

IN GOOD CONSCIENCE

BY DR. ALAN L. KEYES



ESSAYS ON FAITH AND AMERICA'S LIBERTY

Edited by Stephen Stone

In Good Conscience: Essays on Faith and America's Liberty, by Dr. Alan L. Keyes

Copyright © 2013 by Alan L. Keyes. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.

Property of Alan L. Keyes

First edition: September 2013

Published by Politechs, Inc.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9898996-0-4

Contents

God: just too embarrassing to keep around	7
By what right do rights trump laws?	10
Why America's elite hates the American way	13
'Gays' push a travesty of rights	16
Speaking truth in love—What did Jesus do?	19
Signs of life from America's true conservatives	23
Churches: flee BSA's homosexual embrace	26
Obama's inauguration speech morphs liberty into tyranny	29
Wherewith Christ has made us free	34
Imagine there's no choice	36
The true right to secede comes from God, not the Constitution	39
Christ and the republican capacity for self-government	43
Living up to the creed	47

Foreword

When Alan Keyes asked me a year ago to help him compile, and then edit, some of his growing portfolio of writings, I told him I'd be delighted to do so—as indeed I am.

In my estimation, no one in America over the past twenty years has done more for the cause of preserving our republic than Dr. Keyes. Not only has his personal activism and sacrifice in behalf of our country been singularly outstanding, but on top of that, Dr. Keyes is in many ways one of our country's most astute and literate political philosophers. His mind is clear and sharp, his grasp of history and Western thought impeccable, and his ability to express himself in timeless, logical terms unsurpassed by any of his generation.

When Alan's at his best, he's peerless.

Not only has Alan often been called the “conscience of the Republican Party” by informed conservatives, but now—as an unaffiliated independent—he's in a class by himself as someone who, more than anyone you could name, reflects the wisdom, vision, and selfless commitment to principle of the original Founders.

He's truly exceptional. I say that from observing him in action for more than a dozen years, having served during that time as an insider in support of his work.

This is the first in a series of booklets on selected essays by Alan Keyes—this one titled *In Good Conscience: Essays on Faith and America's Liberty*. These illuminating essays, all fairly recent, emphasize Alan's biblical premises and resulting appreciation of what he calls America's “God-acknowledging Creed,” the Declaration of Independence.

It is upon this sure foundation that he stands in observing and assessing the challenges of our times.

The essays originally appeared at WND.com, LoyalToLiberty.com, and RenewAmerica.com. I encourage readers to give these insightful, masterfully-written thoughts the open-hearted attention they deserve.

Cordially,

Stephen Stone
President, RenewAmerica
June 2013

About Alan Keyes

Dr. Alan Keyes holds the distinction of being the only person ever to run against Barack Obama in a truly contested election—one featuring authentic moral conservatism vs. progressive liberalism—when they challenged each other for the open U.S. Senate seat from Illinois in 2004.

During the Reagan years, Dr. Keyes was the highest-ranking black appointee in the Reagan Administration, serving as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs and as Ambassador to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

He ran for president in 1996, 2000, and 2008, and was a Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate from Maryland in 1988 and 1992, in addition to his 2004 candidacy in Illinois.

He holds a Ph.D. in government affairs from Harvard and wrote his dissertation on constitutional theory.

His basic philosophy can best be described as "Declarationism"—since he relies on the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence to define the premises on which our country was founded, and to which it must return if it is to survive. To Dr. Keyes, the Constitution itself cannot be faithfully interpreted, understood, or applied apart from the divinely-premised principles of the Declaration.

When Dr. Keyes ran for president in 2000, the media generally considered him the winner of the Republican primary debates, due to the persuasive eloquence of his defense of the unborn, opposition to unfair taxation, advocacy of school choice, promotion of family values, and focus on what he called "America's moral crisis." As a result, he became the host of MSNBC-TV's "Alan Keyes Is Making Sense" in 2002.

He is best known for thrusting the evil of abortion—which he considers our nation's "greatest moral challenge"—into the national spotlight.

Dr. Keyes is also a strong supporter of Israel, and in 2002 he was flown by the Israeli government to the Holy Land to receive an award for his staunch defense of Israel in the media. He is the only American ever to receive such an honor from the State of Israel.

When he ran against Obama for the Senate in 2004, Dr. Keyes did so because he was incensed the Democrat "community organizer" refused to support the Born Alive

Infant Protection Act in Illinois on several occasions—a measure approved not long afterward by the U.S. Senate, 100 to 0.

Dr. Keyes blogs at LoyaltyLiberty.com, and writes commentary for WND.

He can be contacted at alan@loyaltyliberty.com.



God: just too embarrassing to keep around

Most individuals have experiences that pose a fundamental question about who they are. They go through life professing to believe in God or love or something; or else professing to believe in nothing much at all. Then they confront a situation in which they cannot escape a choice; where, by action or inaction they will declare to all the world, or to themselves and God alone, the truth or falsity of what, inwardly or outwardly, they have professed to be.

Particularly in such matters of character, I agree with Theodore Roosevelt that some observations are “true of the Nation, as of the individual.” From the outset, the United States has professed to be a nation that holds certain “truths to be self-evident,” as our Declaration of Independence says. Of course, if there is no truth, there can be no self-evident truths. Among the self-evident truths is the notion that we are “created equal.” Of course, if there was no creation, we are not created, equal or otherwise.

Thanks to the same profession of self-evident truth, we are a nation that relies on the concept of human rights. These rights do not depend on human will, judgment, power, or legislation, because they are a natural endowment, gifted to us in our very nature by the Creator who proclaimed the “laws of nature and of nature’s God.” But of course, if there is no God, then...

I know from firsthand experience that, years ago, guides at historic sites maintained by our National Park Service stopped quoting such God-acknowledging phrases from the Declaration of Independence. I’ve noticed, too, that when July 4 rolls around, the elitist faction’s blaring media touts it as “Independence Day.” They neglect to mention that July 4 is not the date Congress voted to approve the resolution that declared the nation’s independence (that’s July 2). It’s the date on which they approved the words of the Declaration of Independence and authorized its publication. It seems that our God-rejecting elites would rather we didn’t dwell too much on the words of the Declaration. But if there is no Declaration of

Independence, what becomes of our claim to God-endowed unalienable rights—and a government dedicated to securing those rights, which derives its just powers from the consent of the governed?

It's always worth noting that through all the centuries when God or the gods were held up by powerful elites to validate their claims of power, it didn't occur to them to drive all talk of divine authority away from the precincts of government. But since the logic of Christ's influence opened human minds to God's empowering love, even for the weakest and poorest of those who truly acknowledge Him, and since he offered the way for everyone to lay claim to true self-government, the "superior people" have decided to tap the undercurrent of God-rejecting atheism. They were more than willing to suppress it as long as superstition and error made divine authority a bulwark of their domination. As it became instead a burning light of truth, revealing the arrogance and abuse inherent in that domination, well, I guess God just became too embarrassing to keep around.

How they wish that Christ had never been born! How they wish that human faith, hope, and courage had never been born again because of him! So now they wholeheartedly seek the self-fulfillment of that wish. For years they have done so subtly, translating the teachings of compassion and liberty into isms that glorify human material comfort and advancement at the expense of conscience—and which, in liberty's name, falsely worship unbridled hedonism, greed, power, and mad ambition.

In the name of liberty, they have banished the concept of sin. Yet, in the guise of universal tolerance, they pretend to preach Christ's doctrine of forgiveness. Yet where there is no sin, forgiveness has no cause or meaning. In liberty's name they have idolized self-fulfilling love. Yet they kill the very heart of love in grisly rites of child murder, which they falsely address as healing or reprieve from the "punishment" of procreation.

Those were their subtle ways. But at present, by usurping the prerogatives of right, they are not so subtly arming themselves with the force of law. They mean to persecute all those who will not forget the profession of truth and God and right that is still the American creed. By law they will coerce every conscience to uphold their rituals of infant slaughter. By law they will coerce every student, every teacher, every school; every pastor, every minister, every institution and place of worship, to bend the knee to their idolatry of wrongs. In service to that "secular" religion, they openly assault the rights of procreation and commerce, association and propriety. Preaching the equal right of wrongdoing, they mean to destroy the peace and security of those whose only "crime" is to exercise their rights. They mean to birth a new polity of wrongs. And they will do so, whether by rewarding themselves for crime, or punishing for their decency the righteous souls who dare to bear witness against it.

Meanwhile, except it serves their own pursuit of power, lust, or greed, who is willing to stand and prove their true adherence to the profession of God-endowed right that

defines us as Americans? And in your answer, please don't speak the factious, partisan label of the GOP. Even now those so-called "Republicans" are poised to uplift Mitt Romney as the standard and standard bearer of their party's bid to represent the nation. Yet what he really represents is the deed-confessed abandonment of the Declaration creed. What do they mean by "Republican" who sometimes timidly mouth the words but then, in their deeds, abandon the logic, meaning, and allegiance that uphold our constitutional republic?

Put no faith in their partisanship, or that of any others. Rather, put your faith in God, and trust yourselves to His divine Providence, as America's founders did. Then you may find the eyes to see; the minds to understand; the heart and soul and courage not just to remember but to live out the pledge of life, fortune, and sacred honor that fulfilled itself in the nation's birth and may yet again fulfill our prayer that, with God's help, it can be born anew.



Monocle/Flickr

By what right do rights trump laws?

The headline read “3 in 4 say religious rights trump law.”¹ The article went on to explain that “In the Knights of Columbus-Marist Poll, nearly three in four Americans, 74 percent, said freedom of religion should be protected ‘even if it conflicts with other laws.’” The juxtaposition of the headline and the explanation provide a perfect illustration of the way in which rights and freedoms are carelessly conflated these days, in a way that could have very damaging unintended consequences.

For example, if religious freedom per se trumps other laws, what about the so-called “honor killing”² permitted by Islamic law in which a woman who has brought “shame” to her family is murdered to preserve family “purity”? Would the revival of human sacrifice, including the ritual slaughter of children, trump laws against murder? The ancient Greek historian Herodotus speaks of a people in the ancient Near East who considered it a sign of reverence to eat the flesh of a dead parent as part of the ritual commemorating the death. Could neo-pagans seeking to revive this practice claim that their religious freedom forbids enforcing laws against the desecration of corpses in order to discourage their practice of cannibalism?

I think we can take it for granted that most Americans will react to these examples with feelings of revulsion. But as we know from the ongoing campaign to enforce acceptance of homosexuality, a small minority can use or abuse arguments that assert “rights” to demand acceptance of their behavior no matter how most other people feel. Today, who contends, for example, that the fact that most Americans once found “race-mixing” repugnant justified the enforcement of laws against miscegenation?

Since it's currently trendy to despise racism, many people will dismiss the latter question as a matter settled beyond dispute. But beyond their indoctrinated "feelings" (i.e., the stubborn assertion that racism is just wrong, everybody knows that), how many could actually articulate a reasonably cogent argument against such racist laws?

In this regard, we have become accustomed to asserting "rights" while neglecting to remember the understanding of what is right that makes sense of the assertion. This right understanding is what makes it possible for us to identify and defend our rights in a way that doesn't promote evils many people agree to perpetrate against a few, or force the toleration of evils that a few persist in with enough force and intensity to wear down and intimidate the vast majority conscientiously repulsed by what they do.

In the context of America's Constitution and laws, where do we find articulated the understanding of right that makes sense of the assertion of rights both the Constitution and the laws are supposed to respect—the rights that therefore trump whatever legal suit is brought against them? We find it in the Declaration of Independence,³ which establishes, as the basis for our reasoning about rights, the recognition of two self-evident truths: a) that as human beings we are all created equal, and b) we are endowed by our Creator (i.e., not by any act of human will) with certain rights inseparable from the way the Creator has fashioned us to be.

According to this understanding, the substance of any right (what it consists in) depends upon a prior decision by the Creator, reflected in the way we are made (our nature). Insofar as we know and understand our nature, we can know and understand our rights. But as far as we can tell, our ability to know and reflect upon our nature distinguishes us from other creatures we observe. We act with knowledge, conscientiously. We not only move in response to hunger, thirst, and other drives, we reflect upon that response. In our minds, we stand apart from it, much as we stand apart from our image in a mirror, even while recognizing it as our own. This capacity for reflection makes us aware of our natural responses as consequence of our actions, eventually allowing us to take ownership of those actions as a matter of deliberate choice.

The ultimate fruit of this deliberate conscience is therefore a sense of responsibility, wherein our ownership of our actions leads to a corresponding reaction for or against their consequences. In the moment of this corresponding reaction, we draw them into ourselves and so pronounce them good, or push them away. But because we cannot escape, upon reflection, the knowledge that they belong to us, the latter revulsion brings us into conflict with ourselves, a conflict we experience as shame, guilt, and self-negation.

"Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all," Hamlet observes. We flee internally from the evil that we do, unwilling to identify ourselves with what we have done, but unable to escape that identification. So we are made to distinguish the ease of

right from the disease of wrong, according to a moral scheme of representation that forces us to choose (elect) one or the other.

In the context of this understanding of the relation between conscience and unalienable right, we see clearly that every assertion of rights is a statement about what is right.⁴ When the slaveholders of the 19th century asserted their right to own slaves, they relied upon the notion that it is right for those superior in proven strength and ability to command the lives and labor of their inferiors. When the practitioners of abortion assert that it is their right to kill human offspring, they assert that it is right for those more advanced in their physical human development to destroy the lives of their inferiors. When the practitioners of homosexuality assert that it is their right to force society to accept, support, and legitimize their conduct, they are asserting that it is right for people whose sexual activities transgress the natural bonds of procreation to command the consciences of others who reject their transgression.

But the recognition of natural right depends on respect for the bonds of natural conscience. Those who cast away those bonds deny the authority of conscience which establishes them. They cannot, thereafter, rationally appeal to conscience to legitimize their coercion of others. Having destroyed the authority of conscience, backed by the authority of the Creator, they are in fact relying upon the forces of law backed only by its arms, which is not law at all in any sense of right. If they persist, the only appeal is to Heaven, as John Locke says, with all that it implies.⁵

¹ "3 in 4 say religious rights trump law," WND.com, May 23, 2012
<http://www.wnd.com/2012/05/3-in-4-say-religious-rights-trump-law/>

² "Honor killing cover-up in Florida?", Pamela Geller, WND.com, June 22, 2011
<http://www.wnd.com/2011/06/313805/>

³ "The saving grace of the republican imperative," Alan Keyes, Loyal to Liberty, September 30, 2009
<http://loyaltoliberty.com/?p=115>

⁴ "Legalizing homosexual marriage impairs unalienable right," Alan Keyes, Loyal to Liberty, May 18, 2010
<http://loyaltoliberty.com/?p=798>

⁵ "The Second Treatise of Civil Government," Chapter III, John Locke, 1690
<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr03.htm>



Why America's elite hates the American way

“The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk,” Hegel wrote. But is this flight of wisdom cause or consequence? Some people assume that his words accurately describe the fact that concrete understanding is a consequence of history. Yet if history is change (and that for the worse), it could just as well mean that history is the consequence of the departure from wisdom, to which are attached the chains of causality that enwrap the towers of human aspiration. For wisdom focuses on truth and flies steadfastly toward its goal, blind to the mirages of fanciful hope conjured by thirsting human ambitions.

If we take the American republic as our example, we observe that what begins in wisdom comes to its end because the heirs to that beginning depart from the wisdom that made it possible. America's founders made respect for truth the foundation upon which they built their hopes for just government, which is to say a government respectful of man's natural liberty. To this end, they instituted America's government upon a careful respect for the idea of right, doing so more explicitly and with greater deliberate care than had ever been seen before in human history.

For all his many errors (rooted mainly in his disregard for the Western Christian acknowledgment of the Incarnation), Hegel appreciated the absolutely fundamental importance of the concept of right, which reflects the preoccupation with justice that is at the heart of any rational understanding of human governance. He did not, of course, conflate right and freedom, as minds victimized by his errors are prone to do in our day. But because he overlooked the importance of the Incarnation, Hegel did not think through the fact that the reconciliation of right and freedom in human terms continually takes place in and through individuals, who therefore persistently represent the concrete realization of human freedom in universal terms, prior to and quite apart from any manifestation of their collective will in the State.

Schopenhauer (and his rebellious offspring, Friedrich Nietzsche) understood Hegel's error but, like him, rejected the Christian understanding of the Incarnation. Schopenhauer's reification of will, though it makes possible the exaltation of individual human achievement, does so without proper regard for the formal requirements of objective human existence. The willful "arrow of longing" is tipped with a coldly destructive flame. It sets alight the sacrificial pyre on which to make a holocaust of individuals, burning away every appearance of humanity. Such are the pyres that produced the billowing darkness of 20th century slaughter, in which the lights of a perverted science reveal, where once were nations, the charnel houses of the living dead.

Such especially is the state and condition of Europe in the light-deprived dawn of the 21st century. However, the wisdom of America's founding has properties that should inoculate Americans against the intellectual and spiritual plague that is spreading through the world on westerly winds of decadent change. And for a time, it did. But after several decades of miseducation and indoctrination, America's elites have been thoroughly infected. They seem now almost entirely enthralled by forces hostile to the wise moderation of the American founding and the reverence for God's authority that is its strong foundation. In service to that hostility, they seek quite literally to demoralize the American people. By every available means, they are bathing the nation's moral foundations in the corrosive acid of spiritual, intellectual, and moral libertinism. There is no God; there is no truth; there are no limits; there is no law, except the will to power and sensual pleasure, and a palpably false compassion for those unable, without let or hindrance, to seize or be seized with its voracious appetites. In the course of this dissolution, the sense of justice degrades into vengeful wrathfulness. Within whited sepulchers embossed with purported scenes of youthful love and sexuality, the aesthetic sensibility decomposes into lofty, cruel, self-worshipping hedonism. All that distinguishes self-conscious humanity within the flux of mindless, heartless, insensible chaos is dismissed as prejudice and superstition.

All this takes place by way of preparation for returning humankind to its long condition of servitude to the unbridled passions of a vainglorious few. Yet this aim abuses the name of "progress" and pretends to proffer paradise on earth, with no question of God to overlook our pride. This latter is the key to understanding why America's elites have turned against the way of life that made them so outstanding. Precisely because it respected their capacity for freedom, that way of life forced them to choose at every turn between doing what served their ambition and doing what they knew to be right.

How many of them have risen to what seemed like the very pinnacle of personal success by selling themselves—body, soul, and conscience—to shadowy power brokers that demanded the sacrifice of all. How many of them found in the fulfillment they so longed for that they had lost their very selves and ended up, like the fallen angels in Milton's "Paradise Lost,"¹ chewing dust and bitter ashes. This bitterness is the fruit of their bad conscience; the inescapable sense that for

perishable goods, they have surrendered the true and only substance of their imperishable goodness. Too proud to admit that their fate springs from self-deception, they turn against the very way of life that, because it respected their capacity for freedom, allowed them the opportunity thus to abandon themselves. And so they long to exact revenge on all who chose to place conscience above ambition. What better revenge than to lure or force them into making the same sacrifice of conscience and right, until all are burning in the lake of fire, nourished with bitter ashes.

Instructed by the truth they found in Scripture, America's founders knew the self-defeating result of vain ambition. When they trusted America's fate to the sovereignty of the majority of the people, it was not because they thought them smarter or materially stronger than the few. It was because they realized that in most human beings, conscience ends up being more decisive than ambition, so that for the most part people are too cautious to let ambition betray them into sacrificing it.

Now we are in the midst of an insidious form of war against the American republic, testing that reliance upon the people's natural decency. I wonder when and whether enough Americans will awaken to the fact that the vengeful bad conscience of our anti-American elite lies at the heart of the threat now poised to dissolve our way of life. Americans of good conscience are slow to understand that, by remaking them in its own image, the force of evil that informs bad conscience seeks to destroy both them and their country.

¹ *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, Book 10
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_10/index.shtml



‘Gays’ push a travesty of rights

“California would strip the tax-exempt status from youth organizations like the Boy Scouts if they have policies that bar gay people from participating under a bill introduced at the Capitol Tuesday.”

So began the report at sfgate.com.¹ With prominent elitist faction GOP leaders like Mitt Romney pressing the BSA to end its ban on homosexual activity, the campaign to enforce respect for so-called “homosexual rights” is quickly moving toward what I have for a long time warned would be its inevitable result.² By allowing the language of fundamental right to be abused in a way that perverts its logic, we have set the stage for the systematic abuse of the coercive power of government in order to force people to abandon their conscientious disapproval of homosexual behavior. Ideas have consequences, especially bad ideas.

Some people try to maintain the position that government has no lawful authority to interfere with human freedom. But according to the premises of American self-government, their view is patently illogical. The American Declaration of Independence (part of the organic law of the United States) states that all just governments are instituted to secure unalienable rights. When wrongdoers ignore and violate those rights (by criminal acts like murder, theft, rape, etc.), government is obliged to curtail their freedom. This is why the criminal law exists.

However, any action provably consistent with God’s natural law (as it applies to human activities) is an exercise of right. That’s why otherwise innocent people who kill to defend their lives against unwarranted attack are not charged with murder (unlawful killing), since their actions accord with the first law of nature. In this respect, a provable claim of unalienable right trumps any provisions of human law that contradict it. The obligation to respect God’s authority supersedes the obligation to obey human authority.

In what we call the Bill of Rights, preventing government coercion with respect to religion is the first order of business. This reflects the fact that the very idea of unalienable right depends on acknowledging that all human beings are obliged to respect “the laws of nature and of nature’s God”; that when they act accordingly they do what is right; and that they therefore have an unalienable right (i.e., a predisposition arising from the provision of God for their existence and well-being) to act as they do. As its origins may imply (from the Latin, *religare*, to bind fast), the word religion has to do with the views and practices connected with the natural sense that we are beholden to God for our existence, and bound to respect the provisions of God for our good.

Does this mean that every claim of right made in the name of religion authorizes people to break the law? Of course not; such claims must be examined in light of a reasonable appraisal of our knowledge of God’s law for our nature, as it applies to all human beings. Thus government may reasonably curtail the freedom of people who believe that their god requires them to murder innocent people (as was reportedly the case with the cult of devotees of the Hindu Goddess Kali, known as Thuggee; and as is true of some Islamic *jihadists* today). In general, a claim of religious belief, however sincerely asserted, does not supersede the obligation to respect the God-endowed natural rights of others.

Today, the elitist faction promoters of so-called “homosexual rights” use and abuse the language of rights even though they reject the logic that, in light of America’s political heritage, invests that language with moral force. By that logic, every claim of unalienable right (i.e., a right that trumps the provisions of merely human law) can be tested with a simple question: What is the provision of the “laws of nature and of nature’s God” that obliges and authorizes the action or activity the claim involves? The pursuit of pleasure, sexual or otherwise, does not in and of itself correspond to such an imperative (even though, thanks to the goodwill of the Creator, most bodily activities required for our survival, are in some degree pleasurable). Loving human relations are of course an imperative of our nature. But loving human relations need not involve the particular physical pleasures connected with what we call “sexual relations.” If by natural necessity they must, then the prejudicial prohibitions against incest or pedophilia would be as much a violation of right as those that target homosexual relations.

Absent any God-endowed natural imperative to engage in homosexual relations, doing so is a matter of choice involving a preference for one form of sensual gratification over another. It’s absurd to suggest that government should, by law, force others to approve of and accommodate such preferences, especially when doing so requires trampling on proven claims of unalienable right, like the right freely to exercise (put into practice) one’s religion. We may justly penalize the neglect of right that permits some to feast while others are denied the opportunity to glean bare subsistence from their leftovers. But it makes no sense to say that because some people want to eat pork, others are forbidden to disapprove of doing

so, and that the latter are required to prepare and serve it whenever pork eaters demand that they do so.

Moreover, unless we mean to repeal the laws against rape, no one can by law be forced to respect or cater to the sexual appetites of others. Even temple prostitutes could discriminate against those who desecrated the idols they served. Shall we then submit to laws that require that we violate our obligation to the Author of our nature, the very authority from which our whole people derives its right of self-government, and from which our Constitution and laws derive their claim to our allegiance and respect? As the famous American patriot said, on the eve of the war occasioned by a less egregious travesty of right, "Forbid it, Almighty God."³

¹ "Boy Scouts could lose tax break for gay ban," Wyatt Buchanan, *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 19, 2013
<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Boy-Scouts-could-lose-tax-break-for-gay-ban-4292197.php>

² "Legalizing homosexual marriage impairs unalienable right," Alan Keyes, *Loyal to Liberty*, May 18, 2010
<http://loyaltoliberty.com/?p=798>

³ Patrick Henry's speech to the Virginia House of Burgess, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 1775
<http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/133/historic-american-documents/4956/patrick-henrys-speech-to-the-virginia-house-of-burgess-richmond-virginia-march-23-1775/>



More Good Foundation

Speaking truth in love—What did Jesus do?

Not long ago, I read an article with the headline “Softening Rhetoric on Homosexuality.”¹ It began with the observation that “engaging a younger generation about the biblical teachings on homosexuality may be today’s greatest challenge for the evangelical church.” The article paraphrased a view it ascribed to “political columnist and talk show host Dr. Michael Brown”: “Most older people have a biblically orthodox view on issues of sexuality...but he said they also have ‘homophobic tendencies’ and caricature all gay people as predators.” He asserted that because of their personal acquaintance with homosexuals, “younger people are more open to homosexuality.” While admitting that “many young evangelicals also lack a biblical worldview, leading to a more subjective view of sexuality,” he nonetheless concludes that “if they leave the church, the church is to blame” because “Many have failed to combine truth with compassion.”

The use of the cleverly prejudicial term “homophobic” is always suspect. It tacitly stigmatizes the effect of conscience by implying that the aversion to immoral behavior is some kind of mental illness. Can this serve any purpose but to encourage wrongdoing? Moreover, is it “compassionate” thus to stifle the reaction of conscience in order to spare wrongdoers the reproach that is, according to God’s word (Proverbs 34:14), intrinsic to what they do? While pondering these questions, it makes sense for people who profess to make Jesus Christ their guide to consider the example he set for us.

Jesus has an encounter (Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:18-30) with someone who “came up to him, saying ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?’” To begin with, Jesus answered the question with a question:

“Why do you ask me about the good,” he said. “The good is one.” Christ’s terse reply makes sense at many levels. Where there is only one good, the only good thing to do is to conform to it. So Jesus affirms: “If you wish to enter into life,” he said, “keep the commandments.” But his interlocutor persists. “Which ones?” he asks. “And Jesus said: ‘Do not murder; Do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honor father and mother; and love your neighbor as yourself.’” The questioner (whom Matthew chooses at this point to describe as a “youth”) then avows that he has kept all these commands. He asks if there’s anything more. In response, Jesus says, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you possess and give to beggars; thus you will have treasure in heaven; then come and follow me.” “When the young man heard this,” Matthew tells us, he went away grieving, for he had much wealth.”

I imagine that most professing Christians would agree that Jesus is the paragon of compassion. But would his handling of this situation be considered compassionate by the standards Dr. Brown and others want us to apply? Jesus begins his reply rather contentiously, by answering a question with a question. Moreover, the question he asks implies that his interlocutor is taking something simple and making it out to be difficult. The questioner seems to confirm this when he asks, rather disingenuously, “Which commandments?”, as if there was some doubt about what Jesus was referring to; or as if one can pick and choose among the commandments which to obey and which to disregard. When Jesus recites a partial list of the commandments, Christ’s interlocutor claims an unblemished record of obedience. He speaks with certitude, such as only youthful inexperience, or youthful brashness, can justify. (This may be why the Evangelist here chooses to point out that he is in fact a youth.) Be that as it may, the young man claims a perfect record. So why does he ask if there’s something more? Why doesn’t the simplicity of Jesus’ logic satisfy him? Is he tacitly admitting that the perfection he claims is doubtful? Or does he already sense the thus far unmentioned standard of perfection Jesus is about to apply? Be that as it may, Mark tells us (10:21) that, for the sake of his earnest profession of obedience, Jesus loved him.

Ironically, the unmentioned standard of perfection is contained in the first of the commandments, whether of love or strict obedience. In either case, the first commandment is not about our neighbor, our parents, or ourselves. It is about God. Jesus does not recite the words. He simply puts the standard into action by putting his interlocutor’s love of God to the test. It turns out that the young man’s first love is not for God, and on this account he does not place his obligation to God above all other ties. Faced with the choice between the way of life his wealth makes possible and the way that leads through Jesus to God and everlasting life, he chooses to esteem the treasures he has in his possession more highly than he esteems the treasure God has in store for him. He will not let “slip the surly bonds of earth,” perhaps because in youth their charms are still too powerful. They overcome the sense of true perfection that, also on account of youth, so strongly haunts his heart.

Consequently, he goes away unhappy. He quite literally turns away from the body of Christ. In every respect, his exit must remind us of young people who do the same today. Like him, their hearts are inclined to do what is right by God, and for this Jesus loves them. But, they are also drawn by the glittering treasures of worldly experience to turn away from the standard of good that transcends experience. By that transcendent standard, the choice for good becomes, quite simply, the choice for God. Will they define life in terms of their love for the treasures of worldly experience, or in terms of the love of God, whose goodwill is the source and substance both of the world's goods and the good that subsumes and lies beyond them? They are charmed by the colorful idols of the world, with their shades of good and evil, their interplay of light and darkness. Thus charmed, they are not content to take God at His Word. Yet and still, they long for goodness unalloyed with evil, and the clarity of love unburdened by the knowledge or obligations of mortality (like procreational marriage and child-rearing).

So they are drawn to the specious thought that life in the here and now can be lifted to this perfection, if only we let ourselves revel in the possibility of what lies beyond good and evil; beyond the eye and thought of God. If all accept that all is good, then it will be so. If all agree that none are bad, then all will be as good as we long for them to be; as good as the music that makes our aspirations soar; as good as the pleasure that the thought of God keeps just beyond our reach. Like the youth who questioned Jesus, today's youth are drawn toward what can never be until they let go of what they are in order to "taste and see that the LORD is good!" (Psalm 34:8). And yet, enthralled by the tantalizing foretaste of that good, they are drawn by its flavor to turn from the one to whom its taste belongs.

Jesus does not seek to avoid or allay the distress occasioned by the tug-of-war between the goods that charm and the good that truly is what they only appear to be. In fact, Christ responds to his young interlocutor with a distressing challenge that compels him to turn away. If, as Christians profess to believe, Jesus is the paragon of true compassion, what does his action tell us about the true meaning of compassion? Christ shows his love by moving the young man from self-satisfaction to grief. He challenges him to confront the distressing truth that his idolatrous fondness for worldly possessions separates him from the life for which he truly longs.

Is it better for us to challenge the young with truth, as Christ did, even if the challenge distresses them, and leads them to turn away? Or should we comfort their youthful self-satisfaction, even though by conniving at their mistaken sense of love, we mask the true sorrow inherent in their separation from Christ and truth and God? If the true relationship with God in Christ is the one and only thing needful for them to enter into life, and we deceitfully allay the pangs of spiritual dearth that alert them to their neediness, how is this compassion? Jesus' response to questioning youth suggests that it is better for us to challenge them in a way that contributes to their lasting good, than to let them be ruled, as they are wont to be, by their present self-deceiving inclinations. For God nurtures the seed of truth. Sooner

or later, it grows to be the landmark that returns the heart to His way of the Cross. And though planted with sorrow and all our griefs, it is the only way to go from this place of longing to the place where we belong.

¹ “Softening Rhetoric on Homosexuality,” Tiffany Owens, Religion Today, February 13, 2013
<http://www.religiontoday.com/news/softening-rhetoric-on-homosexuality.html>



Signs of life from America's true conservatives

Two events this week should encourage and inform Americans who are determined to restore and preserve the constitutional liberty of their country. The national leadership of the Boy Scouts of America postponed the decision to admit practicing homosexuals into the ranks and leadership of the Scouting movement. They reacted to precursory tremors that signaled intense opposition from the organization's grassroots constituency and seriously foreshadowed its dissolution. Meanwhile, on the more explicitly political front, adverse reaction to Karl Rove's move to wage open political warfare against the GOP's grassroots conservative base led him hastily to withdraw behind deceitful professions out of respect for their conservative views.

Along with the intense grassroots opposition roused by Obama's assault on the Second Amendment, these signs of courageous life from America's rank-and-file conservatives convey critically important information about the depth and strength of support for America's moral and political institutions. They put the lie to the elitist faction media's determined effort to conceal the fact that those seeking to dissolve the fabric of America's moral and political life are an elitist minority. They are out of touch with the large segment of Americans who believe in God's moral authority and the provisions for individual rights and constitutional self-government that arise from it.

However, the BSA and Rove episodes also confirm the insidious, intractable nature of the forces that are now threatening to impose their regressive elitist views on people they now regard as recalcitrant subjects, rather than free citizens. The BSA's policy prohibiting homosexuality in the Scouting movement enjoyed strong support from many of the people who participate in the movement, as well as many others who admired the organization's integrity. It was more than holding its own against the gay lobby's specious efforts to coerce people into accepting, as a good model for their children, behavior that good conscience requires them to condemn.

The sudden move to collapse the BSA's thus far successful moral stand apparently came about because of pressure from large corporate donors. Having infiltrated the organization's decision-making structure with their largesse, they threatened to withdraw their money unless the BSA caved to the pressure of the homosexual lobby. In effect, *they weaponized their largesse*, turning it into an instrument of organizational destruction. They then used this weapon to terrorize the BSA's decision makers. Either the BSA would abandon the moral identity that gave substance to the reputation it had built upon over more than a century of service to the nation's moral strength, or the corporate money barons would withhold the financial fix that supports the organization's materially high standard of living.

As usual, I'm struck by the way experience confirms the wisdom of Jesus Christ. He bluntly warned people of faith that "you cannot serve God and mammon." First folks let themselves get hooked on a diet of food offered to the idols of material security, comfort, and pleasure. Then they find that they have fallen prey to a Hobson's choice that takes God's course off the menu. That may be of no consequence to people who see and care for nothing in life that cannot be measured in material terms. But for people who have defined and dedicated their lives to activities and institutions built on moral and spiritual grounds, life in opposition to God-informed conscience is not life, but living death.

Thus far, the leaders of the BSA have decided to postpone adding the organization to the ranks of the living dead, which these days include the Girl Scouts, universities like Notre Dame and Harvard, and all too many churches and parishes enlisted in the emerging American version of China's state-dominated religion. Unhappily, in the political realm, the party on which too many people who profess to be sincere conservatives still waste themselves seems long since to have crossed into the realm of the living dead. It got there on account of the very subversion-by-mammon strategy being deployed in the attempt to demoralize the BSA.

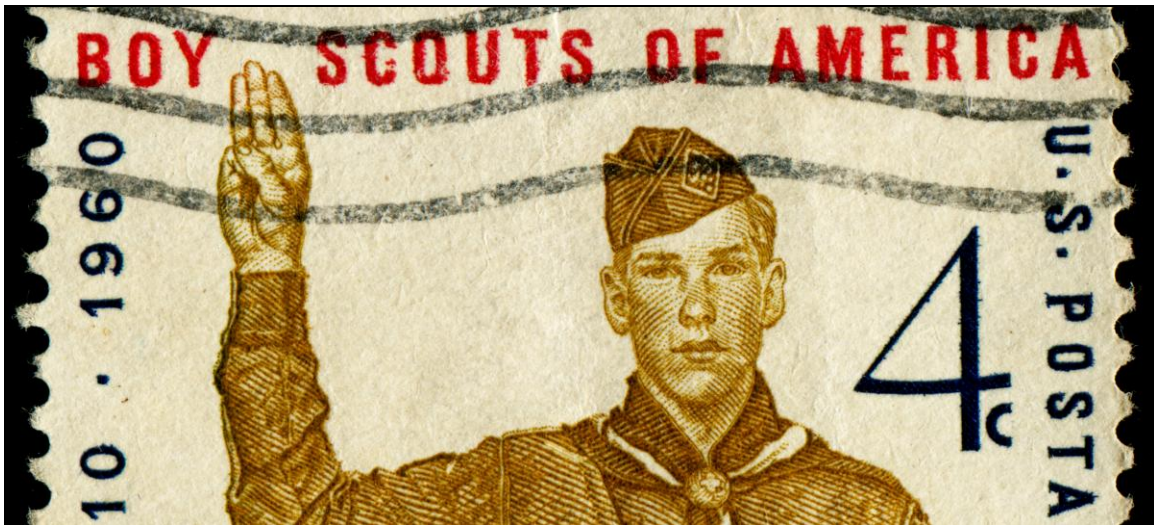
No one epitomizes that strategy more completely than Karl Rove. Money is the drug of choice he and those like him distill into the coffers of candidates, organizations, and movements to lure them into the state of material addiction that enslaves their political will. The strategy has been so successful that they have trumped every other criterion of political worth with money and the things it can buy. Competence, integrity, wisdom, decency, justice—none of them matter. Neither does the likelihood that a person or policy will perpetuate the nation's liberty, its free institutions, or its legacy to future generations. The only goal is power, and the only really essential qualification for office is the backing of money powers whose largesse provides the means to win it.

Whether you're the BSA or the sincere base of conservatives being exploited and abused by the GOP, there is only one way to avoid the fate of living death the

mammon subversives have in store for you, and for America. When it comes to the largess of mammon, the author of Proverbs said it best:

“When you sit down to eat with a ruler, observe carefully what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.” –Proverbs 23:1-3

Considering these pitfalls, the best place to sup with princes (or with the would-be tyrants who fancy themselves to be such) is in your own house. Though it was against their own interests to do so, this was exactly the lesson America’s founders bequeathed to future generations. They laid the foundations upon which the American people could build a house that would belong to them, and to their posterity. Today’s elites think that they have purchased an exclusive deed to the premises. They are inexorably moving to make Americans no better than government slaves in the land of promise that once belonged to them. But signs are growing that we still know how to resist these destroyers of liberty. That’s all to the good. But what remains to be seen is whether we still have within us the wherewithal to revitalize and renew what they are seeking to overthrow.



Rook76/Shutterstock

Churches: flee BSA's homosexual embrace

*On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.¹*

Like many men of my generation, experience with the Boy Scouts was part of my upbringing. According to reports, the people now entrusted with supervising the Boy Scouts of America may imminently abandon the organization's commitment to true Christian morals, allowing homosexuals into the ranks and leadership of its troops, as the Girl Scouts did years ago. Given the parlous state of God-revering self-confidence in Christian America these days, I hesitate to predict what the response will be from the churches that constitute much of the infrastructure of the Boy Scouts in material and human terms. There is no doubt what it ought to be. All Christian churches should immediately and spontaneously withdraw from their cooperation with the BSA's corporate entity, which would, from that point on, be usurping the name and reputation of the Scouting movement. The thunderous impression of their withdrawal would alert and warn all believers of the pitfall any association with the usurpers must henceforward entail.

The Scripture is clear on this point:

"...your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two will

become one flesh.' But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality." (Corinthians 6:15-18)

Under civil law, corporations exist, as the term implies (from Latin, *corpus*, meaning body), by analogy with the individual body. They are legal constructs made up so that the law can treat a number of people, acting for a common purpose, and with a common will and spirit, as an individual person. In this respect, participation in such a legal corporate entity involves a self-conscious commitment of will and spirit, even more immediately obvious than the fleshly union of bodily individuals the Scripture describes.

In the flesh, the bodily motive of strong physical passion may impair self-conscious will, so that all may say what the Apostle says of himself, "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15). But Christian churches (corporate persons) who participate in the activities of a legal corporate entity that rejects the standard of God do not have this excuse. By deliberate decision of their will, they join themselves to others, professing to act with them in a common spirit and for a common purpose. As long as the BSA's standard of right action corresponds to God's standard, people who profess to be one in spirit with Christ can join themselves to the BSA's corporate entity which implements, under the law, their common will. But if the trustees of that entity commit the corporate body to a path that departs from God's way, Christians who continue to make themselves part of it cease to be one in spirit with Christ, the truth of whose will wholly consists in His perfect communion with God, and who therefore walks the straight path of God's will though it leads, by way of the flesh, through torture unto ignominious death.

The simple words of the Scout Oath were meant to encourage boys in the habit of walking this straight path; hence the endeavor to be "morally straight." But the oath first of all made it clear that the Scout looked first of all to God as the standard of moral rectitude. Try as they might, the present-day trustees of the Scouting movement will never fit the square peg of God's standard into the round hole of homosexual sin. Moreover, though they begin by admitting practicing homosexuals into the ranks, they must end in acknowledging homosexual activity as morally correct, else they will involve the whole movement in the perjurious administration of an oath openly violated in practice. For in that moral sense, it is not possible to be gay and morally straight at the same time. Thus, what the present trustees of the BSA reportedly may do involves rejecting God's standard for male sexual behavior. And it involves doing so in a way that willfully abandons the straight path blazed by the footsteps of Christ.

No doubt Christ came for sinners. Except by His ministry, such are we all. But Christ lives to glorify God, and thus to reveal and rebuke the nature of sin in light of God's will. Doing so, he calls sinners to repentance. Therefore, though we are imperfect by nature, we are, by our participation and empowerment in Christ, called to respect God's standard of perfection. We are not called to lower that standard in cowardly obeisance to some standard made and lifted up by human power and opinion. That

is idolatry. Better to be crushed every day by the humbling condemnation God's standard brings against our sins, crying out like the Publican for God's mercy, than equivocally to live at false peace with the world's opinion, but dead to our true selves in Jesus Christ. For though every day we fail, and as sinners must cry out to God for mercy likewise every day, through Christ, God will receive our prayers—so long as we look to His standard, humbly admitting our sins and suffering ourselves to be judged by Him.

By accepting a humanly fabricated redefinition of the moral standard, the BSA will fall prey to the inevitable logic of such idolatry. "Their idols are...the work of human hands...those who make them become like unto them; so do all who trust in them" (Psalm 115:8). It will speedily become evident that what masquerades as tolerance is actually indoctrination, seeking to mold boys according to the standard the BSA trustees will have raised above God's standard. For if homosexual activity is morally acceptable as an expression of love and good fellowship, then those who express their love accordingly do what is right.

But the aim of Scouting is to encourage young men to do what is right in various ways. Therefore, once the moral prejudice against homosexuality is regarded as a violation of right, doing things that habitually assault and break down this prejudice becomes part of "moral training." Just as, on many campuses now, refusal to experiment with homosexuality is frowned upon as a sign of bigotry, so henceforth in Scouting breaking down this prejudice would be recognized as a meritorious activity. Though camouflaged in different words, there will be a merit badge for this experimentation as part of the regime of homosexual indoctrination. God knows what that will lead to; and given now widely publicized possibilities,² so should the BSA Inc.

¹ The Scout Oath, Boy Scouts of America
<http://www.scouting.org/sitecore/content/scoutparents/scouting%20basics/what%20scouting%20is/scout%20oath%20and%20law.aspx>

² "Alleged victim says cries for help from Sandusky basement went unheeded," M. Alex Johnson, NBC News, December 7, 2011
<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2011/12/07/9279239-alleged-victim-says-cries-for-help-from-sandusky-basement-went-unheeded>



Obama takes the Oath of Office from Chief Justice John Roberts

Obama's inauguration speech morphs liberty into tyranny

People who have read and pondered the articles I've posted here over the years have undoubtedly noticed my consistent reliance on the principles and logic of the American Declaration of Independence. Many of America's self-professed conservative political leaders fail to think through and uphold the Declaration's tenets. This may yet prove to be a flaw fatal to the prospects of liberty. Is this failure the result of incompetence? Or is it a matter of malicious choice? Whatever the explanation, in spurning the Declaration they discard the Providential gift that has been and remains America's defining and most essential moral resource.

The heart of most Americans still responds to the understanding of justice conveyed in the Declaration's most famous words, particularly its acknowledgment that "all men are created equal." The Declaration's words still move even those avowedly committed to the socialist degradation of America's character and institutions. We see new proof of this in the inauguration speech just delivered by the idol they have lifted up to be the historical focal point for consummating that degradation. Barack Obama has consistently used a rhetorical device wherein he cites or alludes to the Declaration's words even as he advocates and implements an understanding of government that contradicts the Declaration's logic. He did so again last week:

What makes us exceptional—what makes us American—is our allegiance to an idea articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Today we continue a never-ending journey to bridge the meaning of those words with the realities of our time. For history tells us that while these truths may be self-evident, they’ve never been self-executing; that while freedom is a gift from God, it must be secured by His people here on Earth.

The observation that all men are created equal is set apart in the Declaration as the first principle of right. By acknowledging that it depends upon the authority of the Creator, the Declaration avows the transcendent basis for human equality, which makes sense as a matter of fact *only* as a statement of moral, rather than material truth. But whatever notion of history Obama may invent, the American Declaration of Independence does not say that “freedom is a gift from God.” Rather, it lists “liberty” as one of a number of “*unalienable rights*” with which the Creator endows humanity.

The word “unalienable” means “not to be separated, given away or taken away....”¹ So, far from being a “gift of freedom,” an “unalienable right” involves a limitation on human freedom. The difference is easily perceived. As an unrestricted gift, for instance, life might be considered a matter of choice; something people are morally permitted to give or take (in gladiatorial combat, for example, or by assisted suicide) as they choose. But as an unalienable right, one’s own life is not to be willfully terminated (suicide), nor is another’s innocent life to be purposely taken away (as by abortion or any other form of willful murder). Though easily comprehended, this difference between unalienable right and freedom is by no means trivial. John Locke (the English philosopher whose *Second Treatise of Civil Government*² profoundly influenced the logic of the Declaration) relies upon it when he argues against the once widely accepted notion that the sovereign power of human government, because it is supreme, is absolutely arbitrary (and therefore inherently tyrannical):

First, it is not nor can possibly be, absolutely arbitrary over the lives and fortunes of the people; for it being but the joint power of every member of the society given up to that person or assembly which is legislator, it can be no more than those persons had in a state of nature before they entered into

society, and gave up to the community; for nobody can transfer to another more power than he has in himself, and nobody has an absolute arbitrary power over himself or over any other, to destroy his own life or take away the life or property of another. (Chapter XI)

The logic Locke relies upon is elegantly simple: human government cannot lawfully contain a power that humanity (human nature) does not.

As an inseparable feature of our humanity, God-endowed unalienable rights implement this logic. They arise from the determinations whereby the author of our humanity formed and informed the particular way of being that makes us human. They correspond to the natural traits and inclinations that sustain and preserve human nature, for individuals and for the species. These traits and inclinations result in actions that are right in the sense that they contribute to the preservation of our nature.

But one aspect of our Creator-endowed nature is that we are free to follow or resist the information God provides. We can accept or reject the right actions that, according to the Author of our being, preserve and sustain our nature. We can choose for or against His authority. When what we do respects the Creator's authority, it is an exercise of unalienable right. When what we do contravenes that authority, it is the perpetration of wrong, quite literally a crime against human nature. Thus the difference between unalienable human rights and humanly intolerable wrongs does not depend on our choice, but on choices already made by our Creator. Therefore the exercise of right does not refer to our freedom (i.e., our capacity for choice), but to the use that we may rightly make of it. We exercise unalienable right only when we choose to do that which respects the authority of the Creator. His being and will, not ours, are the source and standard of right from which the unalienable rights of human nature take their name.

Contrary to Obama's insidious perversion of the Declaration's logic, unalienable rights *are* self-executing, since they are exercised (carried out) whenever human beings, pursuant to the goodwill inherent in their nature, do what is right as God gives them to see the right. This is what the Apostle Paul (Romans 2:14-15) refers to when he speaks of those who "by nature do what the law requires," thus showing that "the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness...." Just government is the work of these people of goodwill, the self-executors of "the laws of nature and of nature's God" as they pertain to human

affairs. These are the people who come together with one another (convene) in civil society in order to ordain and establish lawful government.

Though he ascribes the gift of freedom to God, Obama evokes the authority of history in order to assert that God's gift is fatally inoperative. But history records the actions of all people, regardless of their respect for the will of the Creator. It speaks, therefore, without respect for the distinction between those who acknowledge God-ordained right and act accordingly, and those who do not.

History therefore makes no distinction between government by thugs, imposed by criminal force, and government by people of goodwill, exercising right as God gives them to see the right. Seen from this ungodly historical perspective, it is accurate to conclude that no security comes with the so-called gift of freedom.

But why, on that account, would any but the most powerful regard it as a gift?

Obama's speech corresponds quite literally to those who are spoken of in the Bible as "traitors...having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..." (2 Timothy 3:5). Obama replaces the power of godliness with government power, wielded without regard for God-endowed unalienable rights. He shows no respect for the power of right action that flows through God's provision of individual conscience and goodwill, to all individuals inclined by their goodwill to fulfill the God-ordained obligations from which their rights derive. Like the elitist faction he represents, Obama holds out, to morally-vulnerable individuals, an inoperable promise of freedom. He uses this empty promise to distract them from the fact that he is discarding the God-empowered notion of unalienable right which the Declaration evokes to constrain and thereby legitimize government power (i.e., keep it within the limits of God's law).

By contrast, in response to the true logic of the Declaration, Americans recognize the all-sufficing Providence of God. They accept God's provision of conscience, made for all humanity, which operates through the individual goodwill that gives rise to the exercise of right. By the true logic of the Declaration, Americans understand that to secure this exercise of right, the people delegate just powers (i.e., powers limited by respect for God-endowed right) to government in order primarily to assure that wrongdoers will suffer the consequences of their disrespect for God-endowed right.

Contrary to Obama's treacherous prevarication, God's provision for the implementation of natural law *is* humanly "self-executing." God made it so when he

reprogrammed human nature with a new imperative, after the Great Flood: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood by man shall his blood be shed” (Genesis 9:6). With this imperative, He delegates to human beings the power of execution originally reserved to God alone (Genesis 4:15). He arms conscience with the motive power of *righteous indignation*. And by instituting human action that naturally calls for the use of deadly force, he authorizes people to prepare and equip themselves for its use.

This is the biblical verification for John Locke’s recognition that, when they act with respect for “the laws of nature and of nature’s God,” everyone “has the right to punish the offender and be the executioner of the law of nature.”

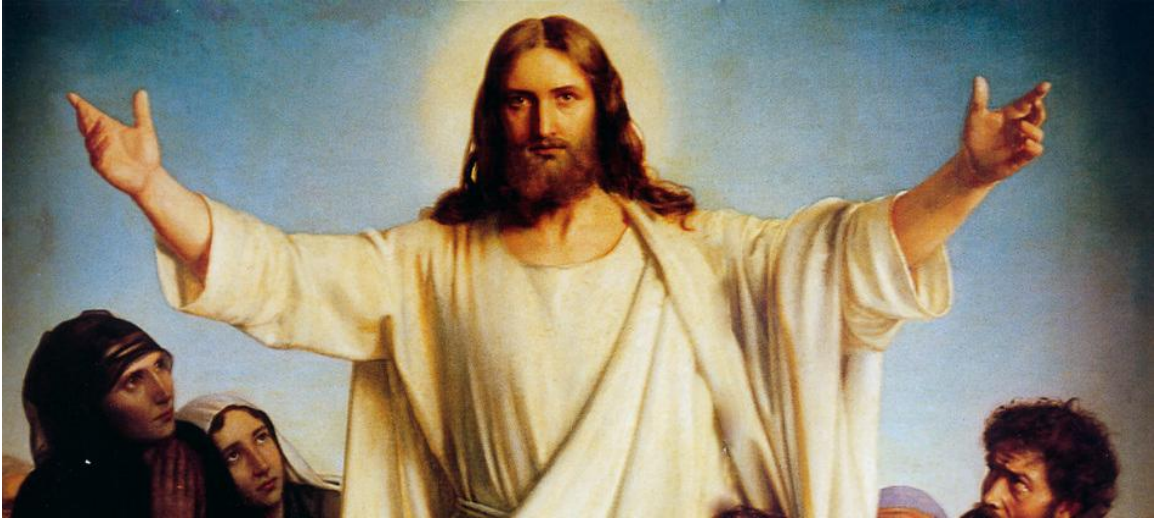
...[F]or the law of nature would be in vain if there were nobody that in that state of nature had a power to execute that law and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders.³

Thus the original for the essential power of government is an individual right, antecedent to any institution of government except that of Almighty God. Yet with the Declaration’s acknowledgment of God’s authority still fresh upon his lips, Obama avows that the lesson of history refutes the priority the Declaration gives to God-endowed individual right. He thus seeks to turn America’s deep attachment to the Declaration’s self-evident truths against the purpose of just self-government, the very form of government whose unprecedented success the logic of those truths made possible. If Obama’s sleight of hand succeeds, the great American tragedy will ultimately be acted out in the history of America’s demise.

¹ Unalienable, The Free Dictionary
<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/unalienable>

² “The Second Treatise of Civil Government,” John Locke, 1690
<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>

³ *ibid.*, Chapter II



Wherewith Christ has made us free

In articles I've written over the past several years, I've pointed to the fact that the natural family is the paradigm of government based on the consent of the governed. I did so most recently, for example, in the post on Newt Gingrich's flight from the battle being waged in its defense.¹ But it was most thoroughly articulated in the third part of the series "The Strategy of Right,"² and in the section on Natural Right and the Family in the essay *In Good Conscience*.³ In the latter, I wrote:

Because human beings are born in a state of the utmost helplessness, the survival of the species itself depends on the possibility that those who are stronger and more capable than an infant will feel and respond to the obligation to care for its needs. The tie that binds the caring parent to her child is both the proof and the paradigm of the relation of natural justice that arises from the obligation of one human being toward another. That all are created equal is clear in the equally helpless condition in which all enter the world. That by nature government is based on consent is proved by the simple fact that parents, acting upon nothing more authoritative than the promptings of their own hearts, offer to helpless babes servitude more prompt, more assiduous and sacrificial than could be commanded by the most absolute monarch of the world.

Thus the sovereign Master of the universe works His will by way of a law enforced with no more show of power than the little cries and murmurings of a helpless babe.

People accustomed to see the force of arms, or the impressive panoply of money and fame, as the essential attributes of power will quickly doubt and soon despise the notion that the weak and helpless may nonetheless claim with authority the divine right of kings. But every year at Christmastime, people of goodwill and faith

throughout the world focus their hearts upon a helpless babe who nonetheless is “God with us” (Immanuel), the Word through whom all things were made, possessing therefore the power to save the world and all within it.

As we allow our understanding of the true nature and foundation of human liberty to be extinguished, many Americans, even those still emotionally attached to liberty and rights, are increasingly blind to the profound relationship between the Christmas spirit and the spirit of liberty. But as represented in the infant Jesus, the power of God works by the law of love, calling upon hearts unconstrained by fear freely to offer to the Lord and, by his example, to one another, the care, respect, and service that we owe to God and God alone.

Freed by the love of Christ from the constraints of law, we become, by the Grace of God, in Christ true agents of the right which it commands; not by power, conforming others to our will, but by freely conforming our will to the power of God, though it appears in the weakest human form imaginable.

So, by love, the still, small voice of conscience comes to speak for the sovereign power of the Creator, God. So, by God, the infant Jesus Christ comes to speak for all of us. And for as long as we hear and heed His call to act as His love of God in us makes possible, we will have hope of recovering the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

¹ "Re the defense of marriage, Gingrich flees the battle," Alan Keyes, Loyal to Liberty, December 20, 2012
<http://loyaltoliberty.com/?p=2081>

² "The Strategy of Right," Alan Keyes, Loyal to Liberty, January 30, 2009
<http://loyaltoliberty.com/?series=the-strategy-of-right>

³ "In Good Conscience," Alan Keyes, Loyal to Liberty, January 23, 2009
<http://loyaltoliberty.com/?p=5>

³ "In Good Conscience," Alan Keyes, Loyal to Liberty, January 23, 2009
<http://loyaltoliberty.com/?p=5>



John Lennon's Memorial (Lennyjik/Wikimedia)

Imagine there's no choice

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live....

—Deuteronomy 30:19

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!¹

—Patrick Henry, 1775

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people living life in peace*

—John Lennon, from his song "Imagine"

December 7 is the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, which instigated America's involvement in the resumption of World War in the mid-20th century.

December 8 is the anniversary of the senseless death of the poet/songwriter John Lennon who penned what, in their fond imaginings, many avowed and secret

proponents of socialist utopianism know to be their spiritless “anti-national” anthem.

The juxtaposition of these anniversaries invites us to reflect on the nature of war and peace and the ironic relationship we have with both, on account of our humanity. There’s a sun-drenched, basking lizard quality to John Lennon’s siren song of peace that corresponds to a deep longing experienced by all human beings, though not all are willing to admit it. It has the rich, fresh-baked aroma of home, touched no doubt by the subtle but pervasive memory of the time when the warmth of our mother’s womb was our all-embracing universe. Safe and secure, one subsists in an effortless dream, with all the give and take of life, all of its primordial labors of self-possession already done, even the breath of life itself.

After a little thought, it turns out to be not at all surprising that many of the people whose professed or guilty pleasure it is to dwell, from time to time, on Lennon’s invitation to dreamily live as one are the same people who have done everything in their power to make the mother’s womb a more certain place of death than any battlefield. They are perfectly happy to pretend that human life can be taken for granted, unless and until that common sense interferes with “a woman’s choice.” Then they remember that choice is essential to humanity, including the choice involved in deciding to care for the life of another as you care for your own.

Lennon was right to wonder whether anyone can really “imagine no possessions.” Without self-possession, who is there to do the imagining? Isn’t the first condition of human life, in the womb, the very image of that self-possession; of humanity as the being within itself, possessing itself distinctly because it carries, in itself, the burgeoning image of its own possibility? Yet from the perspective of the child, which is that possibility, one human being exists as it is because, in some respect, another human being has already realized what it is and accepted its being as though it were her own. Because she is already what the child is to be, the mother is prepared to provide all that is needed so that the child may become what, in and through the mother’s being, it already is. In this respect the birth of each human being represents what the Scripture portrays as the condition of all the world: “That which is has been already; and that which is to be has already been; and God seeks after that which has passed away” (Ecclesiastes 3:15).

Since the first of his possessions is himself, man cannot imagine himself without possessions. But on account of that primordial possession, the mother’s acknowledgment of the child has to be a choice, a choice conditioned by the fact that it is literally in her possession; and that by nature she is inclined to remember the child that way even after it is born. But despite these factual conditions, she still has the final say. She may or may not continue “sharing all the world” with the child. Though for a time, and by nature, the child shares in her being, after some time, and also by nature, the child comes into its own. There is a moment when the mother may accept or reject the being that can exist without (outside of) her as still identical to the being that was once wholly within (and part of) her. Is it especially

in this moment of choice, when she identifies a being distinct from herself as nonetheless still her own in some respect, that the woman achieves, on behalf of all humanity, the existential breakthrough to self-consciousness—i.e., the form of self-possession especially characteristic of humanity?

It's wickedly ironic that some of the very people who respond to the dreamy idealism of Lennon's anti-national anthem also wax eloquent in defense of "choice"—i.e., the possibility that we may choose not to see ourselves in others and share all the world with them. We can say yes or no to the claim they represent upon our lives, our time, our effort, and convenience. It turns out that Lennon's dream is, in the strictest sense, just a figment of the imagination. It banishes the element of choice. It is therefore, strictly speaking, not a human dream of peace at all.

By contrast, it was no Lennon-like mirage of peace that Patrick Henry had in competition when he deployed the famous rhetorical question intended to inspire his compatriots to embrace the hard necessity of war for the sake of liberty. As we are reminded in the opening scenes of Mel Gibson's "The Patriot," in the populous, well-settled portions of Britain's American colonies, some people surely enjoyed long days when the warm, sweet peace of home and self-possession was not some lyrical fantasy. But the slavery in their midst was a constant reminder that, in the end, peace may be a choice made at the expense of liberty, a choice that thereby denies the essential attribute of humanity, as some of them denied it to those they enslaved.

Do generations openly or secretly steeped in Lennon's self-extinguishing fantasy of universal peace and brotherhood have any understanding of the spirit that made Patrick Henry's call to arms an inspiration? When Henry exclaims, "Forbid it, Almighty God," he reminds us of the key to that inspiration, which some still recognize as the true key to life itself. By invoking the standard of God's authority, Henry calls to mind what distinguishes Lennon's denatured peace, devoid of religion and humanity, from the human and spiritual peace that accepts "the responsibility for conscientious choice that is the inescapable fate of those willing to answer for the human vocation." For all their maudlin, prevaricated visions of peace, the suppression of this vocation is the true goal of Lennon's dreamers. And these days, unhappily, it doesn't take much imagination to realize that it's no heaven.

¹ Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" speech, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
<http://www.history.org/almanack/life/politics/giveme.cfm>



The true right to secede comes from God, not the Constitution

In an article I saw this week at WND, Pat Buchanan writes of the Declaration of Independence:

The declaration was signed by 56 angry old white guys who had had enough of what the Cousins were doing to them. In seceding from the mother country, these patriots put their lives, fortunes, and honor on the line.

Four score and five years later, 11 states invoked the same right “to dissolve the political bands” of the Union and form a new nation. After 620,000 had perished, the issue of a state’s right to secede was settled at Appomattox. If that right had existed, it no longer did.¹

I have no idea why Buchanan refers to the signers as “old.” The mean average age of the men who signed the Declaration was 44.5. The oldest signer was Benjamin Franklin at 70 (though given his personality his colleagues, and the ladies at the Court of France, would probably have pegged it considerably lower). The youngest signers were Thomas Lynch Jr. and Edward Rutledge, at 26. Nearly two-thirds of the signers were in their 30’s or 40’s. Unless he accepts the silly notion that anyone over thirty is old (even less true today than when it was in vogue back in the 60’s), calling the signers “old men” leaves rather a false impression.

Not being a leftist, or one of the dubiously self-professed “conservatives” who regrets the outcome of the War between the States, I see no reason even subtly to denigrate the physical or mental acuity of the people who signed the Declaration. Yet I can’t agree with Buchanan that the right to secede was settled at Appomattox. Buchanan’s statement to that effect reflects the inadequate thinking that results

when people use the word “right” as though it’s synonymous with “freedom.” Every right is a use of freedom; but not every use of freedom is a right. The distinction rests on whether the use of freedom satisfies or violates the standard that justifies the assertion of right.

People with sufficient power may successfully use it to enslave others. But given the self-evident truths set out in the Declaration of Independence, such use of their freedom violates the standard of right which impelled the people of the United States “to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them.” The Civil War was therefore not about the right to secede. It was about whether some of the States, frustrated in their efforts to compel the others to enforce and extend *their wrongdoing*, should be allowed violently to disrupt and attack the government justly ordained and established by the consent of the whole people of the United States, including their own.

President Lincoln clearly anticipated war. But he carefully refrained from authorizing any military initiative against the Confederacy until a facility of the Constitutional government came under violent attack. He then acted to suppress armed insurrection against the Constitutionally-established government of the United States. This was Constitutionally his duty as President of the United States.

Lincoln’s restraint demonstrated his understanding of the issue at stake in the Civil War. In light of that understanding, the outcome of the war *did not* decide the issue of a state’s right to secede, because the Confederate States were not exercising a right. They were engaged in wrongdoing. Their actions were wrong in principle (i.e., according to the Declaration’s principles of God-endowed justice); and in terms of the U.S. Constitution. The latter requires the President, by oath, to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.” It nowhere requires or authorizes the States (or any of their officers) to use force to attack the Constitutionally-established government of the United States.

This does not mean that there is no right to secede. It means that secession involves an issue of right that cannot be decided under the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution is an instrument of government. Like any other human instrument, it can be used for good or ill. Unlike some of its pretended advocates today, the Federalists who supported the Constitution suffered no foolish delusion in this respect. That’s why Jefferson said, in the context of describing American slavery, “I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever.” The issue of slavery is an issue of God-endowed right, not Constitutional law. As the Declaration explicitly states, when any government systematically violates God-endowed right, people are obliged by right to alter or abolish it.

No merely human law can remove this obligation. Therefore no merely human agreement or convention can alienate this right, *not even the Constitution of the United States*. Like every other God-endowed unalienable right, it remains intact as a responsibility of the people—as individuals in their respective states and

communities, and as a whole. In acquitting this responsibility, they are answerable first, and above all else, to God. To His will and His law they may appeal; upon His will and His law they may stand, come what may, whenever in good conscience they conclude that in their prudent exertions for justice they have exhausted every manner of appeal to human will and human law.

In America today, it should be obvious to all that we have not reached this point of exhaustion, however clear the signs that it's approaching. People without the courage and will to secede from political parties that no longer justly represent them have obviously not exhausted every appeal for justice the Constitution allows. For, under the U.S. Constitution, the last court of appeal is the people. But in the critically-needed effort to withdraw from and defeat the elitist faction's subversion of their right of self-government, Americans of good faith have by no means exhausted themselves.

If they are, in truth, determined to stand upon God-endowed unalienable right, why make that stand in order to dissolve the Union that exists, in principle, to safeguard it? Why not come together, instead, to renew in our politics the Union in principle that is now being systematically dissolved by the irretrievably corrupted political faction that controls the GOP/Democrat party system. That faction has effectively agreed amongst themselves to banish respect for God's authority from politics. They want us to forget that our national Union was based upon that respect. They want us to forget that upon it, the people stake their claim to have any unalienable rights at all.

In its origins and history, as well as by its most striking national and international achievements, the union formed by the people of the United States has affirmed, in act and principle, our God-endowed rights and those of all humanity. By abandoning, it we will assure the eventual triumph, in every state, of the elitist faction that, in practice, aims to destroy all right. A factional clique strong enough to corrupt the politics of the nation as a whole will surely have the means eventually to subvert or subdue us once we have fallen to pieces. And this is precisely what they intend.

But what if, instead, we unite in order to implement a politics of principle that respects the God-endowed unalienable rights of the people? Then we could work to remove from the people, as individuals and in their respective States, the deadening weight of national, socialist tyranny. We could work to restore the moral energy, responsibility, and confident self-respect that are the keys to America's moral identity and true prosperity. Instead of co-operating with the elitist faction's plan of dissolution, we could work to uphold the better plan of righteous liberty that was and is the hope our nation is meant to offer *to all people, not just the elitist few*. After so many generations which endured risk and war and sacrifice to sustain that hope,

shall we now fail, and let our country fail, because we lack the strength of heart, the God-dependent spiritual strength, to exert a righteous political will?

¹ "Is secession the answer?", Patrick J. Buchanan, WND.com, November 29, 2012
<http://www.wnd.com/2012/11/is-secession-the-answer/>



More Good Foundation

Christ and the republican capacity for self-government

The Socrates of Plato's Republic is famous for saying that there can be no cessation of ills in human societies until and unless philosophers rule. These days the advocates of Godless, elitist technocracy delude themselves with the thought that what they seek somehow aims to achieve that end. But they utterly ignore what Socrates says about the kind of people these philosophers must be to pursue the vocation of political power. Above all, they must have no hunger to rule. In this respect, Socrates distinguishes philosopher kings from people who want to rule simply in order to gratify their private and particular passions or ambitions. When dominated by these self-seeking politicians, politics degenerates into factional warfare, in which the participants ultimately destroy themselves and the rest of society.

In the account he gives of the nature and genesis of the philosophic soul (the famous metaphor of the prisoners in the cave), Plato's Socrates portrays the philosopher as one whose eyes have become accustomed to see things in light of the true good. The philosophic rulers, or philosopher kings, become accustomed to living in the knowledge derived from this vision of what is good. But in light of what is truly good, they realize that they cannot, with justice, live for themselves alone. They must respect the good of those not blessed to know the truth as they do. Such respect requires that, by turns, they give up the perfectly contented life enjoyed by those with lives informed by what is truly good. On account of this information, they are willing to live among and serve people still trapped, as it were, in the belly of a dark cave of ignorance, people who, on account of their ignorance, are prevented from turning toward the cave's entrance, which also provides its access to the light.

The people imprisoned in the cave of ignorance know nothing of the true nature of things except what they infer from shapes formed against the backdrop of the light as it filters from above, through the entrance behind them. These shapes appear as shadows projected onto the cave wall as things move back and forth across the entrance to the cave. The philosophers, as people released from or free of the ignorance that constrains the cave dwellers, feel obliged to release others into the light, despite the impairment of vision they must endure as they move from light to darkness, and from darkness into light.

In this respect, Plato's description of the goodwill of the philosopher king calls to mind the Apostle Paul's description of Christ. Christ is the light dwelling in perfect communion with God, the principle of all reality, in and through which all things are perfectly apprehended, appearing as they truly are. But Christ also exemplifies the obedience to which all Christians are called. Though they may enjoy, in their communion with God through Christ, perfect peace, love, and joy, they are also called to "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:3-8).

Christ's perfect communion with God is the *summum bonum* or highest good to which any individual can aspire. But those who let the mind of Christ be their mind understand that this perfect communion is not to be sought after or selfishly held onto as a private possession. Following Christ's example, they are willing to surrender it in obedience to the imperative of God's will that calls upon them to do so for everyone's sake. The common good thus served is not the good of some abstract commune or collective, some whole which simply transcends each individual. It is the good of all respected severally, the good of each and every one. This good is respected on the whole only if and when the good of each is also and by the same token respected. How can this be, when some are called to sacrifice themselves for others? It is possible because perfect communion with God necessarily implies perfect participation in His will. But His will constitutes every aspect of His creation, declaring what it means for it to be as it should be. So, all in all, what we surrender of the sake of realizing God's perfection in others we reclaim as, for God's sake, others do the same for us.

In Plato's Republic, a comprehensive and specialized regime of education is required to raise up characters who are perfectly contented with the power of truth, and therefore disdainful of the power of government; but who nonetheless willingly obey the imperative of truth which requires that they surrender their perfect contentment whenever true justice requires it. Plato's regime of education ultimately entails the comprehensive transformation of the political regime. This transformation involves some drastic measures that seem at times both inhuman

and inhumane. Chief among them is the “noble lie” with which he deprives each person of information about their parentage, telling all that they have been “born of the soil” and therefore share a common heritage.

So, in order to motivate people to serve the good of the society as a whole, the founders of Plato’s Republic redirect the familial passions that would otherwise incline them primordially to love and serve their natural parents and familial kin. Particular people become, as it were, nodes in the fungus-like network of the political organism. This erases individuality in any substantive sense of the term. Thus Plato cannot induce people to serve others in truth without denying, in themselves, the very truth they are supposed to serve.

By contrast, the power of true faith in Jesus Christ comprehensively transforms individuals, understanding each as a natural whole formed and informed by nature, as God intends. Through the God-endowed natural family, the organic unity of the individual whole reconstitutes and extends itself through each generation. In the act of procreation, the special seed of one human life is sowed into the special soil of another, growing by virtue of the God-endowed truth God has shared with and through each of them, into a new and distinct individual, whose wholeness represents their God-informed communion with one another. Particular people grow up in groves, like trees, each one a distinctive whole rooted in and expressing, in unique combination, the union of rest and motion, activity and acceptance, change and permanence, that was the living, self-containing seed of its origin. Though in one sense it relies upon and expresses and reflects the identity of the material substance through which it takes place, that substance does not constitute the identity of the community of individuals derived from the bonds of procreation.

Each individual constitutes a new and distinct interpretation of the whole from which it derives. Each bears the title of humanity. Each is registered in the account of some family name. But each also will receive and is meant to re-acquire a name all its own, the name by which it calls upon itself in the secret heart of God, from whence it came, toward which it goes, to which it should return. This is the God-endowed vocation that corresponds to the intention of God for the life of each and every individual, the root of that responsibility to the Creator on account of which each one of us must answer for the good or wicked use we make of it.

But the perfect truth of God’s intention is known to God alone. Through nature and His word, He guides us toward fulfilling it. But like Plato’s cave dwellers, we dwell in confusion so invincible that on our own we cannot move beyond its doubtful shadows, even when at last we see them for what they are. In this respect, the Apostle speaks for all when he says “...I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate” (Romans 7:15). Even though we perceive, and wish to respect the identity God intends for us, on our own we do not understand how to act according to the righteous inclinations of our hearts. But once in possession of the mind of Christ, the faithful do, by virtue of Christ’s perfect

trust in God, what Plato's philosophers had no power to do—i.e., act with respect to the whole truth without, in ourselves, denying some aspect of it.

Once we admit Christ within us, the light of God's truth shines from within, and from within it reveals the power of mind and will to act upon it. The knowledge of Christ is the experience of truth, an activity through which information, by God's grace, becomes transformation by God's will. And because Christ made himself available for all, this transformation is open to all except, of course, those unwilling to receive him. Because, in obedience to God, Christ showed the way, the individual capacity to accept and by turns impose the rule of justice was thus removed from the rarely visited province of a few exceptional individuals.

What Plato believes to be possible for a few, and only through the totalitarian transformation of society, Christ makes available to *all* by way of his total transformation of the individuals willing to receive him. The dedication to truth that Plato purports to achieve by the appearance of community engendered by his "noble lie" becomes reality once Christ appears, as he draws people along the only path that leads to communion with God in truth. In this way, Christ makes them an actual community (i.e., one that appears in consequence of the common spirit made manifest in their actions). Plato's Republic exists by way of deception, which is a species of coercion. The Christian republic exists by way of election, which is a species of choice or liberty. Plato deceives in order to force all individuals to live in ignorance of their true origins, i.e., without experiencing family life in the way that otherwise provides the basis for each individual's God-endowed identity. By thus curtailing their knowledge of themselves, Plato forces all to serve the good of all. Christ, on the other hand, reveals the true identity of all, by which every one is drawn freely to serve the good of the whole (which is God's will) even as, in conformity with God's prescription for their existence (their God-endowed nature), they each serve each their own.

Everyone faces a fundamental choice, to claim and enact their God-endowed identity, or to live with respect for no will but their own. Unlike the founders of Plato's Republic, Christian republicans do not believe that justice can be established by lies that deny human beings their God-ordained capacity for choice. Instead, by accepting what God has given us in Christ, we see the way to establish and maintain a political regime that respects God—not by repressing the human capacity for choice, but by using that capacity in the exercise of right, as God gives us, in Christ, to see it done.



mopar05ram/Flickr

Living up to the creed

Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man in whom there is not salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. (Psalm 146:3-4)

This morning, I read an article reporting what Roman Catholic Archbishop of Philadelphia Charles Chaput said about the priority that should govern how Catholics cast their vote. "We're Catholics before we're Democrats. We're Catholics before we're Republicans. We're even Catholics before we're Americans, because we know that God has a demand on us prior to any government demand on us."

I think that statement holds true for anyone who has accepted Christ in their hearts, to be the Lord and Master of their mind and will. For Christ said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." which means that, especially when it comes to self-government, the ruler is God.

I can hear the *sotto voce* muttering of those who resent this simple statement of spiritual truth because they have hardened their will against it in this election year. "Neither God nor Jesus is running for President," they tell themselves. "We're all imperfect, and sometimes we must choose among evils." Even though some people still try to deny it, the fact is that both Romney and Obama have plainly expressed their commitment to policies that violate "the laws of nature and of Nature's God," the will of the Creator for all humanity.

Both are willing to countenance the lie that it should be lawful to murder (i.e., purposely kill in violation of their Creator-endowed right to life) our innocent nascent offspring. Both are willing to use the Command authority of the President of the United States to force military personnel to accept, respect, and honor openly

homosexual relations, making them liable to punishment for exercising the right of conscience whereby they are bound to respect the Creator-endowed natural rights of the pro-creational family.

Such policies abrogate the purpose of government enunciated in the Organic Law of the United States—which is to secure the unalienable rights that come to every human being as an endowment by God, not government. Each and all such policies overthrow just government in principle, invalidating the logic of justice that confines the use of government power within the limits prescribed by the requirements of respect for God-endowed right.

It is evil to act without regard for right. Obama and Romney are therefore, both of them, committed to evil. If we choose one or the other, we make a choice of evils.

This explains why so many self-professed Christians are talking to themselves these days, repeating the double-minded mantras wherewith they seek to silence the small voice of conscience that keeps reminding them that their first duty is to God. It also explains why some preachers have taken to expounding on the passage that seems to justify this double-mindedness. For was it not Christ himself (in Matthew 22:15-22) who resolved the dilemma of our political duty with the command to “Render therefore unto to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” Like so many of Christ’s admonitions, however, this one rather challenges than comforts the double-minded. It does so first of all because it seems to require that we serve two masters. But didn’t Christ say with direct simplicity that “no man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other” (Matthew 6:24).

Caught as it were on the horns of this dilemma, it may help to think again about Christ’s famous utterance. Assuming that we are indebted to both God and Caesar, doesn’t it beg an obvious question?

In word and deed, Christ actually raises and addresses this question before he enunciates the well-known command. When asked whether it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not, he begins with a rather uncharacteristic request. In what these days we could mistake for a Jerry (Show me the money) Maguire moment, he demands that his Pharisaical inquisitors “Show me the coin for the tax.” The Evangelist continues, “And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ They said, ‘Caesar’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.’”

As he will later do for us on the cross, in this passage Christ answers the question we raise even before we know we are asking it. What belongs to Caesar is what has Caesar’s likeness and inscription upon it. When we naturally are led to ask “What then belongs to God?”, the answer is already before us. “What has God’s likeness and inscription upon it.” But practically on the first page of God’s Word we are told that

God made man in His image and after His likeness. And the Apostle (Romans 2:15) speaks of the way the “Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires.... They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness....”

Thus, all human beings bear the likeness and inscription of God. All human beings, including those like Caesar who fancy themselves to be the greatest powers on earth, are indebted to God for their very being. What we owe to God is our very selves.

Stunned by this breathtaking conclusion, the Evangelist tells us that the Pharisees, “When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.” Speaking truth that flowed from the very principle of God’s Word (i.e., its source in God Himself), Christ made it clear that, whatever Caesar’s pretensions, the very lawfulness of the law depends upon God’s will as the Creator, so that no debt of human making can take precedence over the debt we owe to Him.

When Archbishop Chaput reminds Catholics that their first duty is to God, he does no more than what Christ did. And Christ cast this truth in the teeth of those whom he knew were seeking an excuse to deliver him up to Caesar’s governor for execution. But the Archbishop also does no more than what America’s founders did, when they acknowledged the Creator of all things as the natural source of law, right, and justice for all humanity. Therefore, when a religious leader issues this call of duty to people who profess to put their trust in God and Jesus Christ, it is both a challenge to live out their religious faith, and a challenge to live up to the American Creed.