

Commentary — From the Margins

Intellectual Bulimia

Liberal Protestant theologians locate Puritan Christianity within the logjam of social constructs underpinning the development of Western thought in the 17th- & 18th-Centuries. These theologians, with very few exceptions, do not believe the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of a creating deity that exists outside of the dimensions of space-time. Thus, these theologians, again, with very few exceptions, do not accept literal explanations or applications of Scripture. They leave such “nonsense” to born-again Evangelical scholars, who are always feasting on the Word, but never arriving at any intellectual understanding, for these born-again scholars regurgitate the laws of God. These born-again scholars are as river otter that catches a fish, then away from their dens, puke up their partially digested catch. Otters receive sustenance from their catch for as long as it remains in their digestive tracts, but they deal with the bones by vomiting them out, along with a goodly amount of flesh.

The question can be posed: is it better to reject the Bible as the literal Word of God in totality, or to swallow all of it, then puke up the structure that holds it together. The theologians of Post-Modernism have intellectual eating disorders, either anorexia or bulimia. Whereas Puritan theologians, with Jonathon Edwards foregrounded, sought spiritual muscle through the consumption of the Word of God, their biographers and apologists are as sockeye salmon, whose digestive tracts shut down once they enter freshwater, or as the river otter that feed on sockeyes if they can catch them.

In graduate school, in a course on American spiritualism, I was told that to appreciate how controlling religion was of Puritan mindsets, a person would have become part of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect. I begged to differ with the instructor then, and still do. Christian sects then existed and still do that use the laws of God as the social constructs underpinning their mental paradigms. These sects are usually dismissed as heretical by the Evangelical Church, which suffers from being physically [the *more-than-enough* gospel, and the escapism of a pre-Tribulation rapture of the Church] rather than spiritually minded. Liberal theologians dismiss these sects as philosophical relics, out of touch with reality. And truly, disciples in these sects do not experience the same “reality” as do liberal theologians. Plus, the practices and beliefs of these disciples are contrary to those that stem from historical exegesis.

Jonathon Edwards sought to introduce intellectual heft to the Calvinism he received, a Calvinism that would have a person’s future predestined from the foundation of the world, which is, when examined, the pronouncement of judgment upon the person before Christ returns as the all-powerful Messiah. So the Calvinism Edwards received should have been shorn of its understanding of predestination by the literal application of the epistles of Paul. But that would

have also required Edwards to reject the lie of the old serpent, who told the second Eve that she would not surely die, that she had an immortal soul.

In Edwards' quest for intellectual heft, he should have realized that eternal, or spiritual life is the gift of God, and that the literal wages of sin is death. Spiritual life doesn't come from fornication when a bundling board isn't high enough. It doesn't come as the result of adultery. It doesn't come with the union of a man and his wife in wedlock. It comes when God the Father gives it to a person by drawing the person out of the mental paradigms of the world (John 6:44, 65). It is what happens when a person is born-again, or born from above. And any sin now credited to the person who has been born-again, or born a second time will result in the second death. But by the terms of the eternal covenant into which the born-again person has been placed, Christ bears all of this person's sins. No sin will even be imputed to this person as long as he or she remains in covenant with the Father. However, the boundaries of that covenant are the laws of God. If the born-again individual chooses to live outside of those boundaries (which is different than accidentally wandering across them), this born-again individual has taken him or herself out of the covenant by which Christ bears the person's sins. Now, this individual bears his or her own sins—and awaits the resurrection unto condemnation (John 5:29). The person is a hypocrite.

Much of the problem Edwards experienced and others since him have is the concept of "eternal" and "forever." All language speakers assign meaning to linguistic signifiers or icons. Translators, then, attempt to assign the appropriate icon of another language to the object of the icon in the first language. The assumption of a translation is that the translators properly assigned a linguistic object to the icon of the first language. Thus, because humanity exists only inside the four dimensions of space-time, the assignment of objects to Greek or Hebrew icon phrases that should be rendered *age-ending*, of *from age to age* become *eternal*, or *forever*, or *ever-burning*. To me, an age-ending fire differs substantially from an ever-burning fire. But if the translator believes the individual receives spiritual life through fornication, then this translator will not comprehend the difference between ever-burning (since the person will live forever) and age-ending, which has spiritual life ending in a lake of fire that isn't an oxidizing agent, as Moses observed about the burning bush. Spiritual fire will change matter into energy in a controlled manner. In addition, it can change spiritual constructions into the elements from which those constructions were assembled, just as physical fire serves as an oxidizing agent. Thus, *eternal life* is really spiritual life in the heavenly realm. And it is this life that the Father gives to every disciple when He places the disciple in the spiritual covenant that has Him writing His laws on the hearts and minds of the disciple.

So all of those liberal theologians who no longer believe they have immortal souls can rest assured that they are correct. They have no life other than that which comes from their breath until they receive the Holy Breath/*Pneuma* of God the Father. At that time, they receive spiritual life. They have been born from above. They are not yet glorified—and they will never be glorified if they voluntarily leave the covenant walled by the laws of God.

All judgment of humanity is given to Christ, who will decide both the hard and the easy cases. If you have once been enlightened and now know that you will not be ruled by Christ and the laws of God, you are an easy case to judge. The lake of fire awaits you, where you won't be tormented forever, but only until you are

consumed. The hard cases are those individuals who were enlightened that did the *hokie-pokie* with one foot in the world and one foot out. Neither Christ, nor the Father is in the business of creating additional satans; so if there is any doubt about whether you will be ruled by the laws of God “forever,” don’t expect to be glorified. There are too many enlightened Puritans who have demonstrated in this life that they will, indeed, be ruled by Christ.

The key to the above is “if enlightened.” The vast majority of human beings have never been enlightened. God the Father would be a respecter of persons if He didn’t also give each of these individuals a chance to be ruled by Christ and His laws. This is what the great White Throne Judgment is about. Every person receives **one** (and only one) chance to be governed by the laws of God. If your chance is now—and judgment is upon all who have been baptized in the name of Christ Jesus (1 Pet 4:17)—you have been predestined to be judged out of season, or prior to the time of general judgment. Your reward potential is greater, and so is the difficulty of being accounted worthy (which is why you can be called out of season and God not be a respecter of persons). You were pre-ordained from the foundation of the earth to be a vessel of special use, as opposed to a vessel meant for ordinary use. So do not desire that which is “common.” You were not called to be a spiritual Gentile, but a spiritual Judean. You have been made holy; you are to live as one who is holy. And here is why that instructor of mine in graduate school didn’t understand that Puritans still exist within the Christian community: I have been so pre-ordained to be called at this time, he had not. I don’t physically appear different from any anyone else. I wear no special clothes, nor cut my hair in a special way. I seem a bit odd when I refrain from doing certain things on the Sabbath, which is the manifestation of a “special” mindset. And it is in the mind where I differ from those whose calling is not yet. It is the differing social constructs that inform the same kinds of thoughts and the same types of emotions occurring in my mind as occurs in everyone else’s. Because the underlying social constructs differ, the thoughts and emotional feelings planted in them develop along differing paths from the world. A spiritually minded Christian (me) literally doesn’t arrive at the same conclusions as does a carnally minded individual even though our thought processes are similar. The difference stems from the soil in which the idea sprouted and took root.

Lucifer, now Satan, is the spiritual king of Babylon, and of Tyre, and he will be destroyed by having fire come out from his belly. Judgment has already been pronounced upon him (Ezek 28:18–19). And if God the Father will deconstruct Satan, He certainly can have a born-again Christian who has been judged unworthy thrown into the lake of fire.

This past semester I received several essays about eating disorders. One astute observation was made by a young woman whose best friend suffers from bulimia. Her friend’s emotions were out of control—this friend had no control over them. Thus, this friend exercised the control she desired to have over her emotions over her eating. She literally would experience the gorging of her stomach as she felt emotionally gorged. Then she would make herself vomit all she had eaten as if she were purging herself of her overwrought emotions. The only problem was that her friend’s eating disorder did nothing to solve her friend’s emotional disorder. And no treatment of her friend’s eating disorder had been effective, because the nature of the problem wasn’t being addressed.

The nature of the Evangelical Church's spiritual problems also aren't being addressed as the Church feasts on the Word of God while busily erasing the laws of God that He wrote on the hearts and minds of born-again disciples. These Christians appear in prophecy (Matt 24:12). It won't be the world that becomes increasingly lawless. The entire passage (*vv.* 9–14) pertains to spiritual Israel, as does all of Jesus' Olivet discourse. And Jesus said His disciples would be known by the love they have for one another...I have enough love for you to not pull any punches. As a disciple upon whom judgment has come, you either will remain within a spiritual Eden that is bordered by the laws of God, or you will go into the lake of fire. The tree of life is inside of Eden, not growing on some sharecropper's farm in the bootheel of Missouri. Wal Mart doesn't have a contract for its fruit—it cannot be purchased anywhere. It is a gift to all of those who are in Eden when judgment comes upon them, regardless of whatever eating disorder they might have had.

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