

Kirkpatrick Signature Series

Book 2

Readings for Weeks 4-6



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Week 4

The Changing Role of Religion

A Model of Christian Charity

by John Winthrop

GOD ALMIGHTY in His most holy and wise providence, hath so disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity; others mean and in submission.

The Reason hereof:

1st Reason. First to hold conformity with the rest of His world, being delighted to show forth the glory of his wisdom in the variety and difference of the creatures, and the glory of His power in ordering all these differences for the preservation and good of the whole, and the glory of His greatness, that as it is the glory of princes to have many officers, so this great king will have many stewards, counting himself more honored in dispensing his gifts to man by man, than if he did it by his own immediate hands.

2nd Reason. Secondly, that He might have the more occasion to manifest the work of his Spirit: first upon the wicked in moderating and restraining them, so that the rich and mighty should not eat up the poor, nor the poor and despised rise up against and shake off their yoke. Secondly, in the regenerate, in exercising His graces in them, as in the great ones, their love, mercy, gentleness, temperance etc., and in the poor and inferior sort, their faith, patience, obedience etc.

3rd Reason. Thirdly, that every man might have need of others, and from hence they might be all knit more nearly together in the bonds of brotherly affection. From hence it appears plainly that no man is made more honorable than another or more wealthy etc., out of any particular and singular respect to himself, but for the glory of his Creator and the common good of the creature, man. Therefore God still reserves the property of these gifts to Himself as Ezek. 16:17, He there calls wealth, His gold and His silver, and Prov. 3:9, He claims their service as His due, "Honor the Lord with thy riches," etc. --- All men being thus (by divine providence) ranked into two sorts, rich and poor; under the first are comprehended all such as are able to live comfortably by their own means duly improved; and all others are poor according to the former distribution. There are two rules whereby we are to walk one towards another: Justice and Mercy. These are always distinguished in their act and in their object, yet may they both concur in the same subject in each respect; as sometimes there may be an occasion of showing mercy to a rich man in some sudden danger or distress, and also doing of mere justice to a poor man in regard of some particular contract, etc.

There is likewise a double Law by which we are regulated in our conversation towards another. In both the former respects, the Law of Nature and the Law of Grace (that is, the moral law or the law of the gospel) to omit the rule of justice as not properly belonging to this purpose otherwise than it may fall into consideration in some particular cases. By the first of these laws, man as he was enabled so withal is commanded to love his neighbor as himself. Upon this ground stands all the precepts of the moral law, which concerns our dealings with men. To apply this to the works of mercy, this law requires two things. First, that every man afford his help to another in every want or distress.

Secondly, that he perform this out of the same affection which makes him careful of his own goods, according to the words of our Savior (from Matthew 7:12), whatsoever ye would that men should do to you. This was practiced by Abraham and Lot in entertaining the angels and

the old man of Gibeon. The law of Grace or of the Gospel hath some difference from the former (the law of nature), as in these respects: First, the law of nature was given to man in the estate of innocence. This of the Gospel in the estate of regeneracy. Secondly, the former propounds one man to another, as the same flesh and image of God. This as a brother in Christ also, and in the communion of the same Spirit, and so teacheth to put a difference between Christians and others. Do good to all, especially to the household of faith. Upon this ground the Israelites were to put a difference between the brethren of such as were strangers, though not of the Canaanites. Thirdly, the Law of Nature would give no rules for dealing with enemies, for all are to be considered as friends in the state of innocence, but the Gospel commands love to an enemy. Proof: If thine enemy hunger, feed him; "Love your enemies... Do good to them that hate you" (Matt. 5:44).

This law of the Gospel propounds likewise a difference of seasons and occasions. There is a time when a Christian must sell all and give to the poor, as they did in the Apostles' times. There is a time also when Christians (though they give not all yet) must give beyond their ability, as they of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8). Likewise, community of perils calls for extraordinary liberality, and so doth community in some special service for the church.

Lastly, when there is no other means whereby our Christian brother may be relieved in his distress, we must help him beyond our ability rather than tempt God in putting him upon help by miraculous or extraordinary means. This duty of mercy is exercised in the kinds: giving, lending and forgiving (of a debt).

Question: What rule shall a man observe in giving in respect of the measure?

Answer: If the time and occasion be ordinary he is to give out of his abundance. Let him lay aside as God hath blessed him. If the time and occasion be extraordinary, he must be ruled by them; taking this withal, that then a man cannot likely do too much, especially if he may leave himself and his family under probable means of comfortable subsistence.

Objection: A man must lay up for posterity, the fathers lay up for posterity and children, and he is worse than an infidel that provideth not for his own.

Answer: For the first, it is plain that it being spoken by way of comparison, it must be meant of the ordinary and usual course of fathers, and cannot extend to times and occasions extraordinary. For the other place the Apostle speaks against such as walked inordinately, and it is without question, that he is worse than an infidel who through his own sloth and voluptuousness shall neglect to provide for his family.

Objection: "The wise man's eyes are in his head," saith Solomon, "and foreseeth the plague;" therefore he must forecast and lay up against evil times when he or his may stand in need of all he can gather.

Answer: This very Argument Solomon useth to persuade to liberality (Eccle. 11), "Cast thy bread upon the waters...for thou knowest not what evil may come upon the land." Luke 16:9, "Make you friends of the riches of iniquity..." You will ask how this shall be? Very well. For first he that gives to the poor, lends to the Lord and He will repay him even in this life an hundredfold to him or his. The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed enjoyeth the blessing; and

besides we know what advantage it will be to us in the day of account when many such witnesses shall stand forth for us to witness the improvement of our talent. And I would know of those who plead so much for laying up for time to come, whether they hold that to be Gospel Matthew 6:19, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," etc. If they acknowledge it, what extent will they allow it? If only to those primitive times, let them consider the reason whereupon our Savior grounds it. The first is that they are subject to the moth, the rust, the thief. Secondly, they will steal away the heart: "where the treasure is there will your heart be also."

The reasons are of like force at all times. Therefore the exhortation must be general and perpetual, with always in respect of the love and affection to riches and in regard of the things themselves when any special service for the church or particular distress of our brother do call for the use of them; otherwise it is not only lawful but necessary to lay up as Joseph did to have ready upon such occasions, as the Lord (whose stewards we are of them) shall call for them from us. Christ gives us an instance of the first, when he sent his disciples for the donkey, and bids them answer the owner thus, "the Lord hath need of him." So when the Tabernacle was to be built, He sends to His people to call for their silver and gold, etc., and yields no other reason but that it was for His work. When Elisha comes to the widow of Sareptah and finds her preparing to make ready her pittance for herself and family, he bids her first provide for him, he challenges first God's part which she must first give before she must serve her own family. All these teach us that the Lord looks that when He is pleased to call for His right in any thing we have, our own interest we have must stand aside till His turn be served. For the other, we need look no further then to that of 1 John 3:17, "He who hath this world's goods and seeth his brother to need and shuts up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Which comes punctually to this conclusion: If thy brother be in want and thou canst help him, thou needst not make doubt of what thou shouldst do; if thou lovest God thou must help him.

Question: What rule must we observe in lending?

Answer: Thou must observe whether thy brother hath present or probable or possible means of repaying thee, if there be none of those, thou must give him according to his necessity, rather then lend him as he requires (requests). If he hath present means of repaying thee, thou art to look at him not as an act of mercy, but by way of commerce, wherein thou art to walk by the rule of justice; but if his means of repaying thee be only probable or possible, then he is an object of thy mercy, thou must lend him, though there be danger of losing it. (Deut. 15:7-8): "If any of thy brethren be poor ... thou shalt lend him sufficient." That men might not shift off this duty by the apparent hazard, He tells them that though the year of Jubilee were at hand (when he must remit it, if he were not able to repay it before), yet he must lend him, and that cheerfully. It may not grieve thee to give him, saith He. And because some might object, why so I should soon impoverish myself and my family, he adds, with all thy work, etc., for our Savior said (Matt. 5:42), "From him that would borrow of thee turn not away."

Question: What rule must we observe in forgiving (a debt)?

Answer: Whether thou didst lend by way of commerce or in mercy, if he hath nothing to pay thee, thou must forgive, (except in cause where thou hast a surety or a lawful pledge). Deut.

15:1-2 --- Every seventh year the creditor was to quit that which he lent to his brother if he were poor, as appears in verse 4. "Save when there shall be no poor with thee." In all these and like cases, Christ gives a general rule (Matt. 7:12), "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye the same to them."

Question: What rule must we observe and walk by in cause of community of peril?

Answer: The same as before, but with more enlargement towards others and less respect towards ourselves and our own right. Hence it was that in the primitive Church they sold all, had all things in common, neither did any man say that which he possessed was his own. Likewise in their return out of the captivity, because the work was great for the restoring of the church and the danger of enemies was common to all, Nehemiah directs the Jews to liberality and readiness in remitting their debts to their brethren, and disposing liberally to such as wanted, and stand not upon their own dues which they might have demanded of them. Thus did some of our forefathers in times of persecution in England, and so did many of the faithful of other churches, whereof we keep an honorable remembrance of them; and it is to be observed that both in Scriptures and latter stories of the churches that such as have been most bountiful to the poor saints, especially in those extraordinary times and occasions, God hath left them highly commended to posterity, as Zaccheus, Cornelius, Dorcas, Bishop Hooper, the Cutler of Brussels and divers others. Observe again that the Scripture gives no caution to restrain any from being over liberal this way; but all men to the liberal and cheerful practice hereof by the sweeter promises; as to instance one for many (Isaiah 58:6-9) "Is not this the fast I have chosen to loose the bonds of wickedness, to take off the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke ... to deal thy bread to the hungry and to bring the poor that wander into thy house, when thou seest the naked to cover them ... and then shall thy light brake forth as the morning and thy health shall grow speedily, thy righteousness shall go before God, and the glory of the Lord shalt embrace thee; then thou shalt call and the Lord shall answer thee," etc. And from Ch. 2:10 (??) "If thou pour out thy soul to the hungry, then shall thy light spring out in darkness, and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in draught, and make fat thy bones, thou shalt be like a watered garden, and they shalt be of thee that shall build the old waste places," etc. On the contrary most heavy curses are laid upon such as are straightened towards the Lord and his people (Judg. 5:23), "Curse ye Meroshe ... because they came not to help the Lord." He who shutteth his ears from hearing the cry of the poor, he shall cry and shall not be heard." (Matt. 25) "Go ye cursed into everlasting fire," etc. "I was hungry and ye fed me not." (2 Cor. 9:6) "He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly."

Having already set forth the practice of mercy according to the rule of God's law, it will be useful to lay open the grounds of it also, being the other part of the Commandment and that is the affection from which this exercise of mercy must arise, the Apostle tells us that this love is the fulfilling of the law, not that it is enough to love our brother and so no further; but in regard of the excellency of his parts giving any motion to the other as the soul to the body and the power it hath to set all the faculties at work in the outward exercise of this duty; as when we bid one

make the clock strike, he doth not lay hand on the hammer, which is the immediate instrument of the sound, but sets on work the first mover or main wheel; knowing that will certainly produce the sound which he intends. So the way to draw men to the works of mercy, is not by force of Argument from the goodness or necessity of the work; for though this cause may enforce, a rational mind to some present act of mercy, as is frequent in experience, yet it cannot work such a habit in a soul, as shall make it prompt upon all occasions to produce the same effect, but by framing these affections of love in the heart which will as naturally bring forth the other, as any cause doth produce the effect.

The definition which the Scripture gives us of love is this: Love is the bond of perfection. First it is a bond or ligament. Secondly, it makes the work perfect. There is no body but consists of parts and that which knits these parts together, gives the body its perfection, because it makes each part so contiguous to others as thereby they do mutually participate with each other, both in strength and infirmity, in pleasure and pain. To instance in the most perfect of all bodies: Christ and his Church make one body. The several parts of this body considered a part before they were united, were as disproportionate and as much disordering as so many contrary qualities or elements, but when Christ comes, and by his spirit and love knits all these parts to himself and each to other, it is become the most perfect and best proportioned body in the world (Eph. 4:15-16). Christ, by whom all the body being knit together by every joint for the furniture thereof, according to the effectual power which is in the measure of every perfection of parts, a glorious body without spot or wrinkle; the ligaments hereof being Christ, or his love, for Christ is love (1 John 4:8). So this definition is right. Love is the bond of perfection.

From hence we may frame these conclusions:

First of all, true Christians are of one body in Christ (1 Cor. 12). Ye are the body of Christ and members of their part. All the parts of this body being thus united are made so contiguous in a special relation as they must needs partake of each other's strength and infirmity; joy and sorrow, weal and woe. If one member suffers, all suffer with it, if one be in honor, all rejoice with it.

Secondly, the ligaments of this body which knit together are love.

Thirdly, no body can be perfect which wants its proper ligament.

Fourthly, All the parts of this body being thus united are made so contiguous in a special relation as they must needs partake of each other's strength and infirmity, joy and sorrow, weal and woe. (1 Cor. 12:26) If one member suffers, all suffer with it; if one be in honor, all rejoice with it.

Fifthly, this sensitivity and sympathy of each other's conditions will necessarily infuse into each part a native desire and endeavor, to strengthen, defend, preserve and comfort the other. To insist a little on this conclusion being the product of all the former, the truth hereof will appear both by precept and pattern. 1 John 3:16, "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Gal. 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burden's and so fulfill the law of Christ."

For patterns we have that first of our Savior who, out of his good will in obedience to his father, becoming a part of this body and being knit with it in the bond of love, found such a native sensitivity of our infirmities and sorrows as he willingly yielded himself to death to ease the infirmities of the rest of his body, and so healed their sorrows. From the like sympathy of parts

did the Apostles and many thousands of the Saints lay down their lives for Christ. Again the like we may see in the members of this body among themselves. Rom. 9 --- Paul could have been contented to have been separated from Christ, that the Jews might not be cut off from the body. It is very observable what he profeseth of his affectionate partaking with every member; "Who is weak (saith he) and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?" And again (2 Cor. 7:13), "Therefore we are comforted because ye were comforted." Of Epaphroditus he speaketh (Phil. 2:25-30) that he regarded not his own life to do him service. So Phoebe and others are called the servants of the church. Now it is apparent that they served not for wages, or by constraint, but out of love. The like we shall find in the histories of the church, in all ages; the sweet sympathy of affections which was in the members of this body one towards another; their cheerfulness in serving and suffering together; how liberal they were without repining, harborers without grudging, and helpful without reproaching; and all from hence, because they had fervent love amongst them; which only makes the practice of mercy constant and easy.

The next consideration is how this love comes to be wrought. Adam in his first estate was a perfect model of mankind in all their generations, and in him this love was perfected in regard of the habit. But Adam, himself rent from his Creator, rent all his posterity also one from another; whence it comes that every man is born with this principle in him to love and seek himself only, and thus a man continueth till Christ comes and takes possession of the soul and infuseth another principle, love to God and our brother, and this latter having continual supply from Christ, as the head and root by which he is united, gets predominant in the soul, so by little and little expels the former. 1 John 4:7 --- Love cometh of God and every one that loveth is born of God, so that this love is the fruit of the new birth, and none can have it but the new creature. Now when this quality is thus formed in the souls of men, it works like the Spirit upon the dry bones. Ezek. 37:7 --- "Bone came to bone." It gathers together the scattered bones, or perfect old man Adam, and knits them into one body again in Christ, whereby a man is become again a living soul.

The third consideration is concerning the exercise of this love, which is twofold, inward or outward. The outward hath been handled in the former preface of this discourse. From unfolding the other we must take in our way that maxim of philosophy, "*simile simili gaudet*," or like will to like; for as of things which are turned with disaffection to each other, the ground of it is from a dissimilitude or arising from the contrary or different nature of the things themselves; for the ground of love is an apprehension of some resemblance in the things loved to that which affects it. This is the cause why the Lord loves the creature, so far as it hath any of his Image in it; He loves his elect because they are like Himself, He beholds them in His beloved son.

So a mother loves her child, because she thoroughly conceives a resemblance of herself in it. Thus it is between the members of Christ; each discerns, by the work of the Spirit, his own Image and resemblance in another, and therefore cannot but love him as he loves himself. Now when the soul, which is of a sociable nature, finds anything like to itself, it is like Adam when Eve was brought to him. She must be one with himself. This is flesh of my flesh (saith he) and bone of my bone. So the soul conceives a great delight in it; therefore she desires nearness and familiarity with it. She hath a great propensity to do it good and receives such content in it, as

fearing the miscarriage of her beloved, she bestows it in the inmost closet of her heart. She will not endure that it shall want any good which she can give it. If by occasion she be withdrawn from the company of it, she is still looking towards the place where she left her beloved. If she heard it groan, she is with it presently. If she find it sad and disconsolate, she sighs and moans with it. She hath no such joy as to see her beloved merry and thriving. If she see it wronged, she cannot hear it without passion. She sets no bounds to her affections, nor hath any thought of reward. She finds recompense enough in the exercise of her love towards it.

We may see this acted to life in Jonathan and David. Jonathan a valiant man endued with the spirit of love, so soon as he discovered the same spirit in David had presently his heart knit to him by this ligament of love; so that it is said he loved him as his own soul, he takes so great pleasure in him, that he strips himself to adorn his beloved. His father's kingdom was not so precious to him as his beloved David, David shall have it with all his heart. Himself desires no more but that he may be near to him to rejoice in his good. He chooseth to converse with him in the wilderness even to the hazard of his own life, rather than with the great Courtiers in his father's Palace. When he sees danger towards him, he spares neither rare pains nor peril to direct it. When injury was offered his beloved David, he would not bear it, though from his own father. And when they must part for a season only, they thought their hearts would have broke for sorrow, had not their affections found vent by abundance of tears. Other instances might be brought to show the nature of this affection; as of Ruth and Naomi, and many others; but this truth is cleared enough. If any shall object that it is not possible that love shall be bred or upheld without hope of requital, it is granted; but that is not our cause; for this love is always under reward. It never gives, but it always receives with advantage:

First in regard that among the members of the same body, love and affection are reciprocal in a most equal and sweet kind of commerce.

Secondly, in regard of the pleasure and content that the exercise of love carries with it, as we may see in the natural body. The mouth is at all the pains to receive and mince the food which serves for the nourishment of all the other parts of the body; yet it hath no cause to complain; for first the other parts send back, by several passages, a due proportion of the same nourishment, in a better form for the strengthening and comforting the mouth. Secondly, the labor of the mouth is accompanied with such pleasure and content as far exceeds the pains it takes. So is it in all the labor of love among Christians. The party loving, reaps love again, as was showed before, which the soul covets more then all the wealth in the world.

Thirdly, nothing yields more pleasure and content to the soul then when it finds that which it may love fervently; for to love and live beloved is the soul's paradise both here and in heaven. In the State of wedlock there be many comforts to learn out of the troubles of that condition; but let such as have tried the most, say if there be any sweetness in that condition comparable to the exercise of mutual love.

From the former considerations arise these conclusions:

First, this love among Christians is a real thing, not imaginary.

Secondly, this love is as absolutely necessary to the being of the body of Christ, as the sinews

and other ligaments of a natural body are to the being of that body.

Thirdly, this love is a divine, spiritual, nature; free, active, strong, courageous, permanent; undervaluing all things beneath its proper object and of all the graces, this makes us nearer to resemble the virtues of our heavenly father.

Fourthly, it rests in the love and welfare of its beloved. For the full certain knowledge of those truths concerning the nature, use, and excellency of this grace, that which the holy ghost hath left recorded, 1 Cor. 13, may give full satisfaction, which is needful for every true member of this lovely body of the Lord Jesus, to work upon their hearts by prayer, meditation continual exercise at least of the special influence of this grace, till Christ be formed in them and they in him, all in each other, knit together by this bond of love.

It rests now to make some application of this discourse, by the present design, which gave the occasion of writing of it. Herein are four things to be propounded; first the persons, secondly, the work, thirdly the end, fourthly the means.

First, for the persons. We are a company professing ourselves fellow members of Christ, in which respect only, though we were absent from each other many miles, and had our employments as far distant, yet we ought to account ourselves knit together by this bond of love and live in the exercise of it, if we would have comfort of our being in Christ. This was notorious in the practice of the Christians in former times; as is testified of the Waldenses, from the mouth of one of the adversaries Aeneas Sylvius “*mutuo ament pene antequam norunt*” --- they use to love any of their own religion even before they were acquainted with them.

Secondly for the work we have in hand. It is by a mutual consent, through a special overvaluing providence and a more than an ordinary approbation of the churches of Christ, to seek out a place of cohabitation and consortship under a due form of government both civil and ecclesiastical. In such cases as this, the care of the public must oversway all private respects, by which, not only conscience, but mere civil policy, doth bind us. For it is a true rule that particular estates cannot subsist in the ruin of the public.

Thirdly, the end is to improve our lives to do more service to the Lord; the comfort and increase of the body of Christ, whereof we are members, that ourselves and posterity may be the better preserved from the common corruptions of this evil world, to serve the Lord and work out our salvation under the power and purity of his holy ordinances.

Fourthly, for the means whereby this must be effected. They are twofold, a conformity with the work and end we aim at. These we see are extraordinary, therefore we must not content ourselves with usual ordinary means. Whatsoever we did, or ought to have done, when we lived in England, the same must we do, and more also, where we go. That which the most in their churches maintain as truth in profession only, we must bring into familiar and constant practice; as in this duty of love, we must love brotherly without dissimulation, we must love one another with a pure heart fervently. We must bear one another's burdens. We must not look only on our own things, but also on the things of our brethren.

Neither must we think that the Lord will bear with such failings at our hands as he doth from those among whom we have lived; and that for these three reasons:

First, in regard of the more near bond of marriage between Him and us, wherein He hath taken us to be His, after a most strict and peculiar manner, which will make Him the more jealous of our love and obedience. So He tells the people of Israel, you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your transgressions.

Secondly, because the Lord will be sanctified in them that come near Him. We know that there were many that corrupted the service of the Lord; some setting up altars before his own; others offering both strange fire and strange sacrifices also; yet there came no fire from heaven, or other sudden judgment upon them, as did upon Nadab and Abihu, whom yet we may think did not sin presumptuously.

Thirdly, when God gives a special commission He looks to have it strictly observed in every article; When He gave Saul a commission to destroy Amaleck, He indented with him upon certain articles, and because he failed in one of the least, and that upon a fair pretense, it lost him the kingdom, which should have been his reward, if he had observed his commission.

Thus stands the cause between God and us. We are entered into covenant with Him for this work. We have taken out a commission. The Lord hath given us leave to draw our own articles. We have professed to enterprise these and those accounts, upon these and those ends. We have hereupon besought Him of favor and blessing. Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then hath He ratified this covenant and sealed our commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it; but if we shall neglect the observation of these articles which are the ends we have propounded, and, dissembling with our God, shall fall to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnal intentions, seeking great things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us, and be revenged of such a people, and make us know the price of the breach of such a covenant.

Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck, and to provide for our posterity, is to follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as His own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly we have been acquainted with. We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "may the Lord make it like that of New England." For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies

to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God's sake. We shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.

And to shut this discourse with that exhortation of Moses, that faithful servant of the Lord, in his last farewell to Israel, Deut. 30. "Beloved, there is now set before us life and death, good and evil," in that we are commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another, to walk in his ways and to keep his Commandments and his ordinance and his laws, and the articles of our Covenant with Him, that we may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may bless us in the land whither we go to possess it. But if our hearts shall turn away, so that we will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worship other Gods, our pleasure and profits, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it.

Therefore let us choose life,
that we and our seed may live,
by obeying His voice and cleaving to Him,
for He is our life and our prosperity.

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

by Jonathan Edwards

V. SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD

Deuteronomy xxxii. 35.—Their foot shall slide in due time.

In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, that were God's visible people, and lived under means of grace; and that notwithstanding all God's wonderful works that he had wrought towards that people, yet remained, as is expressed verse 28, void of counsel, having no understanding in them; and that, under all the cultivations of heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text. The expression that I have chosen for my text, their foot shall slide in due time, seems to imply the following things relating to the punishment and destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to.

1. That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction's coming upon them, being represented by their foot's sliding. The same is expressed, Psalm lxxiii. 18: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction."

2. It implies that they were always exposed to sudden, unexpected destruction; as he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he can't foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once, without warning, which is also expressed in that Psalm lxxiii. 18, 19: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!"

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and don't fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said that when that due time, or appointed time comes, their foot shall slide. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God won't hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall to destruction; as he that stands in such slippery declining ground on the edge of a pit that he can't stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this,

There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God.

By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree or in any respect whatsoever any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment.

The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands can't be strong when God rises up: the strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands.

He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but he can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel that has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the number of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defence against the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces: they are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so 'tis easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by; thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down!

2. They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke xiii. 7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and 'tis nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They don't only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell: John iii. 18, "He that believeth not is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is: John viii. 23, "Ye are from beneath:" and thither he is bound; 'tis the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law, assigns to him.

They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell: and the reason why they don't go down to hell at each moment is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry as he is with many of those miserable creatures that he is now tormenting in hell, and do there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth, yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, that, it may be, are at ease and quiet, than he is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and don't resent it, that he don't let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation don't slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them.

5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The Scripture represents them as his goods, Luke xi. 21. The devils watch them; they are ever by them, at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry lions that

see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back; if God should withdraw his hand by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men a foundation for the torments of hell: there are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell-fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the heart of damned souls, and would beget the same torments in 'em as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in Scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isaiah lvii. 20. For the present God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;" but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all afore it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is a thing that is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whenas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so, if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. 'Tis no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he don't see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages shows that this is no evidence that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step won't be into another world. The unseen, unthought of ways and means of persons' going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they won't bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight can't discern them. God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending 'em to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners' going out of the world are so in God's hands, and so absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it don't depend at all less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, don't secure 'em a moment. This, divine providence and universal experience does also bear testimony to. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them

from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death; but how is it in fact? Eccles. ii. 16, "How dieth the wise man? As the fool."

9. All wicked men's pains and contrivance they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, don't secure 'em from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security, he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do; every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes won't fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the bigger part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done: he don't intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take care that shall be effectual, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men do miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in their confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The bigger part of those that heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those that are now alive; it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If it were so that we could come to speak with them, and could inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be subjects of that misery, we, doubtless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself: I thought my scheme good: I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief: death outwitted me: God's wrath was too quick for me. O my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me."

10. God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace that are not the children of the covenant, and that do not believe in any of the promises of the covenant, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, 'tis plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that thus it is, that natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of

his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold 'em up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out; and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

APPLICATION

The use may be of awakening to unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of. There is nothing between you and hell but the air; 'tis only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but don't see the hand of God in it, but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock.

Were it not that so is the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun don't willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth don't willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air don't willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and don't willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer

threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. 'Tis true, that judgment against your evil work has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the floodgate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it. The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Thus are all you that never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin to a state of new and before altogether unexperienced light and life, (however you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, and may be strict in it), you are thus in the hands of an angry God; 'tis nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction.

However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: now they see, that those things that they depended on for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. 'Tis ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world after you closed your eyes to sleep; and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you han't gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason

why you don't this very moment drop down into hell.^o

O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in. 'Tis a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

And consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath that you are in such danger of.

1. Whose wrath it is. It is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, that have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Prov. xx. 2, "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul." The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth: it is but little that they can do when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth before God are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke xii. 4, 5, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

2. 'Tis the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah lix. 18: "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries." So Isaiah lxvi. 15, "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." And so in many other places. So we read of God's fierceness, Rev. xix. 15. There we read of "the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The words are exceeding terrible: if it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but 'tis not only said so, but "the fierceness and wrath of God." The fury of God! The fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong! And whose heart

endure! To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger implies that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you should not suffer beyond what strict justice requires: nothing shall be withheld because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezek. viii. 18, "Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy: but when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare; God will have no other use to put you to, but only to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but only to be filled full of wrath: God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that 'tis said he will only "laugh and mock," Prov. i. 25, 26, &c.

How awful are those words, Isaiah lxiii. 3, which are the words of the great God: "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." 'Tis perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz., contempt and hatred and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that he'll only tread you under foot: and though he will know that you can't bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he won't regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he'll crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt; no place shall be thought fit for you but under his feet, to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that provoke 'em. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; and accordingly gave order that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it; but the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful Majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies. Rom. ix. 22, "What if God, willing to

show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?” And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, to show how terrible the unmixed, unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isa. xxxiii. 12, 13, 14, “And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites,” &c.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness, of the Omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isa. lxvi. 23, 24, “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

4. It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: there will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty, merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: for “who knows the power of God’s anger?”

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh, that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and

are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons that now sit here in some seats of this meeting-house in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest, will be there in a little time! Your damnation don't slumber; it will come swiftly and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. 'Tis doubtless the case of some that heretofore you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair. But here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor, damned, hopeless souls give for one day's such opportunity as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has flung the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him and pressing into the Kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very likely in the same miserable condition that you are in are in now a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest for one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield,[15] where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here that have lived long in the world that are not to this day born again, and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and have done nothing ever since they have lived but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case in an especial manner is extremely dangerous; your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Don't you see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves and wake thoroughly out of sleep; you cannot bear the fierceness and the wrath of the infinite God.

And you that are young men and young women, will you neglect this precious season that you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as it is with those persons that spent away all the precious days of youth in sin and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness.

And you children that are unconverted, don't you know that you are going down to hell to bear

the dreadful wrath of that God that is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one that is yet out of Christ and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women or middle-aged or young people or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord that is a day of such great favor to some will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls. And never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the bigger part of adult persons that ever shall be saved will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on that great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the Apostles' days, the election will obtain and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you was born to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore let every one that is out of Christ now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom. "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest ye be consumed."

A Witch Trial at Mount Holly

by Benjamin Franklin

[From the Pennsylvania Gazette, Oct. 22, 1730.]

“Saturday last, at Mount-Holly, about 8 Miles from this Place [Burlington, N. J.] near 300 People were gathered together to see an Experiment or two tried on some Persons accused of Witchcraft. It seems the Accused had been charged with making their Neighbours’ Sheep dance in an uncommon Manner, and with causing Hogs to speak and sing Psalms, etc., to the great Terror and Amazement of the king’s good and peaceable Subjects in this Province; and the Accusers, being very positive that if the Accused were weighed in Scales against a Bible, the Bible would prove too heavy for them; or that, if they were bound and put into the River they would swim; the said Accused, desirous to make Innocence appear, voluntarily offered to undergo the said Trials if 2 of the most violent of their Accusers would be tried with them. Accordingly the Time and Place was agreed on and advertised about the Country; The Accusers were 1 Man and 1 Woman: and the Accused the same. The Parties being met and the People got together, a grand Consultation was held, before they proceeded to Trial; in which it was agreed to use the Scales first; and a Committee of Men were appointed to search the Men, and a Committee of Women to search the Women, to see if they had any Thing of Weight about them, particularly Pins. After the Scrutiny was over a huge great Bible belonging to the Justice of the Place was provided, and a Lane through the Populace was made from the Justice’s House to the Scales, which were fixed on a Gallows erected for that Purpose opposite to the House, that the Justice’s Wife and the rest of the Ladies might see the Trial without coming amongst the Mob, and after the Manner of Moorfields a large Ring was also made. Then came out of the House a grave, tall Man carrying the Holy Writ before the supposed Wizard etc., (as solemnly as the Sword-bearer of London before the Lord Mayor) the Wizard was first put in the Scale, and over him was read a Chapter out of the Books of Moses, and then the Bible was put in the other Scale, (which, being kept down before) was immediately let go; but, to the great Surprize of the Spectators, Flesh and Bones came down plump, and outweighed that great good Book by abundance. After the same Manner the others were served, and their Lumps of Mortality severally were too heavy for Moses and all the Prophets and Apostles. This being over, the Accusers and the rest of the Mob, not satisfied with this Experiment, would have the Trial by Water. Accordingly a most solemn Procession was made to the Millpond, where both Accused and Accusers being stripped (saving only to the Women their Shifts) were bound Hand and Foot and severally placed in the Water, lengthways, from the Side of a Barge or Flat, having for Security only a Rope about the Middle of each, which was held by some in the Flat. The accused man being thin and spare with some Difficulty began to sink at last; but the rest, every one of them, swam very light upon the Water. A Sailor in the Flat jump’d out upon the Back of the Man accused thinking to drive him down to the Bottom; but the Person bound, without any Help, came up some time before the other. The Woman Accuser being told that she did not sink, would be duck’d a second Time; when she swam again as light as before. Upon which she declared, That she believed the Accused had bewitched her to make her so light, and that she would be duck’d again a Hundred Times but she would duck the Devil out of her. The Accused Man, being surpriz’d at his own Swimming, was

not so confident of his Innocence as before, but said, 'If I am a Witch, it is more than I know.' The more thinking Part of the Spectators were of Opinion that any Person so bound and placed in the Water (unless they were mere Skin and Bones) would swim, till their Breath was gone, and their Lungs fill'd with Water. But it being the general Belief of the Populace that the Women's shifts and the Garters with which they were bound help'd to support them, it is said they are to be tried again the next warm Weather, naked."

Faith and the American Founding

by Michael Novak

Please read “Faith and the American Founding” at this link:

http://heartland.org/sites/all/modules/custom/heartland_migration/files/pdfs/20657.pdf

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Ten Commandments and American Law

by Marci Hamilton

Please read “The Ten Commandments and American Law: Why Some Christians’ Claims to Legal Hegemony Are Not Consistent with the Historical Record” at this link:

<http://writ.news.findlaw.com/hamilton/20030911.html>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Letter to Danbury Baptists

by Thomas Jefferson

To messers. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, & Stephen S. Nelson, a committee of the Danbury Baptist association in the state of Connecticut.

Gentlemen

The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist association, give me the highest satisfaction. my duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, & in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection & blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for yourselves & your religious association, assurances of my high respect & esteem.

Th Jefferson

Jan. 1. 1802.

The Mythical ‘Wall of Separation’

by Daniel L. Dreisbach

Please read “The Mythical ‘Wall of Separation’” at this link:

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2006/06/the-mythical-wall-of-separation-how-a-misused-metaphor-changed-church-state-law-policy-and-discourse>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

America's Design for Tolerance

by Christopher Clausen

Please read “America’s Design for Tolerance” at this link:

<http://old.euba.sk/dokumenty/cnas/Tolerance%20WQ%20proof%20-%20Christopher%20Clausen.pdf>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Week 5

Moral Relativism and Moral Absolutism

A Defense of Ethical Relativism

by Ruth Benedict

Please read “A Defense of Ethical Relativism” at this link:

http://public.callutheran.edu/~chenxi/Phil315_031.pdf

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Moral Relativism

from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Please read “Moral Relativism” at this link:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-relativism/>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Ethical Relativism

**by Manuel Valasquez, Claire Andre, Thomas
Shanks and Michael J. Meyer**

Please read “Ethical Relativism” at the following link. This explains the view of anthropologists that cultural relativism equates with moral relativism; also offers counter arguments.

<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/ethicalrelativism.html>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Existentialism is a Humanism

by Jean-Paul Sartre

I would like to defend existentialism against a number of criticisms.

Existentialism has been accused of inviting people to remain in quietism of despair. Because all solutions are impossible, one should consider that action in this world is totally impossible, and that eventually leads to contemplative philosophy. However since contemplation is a luxury, we are brought back to a bourgeois philosophy. This criticism is mainly from the Communists.

We have been criticized, on the other hand, for emphasizing the human ignominy, for showing all the sordid, the louche, the slimy, and for neglecting a number of smiling beauties and the bright side of human nature. For example, according to Ms. Mercier, a Catholic critic, we have forgotten the smile of the child. One and another accuse us of missing human solidarity, of believing that man is isolated, largely also because we start, say the Communists, with pure subjectivity; that is, we start with Cartesian thought, i.e, the moment when man attains his own solitude, the position that makes man unable thereafter to return to solidarity with men outside of himself, whom cannot be reached from the cogito.

And from the Christian side, we are criticized for denying the reality and seriousness of human undertakings, since if we remove the commandments of God and the values enshrined in eternity, there remains only strict freedom; each can do what she wants, and is incapable from his point of view of condemning the views and actions of others.

It is to these various reproaches that I seek to respond today, which is why I titled this brief account: Existentialism is a Humanism. Many will be surprised that we are talking about humanism. We will try to see which in which sense we understand it. In any case, what we can say at the outset is that by “existentialism” we mean a doctrine that makes human life possible and which, moreover, declares that every truth and every action involving a milieu and a human subjectivity. The main criticism says, as we know, that existentialists focus on the bad side of human life. A lady, I was told recently, says when she drops a vulgar word in a moment of nervousness, “I think I am becoming an existentialist.” Ugliness is equated to existentialism, which is why one declares that we are naturalists, and if we are, it is surprising that we would frighten anyone. We scandalize many more than the naturalists, who can properly say that they do not frighten or scandalize anyone today. Those who can swallow a novel by Zola, like *The Earth*, are disgusted when they read an existentialist novel. Those that appeal to the knowledge of the people—which is very sad—find us even sadder. Yet what could be more disillusioned than sayings like “charity begins at home” or “Love a villain and he’ll hate you. Hate a villain and he’ll love you”? We know the cliches on this subject, and they all say the same thing: Do not try to rise above your station. Do not fight the powers that be, do not struggle; any action that does not fit into tradition is a romance; an attempt which is not based on proven experience is doomed to failure; and experience shows that men are always descending into baseness and anarchy and must be restrained by force. But it is the people who insist on these sad proverbs: the people who say “How typical!” every time they are shown a more or less repugnant act, the people who revel in sickening songs. These are the people who accuse existentialism of being too dark, and to the point that I wonder if what grieves them is not its pessimism, but rather its optimism. Is it the foundation that scares them, the doctrine that I am going to explain to you, that leaves a

possibility of choice to man? To find out, we need to revisit the issue from a strictly philosophical framework. What is it we call existentialism?

Most people who use that word would be lost to justify it, because today it has become a fashion; we gladly say that a musician or a painter is existentialist. A gossip columnist from *Clartés* signs his articles, “the Existentialist”, and basically took the word today has such breadth and such an extension that it means nothing at all. It seems that in the absence of an avant-garde doctrine analogous to surrealism, people hungry for scandal and movement are attracted to this philosophy, which can not give them anything; in reality it is the least scandalous doctrine, the most austere, and it is strictly for technicians and philosophers. However, it can be defined easily. What makes things complicated is that there are two kinds of existentialists: the first, who are Christian existentialists, and among whom I put Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, a Catholic; and, secondly, the atheist existentialists among whom we must place Heidegger, and also the French existentialists and myself. What they have in common is simply that they believe that existence precedes essence, or, if you prefer, that we must begin from subjectivity. What, exactly, does this mean? When considering a manufactured object, such as a book or a paper cutter, this object was made by a craftsman who was inspired by a concept; he referred to the concept of cut paper, and also a pre-production technique that is part of the concept, which is basically a recipe. Thus, the cutter is at once an object that occurs in a certain way and also, on the other hand, has a defined value, and we cannot assume a man would produce a paper cutter without knowing how it will be used. Let us say that, for the paper-cutter, the essence—that is to say all definitions and qualities that help produce it and define it—precedes existence, and thus the presence in front of me, like the paper cutter or the book, is determined. Here we have a technical vision of the world in which we can say that production precedes existence.

When we design a creator God, this God is considered mostly a superior craftsman, and whatever we consider the doctrine, whether it be a doctrine like that of Descartes or Leibniz’s, we always assume that the will more or less follows the understanding or, at least, accompanies it, and that when God creates, He knows precisely what He creates. Thus, the concept of man, who has the spirit of God, is comparable to the concept of a paper cutter in the spirit of the artisan, and God produces man following techniques and design, just as the artisan manufactures a paper cutter following a definition and a technique. Thus the individual man carries a concept that is also in the divine. In the eighteenth century, in the atheism of philosophers, the notion of God is suppressed, but not for all the idea that essence precedes existence. We find this idea everywhere: we find in Diderot, Voltaire, and even in Kant. Man is possessed of a human nature. That human nature, the human concept, is found in all men, meaning that every man is a particular example of a universal concept, “man”. In Kant, it follows from this that the hermit, the wild man, and the bourgeois are constrained by the same definition and have the same basic qualities. So, again, the essence of man precedes that historic existence which we encounter in nature.

The atheistic existentialism, which I represent, is more consistent. It states that if there is no God, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before it can be defined by any concept, and that this being is man or, as Heidegger says, human reality.

What is meant by this, that existence precedes essence? This means that man first exists, occurs, arises in the world, and is only defined later. Man, as conceived by the existentialist, if he is not definable, is not definable because he is, at first, nothing. He will not be until later, and then he will be as he makes himself. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Man is not only as he is conceived, but as he wants to be, and as he conceives himself after existence, as he wants to be after this impulse towards existence. Man is nothing other than what he is. This is the first principle of existentialism. It is also called subjectivity, and it is this for which we are also criticized. But what do we mean by this, but that man has more dignity than a stone or a table? We mean that man first exists, that is to say, man is, first, what is thrust into a future, and he is conscious of himself existing into that future. Man is primarily a project that is lived subjectively, rather than a foam, a rot or a cauliflower. Nothing exists prior to this project, nothing is intelligible to heaven, and man, to exist, will first have to be a project. He is not what he wishes to be, however. For we usually mean by “a will” that there is a conscious decision, and that is, for most of us, after we have made ourselves. I may want to join a party, write a book, get married; all these are just one manifestation of a more original choice, more spontaneous than what is called “will”. But if indeed existence precedes essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, the first step of existentialism is to put every man in possession of what he is and to base him on total responsibility for his own existence. And when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not want to say that man is responsible for his strict individuality, but he is responsible for all men. There are two meanings to the word “subjectivism”, and our opponents play on both senses. Subjectivism means on the one hand a choice of the individual subject himself, and, on the other hand, the impossibility of man transcending human subjectivity. The second meaning is the deeper meaning of existentialism. When we say that man chooses himself, we believe that each of us chooses, but by this we mean that by choosing he also chooses all men. In effect, when a man chooses what he wants to be, he creates a man as he must be. To choose to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose. We can never choose evil; what we choose is always good, and nothing can be good for us without being for all. If existence precedes essence and we want to exist at the same time as we shape our image, that image is valid for all and for our whole epoch. Thus, our responsibility is much greater than we might suppose, because it involves all mankind. If I’m laborer, and if I choose to join a Christian trade union rather than communist; if, by that membership, I want to indicate that resignation is basically the right solution for man, that the kingdom of man is not on earth; I do not do so only for my case: I want resignation for everyone, so my approach has committed all humanity. And if what I want is more individual, to get married, have children, even if this marriage depends solely on my situation, or my passion or my desire, by that I commit not only myself, but all humanity on the path of monogamy. So I am responsible for myself and for all, and I create a certain image of man that I choose; by choosing me, I choose man. This allows us to understand what is meant by rather grandiloquent words such as anguish, abandonment, and despair. As you’ll see, it is extremely simple. First, what do we mean by anguish? The existentialist says that man is in happy agony. She means this: the man who is

committed and who realizes he is not only choosing for himself but is also a legislator choosing at the same time for all humanity cannot escape the sense of his total and deep responsibility. While many people are not anxious, they pretend to conceal their anguish, they flee from it. Certainly, many people believe in not committing themselves, and when asked "But what if everyone did that?" shrug their shoulders and answer: "Everybody does not do that." But in truth, we must always ask: what if everyone did the same? and we will escape this disturbing thought only by a sort of bad faith. He who lies and excuses himself by saying everyone does not similarly is someone who is uncomfortable with his conscience, because the act of lying implies a universal value attributed to the lie. Even at the same time, a mask of anxiety appears. It is this anguish that Kierkegaard called the anguish of Abraham. You know the story: An angel commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son (if all goes well it's really an angel). It came and said, you, Abraham, shalt sacrifice thy son. But everyone should ask themselves, first, is that it is an angel, and is what I am Abraham? What proves it? There was a madwoman who had hallucinations: she spoke to a man by phone and he gave orders. The doctor asked, "But who is he talking to you?" She replied, "He says He is God." And what he proved, indeed, that he was God? If an angel comes to me, what proves that he is an angel? And if I hear voices, what proves that they come from heaven, not hell, or my subconscious, or a medical condition? What proves that they come to me? What proves that I am annointed to impose my conception of man and my choice on humanity? I'll never find evidence, any evidence, to convince me. If a voice speaks to me, it's always me who will decide that this voice is the voice of an angel; if I consider that such an act is good, it is I who will choose to say that this act is good rather than bad. I have no way to be Abraham, and yet I am obliged to make the same exemplary acts.

It is as if, for every man, mankind had fixed its eyes on what he does and settled on what it will do. And every man must ask: Am I the one who has the right to act so that humanity will be ruled my actions? And if he does not say this, it only means he masks the anxiety. This is not an anxiety that leads to quietism, inaction. This is a simple anxiety, for all who are aware of the responsibilities. When, for example, a military leader takes responsibility for an attack and sends a number of men to death, he chooses to do, and basically he chooses alone. No doubt there are orders coming from above, but they are too wide and his interpretation is required, and on that interpretation depends the life of ten or fourteen or twenty men. He cannot but have, in the decision he makes, some anxiety. All leaders know that anguish. This does not prevent them from acting; on the contrary, it is the very condition of their action, because it means they are considering a plurality of possibilities, and when they choose one, they realize that the choice is valuable only because it is chosen. And this kind of anguish, which is the one described in existentialism, we will see is also due to a direct responsibility vis-à-vis other men. It is not a curtain that separates us from action, but it is part of the action itself.

And when speaking of abandonment, a word dear to Heidegger, we mean only that God does not exist, and we must draw out the consequences. The existentialist is strongly opposed to a certain type of secular morality that would remove God with the least possible expense. When, around 1880, French teachers tried a secular morality, they said something like this: God is

a useless and costly hypothesis, but it is necessary, however, for there to be a moral compass for society, for a civilized world, that some values are taken seriously and regarded as existing a priori. It must be mandatory a priori to be honest, not to lie, not to beat one's wife, to have children, etc. etc. So we will do a little work to show that these values exist all the same, inscribed in an intelligible heaven even though there is no God. In other words, (and this is, I believe, the tendency of all that is called in France "radicalism") nothing will be changed if God does not exist, we will meet the same standards of honesty, progress, of humanism, and we will have made God an outdated hypothesis which will die quietly and of itself. The existentialist, on the contrary, thinks it is very embarrassing that God does not exist, because with him disappears the possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. There can no longer be any a priori good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it; it is nowhere written that property exists, or that man must be honest and not tell lies, precisely because we are on a plane where there are only men. Dostoyevsky wrote: "If God did not exist, everything would be permitted." This is the starting point of existentialism. Indeed, everything is permitted if God does not exist, and therefore man is helpless, because he finds neither within nor outside himself a fixed point. He first finds no excuses. If, indeed, existence precedes essence, one can never explain by reference to a fixed and given human nature, meaning that there is no determinism; man is free, man is freedom. If, on the other hand, there is no God, we do not find in front of us values or orders which legitimize our conduct. Thus, we have neither justifications nor excuses behind us nor before us in a field of numinous values. We are alone, without apologies. This is what I express by saying that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because did not create himself; free, however, because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. The existentialist does not believe in the power of passion. He will never think that a beautiful passion is a devastating torrent which fatally leads man to certain acts, and that, therefore, it is an excuse. He thinks that man is responsible for his passion.

The existentialist does not think that man can find relief in a given sign, or on firm ground, which would somehow guide him, for he thinks that man interprets a sign as he pleases. He therefore thinks every man, without any support, is condemned at every instant to invent man. Ponge said, in a very nice article, "Man is the future of man." It is perfectly true. But if by that we mean that this future is written in heaven, as God sees it, then it is false, because that would not even be a future. But if we understand that, however man appears, there is a future to be, a virgin future that awaits him, then this is correct. But then it was abandoned. To give you an example that allows better understanding of neglect, I cite the case of one of my students came to me in the following circumstances: his father had quarreled with his mother, and was also inclined to collaborate; his older brother was killed in the German offensive of 1940, and this young man, with somewhat primitive but generous feelings, wanted revenge. His mother lived alone with him and was very distressed by the semi-treason of his father and the death of his eldest son, and could find consolation in him. This young man had a choice, at that time, between going to England and enlisting in the French Underground forces—that is to say abandoning his mother—or remaining with his mother, helping them survive. He was well aware that this woman lived

only for him and that his disappearance—and perhaps his death—would plunge her into despair. He also knew deeply, concretely, that every act he was doing with respect to his mother was as her sponsor, in the sense that it helped her to live; if, instead, he went to go and fight, his actions could get lost in the sands and be of no avail: for example, leaving for England, he could have to stay indefinitely in a Spanish camp, it could happen in England or Algiers; he could be in an office doing paperwork. Therefore, he was faced with two very different types of action: one concrete, immediate, but addressed only one individual, or another action that targeted a whole infinitely greater, a nation, but which was thus ambiguous, and could be stopped on the way. And at the same time, he hesitated between two types of morality. On the one hand, a morality of sympathy, of personal devotion, and secondly, a wider morality, but of more questionable effectiveness. We had to choose between the two. What could help him choose? Christian doctrine? No. Christian doctrine says: be charitable, love your neighbor, sacrifice yourself to others, choose the hardest way, etc. etc. But what way is the hardest? Who is he to love as his brother, the fellow patriot or his mother? How useful is the large action, the wave of fighting, in a whole compared to one that is specific and will help a specific living being? Who can decide a priori? No one. No moral code can help. Kantian ethics says: never treat others as means but only ever as an ends. Okay, if I live with my mother, I will treat her as an end and not as a means; but doing so, I treat as means those who fight around me; and vice versa if I join those who fight. I will treat them as ends, and therefore I will treat my mother as a means.

If values are vague, and if they are still too vast for precise and concrete cases, we think it only remains for us to trust our instincts. That's what this young man has tried to do, and when I saw him, he said, basically, what matters is the feeling. I should choose the direction I am pushed in. If I feel that I love my mother enough to sacrifice everything else—my revenge, my want of action, my desire for adventure—I stay with her. If, on the contrary, I feel that my love for my mother is not enough, I'm leaving. But how to determine the value of a feeling? What was the value of his feeling for his mother? Precisely the fact that he stayed there with her. I can say: I like this friend enough to give him a sum of money, but I cannot say it unless I've done it. I can say I love my mother enough to stay with her, if I stayed with her. I determine the value of the feeling by acting to endorse it and define it. I also ask the feeling to justify my action. I find myself drawn into a vicious circle.

On the other hand, Gide has said very well that a feeling that is merely playing and a feeling that lives are almost indistinguishable: I decide that I love my mother by staying with her, or play a little theatre that will make it so that I do; it's a bit the same. In other words, the feeling is built by the acts we do, I cannot consult feeling to guide me through actions. Which means that I can neither seek in myself an authentic state nor claim a moral concept that will allow me to act. At least, you say, did he go see a professor for advice? But if you should seek advice from a priest, for example, you chose this priest; you already knew basically, more or less, what he would advise you to do. In other words, to choose the counselor is to still commit yourself. The proof is that if you are Christian, you will say, see a priest. But there are collaborationist priests, fence sitters, and priests of the resistance. Which to choose? And if the young man chooses a

priest of the resistance, or a priest of the collaborationists, he has already decided the kind of advice he receives. Thus, coming to find me, he knew the answer I was going to give, and I had a reply for him: you are free to choose, that is to say, you are free to invent. No general moral code can tell you what to do; there is no evidence in the world. Catholics will say: but there are signs. Let's face it; I myself must read the direction from the signs. I knew, while I was captive, a remarkable man who was a Jesuit; he entered the Jesuit order as follows: he had suffered a number of quite bitter failures; as a child, his father had died, leaving him poor, and he was left in a religious institution where they constantly made him feel that he was accepting charity; later, he missed a number of honors that appeal to children, and then at eighteen, he missed out on an affair. And finally, at twenty-two, something quite childish happened, but it was the straw that broke the camel's back, he failed his military training. This young man could therefore feel that he had failed at everything; it was a sign. But a sign of what? He could take refuge in bitterness or despair. But he held, very cleverly for him, that this was the sign that he was not made for secular triumphs, and that only the triumphs of religion, holiness, faith, were accessible. He then felt the calling, and entered into orders. Who cannot see that the decision about the meaning of the sign was made by him alone? We could have concluded something else in this series of failures: for example it would better that he should become a carpenter or a revolutionary. He therefore bears full responsibility for the interpretation. Abandonment implies that we choose our beings ourselves. Neglect goes with anxiety. As for abandonment, this is extremely simple. Abandonment means that we can only rely on what depends on our will, or the set of probabilities that make our work possible.

When you want something, there are always likely elements. I can count on the arrival of a friend. This friend comes by rail or tram; I can assume that the railway will arrive on time, or that the tram will not derail. I remain in the realm of possibility, but it is not wise to rely on the things that are outside my sphere of influence. From the moment I consider the possibilities that are not rigorously involved in my action, I have to ignore them, because no God, no plan can adapt the world and its possibilities to my will. Basically, when Descartes said: "To conquer oneself rather than the world" he meant the same thing: act without hope. Marxists, to whom I have spoken, responded: "You can, in your action that will, of course, be limited by your death, count on the support of others. This means, to count both what the others will do now, in China, Russia, to help you, and on what they will do later, after your death, to take action and bring towards its attainment in the Revolution. You should count on it, otherwise you are not moral." I say first that I will rely on comrades still in the struggle, just to the degree that these comrades are engaged with me in the concrete and real struggle, in the unit of a party or group that I can more or less control, where I am a militant and I know every minute detail. In times like that, I count on the unity and the will of the party; exactly as I count on the fact that the tram will arrive on time or that the train did not derail. But I cannot count on men that I do not know based on human goodness, or the interest of man for the good of society, because man is free, and that there is no bottom I can find to human nature.

I do not know what will become of the Russian Revolution. I can admire it and take it as an

example that proves that the proletariat plays a role in Russia today that he does not play in any other nation. But I cannot say that it will necessarily lead to a triumph of the proletariat; I must confine myself to what I see. I cannot be sure that my comrades in struggle will resume work after my death to bring it to a maximum of perfection, as these men are free and they decide freely what will become of man tomorrow. After my death, men could decide to establish fascism, and others may be fairly sloppy and helpless and let them do; fascism is human truth, and too bad for us. In reality, things will be like man has decided they are. Does that mean I should abandon myself to quietism? No. First I must commit myself, then act according to the old formula. That does not mean I should not belong to a party, but I'll shall be without illusion and I shall do what I can. For example, if I ask myself, collectivization, when will it happen? I do not know. I just know that everything is in my power to make it happen. Beyond that, I cannot count on anything.

Quietism is the attitude of people who say "others can do what I cannot do". The doctrine I am presenting is precisely the opposite of quietism, since it says there is no reality except in action; it also goes further, since it adds that man is nothing but his project. He exists only insofar as he is realized, so there is nothing more than all of his actions, nothing more than his life. From this we can understand why our doctrine horrifies some people. They often have only one way of supporting their misery, which is to think: "The circumstances were against me; I was worth much more than I seemed, of course. I did not have a great love or great friendship, but that's because I have not met a man or a woman who were worthy. I have not written very good books, but it's because I had no leisure to do so. I have not had children to devote myself to, but that is because I have not found the man with whom I could have made my life. I have remained so, at home, unused and fully viable, with a variety of dispositions, inclinations, and possibilities that give me a value that the simple series of my actions do not display." In reality, for an existentialist, there is no love other than that which is being built; there is no possibility of love other than that which manifests itself in a love. There is no genius other than one that is expressed in works of art: the genius of Proust is all of the works of Proust, and the genius of Racine is his series of tragedies. Apart from that there is nothing; why attribute to Racine the opportunity to write another tragedy, precisely because he has not written it? A woman enters her life, her face drawn, and outside of this there is nothing. Obviously, this thought may seem harsh to someone who failed in her life. But then, the existentialist understands that reality alone counts, that dreams, expectations, and hopes only define man as a disappointed dream, as abortive. Hopes and unnecessary expectations define man in the negative and not the positive. However, this does not imply that the artist will be judged solely on his artwork. A thousand other things also contribute to defining him. What we mean is that a man is nothing but a series of enterprises. He is the sum, the organization, the set of relations that constitute these undertakings.

Under these conditions, when we are reproached, it is not for our deep pessimism, but for our optimistic toughness. If people criticize us for our novels in which we describe beings spineless, weak, cowardly and sometimes even downright bad, it's not just because these people are

spineless, weak, loose or bad: if, like Zola, we declare that they are so because of heredity, because of the influence of environment, society, due to organic or psychological determinism, people would be reassured, they would say, "Voilà, we are like that! Nobody can do anything about it!" But the existentialist, when he describes a coward, says the coward is responsible for his cowardice. He is not like that because he has a heart, lung or brain loose. He is not like that from a physiological disorganization. He is like that because he has made himself a coward through his actions. There are no loose temperaments. There are temperaments that are nervous; there are those with weak blood, as the good people say. There are wealthy temperaments. But the man who has weak blood is not cowardly as a result, because what makes cowardice is the wavering or resigning. A temperament does not make the act; the coward is defined by the act he did. What people feel obscurely and what horrifies them is that the coward that we present is guilty of cowardice. What people want is one born a coward or a hero. One of the criticisms most often made is that the Roads to Freedom is formulated thus: but then, these people who are so spineless, how will you make yourselves heroes? This objection makes us laugh because it assumes that people are born heroes. And basically that's what people want to think: if you are born a coward, you'll be perfectly quiet, you cannot help it; you will be cowardly all your life, whatever you do; and if you are born a hero, you will also be perfectly still; you will be a hero all your life, you will drink like a hero, and you will eat like a hero. What the existentialist says is that the coward is a coward, that the hero is a hero, but there is always a possibility for the coward not to be a coward, and for the hero to stop being a hero. What matters is the total commitment, and this is not a special case, a particular action; you engage fully.

Thus, we have responded to, I believe, a number of criticisms about existentialism. You see it cannot be considered a philosophy of quietism, since it defines man by action; nor as a pessimistic description of man: there is no doctrine more optimistic, since the destiny of man is in himself; nor as an attempt to discourage man from action, since it says that there is hope in action, and the only thing that allows man to live is the act. Therefore, in this regard, we are dealing with a moral action and commitment. However, we are sometimes reproached for confining man in his individual subjectivity. Again we are understood very poorly. Our starting point is indeed the subjectivity of the individual, and for strictly philosophical reasons. Not because we are bourgeois, but because we want a doctrine based on truth, not a collection of fine theories, full of hope but with no real foundation. There can be no other truth, as this one, the starting point: I think therefore I am. This is the absolute truth of consciousness itself. Any theory which takes man out of this moment he attained himself is primarily a theory that suppresses the truth, because, apart from this Cartesian cogito, all objects are only probable, and a doctrine of probabilities that is not suspended from a truth collapses into nothingness; to define the probable one must possess the true. So for there to be any truth, there must be an absolute truth, and it is simple, easy to reach, it is accessible to everyone, and it can be seized without an intermediary. Secondly, this theory is the only one to give dignity to man; this is the only one that does not make man an object. While materialism has the effect of treating all men, including himself, as objects, that is to say as a set of determined reactions with qualities and phenomena no

different from a table or chair or a stone. We want to create the human kingdom as a set of distinct values of the material realm. But the subjectivity which we reach there as truth is not a strictly individual subjectivity, because we demonstrated that in the cogito, we did not discover ourselves only, but also others. By "I think", contrary to the philosophy of Descartes, contrary to the philosophy of Kant, we reach ourselves in front of the other, and the other is as certain to us as ourselves. Thus, the man reached directly through the cogito also discovers all the others, and he finds the condition of existence. He realizes that he cannot be anything (in the sense that we say we are spiritual, or we are bad, or we're jealous) unless others recognize it as such. For any truth about me, I must pass by the other. The other is essential to my existence, as well as to the knowledge I have of myself. Under these conditions, the discovery of my privacy at the same time uncovers the other as a freedom posed in front of me, whom I think of, and who wants only to be for or against me. Thus we discover at once a world we call intersubjectivity, and it is in this world that man decides what he is and what is the other.

Furthermore, it is impossible to find in each man a universal essence that would be human nature, yet there is a universal human condition. It is not by chance that the thinkers of today speak more readily of the human condition and as to its nature. They mean by condition with varying degrees of clarity all the a priori limits that outline our fundamental situation in the universe. Historical situations vary: the man can be born a slave in a pagan society or a feudal lord or a proletarian. What does not vary is the need for him to be in the world, to be at work, to be surrounded by the other and be mortal. These limits are neither subjective nor objective; or, rather, they have an objective side and a subjective side. They are objective because they are ubiquitous and are recognizable everywhere; they are subjective because they are lived and are nothing if man did not live them, that is to say did not freely determine its existence in relation to them. And although the projects may be diverse, at least none have been left unknown, because we all attempt to overcome these limits or to reduce or deny them or to accommodate them.

Accordingly, any project, however individual, has a universal value. Any project, even that of the Chinese, the Indian or the negro, can be understood by a European. It can be understood; this means that the European of 1945 may throw himself from a situation he conceives, to its limits in the same way, and he can remake himself into the project of Chinese or the Indian or African. There is universality of any project in the sense that any project is understandable for everyone. This does not mean that the project defines man forever, but it can be found. There is always a way to understand the idiot, the child, the primitive or foreigner, provided we have sufficient information. In this sense we can say that there is a universality of man, but it is not given; it is perpetually constructed. I build the universal in choosing me, I build it in the project including any other man, whatever time it is. This absolute choice does not remove the relativity of each epoch. That existentialism has at heart to show is the connection of the absolute nature of the free commitment, by which every man realizes himself in realizing a type of humanity, commitment always understandable at any time and anyone, and the relativity of the cultural landscape that may result from such a choice must mark both the relativity of Cartesianism and the absolute nature of the Cartesian commitment. In this sense we can say, if you will, that each of us makes

the absolute by breathing, eating, sleeping or acting in any way. There is no difference between being free, being as a project, as existence choosing its essence, and be absolute and there is no difference between being an absolute temporally localized, that is to say that is located in history, and be universally understood.

This does not entirely solve the objection of subjectivism. Indeed, this objection takes on even more forms. The first is this: we are told, then you can do anything; this is expressed in various ways. First, they tax us with anarchy; then they say: you cannot judge others, because there is no reason to prefer one project to another; and the final objection: everything is free in what you choose; you are giving with one hand what you pretend to receive the other. These three objections are not very serious. The first objection, you can choose anything, is not accurate. The choice is possible in one sense, but it is not possible not to choose. I can always choose, but I do know that if I do not choose, I choose again. This, although seemingly purely formal, is of great importance to limit whim and caprice. Sometimes one faces a situation, for example the situation that I am a sexual being and can have sex with someone of another gender, and can have children; I have to choose a attitude, and anyway I bear the responsibility of a choice that, in committing myself, also commits the whole of humanity, even if no a priori value determines my choice. It has nothing to do with caprice, and if one sees in this Gide's theory of gratuitous action, then it is because one has not seen the enormous differences between this theory and that of Gide. Gide does not know that this is but a situation, his act is mere whim. For us, on the contrary, man finds himself in an organized situation, where man is committed to himself, he undertakes in his choice one for all mankind, and he cannot avoid choosing: he either remains chaste, or he will marry without having children, or he will marry and have children; anyway whatever he does, it is impossible that he does not take full responsibility facing this problem. Doubtless he chooses without reference to preset values, but it is unfair to accuse him of caprice. Rather, it is necessary to compare the moral choice with the construction of a work of art. And here I must immediately stop to say that this is not a moral aesthetic, because our opponents are of bad faith if they criticize us for that. The example I chose is a comparison. That said, has anyone ever criticized an artist who makes a picture not abide by rules established a priori? Has anyone ever told an artist what he must do at the easel? It is understood that there is no picture to be painted. The artist engages in the construction of his painting, and the picture to be made is exactly the picture he did make; it is understood that there are no a priori aesthetic values, but there are values which are then in the actual picture, in the relationship that exists between the desire to create and the result. Nobody can say what the painting of tomorrow will be; it can only be determined once the painting is done. What does that have to do with morality? We are in the same creative situation. We never talk about the freedom of a work of art. When we speak of a Picasso painting, we never say that it is free; we understand that it is constructed at the same time as it is painted, as the work comes to life. It is the same in moral terms. What is common between art and morality is that, in both cases, we have creation and invention. We cannot decide a priori what to do. I think I have sufficiently shown this by talking about the case of the student who came to me; and he could have applied any moralities, Kantian or otherwise, without

finding any kind of guidance. He was obliged to invent his law himself. We will never say that this man, who chose to stay with his mother by taking as his basis moral sentiments, individual action and concrete charity, or who had chosen to go to England, preferring sacrifice, made a free choice. Man is; he is not all made in advance; he is choosing his ethics, and the pressure of circumstances is such that he cannot not choose one. We do not define man only in relation to a commitment. It is therefore absurd to reproach us for free choice. Secondly, we are told: you cannot judge others. This is true to an extent, and false in another. This is true in the sense that whenever a man chooses his commitment and project in all sincerity and with lucidity, whatever his project, it is impossible for him to prefer another; it's true in the sense that we do not believe in progress; progress is an improvement; man is always the same in the face of a situation that varies, and choice is always a choice in a situation. The moral problem has not changed since the time when one could choose between slavery and non-slavery, for example in the Civil War, and at moment where you can opt for the MRP or for the Communists.

But we can judge, however, because as I have said, we choose in front of others, and we choose ourselves in front of others. We can be judged, first (and this is perhaps not a value judgment, but it is a logical judgment), that some choices are based on error, and others on truth. We can judge a man by saying he is in bad faith. If we defined the situation of man as free choice, without excuse and without help, every man who hides behind the excuse of his passions, every man who invents a determinism, is a man of bad faith. One could object: but did not he choose to be in bad faith? I reply that I did not judge him morally, but I define bad faith as an error. Here, one cannot escape a judgment of truth. Bad faith is obviously a lie, because it hides the total freedom of commitment. On the same plane, I would say that there is also bad faith if I choose to declare that certain values exist before me; I contradict myself if, at a time, I want them and they are imposed on me. If it is said, but what if I want to be in bad faith? I answer: there is no reason why you cannot, but I declare that you are, and that the attitude of strict consistency is the attitude of good faith. And also I can make a moral judgment. I said that freedom, through each concrete circumstance, can have no other purpose than to want itself; if once man has recognized that, he values neglect, he can want only one thing: freedom as the foundation of all values. This does not mean that he wants freedom in the abstract. It simply means that the actions of men of good faith have ultimate significance as the pursuit of freedom as such. A man who belongs to union, communist or revolutionary, wants concrete goals; these goals will involve abstract freedom but this freedom is meant in the concrete. We want freedom for freedom and through every circumstance. And wanting freedom, we discover that it depends entirely on the freedom of others, and that the freedom of others depends on ours. Of course, freedom as the definition of man does not depend on others, but once there is commitment, I am obliged to want, along with my freedom, the freedom of others. I cannot take only my freedom. So I also take the other's freedom as a goal. Accordingly, where, in the scheme of total authenticity, I recognized that man is a being in whom essence is preceded by existence, he is a free being who cannot, in diverse circumstances, but want freedom; I recognized the same time as I cannot wish but for the freedom of others. Thus, in the name of this desire for freedom, the freedom implied by

itself, I can make judgments on those who seek to hide the total gratuitousness of their existence, and its total freedom. Those who will hide, in the spirit of seriousness or deterministic excuses, their total freedom: I call them cowards. Others who will try to show that their existence was necessary, that it is the very contingency of the appearance of man on earth, I will call them bastards. But cowards or bastards cannot be judged in terms of strict authenticity. Thus, although the content of morality is variable, some form of this morality is universal. Kant declared that freedom wants itself and wants the freedom of others. Okay, but he believes the formal and universal to be morality enough. We believe, however, that principles are too abstract to define the action. Again, take the case of this student, in the name of what, on behalf of what great moral maxim, do you think he could have with peace of mind chosen to abandon his mother or stay with her? There is no way to judge. The content is always concrete, and therefore unpredictable, and there always invention. The only thing that matters is whether the invention done is done in the name of freedom.

Consider, for example, the following two cases, you will see how they agree and differ. Take *The Mill on the Floss*. Here we find a girl, Maggie Tulliver, who embodies the value of passion and who is conscious of that, and is in love with a young man, Stephen, who is engaged to an insubstantial girl. This Maggie Tulliver, instead of recklessly preferring her own happiness, in the name of human solidarity, chooses to sacrifice herself and chooses to abandon the man she loves. In contrast, the Sanseverina in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, believing that the passion is the true value of man, would declare that a great love merits sacrifices. She would prefer great love to the banality of that married love that would unite Stephen and the young goose that he was to marry. She would choose to sacrifice this goose to realize her own happiness, and, as Stendhal shows, she will sacrifice herself for a passionate life if required. We are here faced with two opposing moralities; yet I claim that they are equivalent: in both cases, there is one goal: freedom. And you can imagine that the two attitudes exactly similar as to the effect: one girl, in resignation, prefers to renounce her love. The other, through sexual appetite, prefers to disregard the earlier commitments of the man she loves. These two actions outwardly resemble those we just described. They are, however, entirely different; the attitude of the Sanseverina is much closer to that of Maggie Tulliver than it is to reckless greed.

So you see that second reproach is both true and false. We can all choose, in terms of free commitment.

The third objection is this: “you receive with one hand what you give to the other”, that is to say, our values are not serious, since we choose them. To this I reply that I am very sorry it is so, but if I removed God the father, someone must invent values. We must take things as they are. And, moreover, that we invent values does not mean anything but this: life has no meaning *a priori*. Before you live life it is nothing, but it’s up to you to give it meaning, and that value is nothing but the direction you choose. Thus, you see, there is the possibility of creating a human community. I have been accused of asking if existentialism is a humanism. I was told: “but you wrote in *Nausea* that humanists were wrong; you’ve made fun of a certain type of humanism, why come back now?” In fact, the word ‘humanism’ has two very different

meanings. 'Humanism' can mean a theory that takes man as the end and of the highest value. There's humanism in the sense of Cocteau, for example, when in his story, *Around the World in 80 Hours*, a character says, "Man is amazing because he flies over mountains by plane!" This means that I, personally, who have not built airplanes, I benefit from these particular inventions, and I could personally, as a man, consider myself responsible and be honored by particular acts of other men. This would imply that we value a man according to the highest acts of some other men. This humanism is absurd, because only the dog or the horse could pass general judgment upon man and declare that man is amazing; which they have not done, to my knowledge at least. But one cannot admit that a man can pass judgment on man. Existentialism has waived any such judgment: the existentialist will never take man as finished; he is always at work. And we must not believe that there is a humanity that we can worship in the manner of Auguste Comte. The cult of humanity leads to humanism closed in on itself, and, it must be said, to fascism. It is a humanism which we do not want.

But there is another sense of humanism, which basically means this: man is constantly outside himself; it is in projecting and losing himself that man is made, and, on the other hand, it is pursuing transcendent aims that he can exist; man is transcendent and does not know objects except as compared to that transcendence. This is the heart, the center of the transcendence. There is no universe other than the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity. This binding to transcendence as constitutive of man—not in the sense that God is transcendent, but in the sense of self-transcendence—and subjectivity in the sense that man is not confined to himself but is always present in a human world, this is what we call existential humanism. Humanism, because we remind man that there is no other legislator but himself, and that it is in neglect that he will decide for himself, and because we show that it is not in turning to himself, but in always looking out of himself that a release (a goal that is liberation, as particular realization) that man will realize what is human.

We see from these few reflections that nothing is more unjust than the objections made of use. Existentialism is nothing other than an effort to draw all the consequences of a coherent atheistic position. It does not try at all to plunge man into despair. But if you mean despair as Christians do, despair and every attitude of disbelief, depart from the original despair.

Existentialism is not so much an atheism in the sense that it would run out to prove that God does not exist. It says instead: even if God existed, it would not change anything. That's our point of view. Not that we believe that God exists; but we think the problem is not one of his existence. Man must find himself and persuade himself that nothing can save him, not even a proof of the existence of God. In this sense existentialism is optimistic, a doctrine of action, and it is only by bad faith, confusing their own despair with ours, that Christians can call us desperate.

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Defining Deviancy Down

by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Please read “Defining Deviancy Down” at this link:

<http://www2.sunysuffolk.edu/formans/DefiningDeviancy.htm>

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The Allegory of the Cave

by Plato

BOOK VII

The Allegory of the Cave

[Socrates is speaking with Glaucon]

[Socrates:] And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened: --Behold! human beings living in a underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

[Glaucon:] I see.

And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

No question, he replied.

To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision, -what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, -- will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer

than the objects which are now shown to him?

Far truer.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take and take in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

True, he said.

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he 's forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Last of he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

Clearly, he said, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer,

Better to be the poor servant of a poor master, and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner?

Yes, he said, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Imagine once more, I said, such an one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

To be sure, he said.

And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had

become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable) would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

No question, he said.

This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally, either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

Confronting Relativism

by William B. Irvine

Please read “Confronting Relativism” at the following link. *After clicking the link please use the password: cluster*

<http://libguides.bellevue.edu/er.php?ecid=2691>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Socrates Meets a Moral Relativist

Please watch “Socrates Meets a Moral Relativist” at this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tjt4dNuS2ys&feature=related>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Debate: Moral Relativism v. Moral Absolutism

Please watch parts 1 to 6 of “Debate: Moral Relativism v. Moral Absolutism” at these links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YV19W6he6M>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eyDFXikCq0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BGg6NHYPpE>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkTYrqdRA90>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXTMEJbfv9Y>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OrCtYW6HUw>

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Week 6

The American Family

Census Figures

Please read about Census figures that present evidence on: births to unmarried women by country, marriage and divorce rates by country, and Single Parent Households by country (1980 – 2008) at this link:

<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s1337.pdf>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

Women in the Workforce rates (Marriage) by Country

Please read “Women in the Workforce rates (Marriage) by Country” at this link:

<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s1368.pdf>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

American Families

by Suzanne M. Bianchi and Lynne Casper

Please read “American Families” at this link:

<http://ezproxy.bellevue.edu:80/login?auth=bb&url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/237071323?accountid=28125>

Note: In order to view this link you must be logged into Blackboard.

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American Families

from Encyclopedia of Sociology

Please read “American Families” at the following link. After opening the link, scroll down to p. 120. The article is between pages 120 and 131. The references list for the article is between pages 131 and 133.

<http://www.hse.ru/data/2010/01/20/1229134130/Gale%20Encyclopedia%20of%20Sociology%20Vol%201.pdf>

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Citation:

Russel Hatch, L. (2001). Gale Virtual Reference Library - Document - American Families. In Encyclopedia of Sociology. New York: Macmillan Reference USA.

Second Thoughts of Civil Society

by Gertrude Himmelfarb

Please read “Second Thoughts on Civil Society” at this link:

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Protected/Articles/000/000/007/286yvudo.asp>

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The State Against Blacks

by Walter Williams

Please read “The State Against Blacks” at this link:

<http://ezproxy.bellevue.edu:80/login?auth=bb&url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/846750129?accountid=28125>

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Taking Marriage Private

by Stephanie Koontz

Please read “Taking Marriage Private” at this link:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/26/opinion/26coontz.html>

If you are unable to view link, please contact your faculty member.

2012 Census Statistical Abstract

Please read the 2012 Census Statistical Abstract at this link:

http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/international_statistics.html

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