply, and when they, like Neuhaus, have learned to reflect seriously on what they do, the church should cherish them, even when it does not fully agree with them.
HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF THE THINGS that aren't getting done because you've come to worship? We spend our days trying to get things done, worthwhile things, and some not so worthwhile, but they never seem to stay put. Things come unstuck—even the big things: what you are investing your life in, the home you are making, the bringing up of your children, the part you play in church, and in the town and society. We want to be able to say, "I've done it," but uncertainties and our falling short make that impossible. Why keep on trying? Why not give up?

Because we know ourselves and our lives to be involved in what happened on Calvary. That is why we are here, and now we come to that triumphant word of work completed, of job done, "It is finished."

Last night's Gospel began

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

"He loved them to the end." It is the same word: to the end, to completion, to doing what was his to do for
those he loved, for you and for me. Now we hear him cry It’s done. It is finished.

Let us consider how we contradict this word of Jesus, and then how we live in the sure fact of it.

What messes us up, what puts us wrong with God is our sin, our turning away from him, our taking over the job of being God, a job we can surely never complete. To break with God is to break with him from whom comes our life. “The wages of sin is death.” We have heard Jesus cry out as he suffered that death for sin, that separation from God, the hell that was ours to suffer he suffered for us all the way to the end. He cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Jesus spoke these words beginning Psalm 22, and at its end we are told of the Lord and his deliverance that he has wrought. He has done it.

“No, he hasn’t,” is what you say whenever you cling to your sin, won’t let it go, insist that you bear it, take its punishment. Are you one who hears this word of Jesus, one who has often heard, “Your sins are forgiven you for Jesus’ sake,” and yet you cling to your sin, let it hold you, warp you, embitter you, overshadow your life, make yourself suffer for it and show how you are suffering for it by keeping on being miserable about it, and insisting how worthless you are? This can even be done most awfully piously and religiously, yet it is flat contradiction of him, his cross, and his cry, “It is finished.” He has taken your sins and answered for them. If you insist on having them, on suffering for them, then you have to take them back from him, away from Calvary back upon yourself. If you insist, you can have them and the answering for them, and so reclaim your hell. Leave your sins with him at Calvary, and pray with Dr. Luther, “I am your sin. You are my righteousness.”

He’s done it, and you can now no more be destroyed by your sins than he was. You are freed of them and their dominion over you, you are forgiven, as surely as Christ did it all for you and cried, “It is finished.”

He forgives us. He accepts us. He delights in us. We are his and his gifts and resources are all for us. Prompted by all that he has done for us we would show with our lives that we are his. We keep plugging along, no longer grubbing away with our sins, in bondage to them, or in the bondage of trying to prove that we have got it all under control, producing our works that prove that we are somebody, that surely gets things done and can finish them in a way that commands the applause of men and even of God himself. We see people grinding their lives away under this kind of pressure and the fear of not making it, as if Calvary had never happened, as if Jesus had never cried, “It is finished.”

We who are gathered again at the foot of the cross and hear our Savior cry, “It is finished,” at the end of each day can confidently pray:

Dear Lord, forgive me and the whole lot of this past day for Calvary’s sake. There isn’t a perfect thing in it that doesn’t need forgiveness. And in forgiving me, please accept me and what I have striven to do this day. Make good my shortcomings and graciously use me and what I have done for the good of those I love, for the good of those you love. Grant me now to sleep in the confidence of your forgiveness and love, and wake me tomorrow for another day invigorated and shaped by the fact that I am yours, until you wake me that day when you bring to completion what you have in mind with me, that that too may be finished to your undying praise. Amen.
Kay Dagonkopf, *Untitled*, strip casting.

Kevin Allodi, Ceramic Wine Cups.


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MY NAME IS IMMORTAL

the cross pulls me away from myself
into the hole

ground swells up and takes me in

sky blackens
birds sleep in nests
rivers stop
clouds cover over

my bones suck marrow from themselves
and I crack the chrysalis searching for the meaning
in this passion
in this movement away from life
into death

Jesus—your feet bleed
Jesus—your face swells
Jesus—your mind cringes against the shadow of the cross

and I buy avocados at the market for 25¢
I wash my Datsun
I hike with my dogs
I make love
I wash dishes
I cut grass
I do this
and do that
and think about tomorrow
and lessons
bills
worries
ashes...ashes...ashes...

and the flames of hell
lick my groin and a sweet cream
spurts forth and covers my face
I cannot help it Jesus... this is your funeral not mine
this is your grave
this is your cross
this is your fate
your fate
your fate
your box
your coffin
your tomb
your winding sheets
your gray ashen sunken face
your meaning to take with you
your dream soured on tongues of followers
your success
your failure
your posterity

and my pulse lies
my mind reels drunkenly with fear
because I see the old tire in the ditch
the water heater with weeds growing inside
the snake skin by the side of the road

and I see nothing of myself
nothing of dreams
nothing of tomorrow
no future
no dreams
no...
and the cross covers the ground and finds me there
the shadow of the cross finds me... roots me to the spot
covers the hill with holes and I am in them
I am in the tomb
I am eaten alive with maggots
my dreams poems... loves... lives are sullen
spoiled... terrible to see... to dream... my eyes are sockets
my ears rot off my tongue tastes despair
JESUS...

AND THE BREATHING EASES

THE AIR CLEANS BY MORNING LIGHT BREAKING ACROSS
THE VALLEYS
AND THE BIRDS SOAR HIGH IN THE BLUE SKY
THE IRIS BREAKS ALONG THE FENCES
WHILE THE NEW LAMBS
EAT NEW GRASS AND NUZZLE AND BUMP
THEIR MOTHERS FOR MILK
THE SHEPHERD WATCHING
HIS DOG AT HIS SIDE
THE CARS MOVING BEYOND ON THE FREEWAY
THE PREACHER STANDING WITH HEAD DOWN
THE SIDEWALKS CARRY PEOPLE HERE AND THERE

AND THE BLOOD races
and my eyes sing
and the feeling returns to the air and to my senses
and I dream again
I hope again
I see again
I believe again

the passion turns
the passion turns
the passion turns

I am whole again and forever
I am flowers in meadows
I am sky and snow in ravines
and in mountain passes
my oils mix with comets
my bones pound through daisies
my memories breathe in others
my name is immortal
my story is Jesus
my life goes on and on
through wine- dark seas
through terrible storms
that rattle atoms and break galaxies yet I shall live
and live and live...

J. T. LEDBETTER
EVERYONE KNOWS BY NOW that comedy is a serious business and that the lowest comedy, the farce and burlesque and particularly the one \textit{commedia dell’arte} style, need the physical movement as much as sheer wit to survive. The farce is ever-present and everlasting. There is not one good comedy that does not contain elements of the farce. The farcical humor is the timing. Every good prepared and polished comedy that does not contain the \textit{commedia dell’arte} style, need the physical movement as much as shear wit to survive. The farce is ever-present and everlasting. There is not one good comedy that does not contain elements of the farce. The farcical humor is the timing. Every good prepared and polished play by one of the last great playwrights in love with the style of the \textit{commedia} players, Count Carlo Gozzi. He told the unforgettable stories of \textit{The Love For Three Orange}, \textit{Re Turandot}, \textit{The King Stag}, and many others. One of his lesser known plays was the one of a monster which was named \textit{The Pink Monster} by the Züricher Theater am Neumarkt. Gozzi liked to tell fairy tales, to create a theater of the fabulous, full of exotic fantasy, of spontaneous language and action. It was all there in this beauty-and-the-beast tale in which the love of a young girl was tested.

The play was freely adapted, and Gozzi himself easily to free adaptations. It was staged by Dieter Reible with all the extemporizing freedom which the style of the \textit{commedia} permits. The staging was full of ideas, the most intricate puppets were used, impressive masks and monsters were built, soldiers made of cardboard marched up and down; a handful of actors played innumerable parts and changed costume and mask in front of the audience. In short, the most complex apparatus was set in motion and should have shown how easy and joyful all this make-believe is. But—and there’s the rub!—we saw only how difficult this entire masquerade was, how much sweat and anxiety were on the faces of these actor-jugglers. The fun was much too labored. It should have looked as if improvised, but instead, it moved in a heavy-handed manner. It’s a pity that it wasn’t as funny and pretty and innocent as it pretended to be.

All this came to mind when I saw a play by one of the last great playwrights in love with the style of the \textit{commedia} players, Count Carlo Gozzi. He told the unforgettable stories of \textit{The Love For Three Orange}, \textit{Re Turandot}, \textit{The King Stag}, and many others. One of his lesser known plays was the one of a monster which was named \textit{The Pink Monster} by the Züricher Theater am Neumarkt. Gozzi liked to tell fairy tales, to create a theater of the fabulous, full of exotic fantasy, of spontaneous language and action. It was all there in this beauty-and-the-beast tale in which the love of a young girl was tested.

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by spelling his era with a capital "R."

Is romanticism—upper or lower case—outdated in our scientific and technological era? By far not. Now that we are able to turn the moon into a tourist attraction tomorrow, we shall need dreams for something even more remote and magic. We are frightened by our own fear of the future because there may be none. All the more do we need to run away from a reality which holds up a mirror to all possible marvels while preparing the seed of destruction.

When we escape to the theater, a spontaneous sputum of creative negligence will not do. As the true neo-romantics that we are, we want to be shown the excitement in mere existence and the beauty in being. We cannot help being shocked into shame of being human and responsible for the sores of our portentous and potent era ever so often. But the newest paroxysms of negation, improvisational obscurity, the depths of hollowness should have run their course by now. So much is taken for art which is little more than a feeble and defiant scribble on the wall. Shall we take it for the Mene Tekel of our time or already as its epitaph? If escape we must, we want to be told at least one truth of the many truths; we want to face the revelation of life's mystery or some aspect of it; yes, even a romantic and escapist needs to be shown the image of a heightened, danced reality, an image formed out of an inner cry and outer chaos.

Bertolt Brecht once said, "What kind of a time is this in which it is a crime to speak of trees!" In true neo-romantic fashion we must add: Because it is the time it is, an extremely sordid state of affairs, let us also speak of trees. After all, the tree is but a symbol of our belief in the creative will, a symbol of our hope that something will and can last if not hit by lightning, lightning from above or man-made lightning.

OLD AGE

The red disk
visible
through the stark trees
of autumn
above the silent lake,
reflects.
The still wind
rests
from its labors
bent ahead.
Languid eyes
see gnarled fingers
ponder
the red ball
hold it up,
    wonder.
It it time
to set
it
down?

CRAIG LEE ASHBAUGH

April, 1978
The conference study papers investigate the *Formula of Concord* historically and theologically for its resources for pastoral and congregational life today.

Prepared in advance of the conference, as study guides to the participants, were the following papers:

a) David G. Truemper, "Confession and Congregation: An Approach to the Study of the *Formula of Concord*.

b) Kenneth F. Korby, "Naming and Healing the Disorders of Man: Therapy and Absolution" (FC:I, Original Sin).


e) Walter E. Keller, "When Confession is Called For: Indifferent Things and the Case of Confession" (FC:X, The Ecclesiastical Rites that are Called *Adiaphora* or Things Indifferent).

The essays presented at the conference for use in the workshops:

a) Roger D. Pittelko, the Keynote Address, "Confession and Congregation: Resources for Parish Life and Work";

b) Robert C. Schultz, "Therapy and Absolution: Issues of Healing and Redemption" (to study paper "b");

c) William H. Lazareth, "The Foundation for Ethics and the Question of the Third Use of the Law" (to study paper "c");

d) Walter R. Bouman, "Piety in a Secularized Society" (to study paper "d");

e) Robert W. Bertram, "Confessional Movements and the *Formula of Concord* Article Ten" (to study paper "e").

Responses to the essays by the authors of the study papers.

The concluding address by Michael Rogness, "The Confessions in the Congregation: Practical Suggestions for Parish Use."

Estimated 75 pages, 8½ x 11—a meaty document indeed for congregational study groups, pastoral conferences, and college and seminary classrooms.

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MY EXPERIENCE is that people think Jules Verne represents genius of the highest order, or they wonder what the big to-do is all about. For either of you, Walter James Miller has done a favor.

In the first place, Miller restores the text, horribly mangled by the translator in the "standard" English edition, and annotates a variety of items to titillate the tastes of those who eat Verne up. In the second, he demonstrates that Verne is by no means the haphazard and sloppy writer the wonderers have thought he was. In French, he is considerably better.

You see, the translator, working under the name of "Mercier Lewis," had some beehives in his bonnet. He was a clergyman with axes to grind. Verne loved science and tried to slip in a bit of painless teaching in all his novels. "Mercier Lewis" didn't approve the science, so he didn't translate it. Verne liked to make political comments. "Mercier Lewis" had different politics. So he failed to translate or mis-translated the author's political allusions. Verne used the metric system. "Mercier Lewis" apparently didn't even understand the metric system, because in translating everything to feet and inches, he missed the point much of the time. Worst of all, Verne made idiomatic jokes in French, by which he built his characterizations. "Mercier Lewis" missed the jokes—and in his translation, you do too.

In fact, after Walter James Miller gets through with "Mercier Lewis," one wonders whatever possessed "Lewis" to translate Verne at all. It is amazing that Verne has as large an English following as he has, with such "friends" to tout his work.

And so we all owe Miller a debt.

On the other hand, Miller isn't such a hotshot annotator. In the first place, he retains the "Mercier Lewis" text throughout, except where "Lewis" omits passages altogether. Those Miller fills in for you. All the other corrections he puts into the notes. Personally, I would have preferred a fresh translation. The notes could have been used to show where "Lewis" made hash of the original; but we could have had the benefits of a smooth and accurate translation to follow and avoided having to check the notes to see how it ought to have read. One of the jokes in particular might have come off better had Miller chosen to do a complete translation. Conseil has a habit of speaking to Aronnax only in the third person ("If Monsieur would care to, he might . . ."). Late in the book, Conseil lets slip a "you" under circumstances in which this is both funny and revealing of Conseil's character.

"Mercier Lewis," predictably missing the point, changes them all to second person ("If you, sir, would care to, you might . . ."). Miller's decision to leave us with the "Lewis" version to follow for the main story lines puts the joke in the notes instead of in the text.

Miller accuses "Lewis" of being arbitrary; but Miller's own annotations appear pretty arbitrary themselves. Frequently, Verne will give a list of sea-creatures, together with some scientific terminology in his campaign to educate his readers. It seems to me that a proper annotator would have annotated them. But Miller picks out two or three in a list, and leaves as many as ten others, equally intriguing, completely uncommented upon. Why those and not the rest? Again, there are references to historical personages with whom I, at least, am unfamiliar. Some of these Miller introduces to us. Others (who is the "Knight of Rhodes, Dieudonné de Gozon," for example?) we are simply left to wonder about.

Worse than this, however, is the fact that some of Miller's notes are simply inaccurate. He declares that the Celsius temperature scale is very logical (true), while Fahrenheit is entirely arbitrary (false). To be sure, Celsius is simpler to work with; but Dr. Fahrenheit was by no means being arbitrary when he invented his scale. He did not pick thirty-two degrees for freezing and 212° for boiling water out of the blue. Rather, he wanted to choose things he thought anyone could duplicate. Zero degrees was then the coldest temperature attainable. It was achieved by the progressive freezing of salt water, something anyone could replicate nearly any time he needed to. You still use the principle when you make homemade ice cream. One hundred degrees he set equal to the temperature of the human body—something else he imagined people carried with them. Evidently, the good doctor had a fever at the time. These might not be useful designations any longer; but they are not arbitrary. Miller has just not done all his homework.
One of the puzzles of the book, commencing from shortly after the time Aronnax, Conseil, and Ned Land are picked up by the Nautilus, is the language spoken by the crew. It is mysterious both to Aronnax and to the reader, and Verne does not answer the question directly anywhere. Miller gives us his own speculation—but neither at the beginning of the book where it first arises, nor at the end, so as not to detract from Verne's purpose for keeping it secret. We get it on page 327, and without ever a mention that perhaps Verne wanted it to be a secret. The only hint Verne himself ever gives concerning the crew's language is not given to us unless we read Mysterious Island, where Verne reveals the answer to another closely guarded secret—that of Nemo's true nationality. Presumably the shipboard language could be Nemo's. Miller doesn't even consider it. Probably Miller's worst critical offense of all is to confuse the opinions of a character with that of the author. Example: Miller maintains that in spite of Verne's idealism, he remains prejudiced. Reason: Conseil and Aronnax think of the Papuan "savages" as being near apes. This is high school level criticism. Many authors create characters with opinions different from their own. In this case, not only are Conseil's and Aronnax's opinions a part of Verne's careful characterization, but the true "hero" of the book is not Aronnax, but Nemo himself—who disagrees with Aronnax on this and several other politically charged issues.

So, Walter James Miller is not such a great critic. There are plenty of flaws in the work. I wish the book had been done better, because I think Verne deserves a little better. But Miller has done us a favor by bringing out The Annotated Jules Verne. Go buy it for your son or daughter for Christmas. And read it yourself before you wrap it up.

Or maybe a giant squid will get you.

WALTER R. RIEDEL

TOM BROWN'S UNIVERSE

TOM BROWN'S UNIVERSE explores the world of the English prep school, an institution whose graduates, though not curriculum, have wielded enormous influence on the world. This will prove an admirable book or just an involved history of British education, depending on one's point of view; it is certain, however, that those who read it will find it informative and even downright shocking. The problem of student unrest, we find by reading this book, was nothing new in the 1950s with the famous blackboard jungles or in the 1960s with the campus riots, for the archetypal patterns of these recent phenomena can be seen much earlier in the English great schools of the last century. The precise recording of these phenomena and the keen analysis of them constitute extremely strong points in the book. Thus when an American educator or parent reads that it took George the Third himself to stop a riot of boys at Eton, then at the very least the real dimensions of modern education come into clearer perspective. Another special feature of this book is that it goes further and tends to clarify the roles of both educators and parents in a highly developed society. Finally, this is a political book in the sense that it is a book about the politics of running a school. We see the emergence of many strong personalities, and sometimes they are in sharp conflict about what is the best education for the children of England, and it is in these conflicts that we see much that is food for thought. There is an abundance of notes and an excellent bibliography for those who wish to read further on the subject, although at certain times one feels the notes are too extensive. But this is one of the very few weaknesses in an absorbing book, a book which will surely enjoy a very wide readership among parents, educators, historians, literary buffs, and thinking laymen.

JOHN K. COWGER

SCIENCE, ETHICS AND MEDICINE.

KNOWLEDGE, VALUE AND BELIEF.

HARDLY ANYONE is unaware of the extensive burgeoning of literature in the field of bioethics during the past decade. For seven of those years the Institute of Society, Ethics, and the Life Sciences, the Hastings Center, has contributed its fair share to that literature. One of several major institutes dedicated to the study of moral, legal, and social problems of biomedicine, the Institute has taken an interdisciplinary approach which has brought together in its work and publications, scholars and professionals from the fields of philosophy, medicine, biology, social science, law, history, and theology. As one might expect, a wide diversity of opinion has been evident. That same diversity of opinion continues to find expression in these two volumes.

However, these two volumes and the two more that are anticipated represent a new departure in the history of the Institute. The result of a research project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Volumes I and II have initiated a series of papers and responses that enter the thorny thicket of the foundations of ethics and the relationship of ethics to science. The effort is to go beneath the descriptive evaluative discussion, which analyzes, identifies, and offers opinions on issues in bioethics, to the more fundamental, prior questions: Is there an inherent ethical dimension to science in general and biomedicine in particular? Are ethics and science compatible as disciplines? Is there a cogent, share-
able foundation of moral judgments to which we can appeal for a truly productive public discussion of problems in bioethics?

The first two of these questions dominate the contributions in Volume I. The discussion withal is on the interdependent relationship of fact and value. Michael Scriven attempts to lock the two together in the opening chapter by arguing the general claim that ethics is a science, indeed, "the empress of science—no more, no less." Appealing to logic and a variety of evidences from the social sciences, Scriven attempts to justify his claim and its conclusion that the outcomes of ethics can be rationally appraised and accepted just as the outcomes of other sciences. Scriven proposes that if this claim for the scientific status of ethics can be sustained, then its corollary is also true, science is not value-free.

From a considerably different perspective John Ladd argues in a subsequent chapter that science should be considered as morally neutral. Ladd's concern is to scrutinize and criticize the false pretensions of the "Ideology of Science" which considers the pursuit of science to be a highly moral activity constituting virtually a moral imperative. Ladd fears that the popular acceptance of this claim will enable science to achieve unwarranted immunity to genuine public moral accountability. Similarly, Marc Lappée argues in a later chapter that scientists have an obligation to weigh the moral consequences of pursuing their new hypotheses.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP of science and ethics are also explored. H. Tristram Englehardt, Jr. offers a most interesting article on the value judgments implicit in medical science's definitions of what constitutes disease and health. Eric Cassell develops a helpful discourse on how the patient's disclosures about himself contribute to the shaping of applied moral thought in clinical practice. The value of ethical thought to the practical operation of medicine is further pursued by Samuel Gorovitz and Alasdair MacIntyre in their attempt to bring philosophical inquiry to bear upon a theory of medical fallibility that can shed light on current malpractice concerns. This is but a sampling.

By the editors' account, the essays and responses in the first volume taken together permit five general conclusions which indicate a clear overlap of subject matter and key concepts in the relationship between ethics and the sciences. Thus, "a clear line cannot be drawn between evaluation and explanation."

VOLUME II CONTINUES THE interdisciplinary discussion of the relationship of ethics to science. However, the essential focus here is the question of a foundation for evaluative judgments that can be shared by science and ethics. It is in this context that theology's dependence on an appeal to God for the grounding of its ethics comes under scrutiny. Perhaps one of the most telling exchanges in the entire volume is that between Alasdair MacIntyre, a philosopher, and Paul Ramsey, a theologian. MacIntyre argues against the validity of what he considers to be Kant's thesis that morality presupposes theology. While it is true, as Kant states, that belief in moral obligation presupposes teleology does not necessarily entail belief in God. By this argument MacIntyre drives a wedge between theology and the intellectual world which we all, including science and contemporary theology, inhabit. The two are incompatible because belief in the existence of God is implausible. However, this does not mean the end of belief in moral obligation, according to MacIntyre. Rather, we can rationally locate our appeal to moral action in a commitment to history as moral progression.

In opposition to this disparaging view of religiously-based ethics, Ramsey points out, first of all, that we should not talk about the place of religion in ethics or medical ethics as though its capacity to shore up ethics could provide a justification for its existence. The reverse is the case. Religion is the vocation of humankind. Ethics is an outgrowth of it and plays a subordinate role. Ethics is, therefore, ultimately dependent upon God for its grounding. Moreover, faith's perception of the divine performance is, historically, a firmer foundation than commitment to an as-yet-unfinished history of moral progression.

There are somewhat mediating responses offered by others in two subsequent essays. However, the exchange between Ramsey and MacIntyre is something like a "contemporary-classic" confrontation between the claims of theology and the skepticism of scientific reason.

BETWEEN THE EXTREMES OF the MacIntyre-Ramsey debate, David Burrell and Stanley Hauerwas propose that we understand the foundation of ethics as provided by a "story" that is lived as an understanding of reality. It is the substantive story that generates and sustains the moral life. Indeed, the test of a story's worth and validity is the sort of person it shapes. Religious faith is, then, the phenomenon of accepting certain stories as canonical. The validity and worth of religion as regards life and ethics is therefore determined by its ability to pass the test. This view is offered as a rational alternative to what the authors consider the "standard account" of systematic ethics and its frustrated efforts to scientifically demonstrate the objectivity of moral judgments. This is both fascinating and helpful but not totally adequate, because the application of the test of stories ultimately involves itself in some notion of objectivity.

Again, this is only a taste of what the volume contains. The reader will find the format of essays followed by responses in both volumes interesting and helpful. By this means of addressing the questions at hand, the two volumes, taken together, convey very clearly the enormous complexity of these problems and their resistance to easy solutions.

JAMES M. CHILDS, JR.

April, 1978
ABOVE: Jessica Jablon, Untitled, o/c, 5' x 5'.

FRONT COVER: Wendy Brusick, Sunbathing, o/c, 4' x 9'.