

When Life Is A “Work of Art” The Rediscovery of Biblical Callings

Introduction:

A. An ancient Conversation Revisited

About a year ago now, I listened to a lecture that Chris Clay entitled “Perspectives on Art.” In that lecture, I was reminded of a conversation that took place about twenty-four hundred years ago in Athens. Here is how the conversation went:

Plato: “And so, Glaucon, when you happen to meet those who praise Homer and say that he’s the poet who educated Greece, that it’s worth taking up his works in order to learn how to manage and educate people, and that one should arrange one’s whole life in accordance with his teachings, you should welcome these people and treat them as friends, since they’re as good as they’re capable of being, and you should agree that Homer is the most poetic of the tragedians and the first among them. But you should also know that hymns to the gods and eulogies to good people are the only poetry we can admit into our city. If you admit the pleasure-giving Muse, whether in lyric or epic poetry, pleasure and pain will be kings in your city instead of law or the thing that everyone has always believed to be best, namely, reason.

Glaucon: “That’s absolutely true.

Plato: “Then let this be our defense – now that we’ve returned to the topic of poetry – that, in view of its nature, we had reason to banish it from the city earlier, for our argument compelled us to do so. But in case we are charged with a certain harshness and lack of sophistication, let’s also tell poetry that there is an ancient quarrel between it and philosophy.... Nonetheless, if the poetry that aims at pleasure and imitation has any argument to bring forward that proves it ought to have a place in a well-governed city, we at least would be glad to admit it, for we are well aware of the charm it exercises. But, be that as it may, to betray what one believes to be the truth is impious. What about you, Glaucon, don’t you feel the charm of the pleasure-giving Muse, especially when you study her through the eyes of Homer?”

Glaucon: "Very much so.

Plato: "Therefore, isn't it just that such poetry should return from exile when it has successfully defended itself, whether in lyric or in any other meter?"

Glaucon: "Certainly.

Plato: "Then we'll allow its defenders, who aren't poets themselves but lovers of poetry, to speak in prose on its behalf and to show that it not only gives pleasure but is beneficial both to constitutions and to human life. Indeed, we'll listen to them graciously, for we'd certainly profit if poetry were shown to be not only pleasant but also beneficial." (Plato, Republic, X.606E-607E, trans. by G. M. A. Grube)

Clay notes, "Plato is famous, or rather infamous, for banning the poets from his ideal city because poetry can arouse emotions which subvert the control of reason through intense emotional affect.... "

As again noted by Chris Clay, another reason Plato banned the poets was because poetry – "as the chief representative art form in addition to music and painting – merely created bad copies of the perfect Ideas or Forms that existed in Heaven, the "art" was not only banned from the ideal city, it was likewise banned from true work itself... "

In Plato's city, true work was the work of reason and philosophy, of which there was no "art" in it! Reason or the intellect was the best means of access to these Forms which lay beyond the physical realm. Reason provided the foundation for metaphysics or theology, and art had nothing to add to our knowledge of the heavenly realm. At least, that is the standard view of Plato's attitude to art.

But listen carefully... "What is so interesting about the passage from the Republic cited above, is that Plato seems to complete his final indictment of art with a wistful admission of poetry's lingering attractions, and even seems to hope that if the proper argument can be marshaled then poetry might be welcomed back from exile...." Chris Clay further

notes: “Like many great thinkers, Plato takes a stand and follows what he thinks is the truth, but is still haunted by doubt. Like many great thinkers, he admits a tension into his system. His valorization of reason is haunted by the riddle that is art. Great art indeed is a great mystery, though for this very reason, I will suggest, it should never be excluded from our lives...”

Today, in the next two lectures, I would like to accept Plato’s challenge and in his words seek to “successfully defended art, whether in lyric or in any other meter,” such as to bring it back from exile into the city, or shall we say, back to our daily lives of work!

What is a Christian view of work?: I will want to make the case that work is by its very nature art—we will call it “Art-Work” as related to the callings of God in this life!

B. Definition of Art-Work

And lest you think I am being wildly creative at this point—I will of course assume the task of argument as from the prose and meter of Holy Scripture, even as was to a degree admitted by the Reformers..

For in our tradition of Reformed orthodoxy, we have a great appreciation for the sphere of common grace. This means that we highly esteem the contribution to humankind that emerges in the work of all people, whether Cleric or non-cleric, even Christian or non-Christian. One of the first and best articulations of the meaning of common grace can be found in Calvin’s Institutes: And notice especially Calvin’s use of the word “art” to describe various common grace vocations... Listen:

“Because knowledge of the arts is bestowed indiscriminately upon pious and impious, it is rightly counted among natural gifts. Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God’s excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God. For by holding the gifts of the spirit in slight esteem, we condemn and reproach the Spirit himself. What then? Shall we deny that the truth shone upon the ancient jurists who established civic order and discipline with such equity? Shall we say that the philosophers were blind in their fine observation and artful description of nature? Shall we say that those men were devoid

of understanding who conceived the art of disputation and taught us to speak reasonably? Shall we say that they are insane who developed medicine, developing their labor to our benefit? What shall we say of the mathematical sciences? Shall we consider them the ravings of madmen? No, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without great admiration. We marvel at them because we are compelled to recognize how preeminent they are. But shall we count anything praiseworthy or noble without recognizing at the same time that it comes from God? Let us be ashamed of such ingratitude, into which not even the pagan poets fell, for they confessed the gods had invented philosophy, laws, and all useful arts. Those men whom Scripture calls “natural men” were, indeed, sharp and penetrating in their investigation of inferior things. Let us, accordingly, learn by their example how many gifts the Lord left to human nature even after it was despoiled of its true good.” (Calvin, Institutes, II.ii.14-15; trans. by Ford Lewis Battles)

Calvin assumed, without as much as a qualification, that in the work of philosophy, medicine, law, rhetoric, etc—that there is an “art.” What exactly did he mean? What was the work of medicine or law as a work of art?

Clearly, in such a way of thinking, Calvin was NOT thinking as so many do today as to confuse “career” with “work” whereby work is reduced to that activity that makes us slave to money within a modern economy. Nor was Calvin thinking as we so often do today about work, that it is a necessary evil that must be done in order to make a living, in order that we can do the things on our “off” time that we really enjoy doing such as to really engage our imaginations and “artistic” zeal.

So then, when I use the term “Art-Work”—what do I mean?

What I don’t mean is merely that work that is “art” as in poetry, music, etc—although it will include these things.

What I mean rather is when we assume the “artists” framework as derived from the Creator artist in doing all things worth doing as if we were artisans.

And by Christian “art-work” I do not mean works of art that are Christian in content... such as Christian hymns vs. say any other content of music...

Dorothy Sayers defines our Goal today this way:

Thorough going revolution in our whole attitude to work.. not as a necessary drudgery to be undergone for the purpose of making money, but as a way of life in which the nature of man should find its proper exercise and delight and so fulfill itself to the glory of God. That it should, in fact, be thought of as a creative activity undertaken for the love of the work itself; and that man, made in God's image, should make things as God makes them, for the sake of doing well a thing that is worth doing.

What counts as a work of art, and what kind of art should we favor? Do we need only hymns to God? ... When I speak of the "work of art" I mean not only artworks but also, in the most literal sense, the art of work. What does work do, and how can we do it as an artist?

In short: "Art-Work" is

...not a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do... it is the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental and bodily satisfaction and the medium in which he offers himself to God....

Oh, but we are getting way ahead of ourselves...

1. Lets Locate "Art-work" in the Christian story itself such as to rediscover our own sense of calling within it as applied to all spheres of life—church, family and public service.

A. Art-Work in Creation

B. The Humiliation of Art-Work—both as from a biblical history and post-biblical history

C. Art-Work in Re-creation

2. Art-Work Applied as to an integrated concept of calling as related to 3 spheres, not just one, of church, family and public service... this as related to the integration of common and special grace...

I. Locating Art-Work in the Christian Story

A. Art-Work in Creation

1. The Art-Work of God

a) Work is Art

Gen. 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made...Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food..

God is described in Genesis with terms that reflect God's skill as a great architect of a cosmic palace, both the great artisan of aesthetics and a producer of utility-- for it is said of God that His work was pleasant to the sight and good for food.. (Gen.2:9) It is no surprise then that when God made humanity in His own image, he made her to work-- and this as a calling which preceded the fall, a calling where art is science and production is aesthetics!

Preston Graham, Lecture "The Art of Work"

We will later undertake to understand the meaning of "rest," but for now we can notice that the above passage affirms God at work, and what God does is itself intrinsically good. Moreover, God's work is in fact described as 'pleasant to the sight' and "good for food"-- both valuable in its aesthetics and utility.

Think about this for a minute: the worth of work was intrinsic to itself—each product was pronounced good—this was the worth of God's work—it did something good that was worth doing for his glory!

God is the first to make something as “a work of art” And everything he made was “a work of art.”

One could say that God is a maker of things—and that the things he made are good in and of themselves—not merely having a relative worth, but an intrinsic worth! They were, each one, pronounced “good” and the “aesthetic” was not disjointed from the utility. The two are together!

b) Work is Sacred

Significance of Sabbath Framework in Creation: Monday is Sacramental/Sacred

Pictorial framework of a Sabbath-crowned week whereby God identifies Himself as the one for whom all things are and were created, the Lord worthy to receive glory and honor and praise. (Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue)

Genesis 1:1-13, First three day-frames describes the origin of three vast spheres over which rule is to be exercised.

Day-Frame 1: vs.1-5: Day and night

Day-Frame 2: vs. 6-8: Water below and sky above

Day-Frame 3: vs. 9-13: Dry Land and vegetation

Genesis 1:14-31, Day frames 4-6 describes the rulers of each of these created spheres by divine appointment.

Day-Frame 4: vs.14-19: Sun and Moon, "The greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night"

Day-Frame 5: vs.20-23: Fish and Birds given to possess their spheres, "be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters... and earth.

Day-Frame 6: vs.24-31: Land animals with the investiture of man with Kingship
(Gen.1:26-29)

Genesis 2:1-3, Seventh day frame describes the supreme rule of Him who is Lord of the Sabbath.

But all this pomp and majesty of the six days simply subserves the revelation of the ultimate and absolute dominion celebrated in the seventh day. Even during the pageant of the creature-kings in the narrative of days four through six, their royal splendor is paled by the surpassing glory of the Creator-King who commands them into existence, identifies them in his fiat-naming of them, and invests them with their subordinate dominions. And then when the creation apocalypse has reached the vicegerency of the God-like creature-king of the sixth day, and moves beyond it, we observe the glory of all the creature-kingdoms of all six days being carried along as a tributary offering with the gates of the Sabbath day to be laid at the feet of the Creator-King, now beheld in the brilliance of his epiphany as Sabbath Lord.

Conclusion: THE WHOLE OF LIFE IS TO BE LIVED UNDER THE SABBATH PRINCIPLE

1. All of life (Day 1-6) is what is mirrored in the Sabbath ordinance of Day seven.

2. Sabbath is intended to mirror, not supplant, the meaning of Sabbath as intrinsic

2. The Art-Work of the Imago Dei

Thus, as made in the image of God... all men are made so far artists as to desire the integrity of the work...

Dorothy Sayers, "Postscript, The Worth of Work," *The Mind of the Maker*,

a) It is our nature to image God in His Work—

It is no surprise then that when God made humanity in His own image, he made him to work-- and this as a calling which preceded the fall.

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Key Question: What does "in our image mean"

Clearly it relates to our sexuality—i.e. "in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them..."

And clearly both "male and female" are related to God in so far as God is creating in this context...

I.e. the only detailed information that is given to us about God prior to this most incredible statement is that "God created"... DS "the characteristic common to God and humanity is apparently that humanity is made with a desire/commission to make things...!

Whatever else is meant by the Imago dei (free will, rationality, morality, etc. etc) are all speculative in comparison to the clear context of this passage.

So then, what define us is that we "make things" after the image of God—things that related to both art and production!

Our standard of work will always be the standard of eternity as in the divine example.

We should stop and ponder this awhile as it has huge implications!

Here again we see that the created order which we are to cultivate was created by God with both beauty ("pleasant to the sight") and the capacity to nurture life ("good for food"). We have the unique privilege and responsibility of cultivating the inherent blessing in the created order both in applying "re-creational" energy to the art and utility of our world. Work is not the result of the fall; it is our very creaturely mandate; it is what we were created to do.

· Work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do... it is the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental and bodily satisfaction and the medium in which he offers himself to God. ... satisfaction is found in the fulfillment of his own nature and in contemplation of the perfection of his work... every man should do the work for which he is fitted by nature... we should not longer think of work as something that we hastened to get through in order to enjoy our leisure, we should look on our leisure as the period of changed rhythm that refreshed us for the delightful purpose of getting on with our work... the worker would demand that the stuff he helped to turn out should be good stuff... he would not longer be content to take the cash and let the credit go...

... the greatest insult which a commercial age has offered to the worker has been to rob him of all interest in the end product of the work and to force him to dedicate his life to making badly things which were not worth making...

· It is the business of the Church to recognize that secular vocation, as such, is sacred... it is not right for her to acquiesce in the notion that a man's life is divided into the time he spends on his work and the time he spends in serving God. He must be able to serve God in his work and the work itself must be accepted and respected as the medium of divine creation.

The Church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours and to come to church on Sundays... What the Church should be telling him is this; that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables...

... no piety in the worker will compensate for work that is not true to itself; for any work that is untrue to its own technique is a living lie.... The living and eternal truth is expressed in work only so far as that work is true in itself, to itself, to the standards of its own technique.... Work must be good work before it can call itself God's work.

(The "art in work" is expressed) by the farmer... "there are not a few good farmers who have gone bankrupt for the sake of the land rather than farm badly." Wherever such an attitude is found, there is the artist's way of life. Yet the integrity of the work—the stipulation that it shall be both worth doing and well done—rarely figures in any scheme for an ordered society whether issued by Labor or Capital.

Example what makes for a suitable actor to play the role of angel... is it that the actor be a good Christian, or that the actor be tall, erect, prompt to the set, etc. etc.

Quote from Jacques Maritain: "if you want to produce Christian work, be a Christian and try to make a work of beauty into which you have put your heart; do not adopt a Christian prose." (Ch. 8, "Christian Art," sect 2 in Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism and other essays*... 1930)

· The worker's first duty is to serve the work... much of our present trouble and disillusionment have come from putting the second commandment (love thy neighbor) before the first (love God). ... if we put our neighbor first we are putting man above God, and that is what we have been doing ever since we began to worship humanity and make man the measure of all things...

The only reward the work can give you is the satisfaction of beholding its perfection. The work takes all and gives nothing but itself and to serve the work is a labor of pure love.

Maritain, “the work be controlled and set in being only in relation to its own proper good and nowise in relation to the wages earned; so that the artist may work for any and every human intention he likes, but the work taken by itself be performed and constructed for its own proper beauty alone.”

Conclusion: If work is to find its right place in the world, it is the duty of the Church to see to it that the work serves God and that the worker serves the work.

Thus, as made in the image of God... all men are made so far artists as to desire the integrity of the work.... This is another way of saying that the work must be measured by the standard of eternity, or that it must be done for God first and foremost, or that the Energy must faithfully manifest forth the Idea; or theologically, that the Son does the will of the Father.

Dorothy Sayers

Note: All well and good, but how do I reconcile a call to do justice to the work I do by the fact that I am so busy in different directions?

Are there limits to doing something “good” as driven by the works that I am called to do? AS a parent, what am I making? Likewise, as a church person, or as a public servant. I.e. I do serve God in serving my neighbor, and my neighbor is not only one!

b) Our work is delegated to three spheres

Human commission at Creation involved a dual priest-king office which prohibits any dichotomization of life into religious/non-religious areas.

1) Sacred/"cultic" and the Priestly work in Creation:

a) Adoration and Consecration (2:3, 16)

(Continued by means of post-fall sacrifices Gen.4:3 and the reinstatement of Sabbath in Theocratic Mosaic economy and Lord's Day under the New Covenant)

b) Guardianship of Holy Sanctuary

(The word "Guard" given as mandate to Adam (2:15) and later given to cheraphim (3:24). See also it being used to describe the priestly role of guarding the sanctuary. Nm.1:53; 3:8; 1 Sam.7:1; 2 Kgs.12:9; Ez.44:15)

2) Cultural/Common and the Kingly Work in Creation:

a) Pro-creation Mandate

Gen.1:22, in functional terms

Gen.2:23ff, in terms of family institution

(Note that in Gen. 5:1-3, human procreation is related to God's creation in terms of the image of God terminology)

b) Mandate to Subdue (rule) the Earth

Gen.2:15, Serving the ground.

Gen.2:19-20, Interpretive activity (Science)

(Note also 1 Cor.15:47; 1 tim. 5:8)

Distinction between sacred (cultic) and common (cultural) as present in Creation does provide formal groundwork for sacred/profane distinction, yet not until the fractured post-fall situation. The distinction becomes institutional rather than personal. (Church/state of which neither usurps or transgresses the other in sphere of responsibility even though the two at times come together under one administration in some theocratic contexts. (Examples include Noah's ark, Mosaic covenant)

Family as the first "human" society to assist in the cultic and culture mandate:

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. Gen. 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Gen. 2:20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

It is the foundational society from which all other societies (church and state) are formed...

Samuel Davies:

The great Author of our nature, who has made us sociable creatures, has instituted various societies among mankind, both civil and religious, and joined them together by the various bonds of relation. The first and radical society is that of a family, which is the nursery of the church and state. This was the society instituted in Paradise in the state of innocence, when the indulgent Creator, finding that it was not good for a man, a sociable creature, to be alone, formed a helpmeet for him and united them in the endearing bonds of the conjugal relation. From thence, the human race was propagated; and when multiplied, it was formed into civil governments and ecclesiastical assemblies...

3 The Post-Fall Separation of Church and State yet still under the Family Polity

A. State: The Remedial City of Cain

Gen.4:11-17--

Notice formation-- out of family

Notice purpose- "remedial" or to provide "common grace" to Cain who had been "excommunicated" from the covenant purposes through Abel... "As the provision of

God's common grace, the city is a benefit serving mankind as at least a partial, interim refuge which the fallen race, exiled from paradise, has been driven.

Work is not the result of the fall; it is our very creaturely mandate; it is what we were created to do. The reality of the fall simply heightened the necessity of diligent work after the Fall under the reality of labor (or "toil") and frustration that was written into the created order so as to humble us back to God.

B. The Humiliation of Art-Work

1. A Biblical History

Gen. 3:17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

What Happen?

Fall—i.e. when humanity took it upon itself to bring in the promised utopian city that was promised to it instead of working in reliance upon God!

Human Pride negated our dependence upon God for the Work of building God's city!

Dorothy Sayers "the devilish strategy of pride is that it attacks us, not in our weakest points, but in our strongest. It is preeminently the sin of the noble mind."

John Calvin also:

We are naturally prone to attribute everything to our human flesh, we easily form an exaggerated notion of our strength, and we take for granted that, whatever hardships may happen, we will remain invincible. And so we become puffed up with a foolish,

vain, and carnal confidence which arouses us to become haughty and proud towards God, as if our own power would be sufficient without his grace

Illus. I am reminded of the many "Dreams of a Golden age --

I wonder, did any one here get down to the New York Public Library late last fall into the winter? If you did, then you saw the exhibit "Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World, --an exhibition on ideal societies in Western culture, both imagined and attempted, from Classical antiquity through the present

Utopia was the largest exhibition ever presented by The New York Public Library and chronicled utopias both imagined and attempted, across all forms of written, artistic, and political expression throughout Western history.

The idea of a perfect society has captured the imaginations of philosophers, theologians, artists, writers, and ordinary people for centuries. from the establishment of Shaker communities, to the experiment in the Soviet Union all illustrate the wide-ranging manifestations of these hopes and dreams for a better world.

Plato in the Republic

Virgil-- popularized the idea in his Fourth Eclogue

Voltaire's Candide

More recently--

Ovid's Metamorphoses describing the Golden Age

It was Thomas More's 1516 publication of Utopia which marked the beginning of an entirely new literary genre, the utopian novel. ... and where the term utopia was first used to designate a visionary or an ideally perfect state of society.

Since More's day many ideal commonwealths in imitation of the Utopia have flourished in literature. Among the best known are:

Bacon's "New Atlantis" (1624), in which the author dreams of the happiness of mankind attained through the progress of the natural sciences;

Campanella's "City of the Sun" (1637), which emphasizes community of property and stirpiculture;

Harrington's "Oceana" (1656);

Fénelon's "Telemaque" (1699);

Cabet's "Voyage in Icaria" (1840);

Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward" (1889);

William Morris's "News from Nowhere" (1890);

Hertzka's "Freiland" (1891); and

H. G. Wells's "A Modern Utopia" (1905) and "New Worlds for Old" (1908).

And the list could go on and on...

Samuel Butler, Henry David Thoreau, Robert Owen's "New Harmony" Leo Tolstoi...

Communism is largely driven by utopian visions along the lines of a classless state...

Capitalists think of such an age in terms of material prosperity...

During the postwar period: one thing of the idealist social upheavals of the 1960s and '70s and the communal movement.

Kline: p. 60ff

As Christians, we would locate the origins of this dream within a covenant promise made to humanity at her creational conception... this eschatological hope was instilled in man's heart as image of God and in view of the kingdom program assigned to man with its ultimate objective of constructing the cosmic-human temple city of creation... the ultimate form of the covenant blessing included the full actualization for the dominion that belonged to humanity as image of the glory of God, the dominion formulated as the objective of man's royal cultural commission. This glorification included a physical glorification as with a spiritual one in the eternal state...

I.e. The point being that

1st-- the promise of a glorious life is depicted by the placement of the tree of life... by placing the tree of life before humanity in the garden sanctuary of God, the Creator invited humanity to partake of the sacramental fruit "Take, eat, this is my life offered to you."...

Here then, from the very beginning, is a vision planted into humanity, a vision that is even here depicted by a great harvest of fruit...

Genesis 2-- The promise of a glorious life in fellowship with God was depicted by the great "sabbath rest" -- "during this preconsummation earthly history the weekly Sabbath sign would point the way, indicating that the six days of genealogical cultural work would eventually come to an end and man would enter with joy into the eternal seventh day of the Creator's Sabbath."

Thus, the tree of life and the sabbath, both symbolized a glorious consummation to creation in redemption... i.e. redemption (special grace) is not dichotomized from creation (common grace) but rather common grace becomes special grace and vice versa... Sabbath represented the completed redemption of creation-- consequently, sabbath rest points to a day when all of life is sacred, when all activity is sacred activity, when creation is redemption...

But what happened?

History teaches that such plans are inevitably followed by disillusionment... this is first of all discerned in the Christian story of the Fall... followed by many subsequent lessons such as in the tower of Babel...

Kline: "Apostate mankind in constructing the city of man is ever inclined to transgress the common grace boundaries of the state by projecting on it Utopian expectations in lieu of accepting the hope of the redemptive restoration of the kingdom of God, offered through Jesus Christ. "

Again, in Gen. 11 we know that

Babel was an idolization of man. Inspired by the spirit of human autonomy and omnipotence, the Babel builders would soar above their geophysical entrapment. By the resources of their scientific genius they would master fusion and remove the sting of fission from their experience of fullness. Babel was the anti-city, the diametrical opposite of the city of God, which is the creation and gift of God, its altar an altar of plain earth or unhewn stone because it must be holy and man's technological processing would defile it (Exod 20:25; cf. Heb 11:10; Rev 21:2,10). Made-by-man was Babel's trademark: "Come, let us make brick...Come, let us build" (Gen 11:3a,4a). In building their pseudo-focus-city they were exploiting the common grace city, perverting the legitimate cultural product into an idol-cultus. What was ordained as an interim measure merely to provide historical space for the program of the eternal city they reinterpreted as the actual eschatological telos. Turning the city of man into the temple of man, they projected a tower-mountain that should open the way for them to the heights of the immortals. Gathered into the unity of this rival focus-city, they would preempt the eschatological gathering promised at the consummation of the redemptive city of God.

Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue

Result: The Humiliation of Work:

The Humiliation of Vocation as Summarized in Ecclesiastes

Throughout the book of Eccl. the teacher, Qohelet, has asked us to squarely face the limitations of life, that we might a limitless God! These limitations included the

limitations of human wisdom, the limitations of human ingenuity and industry and today, we are called upon to consider the limitations of human existence.

The Limitations of Human Ingenuity:

- The Limits of Human wisdom and industry has been one of the significant themes throughout...

Eccl. 3:11 He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Eccl. 8:17 then I saw all the work of God, that no one can find out what is happening under the sun. However much they may toil in seeking, they will not find it out; even though those who are wise claim to know, they cannot find it out.

Eccl. 9:11 Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the skillful; but time and chance happen to them all.

Eccl. 10:14 yet fools talk on and on. No one knows what is to happen, and who can tell anyone what the future holds?

- And of course, eventually, the limit of Human work is illustrated by our very existence itself—in that we will one day be forced to stop working by death itself...

The Ultimate Limitation: Look at vs. 11:9 especially...

vs. 9—“Rejoice, young man, while you are in the prime of your life. Let your heart be merry in days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. BUT, know (this) that God will bring you into judgment concerning all these things...

The crucial thing to notice is the stark contrast

9a—a call to “rejoice while in the prime of one’s life – i.e. “go for it”

i.e. “young” is referring to “young person” which is probably better trans. “prime of life”

9b—an exhortation to “know” (remember, beware maybe) that we all will face judgment...

—vs. 7-8 have established the same contrasting pattern as stated more blatantly in vs. 9...

9a--Eccl. 11:7-8a ¶ Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. Even those who live many years should rejoice in them all

9b--Eccl. 11:8b ¶; yet let them remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is like the wind, transient...

(transient, is like wind.....)

Darkness= judgment=death

1Cor.15—where “death” is viewed as the ultimate expression of God’s judgment against sin...

Vs. 11: 7[- Q used light and the ability to see the sun as metaphors for life and its natural pleasures in contrast to the coming of days of darkness vs. 8.

--Vs. 10-12:1: The same pattern is restated in vs. 10 – 12:1

9a-- Eccl. 11:10 ¶ Banish (IMPERV) anxiety from your mind, and put away pain from your body;. (live carefree)

9b-- Eccl. 12:1 ¶ for youth and the dawn of life are fleeting, are a breath... (your going to die anyway) Remember (IMPERV—HIPH...) your creator in the days of your youth, before, the days of trouble come, and the years draw near,

vs.2-5—a series of metaphors describing the decreasing physical vitality which often comes with old age, leading to death...

Most see these as metaphors describing getting old... i.e. references to muscular tremors, gnarled limbs, sarcity of teeth, failing eyesight vs. 3 and description of hearing or speaking disorders in vs. 4

Note, the Egyptian vizier Ptah-hotep describes old age with a similar mix of metaphorical and literal language... (ANET 412) Thus

“grinders” and “those that look through the window” 12:3—are figures for teeth and eyes... keepers of the house and the strong men refer to arms and legs... etc.

Point—not necessary to find a one to one correspondance with imagery, only to see that the imagery refers to the simple fact that life consist of a process toward dying... It that blatent really, its that plain...

Illustration: How did you feel this morning when you woke up...? (not those of you in your prime, but those of you who are past your prime)..

As for me, well I had a great time “yesterday” with many of you playing tennis, throwing the football, playing some softball....

But last night and this morning...

Well it all during the night when I would wake up occassionlly with this strange aching in my back.. this morning.. stiff as a board...

Then there was this weird tension in one of my feet...

I laying on the ground to straighten my back out.. thinking, lets do that leg raise drill that I used to do as an athelete—only to discover that within minutes, my stomach mucle were vibrating...

Yes, like Qohelet notes, I am finding that my eye muscles are starting to deteriate... harder to focus...

Yes, my teeth are falling out, and if it where not for the modern dentist, I might be gumming by now...

I'M DYING... these are the signs... to be sure, subtle and not so tragic.. but we all know it will get worse... and worse, and worse... this is the point of vs. 2-5...

vs. 6—Death is poetically described

—metaphors for death itself... i.e. the cord from which a lamp is hanging snaps, the golden bowl is shattered... the rope in the pulley breaks...and the clay jar used to pull up the water is dropped...

vs. 7: Death is literally described as related to our returning to the dust, as from whence we came at creation.. clearly refering to Gen.

dust of which a person is made returns to the earth and the spirit returns to the creator... the words “to dust you will return” echo those used as Adam and Eve where being cast out of Eden, (3:19)

Gen. 2:17, 3:19

Gen. 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Gen. 3:19 By the sweat of your face
 you shall eat bread
 until you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
 you are dust,
 and to dust you shall return.”

The Humiliation of Work Tragically Illustrated by Sept. 11.

Something has tragically changed for people living in America. We are now, like so many around the world confronted with our frailty and vulnerability. Our national boundaries are exposed as permeable. Our covert and overt strategies for national defense are unveiled in their limitations. And while we continue to mourn the horrific events of September 11th, we are as a people wanting to go forward, which of course raises a question-- How then should we live?

My point in raising the question is not political. Nor is it directed to any particular view concerning military strategic defense. Rather, I raise the question in the only way that I am qualified, as to its deeply personal and existential aspects. How has September 11th changed the way I think of life and how I live it? To find an answer, I am reminded of the teachings of Ecclesiastes.

To be sure, Ecclesiastes brutally confronts us with the jarring reality that “all is hevel.” Translation: “All is transient, hard to get a handle on....” According to Ecclesiastes, life “under the sun” is much like “the wind,” it comes and then it goes, and ultimately we can’t control it.

Now to be honest, most of us who reside in America are not prone to remember this. We avoid the onset of old age as if an embarrassing or shameful event. We deny our vulnerability with our scientific jargon, our political rhetoric and with our technological dialect as if to defy reality. But then there is the horror of September 11th. And we are met with the reality of Ecclesiastes, that “all is ultimately hevel.”

But of course, the wise teacher does not ask us to remember this only to leave us in despair-- nor should the events of September 11th! Like a kind of “reality therapy,” the teacher remembers that “all is hevel” in order to raise the question “how then should we live?” And the answer is basically this—that while we are confronted with “all is hevel” we must also remember God (Eccl.11:7-12:1). Even in the days of our prime, or when we would be most tempted to deny our limitations and vulnerability, we are called to remember our mortality as we remember that God is our maker and that we and all things are ultimately accountable to Him.

Think about it for a moment. What are our options if there is not God? One option is what philosophers call nihilism. The option of nihilism is raised by Stephen Crane,

“If I should cast off this tattered coat, And go free into the mighty sky;

If I should find nothing there but a vast blue, echoless, ignorant—

What then? (From *The Block Riders and Other Lines*)

As from the assumption of nihilism, we discovered in Ecclesiastes that there could be two radically different answers to the question “what then?”

One answer is a kind of “hedonistic nihilism.” Simply stated, “eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.” In other words, since this is all there is, and we don’t know when it will end, go for it while you can.

On the other extreme as based upon the same assumption, is “pessimistic nihilism.” Again simply stated, since all is ultimately lost anyway, there is no sense in trying to have a meaningful or even fun existence. We are led to a kind of living suicide, albeit practically expressed via the lack of ambition if not the ultimate and most tragic expression of suicide. As for both types of nihilism, what both answers share in common is the tragic reality apart from God whereby life is denied an ultimate meaning and fulfillment-- like Samuel Beckett’s dramatic piece entitled “Breath.”

Lasting for only thirty-five seconds the play has no human actors. The props consist of a pile of rubbish on the stage, lit by a light that begins dim, brightens (but never fully) and then recedes to dimness. There are no words, only a recorded cry opening the play, an inhaled breath, an exhaled breath and an identical recorded cry closing the play.

For Beckett, a nihilist, life is like a breath... so too for Ecclesiastes. But unlike Beckett, Ecclesiastes affirms that there is a God who is acting in history even as to Him there will be a final accounting leading to a life beyond this life (Eccl.3:12-15, 11:7-12:1). How then would we live believing that there is a God? According to Ecclesiastes, we would put our worries on a God who is there, who cares and who determines all things for an ultimate good purpose. And we would indulge upon the

good things in life as gifts from God. And yet, we would do this in a way that would bring glory to God. We would do this with a respect and love for what God is doing that is eternal (Eccl. 3:12-15). For in the end, we will all be judged by this standard (Eccl. 11:9). To be sure, there is a “sweetness” and “light” which ought to be savored and enjoyed for the brief moment it lasts before the “days of darkness” come (Eccl. 11:7-8). But we would do this without forgetting God, without forgetting that we are not the end, that God is, so that we should glorify him in our living, even as we would expect to enjoy him and this life in so doing. IN short, we would live life to its fullest “God’s way.”

Of course, when Ecclesiastes is put into the greater redemptive history—and the “re-creation” work that God is restoring humanity to do.

End of First Lecture!

2. A Post Biblical History

a. A Classic Dichotomy

Shadows

Less Real

The Platonic Roots

Platonism-- Form/substance

Spirit/Body Dichotomy and "spiritual/worldly" categories

Platonism may lead to either radical materialism or spiritualism

a. Materialism: Denies reality of God's existence. Meaning and security in the accumulation of material things, stimulation of senses, emotions and trust in techniques.

Platonic Thought In Christian Thinking: Manicheism & Christian Asceticism

Spiritualism (Platonism): Material world is the realm of physical world and is imperfect, transitory and shadowy. Spiritual (higher) realm consist of ideas, forms, the real perfection, permanence and divinity. Thinking only about "spiritual" things is Thinking Christianly. (Note, this is perhaps more dangerous than materialism since it can easily be passed on in a superficial resemblance to the biblical view.)

Calling/Art

Christian Gnosticism: 1st Century Church

Col. 2:20

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, 21 "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"? 22 All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.

Manicheism or "Christian Platonism" (3rd Century AD)

Mani-- Persian who thought that there are two eternal principles-- light (God-spirit) and darkness (matter-flesh) and these two are in eternal opposition. Each human being is

an instance of light that is entrapped in matter. (Therefore, the soul entrapped in the flesh)

Redemption: Ascetic abstinence, etc.

Augustine: Tempted with "M" but eventually came to understand that all things created by God must be intrinsically good, etc. (p.28ff)

2. A Medieval Dichotomy

Secular/Profane

Sacred/Spiritual

Calling/Art

Medieval "Societies" and the Post Reformation Anabaptist (5th –15th centuries)

The world consists of various "societies" with organizations.

The "society" of the "church" in opposition to the society of the "state" -- Christ vs. world dualism...

1. Medieval-- sacred/secular-- certain kinds of "work" more spiritual than others...

Monastic Movement: to free oneself from the contaminating influences of the world)

Two ways of life were given by the law of Christ to His Church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living... Wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone... Such then is the perfect form of the Christian life. And the other, more humble, more human, permits men to... have minds for farming, for trade, and the other more secular interests as well as for religion... And a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them." (Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica*)

2. Anabaptist-- passivism and avoid public service...

It is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate because of these points: The government magistracy is according to the flesh, but the Christians' is according to the Spirit; their houses and dwelling remain in this world, but the Christians' are in heaven; their citizenship is in the world, but the Christians' citizenship is in heaven; the weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against flesh only, but the Christians' weapons are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. (Anabaptist Confession)

I.e. Contra Platonism—God is IN the World—but mediated through the church in its word and sacrament... thus the “sacred” work of word and sacrament, but no theology for non-church such as to embrace a divine grace in the common!

Art = Sacred = Church...

For instance, up through the Medieval period—music was predominantly sacred... this as book an illustration that “art” was dis-joined from the common...

Then comes the reformation... a theology of grace both in the church and in the world! (special and common grace) We will return this later, but consider the words of Luther and Calvin as illustrative at this point:

Luther:

Household tasks, have not appearance of sanctity; and yet these very works in connection with the household are more desirable than all the works of all the monks and nuns." (Commentary on Genesis 13:13)

John Calvin:

We know were created to busy themselves with labor... for the common good. (Commentary on Luke 10:38) In all our cares, toils, annoyances, and other burdens, it will be no small alleviation to know that all these are under the superintendence of God... This too, will afford admirable consolation in following your proper calling. No work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendor and value in the eye of God. (2:35, Institutes)

But with it, the German and French Enlightenment—Modernity!

c. Modern Dichotomies

Work

Leisure

Modernism was characterized by at least 2 things as related to two results as related to “art-work.”

1. German Enlightenment: Rationalism and The Secularization of Work

I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith...

In his Critique of Pure Reason, in large measure a reaction to the Medieval system of knowledge and vocation, Immanuel Kant, is often credited as one of the earliest true moderns!

Whether this is true or not is not my point.

(I.e. Others would locate Modernity in Descarte... of which Kant took it to the next step...)

But one immediate detects a dichotomy- this time between reason and faith, and with this the common is expanded to cover all of cosmology/universe such as all of life is secular. As such, faith/God is something that is no longer identified with this world at all... and with it sacred art, romance was taken out of this world all together...

In short—Modernism as brought on by the enlightenment made human reason the sole arbiter and “radar” for discerning truth. Fueled by a fundamental faith in epistemological foundationalism, the enlightenment agenda embarked upon a method which presupposed a confidence in the capabilities of human rationality such that all other beliefs needed to be rationally demonstrable. As popularized by Descarte all beliefs needed to be suspended in order to be rediscovered with reason... reason as is related

to “proof.” At best “God was conceived of in the deistical notion that "God made the world, established its laws, created humans with certain mental capabilities to understand the world, and then stepped back to see what would happen." (Noll. p.399)

This view was naively adopted by Christians such that a search for God was contained to the search for arguments from Design and Definition in order to justify faith. Yet fundamental to the deistic notion of God is a cosmology that accepts as its premise a "closed system universe", that is, a universe void of transcendent God that is also imminent with respect to a sovereign activity within this world.

As then related to “work”—devoid of the transcendence, work is reduced to the mundane... making a living! Moreover, work is absent the the values that are transcendent in nature... IN other words, The art is taken out of work—all work, even church work now!

About Modernity, G.K. Chesterton noted:

Modern man has gone mad... The mad man is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everthing except his reason. He understands everything, and everything does not seem worth understanding.

G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

The key thing here is to notice then how “art/sacred/practical romance—is no longer in work

This is one characteristic of “Careerism” as we will see-- For along with the rise of modern economies—work became more and more a “career” whereby we “earn a living” less acquire and accomplish an “art”... albeit the art of farming, lawyering, doctering, etc.

And Career = work that is as now contrasted with “play”(leisure). And where do you think “art” is put?

Work is ordinarily "utilitarian" in nature-- about "making a living" and perhaps in our better moments about doing something worthwhile for the world. It is considered to be that activity which is obligatory and for the purpose of sustaining our lives-- housework, income related jobs, task-related studies, etc.

Play, on the other hand, is ordinarily considered to be "recreational" in nature-- about amusement, enjoyment, leisure and perhaps even associated with the frivolous. This "play" is where we do things like hobbies—and where we often experience something of an "art" in our attitude and activity—whereby we "make" things or "Discover" things or "participate" in things merely for the intrinsic joy and value of participating. Art become play, even as work has become production...

And our lives are now dichotomized as "on" and "off" as after the mentality of a time clock.

Obligation
Freedom

< X >

(Work)
(Play)

2 French Enlightenment: Autonomous individualism and the Privatization of Work

Premise: we are what we are as individuals, less communities:

The goal of modern life is to be liberated from restrictions, constraints, traditions, and all social parenting-- all of which are self-evidently presumed to be dehumanizing... the social, psychological and political strategies and rhetoric of modernity all focus on a highly abstract notion of individual freedom... (where) sustained covenant accountability is misplaced in the interest of subjective self-expression " (Thomas Oden, , Beyond Modernity, What...? p.47)

Peter Berger: "The conception of the naked self, beyond institutions and roles, as the ens realissimum of human being is the very heart of modernity." (Homeless Mind, 213)

Result of Privatization: What I do to make a living is driven by personal goals less communal goals—work is disjointed from communal values...

What is important to recognize here is the way in which "work" is reduced to individual or "selfish" interest. Corporate/communal activities are now something we do in our spare time...

The 3 spheres of public service, church and family have been dis-integrated in a way to create a disjointed and fragmented life!

With respect then to our ambitions-- what does it look like?

The "work" sphere as now a "career" swallows up the private spheres of family, church and state with respect to productive ambition.

Such a schema reduces religion and family and perhaps state to merely an enabler of the secular values of public life as explained by Robert Bellah:

Privatization placed religion together with the family (private life) in a compartmentalized sphere that provided loving support but could no longer challenge the dominance of utilitarian values in the society at large. Indeed, to the extent that privatization succeeded, religion (with the family) was in danger of becoming a "haven in a heartless world" but one that did more to reinforce that world, by caring for its casualties than to challenge its assumptions.

Robert Bellah, Habits of the Heart

(p.224)

Here we have then one of the great time clock tragedies:

Those spheres of work-- the family, church, state-- whose work would have been to challenge selfish utilitarianism and give ambition its noble dream-- has whimpered into only that which is a haven in a heartless world! A place of rest, not work, a place for healing, not production—only to reinforce the secular “artlessness” in work... rather than to challenge it!

...work and religion [have] become separate departments, and [the church] is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world's intelligent workers have become irreligious or at least uninterested in religion."

Dorothy Sayers

Summary:

In Medieval—as within a “pre-modern” worldview regarded things as within an open system world, albeit God in the church... the sectors of family and state were “secular”...

IN the Modern—as with a “secular” worldview, God is not in the world at all... church is demeaned in importance... public service is transformed into individual self-actualization and selfish “meism”... now the new Godless sacred...replaces the church in its important, albeit with a strange twist as driven by industrialism and market economy..

In short, Modernity took Medieval thought to the next level. For if Medieval thought took the sacred out of the common, then the Modern took the sacred out of the world... (see above Illus) i.e. with no sense of “calling” or “art” in the world, our “work” is transformed into a “career” as related to making a living! And the noble work of “art” is now relegated to “leisure” as in our spare time ordinarily.

In short: Modernity took the “art” out of “work” and took the “work” out of family, church and even state!

5. Our Dilemma: Careerism and the Time Clock Mentality

Questions:

How many of you believe that your work really matters to God?

How many of you see a divine purpose for your work?

How many of you can say that you are satisfied in your work?

Polls?

How many of you see life as divided into “work” and “play”... (perhaps for some Mon-Fri. and “Friday night thru Sunday)

And does Faith Matter to our jobs— Not merely in so far as I can be a witness while I do my job—but does faith really matter as related to the work itself that I do at my job?

Surely one of the most profound ways that faith matters is that it has the capacity to take what is ordinary and mundane, and fill it with the romance of a noble dream.

And Isn't it true, that we are a people, as G.K.Chesterton has observed, that need to rediscover a kind of “ practical romance” in life itself. He further described this as “the combination of something that is strange with something that is secure. We need so to view the world as to combine an idea of wonder with an idea of welcome. ”

"But how is this so?" you might ask. "Mine is a world of hectic schedules, of the rat race pace of meetings and deadlines, union strikes and job transfers, carpools and diapers, bosses and... and how could all this work matter to God? How does faith relate to all of this and how can I find a practical romance in these things?

LOOK, you say, work is something you do to make a living... so when I toast, I raise my glass to Fridays... and the bumper sticker on my car reads something like

Thank God It's Friday or,

I'm not lazy-- I just don't like to work, or

I'd rather be fishing (and for the more refined types-- I'd rather be sailing) or

Another day, another dollar, another 13cents income tax (or whatever it is these days... etc. etc."

“Romance” you say—well that’s something I seek “after hours” work hours that is!

Indeed, these are the “symptoms” of the demise of a genuinely “Christian” work ethic. Said differently, these are the “symptoms” of the demise of the “art” in “work” as then also related to the demise of a sense of calling in the workplace of our lives. For lack of a better word, we will call it “careerism.”

Careerism:

So what do we have? (notice the illustration)

1. The Art is taken out of work—(at best reduced to leisure)

I.e. If what distinguishes the artist from the career women who merely works to live is her desire to see the fulfillment of the work for its own sake...

... as noted by Sayers, “that the artist attitude to work is quite alien to that of the common business man is a fact generally recognized and universally exploited... an artist lives by a set of values which are not purely economic: he beholds the end of the work... as an artist he retains so much of the image of God that he is in love with his creation for its own sake.... The trade-union is conceived in terms of employment and not in terms of the end of the work, so that the artist’s adherence to it can never be whole hearted....

3. The “work” is taken out of all three spheres of life:

We loose the "work" dynamic at home and at church-- with the tragic result that church and family no longer demand productive ambition!

a. We take the sweat out of discipleship and worship...

b. We take the ambition out of raising our children and building a family.

(notice how this would impact a Victorian America-- i.e just as house work and religion have been relegated to "frivolous", so then women who were in the home faced a crisis in identity.

In so far as market values and commercial utilitarianism has swallowed up religion and family-- even making them to serve utilitarianism-- utility itself is perverted so as to serve the self and personal ambition.. -- this of course will eventually lead to disillusionment in the work place!

How many job changes have been motivated by this simple reality?

We then have what is a kind of irony if viewed from the standpoint of history:

What Medieval Church did, so does the time clock:

Indeed the culture of professionalism has been so basic to middle-class habits of thought and action that a majority of twentieth-century Americans has taken for granted that all intelligent modern persons organize their behavior, both public and private, according to it.... By the middle of the nineteenth century, social perceptions about the uses of space, time and words had begun to change dramatically. These perceptions were not wholly mental or imaginary, but corresponded to the reality of how people saw themselves-- a reality that affected human lives. The middle class in America appeared as a new class with an unprecedented enthusiasm for its own forms of self-expression, peculiar ideas, and devices for self-discipline. (Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism*)

Today-- Careerism has done the same, not by the church swallowing up the public and family, but by the public swallowing up the church and family-- but in either, by making only the church sacred/ambitious, or public a kind of secular/sacred/ambitious-- we have more or less the same dilemma in that public life and work is without its practical romance and noble dream!

By "careerism" Leland Ryken defines it as "where one's work is viewed so as to establish one's self-worth and becomes the controlling center of one's life and is the last in a series of priorities to go." It is the person whose identity is not even in what he/she does, but what he/she gets for what he/she does!

At root, careerism is an attitude, a life orientation in which a person views career as the primary and most important aim of life... although workaholism is often discussed as though it were a disease, most workaholics are satisfied and content with their lives, though their lifestyle produce problems for people who have to live with them.

Leland Ryken

Douglas LaBier, has described Careerism as a kind of "modern madness."

"The price of successful careerism is feeling trapped and caught as they navigate upward through layers of hierarchy, fueled by visions of recognition, power, and position that lie just ahead. But smack in the midst of their career steeplechase they find themselves semiconscious of criticisms about themselves and what they do in their work. Particularly values which disturb them and leave them feeling uncertain and anxious about what to do that would help." Douglas LaBier, Modern Madness

What all this presents is a picture about how we think of life-- as if life can be divided into "work" and "play"-- I will call it, "the time clock" approach to life—where the "art" is abstracted from work and where the work is abstracted from 3 spheres of family, church and state... Under the "time clock" schema, play is considered "off time" whereas work is considered "on time." Depending on what you place into the category of work, then everything else is "free time" or "off time " so as to maybe exclude the idea of moral "duty" and perhaps even moral evaluation. Before I suggest another, and I believe, more healthy and Biblical schema for understanding life perhaps we should first think about what the time clock mentality might look like in everyday life.

Take for instance the home-- one or both marriage partner(s) goes "off to work" so that when he or she comes home-- he/she is "off from work so as to begin his/her "off" time. Such a dichotomy could result in a husband, for instance, who feels no real obligation to submit his time at home with his wife or children under the scrutiny of any serious moral obligation or duty. The home, and subsequently his interaction with his wife and kids is considered "free from obligations" since he is in effect "off." It's the ole "when I'm home, its time to wind down" kind of attitude. Within this schema, home is merely a "safe haven" so as to enable the husband to go back into the world of work-- where the meaningful stuff really happens. Should we be able to "rest" when we are home-- sure! But it is an altogether different mentality when we consider that the primary purpose of the home is to help recuperate Dad so that he can go back to work the next day and do the really important stuff.

Now it is true that in a modern economy, money making kinds of work is often outside of the home-- but notice how the responsibilities of husband and father have been reduced by the above sceneio to merely putting money in a family pot. My intention here is not necessarily to second guess the motivations of those men living within this mentality. But it does raise the question as to whether or not this schema is even healthy, much less a Biblical schema. What for instances does this mentality do to a child who both wants and needs a father-- how involved would this father be in child discipline? How responsible would this husband be in caring for and loving his wife? In other words, is there "work" to be done by this father in the home-- work in relation to chores, but more significantly, relationships?

Meanwhile, the other spouse, perhaps the wife-- finds herself living in a world where "home" is treated as play by her spouse-- but is of course running her ragged as it is in reality a place of hard work, especially if her husband tunes out once he's home. How does the wife relate to her role--is it important? In summary, how does the "time clock" mentality remake the home itself? Does the dichotomy of "work and play" really work here? And more importantly, does it even resemble the Biblical picture of a Christian home? This simply demonstrates that depending on what we actually place into the "work" and "play" box, the time clock mentality can radically impact our way of life-- perhaps with many tragic results. With respect to the home—the “art” is out of “home-making” even as the work is out of the home!

In relation to the church the "time clock" mentality corresponds to a secular/sacred dichotomy-- and notice what happens to Sundays. In that Sunday is "off time" in the time clock week, so too church related activities are perhaps inadvertantly put into the "play box." Tragically then, the very concept of sacred is redefined so as to correspond with "off" or "leisure" time. How might this redefine our relation to the church and worship? Is there meaningful "work" to do at church? Moreover, just as "work" is now "secular" and unrelated to Christian discipleship, so too "sacred" becomes "play" and Christian discipleship and training is something we merely play at-- as if it would be a sin to actually break a sweat learning about God. This version of the time clock

schema is noticable in how we may approach worship and Christian training. For most people caught in the time clock mentality who actually do go to church, the last thing that would be expected would be an experience that may demand work there. When applied to worship-- we look for entertainment so as to remain passive. When applied to Christian education-- our mental engines are supposed to run on idle, but hardly in high gear so as to apply diligence of study to the task of learning and understanding the Bible. Moreover, under the time clock mentality, thinking Christianly is merely to think about trivial things or things that happen on Sunday rather than about the whole of life.

In its more pernicious form, the time clock mentality might relegate religion to "a woman thing" given a social context where "men go to work and women stay at home." On the other hand, church attendance may be viewed as one of many options for what to do in ones leisure time-- the key element is that it is discretionary time without obligations and moral duties. In this sense, the church fits into my schedule under the same conditions as say the option of playing tennis with some friends. Which ever option will be most satisfying under our expectations for leisure and play is the logical choice given the time clock mentality. Or perhaps one step up-- church attendance is somehow considered to be important, but again as an "off time" with value only in so far as it provides needed motivation and restoration so as to go "back to work" on Monday. One can readily see how such a mentality would impact worship? For instance, worship itself may be viewed as valuable if it has a positive impact on my production at work-- either by providing me with helpful insights into being more successful, or perhaps being sufficiently therapeutic so as to heal the wounds gained from work so that I may go back to work. Again, all this out of the mentality that play has intrinsic value only in so far as it is "non-work"-- either for amusement or getting ready for work.

When the "time clock" mentality is applied to our vocations (by vocation, I mean here our "careers" which are in the "public service sector") "work" is both tragically demeaned of its sacred value and relevance while at the same time exalted in its secularness. In other words, the work/play-secular/sacred dichotomy associates the sacred (religious) with the private worlds of family and church, but considers the sacred to be irrelevant to the realities of public life outside of the home and church. As noted above, such a schema reduces religion to merely an enabler of the secular values of public life.

In summary, the "time clock" mentality impacts our homes, churches and careers. Perhaps the greatest and most tragic observation about all this is what the time clock mentality does to our quality of life itself. In effect, we see that work is robbed of play, and play is robbed of work. Stated differently, it reduces Monday through Friday to mere "obligation and duty" while at the same time reducing Saturday and Sunday to meaningless trivial pursuits. Given the dichotomy between work and play, leisure becomes an escape from work rather than itself something we do that as meaningful

and for the glory of God! On the other hand, work is merely utilitarian-- something we must do to survive and all the while done with an eye toward the weekend. This can be identified in many ways. When for instance you find yourself actually having fun "at work"-- you are tempted to feel guilty and say something like, "I can't believe I'm getting paid for this." Why? Because your "time clock" mentality tells you that you can't confuse work with play. On the other hand, you find yourself actually expending energy and personal resources while "at play" and you say something like-- "I need a vacation from my vacation." Why? Because the time clock mentality says that your "off" time is supposed to be "dead time" from a production point of view. All in all, the time clock mentality has defined "work" as a time for creational activity and "play" as a time for passivity, lack of deliberation and triviality. And the whole "time clock" confusion runs full circle when play actually becomes work-- when leisure itself becomes the source of our identity. It is the "golfaholic, jogaholic, television junkie, electronic surfer, rock addict and weekend retreat hound that turns the time clock mentality on its head-- where play is work and work is play-- but the dichotomy remains!.

Results :A failure to integrate Faith and Work

A. The Christian Mind

The modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion-- its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal, the view which relates all human problems-- social, political, cultural-- to the doctrinal foundations of the Christian Faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God's supremacy and earth's transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell.

Harry Blamires, The Christian Mind

The reason we have nothing to say to the contemporary situation is that we have not been thinking about the contemporary situation. We stopped thinking about these things years ago. We stopped thinking Christianly outside the scope of personal morals and personal spirituality. We got into the habit of stepping out of our Christian garments whenever we stepped mentally into the field of social and political life. Because the subject was social or political, we left all our well-trying and well-grounded Christian concepts behind us, and adopted the vocabulary of secularism. We put aside talk of vocation, or God's providence, or man's spiritual destiny and instead chattered with the

rest about... We have too readily equated getting into the world with getting out of our theology. The result has been that we have stopped thinking Christianly.

Harry Blamires

B. Where's the Church:

In nothing has the Church so lost her hold on reality as in her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world's intelligent workers have become irreligious or at least uninterested in religion."

Dorothy Sayers

The number of pages theologians have devoted to the questions of transubstantiation-- which does or does not take place on Sunday-- for instance, would I suspect, far exceed the number of pages devoted to work that fills our lives Monday through Saturday.

Mirslov Volfe

Your work matters to God...

When life is a practical romance...

When life is sacred, even in the mundane...

When life is recreational, even in its work!

How then can this happen—

1) We must locate our work in the sacred story of redemption!

Let us in Heaven's name drag out the Divine drama from under the dreadful accumulation of slipshod thinking and trashy sentiment heaped upon it, and set it on an open stage to startle the world into some sort of vigorous reaction. IF the pious are the

first to be shocked, so much the worse for the pious—others will enter the Kingdom of Heaven before them. IF all men are offended because of Christ, let them be offended; but where is the sense of their being offended at something that is not Christ and is nothing like Him. WE do Him singularly little honor by watering down his personality till it could not offend a fly. Surely it is not the business of the church to adapt Christ to men, but to adapt men to Christ. D. Sayers Creed or Chaos...

2)We must avoid any utopian delusions and false expectations that is based on human ingenuity... we will want to repent of the Babel episode where human idolatry was humiliated, even as we put our faith on the Pentecost episode where Babel is begun to be reversed by the power of God. (thus the sermon tomorrow will conclude...)

E. The End of Work and the Post-Modern Search

The End of Work Illustrated: Science

(i.e. the end of science/work/rationalism—but not sure how to regain the romance... time-clock options no good...)

Was it possible that science could come to an end? Could scientists, in effect, learn everything there is to know? Could they banish mystery from the universe? It was hard for me to imagine a world without science, and not only because my job depended on it. I had become a science writer in large part because I considered science--pure science, the search for knowledge for its own sake--to be the noblest and most meaningful of human endeavors. We are here to figure out why we are here. What other purpose is worthy of us?

Before my meeting with Penrose, I had taken it for granted that science was open-ended, even infinite. The possibility that scientists might one day find a truth so potent that it would obviate all further investigations had struck me as wishful thinking at best, or as the kind of hyperbole required to sell science (and science books) to the masses. The earnestness, and ambivalence, with which Penrose contemplated the prospect of a final theory forced me to reassess my own views of science's future. Over time, I became obsessed with the issue. What are the limits of science, if any? Is science infinite, or is it as mortal as we are? If the latter, is the end in sight? Is it upon us?

John Horgan, *The End of Science : Facing the Limits of Knowledge in the Twilight of the Scientific Age*

Ingenuity: "THOUGHTS ABOUT THE END OF SCIENCE"

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Stories are told about 19th-century legislation meant to close the Patent Office because everything had been invented. There was talk of that kind, but no serious legislation. Now people have been talking about the end of science. What such talk really reflects is a change in the character of invention or science.

Think about the nature of matter: 2400 years ago, Greek philosophers argued that question. Is matter made of four continuous essences, earth, air, fire, and water? Or is it made of essential particles that might be called atoms? Science today is rooted in the idea that matter is made of atoms. Yet, as we break atoms into components on the scale of quantum indeterminacy, we seem to be facing Aristotelian essences once more. The nature of matter is as troubling today as it was to the early Greeks.

The difference is that we've seen much more of the process by which the sciences cajole nature into releasing her secrets than Aristotle ever did. As a result, we also face much longer laundry lists of unanswered questions than he did.

We accept a 15 or so billion-year-old universe that began with a big bang, but who can say whether time flowed before that moment?.. We have many physical laws, but we

realize those laws are not absolute truth. They are human constructs meant to make nature predictable. Meanwhile, mathematics has shown us that the only futures we'll ever predict will be trends, not events. Our increasing knowledge seems only to be widening our ignorance.

On the other hand, science now suggests vast arenas of invention. Science and math have given their users so great a capacity for altering human life that change is muted only by our ability to absorb it. What must occur next is not the completion of physics, astronomy, and biology. The method those fields use is already complete. Method is what defines science, and today's scientific method now widens the questions we ask faster than it answers them.

But the technologies that science now makes feasible demand the creation of wholly new sciences. We need a science of the behavior of large interacting systems. We need a science of biological ethics -- a science in which right versus wrong can be optimized and dealt with in the incredibly complex matrix of manipulated life...

C. Art-Work in Re-creation

As the overshadowing Glory was present at the beginning of the first creation, so it was again present at epochal beginnings in the history of re-creation in both old and new covenants – at Sinai, at the incarnation, baptism, and transfiguration of the Son of God, and at Pentecost. And because the Spirit's presence in redemptive re-creation is once more both as power and as paradigm, the consummation of redemptive history witnesses the appearing of the eternal cosmic-human temple of God.

Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue

Creation

New Creation- Noah

New Creation- Exodus

New Creation fortold- Ezekiel

New Creation foretold- John

2. Creations' Salvation (Gen.1-3, 8, 11, Exodus, Ez.37, Acts 2:1-4, Rom.8, Rev. 22
3. The Reversal of Creation's Stammering

Kline: The Trajectory of Spirit in Redemption

Before the first creative fiat is heard in Genesis 1:3, the divine speaker is portrayed in Genesis 1:2 as God the Spirit overshadowing the deep-and-darkness. This same form of divine presence is present over the waters during Noah's redemption, and again, it is identified with the Glory-cloud presence at the Exodus and related to the ratification of the old covenant at Sinai, when the cloud-pillar form of theophany represented God standing as witness to his covenant with Israel. Once again at the ratification of the new covenant at Pentecost, it was God the Spirit, appearing in phenomena that are to be seen as a New Testament version of the Glory-fire, who provided the confirmatory divine testimony. And the book of Revelation pictures the consummation of creation's history as involving a reappearance of the Spirit of Genesis 1:2, now enveloping the incarnate Son, his hand lifted in oath to heaven as he swears by himself, the Creator, that the mystery of God was to be completed (Rev 10:1,5-7; cf. Rev 1:15; 2:18).

II. Art-Work Applied

A. When Work IS Art

Rom. 8—recreation

Rom. 8:20

for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Roman 8:21 indicated that creation itself is waiting to be restored, not annihilated so as to have a "new" (as in other) creation..

Our recreation work is then to participate in the renewal/restoration of creation, always acknowledging that the ultimate restoration is something that will happen after the pattern of a miraculous resurrection!

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;

and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind"

Isaiah 65:17

1. The Created heavens and earth called "good" in and of themselves according to scripture:

Genesis 1:12, 31-- And God saw that it was good...

1 Timothy 4:4-- For everything created of god is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving...

Note: Genesis 3:17, the curse was upon the earth, not the earth itself that is the curse, but that sin has corrupted what is inherently created good-- very much like our now being corrupted by original sin... The promise of 3:15 was to restore what sin had corrupted.

2. "Land" in Redemptive history

Genesis 17:8, Promise to Abraham regarding land

Hebrews 11:9-10, 13-16, Abraham's "promised land" is the "better country, that is, a heavenly one..."

Hebrew 4 , Earthy "Canaan" was a type of the eternal Sabbath rest which still remains.

Galations 3:29, Christ's people are heirs according to the promise given to Abraham

3. Prophetic Expectations-- Old and New

Isaiah 65:17 (above, see also 66:22-23)

Revelation 21:1, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

Here, the word is "new" as in kainos, not "new as in (neos)-- note the difference

neos

1. New, vs. aged old (wine)

2. young

3. novice

Here, in the sense of what a thing actually is?

kainon

1. "unused" (as in wineskins)

2. as in previously not present (unknown, strange, remarkable). (Mk.1:27, Ac17:19, Rv.2:17)

3. In contrast to something old or obsolete as in "revived." (Eph.2:15, 1 Cor.11:25, 2 Cor.3:6)

Here, in the sense of what manner people relate to it?

Examples:

Matt. 9:17 Neither is new (ne~~o~~-on) wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new (ne~~o~~-on) wine is put into fresh (kainou/β or unused) wineskins, and so both are preserved.”

John 19:41 Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new (unused) tomb in which no one had ever been laid.

Note also from John 13:31-35, John's point was not to give a literally "new" commandment since it was in fact not "new" in this sense of the word.

Lev. 19:18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Lev. 19:34 The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Rather "new" is used as to mean "revived" in its use and importance. Something unused is "new" although it could have been around for a long time.

Therefore, a "revived" earth and a "revived" heaven is John's point in Rev. 21:1

See also:

Roman 4:13,

Canaan in Genesis has become the "world" in Romans.

Acts 3:17-21, "the restoration of all things"

Ephesians 1:13-14

What constitutes the "inheritance"?

Is it merely a new heaven, or also a new earth with all its treasures, beauties and glories?

Revelations 14:13,

What is done on earth will be remembered in life to come indicating a continuity.

Dorothy Sayers, "Why Work" in *Creed or Chaos? Why Christians Must choose Either Dogma or Disaster*

Thorough going revolution in our whole attitude to work.. not as a necessary drudgery to be undergone for the purpose of making money, but as a way of life in which the nature of man should find its proper exercise and delight and so fulfill itself to the glory of God. That it should, in fact, be thought of as a creative activity undertaken for the love of the work itself; and that man, made in God's image, should make things as God makes them, for the sake of doing well a thing that is worth doing.

Unless we do change our whole way of thought about work, I do not think we shall ever escape from the appalling squirrel cage... in which we landed ourselves by acquiescing in a social system based upon envy and avarice.

The habit of thinking about work as something one does to make money is so ingrained in us that we can scarcely imagine what a revolutionary change it would be to think about it instead in terms of the work done. To do so would mean taking the attitude of mind we reserve for our unpaid work—our hobbies, our leisure interests, the things we make and do for pleasure—and making that the standard of all our judgments about things and people. We should ask of an enterprise not "will it pay?" but "is it good?"; of a man, not "what does he make?" but "what is his work worth?"; of goods, not "can we induce people to buy them?" but "are they useful things well made?" or employment not

“how much a week?” but “will it exercise my faculties to the utmost?”... if a beer company stock holder not “what are the profits” but “what goes into the beer?”

And she notes how even the “churches are trying to fit a Christian standard of economics to a wholly false and pagan understanding of work.”

In short: “Art-Work” is

...not a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do... it is the full expression of the worker’s faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental and bodily satisfaction and the medium in which he offers himself to God. ... satisfaction is found in the fulfillment of his own nature and in contemplation of the perfection of his work... every man should do the work for which he is fitted by nature... we (would) no longer think of work as something that we hastened to get through in order to enjoy our leisure, we would look on our leisure as the period of changed rhythm that refreshed us for the delightful purpose of getting on with our work... the worker would demand that the stuff he helped to turnout should be good stuff... he would no longer be content to take the cash and let the credit go...

The Callings:

1. The Call to Salvation, Godliness and Discipleship

1 Tim.6:12, Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witness.

Public profession into church is a profession of being called to "he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of Lords." (vs. 15)

1 Cor. 1:9, God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship (communion, partnership, participation with) of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Thess. 2:13, 14, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. For this purpose he called you

through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ...

1 Peter 2:9 You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light...(12), Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles so that though they malign you as evil doers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

Implication:

Whatever we do concerning the 2 spheres of work/vocation-- we would do them for the glory of God and in keeping with our Christian discipleship. This is true both with respect to how we do each particular calling and how we relate each of the three callings to each other.

2. Vocational/Occupational Calling: (3 spheres)

1 Cor. 7:17, 20, Let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him... Every one should remain in the state in which he was called."

(Clearly referring to a person's worldly position or place in culture of which Paul's advice is to remain in it after Christian conversion.)

Heb.5:4, And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

Gal. 1:15, But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace... so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles.

For the Christian, he/she is called while in a calling

I.e. The call to Christ is within an already existing call by God's providence in your life to some life occupation, etc.

It is not an accident that a person is where he/she is and like he/she is when he is converted, and provided that he is not engaged in a course of life which is intrinsically sinful, she is to regard that situation as God's calling (occupational) to him.

The whole of a person's life is a calling from God!

Therefore, the call to the gospel is not antithetical to your calling in some life occupation.

Implication:

Discerning your Callings:

Illus:

If life should look like this: The Art of Work leading to the "romance" in work distributed over three spheres rather than seeking fulfillment in only one sphere.

Art-Work

B. Art-Work Integration (3 Spheres)

The modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion-- its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal, the view which relates all human problems-- social, political, cultural-- to the doctrinal foundations of the Christian Faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God's supremacy and earth's transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell.

Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind*

Rediscovering "art-work) in all three spheres:

- a. The Art in each
- b. The Work in each

1. The Art-Work in Family

Our natural reason.. .takes a look at married life.. and says, alas must I rock the baby, wash its diapers, made its bed... labor at my trade?... What then does the Christian faith say to this? It opens its eyes, looks upon all these insignificant, distasteful, and despised duties in the Spirit, and is aware that they are all adorned with divine approval as with the costliest gold and jewels... When a father goes ahead and washes diapers... God, with all his angels and creatures is smiling-- not because that father is washing diapers, but because he is doing so in Christian faith."

Martin Luther, The Estate of Marriage

a. Marriage as a Sacred Drama

Epithalamion, Song of Soloman, Eph. 5, Rev.

Marriage-- to be sure, it IS a joyful event that will rightly spill over into a celebration of feasting, dancing and all other expressions of other delightful merriment. But why? Why do we rightly celebrate this as a joyful event?

It is joyful if but for the simple fact that we have come to participate in the love that The husband and Nicole have for one another even as they commit themselves to one another as loving sweethearts and loyal friends throughout the duration of this life. There is much by way of common grace represented in marriage as to celebrate the apex of friendship, partnership and romance. And so we will want to celebrate the birth of this marriage.

Furthermore, we rejoice because something very profound is happening today as related to the well-being of our society at large. Today, we will witness the birth of that

“Mother of all institutions.” For it is within the family that both law and grace are first nurtured and formed from whence come both the church and the state. We can rightly say that so goes the family, so goes the church and state and so goes civilization itself! As derived from our experience in families, our sense of loyalty will be stronger or weaker, our sense of relating to one another will be more or less gracious, our level of civility and tolerance for one another will be more or less inclusive. And so what happens here today will impact scores of other people as well-- people that are alive today, but also those who await generation and multiple other generations. And so we celebrate the birth of a marriage as the formation of the mother of all institutions.

But more especially, as through the eyes of faith, our merriment is in the reflection of this marriage as derived from yet a greater and more sacred marriage even. As specially instituted by God, regulated by God's commandments, and blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ himself at the wedding in Canaan where he worked his first miracle, the ultimate glory of marriage is that it functions as a living "type" on earth of that blessed relationship between Christ and His Church that is based solely upon an unconditional love.

And so we will hear read again in this ceremony a reading from the book of Revelations:

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; and to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure"-- for the fine linen is the righteous judgments on her behalf, And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

And so it is right and good that marriage is initiated within the context of Christian worship acknowledging that God is the ultimate actor here in the marriage of The husband and The wife, even as he is the ultimate witness of their vows. And concerning the taking of vows, we are reminded in Eccl. that

When you make a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you vow. 5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not fulfill it. Eccl. 5:4

“Glorious”

Glorious! In a word, it pretty much sums up the lesson just read for us.

husband, when you saw your wife walk down that aisle-- what was it like? Wasn't it glorious-- well the glory of your marriage, even this service itself, is meant ultimate to direct us to yet a greater even more glorious moment--when Christ will welcome his bride, the church, to his heavenly marriage banquet

We should briefly ponder this word as related to our marriages after the pattern of Christ's glorious marriage to the Church.

By Samuel Stone (1866)

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her lord

She is his new creation by water and the word

From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride, with his own blood he bought her and for her life he died.

Is. 62:5

For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

John 3:29

He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled.

Rev. 21:2

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And to be sure, marriage, as type of the eternal and heavenly marriage of Christ with the Church, is a most glorious of institutions, and yet as a word, it is often forgotten today.. We all know that “bad news”—over half of the marriages in the US fail. And perhaps even more unsettling, this is no less true for those who profess to be active followers of Christ through supernatural conversion—even as measured by those who get divorced after their Christian conversion!

We so desperately need to rediscover the word “glorious” as applied to marriage—let me briefly highlight three glorious things about marriage together with how they relate to you in practical terms as derived from your text.

1. Marriage is Glorious because it is God’s doing ultimately.

Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; 8 to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure”-- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The tension is clearly exposed, even while the bride gets herself ready, the marriage of the Lamb is ultimately God’s doing!

We see this also in Genesis where it is God who initiated the idea for marriage, even as it was God who specifically crafted Eve for Adam as a helper suitable for one another.

" Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.”

Therefore, just as our confidence for salvation ultimately rests upon God his work, his providence, his intervention—so too our ultimate confidence in marriage is that

1. Marriage was not a human invention, but God’s such that we can expect God’s help to sustain marriage.

2. Even as we are individually chosen for Christ, so, while it might seem that you choose each other, your being at this place and at this time is ultimately God's doing!!!

Marriage is glorious indeed since it is God's doing! And oh, how this is so very relevant...

EVERY MARRIAGE COUPLE IN THIS ROOM KNOWS SOMETHING OF WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT.

For Even the great theologian/pastor, reknown for his happy marriage, said it this way:

Martin Luther

The annoyances of married life are (almost) unbearable to men. Accordingly, Socrates is reported to have given a good answer to a man who was contemplating marriage: "Whatever you may do, he said, you'll regret it."

Look at each other-- What do you see? Perfectly thin beautiful people right? Lost in a flame of passion perhaps? Guess what, the person now standing beside you at this altar is different than what you will see tomorrow morning when you wake up. And let this be a reminder that he/she is different than the person you will see beside you in 10, 20 years. People change, and you might be tempted to say-- is this the person I committed my life to?

--There will be, well, shall we say, many mild annoyances of personality that you have no doubt already learned about each other, but they will get worse--and add to this the many new ones that you will discover-- and you are bound to wonder sometimes if you made a good decision--

-- Oh, and of course, you will at times hear whispers in your inner ear-- "I should have listened to this or that doubt that I had before I got married, Look at us, we are so different, who where we kidding

-- And then, there will be the many unfulfilled expectations that you will discover say around your 40's , and with half your life before you will be tempted to start all over--,

My point is this-- The world says: "Find the right person." This is so foolish, because the right person might change, and you might change. How often we hear people foolishly say: "He's not the man I married..." Of course he is not.

Do you see how your this first observation is relevant?

Marriage was God's idea! Not yours, not mine, not your parents or even some great poet or wise man long ago, it was God's idea... which means this-- you can count on God to provide you whatever means necessary to preserve it even though you and your life circumstances will change!

But more even than this, even at a personal level, Whatever your differences—your confidence is that they were chosen by God -- however you might change, and you will change, and however your outward circumstances change, and they will change, **YOU CAN COUNT ON THE FACT THAT ALL OF THIS WAS ACCORDING TO GOD'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE IN CHOISING YOU FOR EACH OTHER**, and what God has chosen, we are confident that HE will provide the means of grace so as to bring it to pass for His glory.

And so, as Marriage is glorious because it is God's own doing, Let your confidence in marriage depend less on what you feel and see at times, and more on what you trust and believe about God.

Before I move on to your second passage, I would like to mention a wonderful irony in all this.

For those who take God seriously are able then by God's grace to take themselves less seriously. And I suspect that this is married couple often need to hear more than anything else--

In other words, with our confidence in God and not in our selves ultimately, we of all people ought to have a sense of humor in our marriages.

I'm reminded of the words of an ancient pastor who once said

Eccl. 3:4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Standing here amidst the ambiance of your love and affection, the romance of beautiful dress and stately attire, you can hardly imagine that you will need to work at developing a sense of humor. But innocent mannerisms now, (how you sit, how you sleep, what you do with your eyebrows and how you eat... all innocent) might very well become opportunities for serious discussion once you are married.

Therefore, if you make God your ultimate confidence, you can make it your habit to laugh-- to have fun.

I would even go so far as to make sure you plan to have fun-- take a vacation, go on dates, etc.

Take yourselves less seriously because you take God more seriously!

2. Marriage is Glorious because our roles in marriage are to be as a "role-play" of the relation of Christ to the Church.

The Husband/Wife pattern of relating to one another after the pattern of Christ in relation to the church

We see in the coordination of husband and wife how two persons are made into one family by a perfect and harmonious way of relating one to another after the pattern of Christ to the church...

Again, your passage makes it clear that in so far as roles are concerned, Christ is the groom, the church is the bride... We discover this also in Eph. 5.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church...

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

As we see, these roles have less to do with abilities than in an ultimate redemptive plan of God that is being revealed as through marriage itself-- this means that God will bless your marriage to the degree that you respect your given role in marriage as husband and wife:

-- The Christian wife recognizes then that it is her spiritual even religious duty, to respect that the power given to the man IS a delegated power from God. and the Christian woman recognized that she glorifies Christ by obedience to her husband. She recognized that their family unity is "contingent" upon her role as then s for the glory of Christ ultimately not her personal glory and such then recognizes that God has delegated power to the man for his own glory as well." There is something bigger going on in the family than mere human relations, this is the mystery about which Paul speaks as related to Christ and his church...

-- The Christian husband recognized that his power is delagated (vs. absolute) power as from God and directed by God for a very limited and specific application, as for the purpose of loving his wife as Christ loved the church. And we are here told exactly what "Unto the Lord" means by God, as then a power directed for the women, never against her, in sacrificial love for her...,i.e. it is never rightly exercised power when it is directed

for his own glory, his own convenience, his own ego, his own career in so far as his career is more about his own security and significance rather than for the service of his wife and family and ultimate a his service to God..

husband, you will need to love your wife in the way Christ loves the Church-- and the operative word is sacrificial-- giving yourself to her in service for her best interests and the interests of your family. It is you who ought to initiate ministry to your wife. It is you who ought to put your needs and interests as second to hers. There will be important events, perhaps a career opportunity that you had hoped for-- but you will first want to know if it takes into account what is for the best interest of your wife. Moreover, if you are not to be "embittered" against your wife, this means you should seek to be yielding in your dealings with her-- and George, you will sacrificially love your wife not because she earns that love, but because it is your service to God to love your wife.

Wife, you will want to respect, honor and trust The husband as you seek to submit to him as unto the Lord. This might mean co-ordinating your life plans so as to fit the vocational calling of your home. It may mean that even as you express your will and opinion on matters, that there will be a time to trust God to work through The husband and show deference for his opinions. This will take courage and faith at times as you will need to look first to God in your ultimate trust and hope, and then trusting that God can and will work through your husband so as to do what is best for you as well. Ultimately you will do this not because The husband deserves your respect and submission, but because it gives glory to God. You will be encouraged to remember that even as Christ was one and co-equal with the Father within the Trinity, that he also could subordinate his plans to the fathers without losing his own identity and glory...

3. Finally, Marriage is Glorious because It is meant to reflect God's grace in what is too much as graceless world.

Perhaps the greatest threat to a happy marriage is unresolved guilt...

i.e. When people feel unforgiven, they act it out in all sorts of socially destructive ways... Perhaps defensiveness, avoidance, bitterness, wrath, blameshifting, etc. Clearly, of all the threats to marriage, it is unresolved guilt...

How ironic! For if marriage is to be anything at all, it's glory is to reflect the same kind of "grace" and "forgiveness" that is the very essence of our relationship with Christ.

vs. 32 right of Eph. 4, we are told to "forgive each other as God in Christ forgave you"

This of course begs the question, "How is it that God in Christ forgave you?"

God did not wait for you to quit sinning-- "we are told that even while we were sinners, Christ died for you"

God didn't wait until you were sorry for your sin even.

Nor did God wait until you had stored up enough "merits" with respect to some good deeds even

Rather, God in Christ forgave us freely, unconditionally as based only upon his will to do so. This is what Christian faith is all about-- putting our hope in God vs. ourselves in order to have God's total acceptance. We merely receive forgiveness as God's wonderful gift and then, out of thankfulness in our hearts, we seek to live a more holy life.

Well then, husband, wife, follow in the pattern of the church in relation to Christ in your forgiveness one to another.

Forgiveness is not conditioned upon your partners repentance or your partners remorse-- you don't wait until your partner is "forgivable"-- rather your passage tells us to forgive SINCE CHRIST FIRST FORGAVE YOU...

Perhaps like no other single characteristic, forgiveness after the pattern of Christ defines the Christian home--

The Christian home ought not be a place for snobs?

NOr should it be a place were we must hide our shame from one another in fear of being rejected

Nor should it be a place were people try to act perfect in fear of not be accepted by one another...

Rather, The Christian home is, is a place where sinful persons face the problems of a sinful world. Yet, they face them together with God and His resources, which are all centered in Christ. Sinners live in the Christian Home, but the sinless Savior lives there too. That is what makes the difference! Jay E. Adams

As one person has said it, Marriage is the union of two good forgivers!

In summary, your passage directs us to a moment in history that awaits all true believers in Christ... a moment more glorious than any that we will every experience on this earth to be sure! And how incredible it is, that such a moment is here so wonderfully foreshadowed, a heavenly, even glorious moment that will transform your marriage if you will let it! Remember, there is something going on here far greater even than yourselves.... Something glorious in so far as it is God's own doing, in order to establish a pattern on earth as it is in heaven after the role-play of husband and wife, all as resting upon unconditional love and acceptance, even as Christ first accepted us!

Let it be said today, even as it is said of that marriage in heaven.

"Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God

the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult

and give him the glory,

b. Parenting as a Sacred Trust

Deut. 6:1 ¶ Now this is the commandment--the statutes and the ordinances--that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, 2 so that you and your children and your children's children, may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you. 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. 6 Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7 Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, 9 and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Parental obligation as one of the primary characteristics of the New Covenant!

Perhaps less familiar, but hugely relevant to our own day is the place that parental obligation is given at the end of the Old covenant revelation as anticipating the new covenant.

Mal. 4:1 See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts. 4 Remember the teaching of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

Brief Commentary:

Malachi in his last chapter, prepares the people for the long silence of God's special revelation.

First, Warning: The coming of a great judgment to all except those who "revere my name..." whereby healing will come instead.

Second, Command: Remember the teachings of God. (Discipleship)

Third: Promise: in due time the Messiah's forerunner, coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, will usher in the solemn, yet glorious day of Christ, by his preparatory ministry.

But notice how the prophet characterized the ministry of the forerunner in anticipation of the Messiah and the New Covenant!

His work was to be prominently a revival of parental faithfulness to disciple their children!

Next recorded message from God would be in Luke 1:17 to Zacharias concerning his son who would be the foretold forerunner.

Luke 1:17 With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Point: The New Covenant was to be characterized by an awakening of the parents hearts to the salvation and discipleship of their children!

This revival of parental obligation, according to Malachi, is necessary to prevent the coming of the Divine Messiah from being a woe, instead of a blessing! Therefore, God's means to Messianic blessing (rather than judgment and curse) was not merely the increase of public and outward means only (religious programming and public worship), but preeminently the turning of parents hearts to the discipleship of children.

Clearly the scripture teaches the essential obligation of parents to disciple their children in the Lord!

In fact, one of the signs given to indicate the wickedness of the last days and its corresponding reception of the curse ushered by the Messiah, is that this relationship of parental obligation was being negated and violated.

2Tim. 3:2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,

What more could possibly be said to prove the obligation upon parents to actively disciple their children in the Lord! The relative responsibilities of the church and home in children discipleship is wonderfully summarized in our Book of Church Order as follows:

28-1. The spiritual nurture, instruction and training of the children of the church are committed by God primarily to their parents. They are responsible to the church for the faithful discharge of their obligations. It is a principal duty of the church to promote true religion in the home. True discipleship involves learning the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit both at home and in the church. Without learning there is no growth and without growth there is no discipline and without discipline there is sin and iniquity (1 Timothy 4:7).

Corresponding Parental Attitude: We are God's agent for the development of our children.

Note: We live in a culture that is largely "anti-authoritarian"-- that doesn't like exercising authority or being under authority.

Here we see that parental authority IS derived from God. We are under obligation, whether we like it or not, to exercise parental authority in the discipleship of our children.

a. Parents are persons under authority, such that our focal point is obedience to God.

Our power is regulated power, not absolute.

Our authority must be exercised in the way which God has told us.

(let us not second guess God's purposes, methods or goals in child discipleship, lest we incur God's judgment)

b. We must make it clear to our children, that we are acting on God's authority and not our own--we have no moral alternative but to do this, it is our duty to God.

(Think about how this will impact the way we interact with our children)

I. HINTS IN PARENTAL METHOD:

A. Distinguish between breaking and training the will

“will”—I mean the faculty which chooses and decides between two courses of action.

A child with a broken will is not so well furnished for the struggle of life as a child with only one arm or one leg or one eye. Such a child has no power of personality or of high achievement in this world.

How to break the will? By bringing the pressure of external force directly upon that will, causing the will to give way under the pressure of that force.

How to train the will? By bringing such influences to bear upon the child that he/she is ready to choose or decide in favor of the right course of action

We should guard their privilege of personal choice! (of course, developmentally we will apply different kinds of influences that are developmentally sensitive—i.e. perhaps spanking a young ages who learn by physical stimulus, etc.)

Punishment (as one of several means of training)- is reserved for willful disobedience whereas correction (albeit physically or verbally) is reserved for mis-applied will.

To training the will is NOT then to permit the child's natural will to run his/her life—rather it is to reinforce that “will” that is Christian and/or wise!

Every child will dislike what is sometimes right or best.

Remember—their inward tension with sin is always needing to be checked by the more mature (which is to say disciplined against sinful impulses) will in the adult parent.

Point then is that even while we train a child- we honor a child's individuality!

- a. Allow a child to express and follow their interests
- b. Be willing to listen to the child—given his/her time to express himself without helping them say it
- c. Respect a child's “space” (albeit a old suitcase to collect things in, their “room”—albeit well kept but, their dress code, etc.
- d. Willingness to learn from a child—perhaps even about things that seem insignificant to you...
- f. Training a Child as a Questioner—a child has not been called “an animated interrogation point” for no reason... and the parental temptation is to suppress this for all sorts of reasons (inconvenience mostly)

Remember—questions are the expression of mental appetites following a course of his/her individuality—he who lacks the desire to question lacks both individuality and is in danger of intellectual starvation.

There ought of course to be limitations to a child's privilege of question asking—for every privilege has its limitations—i.e. when a question can be asked, and in what context (obey first then question)

B. Keep a Child's “tank” full— (Resource—Cambell's thoughts on Discipline)

A game of table tennis or a wrestle on the floor has the same impact on behavior as 100 spankings—why?

I believe because acting out is often out of the subconscious sense of being cheated out of parental affection! (although not always)

Physical Play

Time

Conversation

Train up your child with all tenderness, affection and patience even as our Father in Heaven

Rom. 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

1John 3:1 See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Let them see that you love them.

- a. Find common joys that you genuinely can laugh about together.
- b. Get physical
- c. Get to their level

"Love should be the silver thread that runs through all you conduct.

A readiness to take part in childish joys

Patience, sympathy, etc.

Illus: Psychological Tank needs to be filled!

Note: This kind of love demands TIME,

Make the needed sacrifices.

children, like all people, "are easier to draw than to drive."

"Sternness and severity of manner chill them and throw them back. It shuts up their hearts and you will weary yourself to find the door. But let them only see that you have an affectionate feeling towards them,--- that you are really desirous to make them happy, and do them good-- that if you punish them it is intended for their profit,... they will soon be all your own."

C. Don't Spoil Your Child

Distinguish between wants and oughts.

R. C. Ryle, If you would train your children rightly, train them in the way they should go, and not in the way that they would.

-born with decided bias towards evil and therefore certain to choose wrong if left to choose for themselves.

Prov.22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.

Prov.29:15, "A Child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

"Think for him, judge for him, act for him... but for pity's sake, give him not up to his own wayward tastes and inclinations. It must not be his likings and wishes that are consulted."

Example: Don't let him decide on what to eat... what's the difference in other things...

Don't Bless by Spoiling

Prov. 20:21

A possession (inheritance) which is acquired at an early time (first phase, in the beginning) will not be a blessing in the end.

Deny the child wisely!

It is a great pity that the full and free gifts of a loving parent should prove a hindrance to a child's happiness, a barrier to his success in life; that the very abundance of the parents giving should tend to the child's poverty and unhappiness! Yet this state of things is in too many instances an undeniable fact.,

Think about this—0 that the average child of the present generation receives more presents and more indulgences from his parents in any one year than the average child of two generations ago received in all the years of his childhood. A boy today can hardly prize his new bike or sled after being swamped with video games

Reasons why it is not a blessing to be spoiled:

1. Misplaced confidence--

Pss. 49:6 Those who trust in their wealth And boast in the multitude of their riches, (are cursed of God, not blessed)

compared to...

Pss. 9:10 And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.

We learn to trust in our greatest asset--

Illus.

Inner-city-- trust in charm, wit, verbal ingenuity...

Suburb-- My dad will get a goo lawyer...

Idea-- give your child less material things, and they will learn to trust in that which can't be taken away...

Napolean complex-- small people are often amazingly smart, witty and clever-- because back in th school yard they could rely upon brute strength...

etc.

2. Misplaced values--

Opulance proves a corrupter of their hearts, it panders to their lusts, fixing in them habits of vanity, extravagance, and luxury.

Think about the values that over-indulgence tends to thart rather than encourage.

1. thwarts Industry, creativity, hard work
2. Security in every and all circumstance
3. Heavenly mindedness vs. worldly mindedness
4. self-denial and sacrafice...

3. Misplaced endurance--(self-denial)

We deny them indulgence and we give them endurance

We give them indulgence and we deny them the character that will produce greater survice to God...

Heb. 10:34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

It is extremely hard-- but we must carefully allow our children to learn self-denial--

To learn hardship so as to train them for the life of following after Christ...

Christian Life has been compared to a race and a fight by Paul-- to an athletic context...
how then would you prepare the athlete for the race-- or a boxer for his fight-

Would you spare him all pains and sufferings, or would you desire for him the strenuous practice necessary for winning the race, etc.

So too with our children, we ought

1. To Care for them, consider their frames at various periods of development so as to give them health and emotional happiness
2. We must be careful that this doesn't result in not giving them opportunity to learn self-denial!

4. Misplaced humaness

RC Ryle: Train with this thought continually before your eyes-- that the soul of your child is the first thing to be considered

No part of them should be so dear to you as that part which will never die. The world, with all its glory, shall pass away; the hills shall melt; the heavens shall be wrapped up together like a scroll; the sun shall cease to shine. But the spirit which dwells in those little creatures, whom your love so well, shall outlive them all, whether in happiness or misery (humanly speaking) will depend on you.

In every thing you do and say to them, you should think, "how will this affect their souls.

To pet and pamper and indulge your child, as if this world was all he had to look to, and this life the only season for happiness-- to do this is not true love, but cruelty. It is treating him like some beast of the earth, which has but one world to look to, and nothing after death.

Misplaced Home (real inheritance)

This proverb seems to assume the Warning in the Law-- that when you are full with possessions-- you lose the greatest possession of all-- trust in God so as to obey his commandments.

Dt. 8:7-20

vs. 14-- beware... lest when your heart is lifted up and you forget the Lord your God...

vs. 19. Then it shall be if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely die...

By the "possessions" you give, you teach what to seek as their possession---

This language of Inheritance/possession is often applied to our home in heaven-- which is what we should be preparing our children to love and want lest they fall into many temptations

Heb. 11:8 ¶ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

D. Train by Example

Instructions, and advice and commands will profit little, unless they are backed up by the pattern of your own life.

"to give children good instruction and a bad example, is but beckoning to them with the head to show them the way to heaven, while we take them by the hand and lead them in the way to hell."

Fathers and mothers do not forget that children learn more by the eye than they do by the ear. No school will make such deep marks on character as home.

"Who sins before a child sins double"

E. Train them with Biblical discipline:

Be willing to exercise both positive reinforcement and corrective punishment as our Father in Heaven does for us.

Hebr. 12:5 And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons?-- "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

This is the one point of all on which we have most need to be on our guard. It is natural to be tender and affectionate towards our own flesh and blood and it is the excess of this very tenderness and affection which we have to fear. Take heed that it does not make you blind to your children's faults, and deaf to all advice about them or to overlook bad conduct rather than have the pain of inflicting punishment.

Three forms of Discipline:

1. Negative reinforcement: withhold positive reinforcement—be careful that

2. Punishment

3. Positive Reinforcement—look for opportunities to give attention, affection, gifts, etc while they are acting good

2 Principles in determining type of discipline

1. Punishment fit to crime

a. Intensity: Severity to the severity of consequence of crime

b. Categorically: Type of punishment related to type of crime

2. Punishment fit to child.

"As to the best way of punishing a child, no general rule can be laid down. The characters of children are so exceedingly different that what would be a severe punishment to one child, would be no punishment at all to another. I only beg to enter my decided protest against the modern notion that no child ought ever to be whipped. Doubtless some parents use bodily correction far too much, and far too violently; but many others, I fear, use it far too little."

Four Helpful Tips in Discipline:

a. Never, never, never respond to blackmail at any cost!

Leach p.124

1. Look for ways to preempt the occasions for blackmail

2. Be willing to get embarrassed

(remember, your child's soul is worth more than your temporary reputation)

2. Never punishing a child in anger--

A parent ought never to administer punishment to a child while angry. Here is a rule which strictly speaking knows no exception, yet as a matter of fact probably nine-tenths of all the punishing of children that is done by parents in this world is done in anger.

Punishment is a judicial act and needs a level and reasoned mind.

3 Scolding is Never in Order

Many parent who will not spank a child feels free to scold a child... and while spanking is sometimes the right thing to do, scolding is in fact never in order—scolding is an expression of a bad spirit and or loss of temper.

If a child has done wrong, a child needs talking to, but no parent ought to talk to the child while that parent is unable to talk in a controlled tone of voice with carefully measured words.

If a parent is tempted to speak rapidly or to multiply words without stopping to weigh them, or to show an excited state of feeling, the parent's first duty is to gain entire self-control.

In giving commands or in giving censure to a child, the fewer and more calm the spoken words the better.

4. Resist "legislation always in session"

Make rules carefully and intentionally rather than make rules up in response to things.

I.e. Sees coat, From now on... (then comes Dad who feels as strongly about next place as the previous...)

We need rules that are concise, sensible, etc

F. Cherish Family “Table Talk”

Perhaps the household meal is one of the greatest assets to training a child!

The table talk of great men (not to mention Christ) for centuries has been recognized as having a freeness, a simplicity, and a forcefulness not to be found in their words spoken elsewhere.

For just there is a place for all the members of the family to be together and a posture most suited for talking and listening...

However closely and however diversely they may be occupied at other times, when the hour for the house-hold meal has arrived, everything else must be dropped by them all for the one duty of eating and drinking and they must all come together for that common purpose—and in such a state of relaxation—a kindler and gentler conversation will ensue... Now it is that they are freest to speak with one another of matters having a common interest to all rather than to dwell in absorbed thought on the special duties from which they have severally turned away...

It is the most potent factor in the intellectual and moral training of the young.

Keep discussion such as to include everyone—