

A New Heaven and a New Earth

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Introduction of Robert Oakes Byrd

Robert Oakes Byrd was born on January 7, 1916 at Tacoma, Washington. Raised in the Methodist Church, he came into direct touch with Friends through assignment to Friends Civilian Public Service during World War II. After release from Civilian Public service, he was seconded by the American Friends Service Committee to British Friends relief Service for relief and reconstruction work in Berlin, Germany. He was subsequently on the staff of the International Student Program of the American Friends Service Committee. He joined the Religious Society of Friends through 57th Street Monthly Meeting in Chicago in 1950 and was Clerk of Illinois Yearly Meeting from 1958-1960. His graduate degrees are in Political Science and International Relations from the American University, Washington, D.C., Columbia University and the University of Chicago. Robert Oakes Byrd is presently a member of the Executive Committee of the Chicago Regional Office of the American Friends Service Committee and holds the position of Professor of Political Science at North Park College in Chicago.

A New Heaven and a New Earth

Patmos is not an impressive island to look upon. It is shaped a bit like a bent dumb-bell, with northern and southern portions connected by a narrow and curving isthmus. It is small, being but eight miles long and five miles wide at its maximum dimensions, covering no more than a total of thirteen square miles. It is rocky, of volcanic origin, and arid. Seen from the air on a summer day, set in the eastern Mediterranean, it looks rather like a honey-colored kitten curled up on a blue rug - a very blue rug.

Except for a few goats and sheep scrambling among the rocks, a bit of wheat and a few grapes, the main economic asset of Patmos has been a stone quarry. It was this quarry, now exhausted, which has given the island its place in history. The Roman Empire worked the Patmos quarry with prison labor and it was to this prison camp that a man by the name of John was sent for eighteen months when, at the end of the First Century of the Christian Era, he came into conflict with the Roman authorities.

We do not know very much about this man John.¹ His father may have been one Zebedee, but we cannot be sure. John probably came from Ephesus, though we cannot be sure of that either. It is clear, however, that he was active in the little Christian communities on the mainland opposite Patmos in the southwest corner of that peninsula we now call Turkey, but then called Asia Minor. Ephesus was one of these communities. Smyrna, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Thyatira, Pergamum and Sardis were others. We are not certain of the nature of John's conflict with Rome, though it had something to do with the fact that he had confessed adherence to Christianity. As a Christian he had probably refused to worship the Emperor of Rome as God. In any case, he was sent to Patmos, some thirty miles off shore, sentenced to convict labor.

Security on this early-day Alcatraz was apparently not much of a problem. There would have been only the prisoners and their guards on the island. Escape boats could have been easily detected and it would have been next to impossible to swim to the mainland. Thus, the prisoners were given a fair amount of freedom, when they were not hewing out rock in the quarry. John, it would seem, was accustomed to spending much of his free time in the merciful shade of overhanging rocks where he could pray and meditate quietly. One Sabbath morning, legend tells us, he had a vision, rather a series of visions, in his grotto and he heard a voice telling him to write down what he saw and heard, he did; and after his return to the mainland he circulated the account of his visions among the nearby churches.

These were difficult times for the little Christian churches. At first, the Christians, as Jews, had been exempt from worshipping the reigning and deceased emperors of Rome and the goddess Roma, the personification of Rome. The Romans had seen Judaism as a tribal religion which had an ancient custom forbidding the worship of idols or any other gods other than its own. But Christianity, by the end of the First Century, had separated itself from Judaism and by then most Christians were not Jews. Christians therefore lost their exemption from emperor worship. Persecution of Christians in Asia Minor had already resulted in death. Some Christians seemed to be weakening under the combined pressures of state, family, economic necessity and religious orthodoxy. There was every indication that the persecution would become more intense rather than less and it was clear that the churches would need to be buttressed if they were not to give way. It was with this in mind that John dispatched, during a lull in the persecution, the account of his visions, and he prefaced the account with a brief note to each of the churches in Asia Minor, praising them for their strengths and cautioning them sternly on their weaknesses.

To the members of the church at Ephesus he offered praise for steadfastness under pressure. Ephesus was the Imperial City, the center of Roman government in Asia Minor, and the site of the great Temple to Diana,² one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was here that the silversmiths under Demetrius had aroused a mob against Paul and the Christian condemnation of gods of silver, wood and stone.³ Ephesus, too, had become a major center of Christianity, along with Rome and Corinth, following the decline of the church in Palestine. The pressure here was bound to be particularly great. John cautioned the Ephesians that he detected a loss of love in their enthusiasms for the cause, which loss he warned was usually the prelude to a loss of loyalty. The time to stem this loss was in its incipience, not after the evil had come to flower. Thus John advised the church at Ephesus to take the word seriously and to know that, beyond persecution, there is a yet more lovely Eden.

The church at Smyrna was at the center of great commercial prosperity. The Emperor Cult and the Orthodox Jews - the state and traditional religion - combined here to bring particularly grave pressure on the Christians, who were a threat to them both. The Church had borne up well, but the members were reminded that it was Jesus who gave true dignity, not the state. His dignity is theirs, even under cruel persecution, and it is the uniqueness of the message of Jesus that it makes death incidental, not fundamental.

It was at Pergamum, also a center of the Imperial Cult, that martyrdom had already struck the church in Asia. One Antipas had been executed. While the church remained steadfast in belief, John warned sharply that some members of the church at Pergamum had slipped into patterns of living which were, in themselves, very close to the detested idolatry.

Thyatira, like Smyrna, was a town of vigorous commercial life. This was also a center of Apollo worship. John has high praise for this church. They show eagerness in love, insight in faith, and strength in their endurance. The inner life is firm and secure. But John cautioned that their inner life had become so secure that they were beginning to act as though outer deeds did not matter. Some, for instance, were accepting for their own use food which had previously been offered to the local gods.

Sardis was the center of a pagan cult and it was a wealthy and voluptuous town. Moreover, it felt kindly toward the Emperor; it had been saved from the worst effects of a severe earthquake by the emperor's generous and timely dispatch of relief supplies. It was really a very difficult town - wealth, ease, voluptuousness, confidence in the saving grace of the Emperor; not ground in which purity and the spiritual life take root readily. The Christians were seen by the people of Sardis as honest men, diligent, and of generally good, if peculiar repute. This was the trouble. They had a good reputation, but they were suffering from inner decay. They had a good reputation rather than a good character.

Laodicea was a happily located town. It was prosperous and apparently the Christians there shared in this prosperity. The church had felt the softening and corrupting influence of its members' comfortable condition. The comfortable and self-satisfied patterns of the community were too readily accepted. The Christian community here had become spineless, without vitality. They were neither hot nor cold - not very good and not very bad; just unpalatable...they were to be "spewed forth." The Christians in Laodicea were, in fact, miserable wretches, for all of their affluence. How much finer the gold they might have had than the gold which they coveted.

Lastly, Philadelphia was a town some three hundred years old. The principal opposition to the church here came from the Jewish community. The little church had remained steadfast. The Kingdom of Christ is coming and only those who remain steadfast in the testing will be worthy of worshipping God with Jesus.

After these notes to the seven Churches in Asia, John proceeds to reveal the visions he received in Patmos. Continuing to build on the mystic number seven, he describes seven visions, each containing seven episodes.

Whether our Man of Patmos actually experienced these visions or whether he was only using them as a literary device is not important for our purposes here. What is important is that this apocalyptic form was particularly suited to provide a means of communication among a persecuted minority. Meanings would be clear enough to the initiated, and could provide both comfort and instruction for the dark days ahead. The symbolism involved could be expected to be lost to the legalistic minds of Roman and orthodox Jewish persecutors, who would be inclined to take the account literally and ascribe it all to the overly vivid imaginations of a group of erratics. While there is scope for shifting the symbolic content of the images used, and for shifting the symbolism itself from time to time, the Christians of First Century Asia would not find it difficult to see Rome and her seven hills in the symbolism of the figure seven, the defeat of the Beast and the fall of a corrupt and evil Babylon.

John's visions begin with a scene in heaven in which "the slain Lamb of Judah" opens, one by one, the seven seals of a book. As each seal is opened, a divine decision concerning what is to come is revealed. The first four seals reveal four horses - the four horses of the apocalypse: war, civil war, famine and death. The fifth reveals the lament of the martyrs and the information that those martyrs will be released only after they have been joined by martyrs yet to come. The sixth seal reveals cosmic war with the universe in disintegration. The seventh seal unfolds a mighty and dramatic silence in preparation for the trumpet woes that are to follow in the second vision.

The second vision reveals seven trumpeting angels, each heralding the fulfillment of the first vision's decision and prophecy. First there are the four trumpet calls bringing the destructive forces of nature: land, sea, rivers and the moon, sun and stars are destroyed. With the fifth and sixth trumpets God makes use of the forces of evil for his own good purposes, as the evil kill the evil and then are themselves destroyed. The beast arises out of the bottomless pit to devour the prophets, over whose death and bodies the men of earth cravenly rejoice and make merry.

Then there are two visions - one involving the metamorphosis of the earthly persecution of a woman with child into a cosmic conflict between The Beast and the forces of Michael and the angels. The Beast survives the struggle, his wounds are healed and he puts his mark on all his own in order that none may do anything who does not have his mark. Then follows a pause, a change of pace from the fury of the action of the previous visions. The fourth vision involves quietly profound judgments that are comforting, for they foretell the coming rest and bliss of those who suffer. But the pace quickens again, becomes portentous with its solemn pronouncement of the wrath that is to come and reaches a crescendo when an angel, with a loud cry, plunges a sickle into the earth, reaping and throwing into the winepress those who were ripe with evil and marked with the mark of the Beast. Their blood flows down from the winepress.

The fifth vision then follows and one after another the seven bowls of the wrath of God are poured out upon the earth: foul ulcers appear on those wearing "the mark of the Beast," the sea and rivers and the fountains are turned to blood, the sun's heat is intensified, and all withers under its rays. Then a bowl is poured out upon the Throne of The Beast and all is darkness. There is wailing and the biting of tongues and, far from repentance, the followers of The Beast blaspheme heaven and God because of their pain and their sores. The Euphrates dries up. The Kings of the East gather to cross its now dry course to fight the battle of Armageddon. And then a voice rolls out of the temple with terrifying finality: IT IS DONE.

The sixth and seventh visions depict the denouement. There is the actual fall of Babylon in the sixth vision, but all is not yet quite over. The seventh vision shows the final struggles of the Beast who is conquered, chained for a time, released again, but finally defeated and even death and hell are thrown into the Lake of Fire and are no more.

Then, wrote John of Patmos: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth;" - and he was taken to a high mountain to see the New Jerusalem as it came down from heaven from God. There was no sun, no moon and no stars in the New Earth and there was no temple, for God himself was the temple and his radiance, bright as a jewel and clear as crystal, was all the light and temple needed. The city itself, a cube fifteen hundred miles on each side, was of transparently pure gold, its walls were of jasper, each of its twelve walls inlaid with a different kind of precious jewel. Each of the twelve gates was a single pearl. Through the middle of the New Earth flowed the river of life, bordered by the trees of life, each bearing twelve kinds of fruit, some of which were always ripe, and the leaves were for the healing of the nations.

II

Some three hundred years after John of Patmos wrote, "The Beast" *was* thrown into a Lake of Fire and there *was* a "New Heaven and a New Earth," but not the one John foresaw. It was not a New Earth whose only temples were God's radiance, but one which tried to find God in increasingly grand temple-fortresses of stone and authority. It was a New Heaven which could be no more than a lonely pilgrim in this New Earth and a Heaven which gradually departed further and further until it offered but a distant solace for the men of the New Earth who now lost what freedom they may have had, were attached to the land and were transferred as prize of battle or of courtship from owner to owner along with Manor House and cattle.

Though it is arguable that Christianity suffered no less a Fall than did Rome under the blows of Alaric the Goth, himself a baptized Christian, Christianity did not escape the charge that it had caused the Fall of Rome. Rome fell, the argument went, because Rome had previously been enervated by this tenderizing, pacifist creed. The charge was so widespread that Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, whom it is now fashionable to praise as an astute political realist,⁴ thought it necessary to write an extended and vigorous apologia for the Christians.

III

It has been said that one is either mad to begin the serious study of the Book of Revelation, or will be when finished. Certain it is that there is an abundance of material here to attract those whom a scientific age calls mad. But the findings of science cannot always be equated with wisdom, nor the control of nature with sanity. Certain it is, that in John's Revelation we are not in the presence of the highest moral and ethical teaching in the Bible, in the Old or in the New Testaments. Revelation is a far cry from Isaiah, Hosea and Micah, from the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, the Twelfth Chapter of Romans and the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians. How square these counsels of love, even for our "enemies," with the awesome prayer in Revelation: "How long, sovereign Lord, holy and true, must it be before Thou wilt

vindicate us and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?"⁵ But clearly the last book of the Bible is not meant to repeal the Judeo-Christian tradition of charity.

This book has its message and, written for an age of more simple devastations, it may be suggestive to those of us living in an age of devastation's greater sophistication.

First, the situation of John of Patmos and the Asian Christians of the First Century was not unique, nor was their reaction to that situation. They were confronted by an Old Order of things that had become entrenched over a period of three hundred years, that saw itself as the sole guardian of civilization, that came to see its own continued existence as the supreme good on which all other goods depended. Its established order was of the very essence of existence and its leaders were priest-gods as well as emperors.

History is strewn with the remains of such orders. Arising originally in response to the failure of earlier orders to meet the needs of changing times, these orders themselves become entrenched, turn in on themselves, worship their own image, create their own self-supporting and self-justifying values, resurrect and inflame the ancient issues and conflicts that brought them into power. Signs of a new life, a New Order, are energetically suppressed, sometimes by violence and intimidation and sometimes by the more subtle means of slander, isolation, flattery and absorption. Security and order, coercively maintained, become an increasing preoccupation. Finally, coercion is no longer able to hold the Old Order together and it collapses, usually as a result of rot from within and internal struggle for the prerequisites and profits still available in the decaying order.

In more contemporary terms, the Revelation of John of Patmos might be described as a communiqué, written in code, dispatched by an imprisoned leader to the cells of a movement persecuted by and in opposition to the religious orthodoxy and reigning government of the day in their pretensions to infallible truth, and absolute authority. This religious orthodoxy and reigning government are also characterized by an increasingly violent and coercive insistence on meticulous observance of the forms and creeds associated with their truth and their authority. The communiqué urges strict discipline for the faithful, promises dire consequences for the deviationist, notes struggle, suffering and martyrdom ahead, but promises ultimate victory and bliss because the contradictions within the Old Regime, coupled with the dynamic force of the New, will combat and utterly and violently destroy not only the Government of the day, but the state itself. The final issue: a condition in which the power of light and goodness is uninhibited, is sufficient, even to the point of requiring no institutionalization or shelter to maintain, protect or express itself. Hunger, pain, exploitation, violence and even coercion are no more.

John's prophecies were historically inaccurate (and it should not be forgotten that historical accuracy is not the only form of accuracy), not only because the Fall of Rome was not as imminent as John implied, and not only because the New Heaven and the New Earth which came into being with the Fall of Rome were not quite idyllic, but also because the birth and aging of Orders did not stop when John's "first heaven and first earth had vanished."⁶ New Heavens continue to follow on Old Heavens as our understanding changes, and New Earths continue to follow on the fall of Old Earths because New Heavens, time and a different understanding, create new relationships, new problems, new possibilities and new imperatives.

Social, economic and political orders are always and everywhere a particular response to particular needs, and there comes a time when the basic problems which one set of institutions was designed to solve are replaced by another set of problems and the old institutions must be redesigned or new ones created for the new tasks. One of our still unresolved political problems is that of finding adequate procedures for an orderly altering of arrangements established to meet the needs arising out of one set of circumstances when new circumstances have set new problems and new needs; orderly procedures, that is, for passing from Old Heavens and Old Earths to New Heavens and New Earths. Even those disadvantaged by the Old Regime will be slow to recognize and accept the need for a New Order. Change is slow and labored, even when its benefits are clear. As Romain Rolland observed in *Jean Christophe*, "there is nothing more difficult than to make men accept a new happiness."⁷ Furthermore, the regime in the Old Order is inclined to entrench itself and to resist change long after the need for change has become critical. Old Regimes will even perpetuate the old problems and conflicts in order that status and institutional arrangements designed to cope with these problems and conflicts may continue to be justified.⁸ Thus do nationalist movements, after they have defeated colonialism, continue to breathe life into the issue of colonialism and thus may we expect the institutions and people who have come into prominence as a result of the desegregation struggle to keep the segregation issue alive artificially even after its defeat becomes a fact. Thus, too, are communists virtually the last supporters of a capitalism long dead and free-enterprise extremists the last supporters of a communism that is equally dead.

IV

The Old Order of our day is developed in response to the problems of Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe. The need then was for some sort of order and security to be brought into the incredible chaos of the crumbling medieval system that had contained the New Heaven and the New Earth brought on at the Fall of Rome. The authority of Church and Manor had become increasingly incapable of coping with the new, New World brought into being then by a complex confluence of forces: new developments in commerce and trade, the new perspectives and methods of science, the introduction of the printing press, the Reformation Movement, the discovery of the Americas, a new concern for this life and its potentialities in contrast to the earlier preoccupation with the life hereafter. Disorder and bloodshed were the rule as Church battled against Church, Townsmen against Countrymen, Noble against Crown, Commoner against Noble, Noble against Noble and Crown against Crown. Europe was then truly an approximation of the "state of nature" envisioned by Thomas Hobbes, himself a spectator of the age, when he described life as a state in which all were at war with all and in which life was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."⁹ The crying need was for order, and then for as much freedom as possible from the absolutism claimed and practiced by the monarchs who were asserting their divine right to bring their order into the situation. What was desirable, in addition, was some limitation on the power thus consolidated to secure its use in the interest of the many and not the few.

Quakerism developed out of these same conditions, and Friends were equally concerned with the limitation of political power and its consolidation. Early Friends had every reason to and did support the magistrate's sword in its order-building function. Moreover, they thought that the magistrate's sword could be made moral and Christian as well. Though such vigorous Friends as

George Fox, William Penn and Edward Burrough might be expected to take this position,¹⁰ it may be a little surprising to find the gentle Isaac Pennington joining them wholeheartedly when he wrote:¹¹

I speak not...against any magistrates or peoples defending themselves against...evil doers within their borders (for this the present state of affairs may and doeth require, and a great blessing will attend the sword wherever it is borne uprightly to that end, and its use will be honourable; and while there is need of a sword, the Lord will not suffer the government, or those governors to want fitting instrument under them for the management thereof, to wait on him in fear to have the edge of it rightly directed)...

The democratic nation-state was the political answer to these Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century needs. The nation-state was the answer to the need for order. Power and authority was no longer to be splintered into minute and overlapping fragments within which authority was a commodity that could be bought, sold, inherited, and that went along with the ownership of the land. Nor was authority to be shared in this life, between temporal and ecclesiastical authorities. Religion was either to be an associate of the State and an adjunct of it, or it was to be depoliticized and tolerated as essentially irrelevant. Authority - political, religious and economic - was to be centralized and institutionalized in a perpetual monarchy that was the "Defender of the Faith" and the dispenser-of-monopolies, as well as political sovereign.

As the nation-state was the answer to the need for order, democratic institutions and procedures were to provide the answer to the need for freedom from the excesses or corruption of that authority. Those who wielded that authority came to understand that they did not wield it as a private and still less as a divine right. Authority was to be wielded as a public responsibility and the voice of the people was to be treated politically as the voice of God: - *vox populi, vox Dei*.

This was a good system. It met, imperfectly of course, but met in large measure the need for both order and freedom and proved itself remarkably flexible and capable of adjustment and extension as time went on. But this regime, this Order, has aged now, and become entrenched, inflexible and it is questionable whether the establishment can be further stretched and modified to meet the needs of our day. Certain it is that it is providing both diminishing order and diminishing freedom.

Diminishing order has tempted us to rely ever more completely on coercive measures to create a semblance of order. The world has become ill, very ill - it has coercion on the brain.¹² Increasingly we rely on coercion-backed standards - and show little respect even for these standards unless the coercion behind them is obvious, immediate and efficient. Alarming and increasing proportions of our resources are dedicated to policing ourselves domestically. Some of this increase is doubtless the result of increasing population and urbanization, with the geometrical pyramiding of problems of coordination that arises when large numbers of people live in close proximity. But this is not the entire problem, for the same tendency can be seen in rural areas of decreasing population. Disorder at the international level is but too obvious, as is

the increasing proportion of our wealth and manpower devoted to coercing a semblance of order at that level.

But the extent to which coercion is our reliance for order, freedom is a luxury. It is only when and to the extent that order is firmly rooted that freedom's disorder may be absorbed and tolerated by any establishment. The greater disorder the greater the effort to limit freedom in the interest of order. We recognize this constitutionally in the United States when our Supreme Court holds that freedom of speech and freedom of the press mean one thing in times of tranquility and another in times of crisis and disorder. Freedom ceases, according to the established rule, whenever its exercise constitutes a "clear and present danger" to the security of the order, and what is no danger in tranquility may become one in times of crisis and disorder. A child is free, we are again beginning to admit, after a somewhat chaotic interregnum, only in so far as its behavior does not constitute a threat to an order of which it is only part, and not the whole. The student is free only so far as he supports the academic order, and the competitiveness and acquisitiveness that our social and economic order has prized, remain free only as long as they do not threaten the order itself. Competitiveness eventually destroys competition so competition cannot indefinitely continue free. But a domestic order that relies increasingly on legally enforced regulations to define its acceptable behavior patterns, with an increasing number of enforcement officers employed to see that these regulations are obeyed, is not a free order. It is an old regime fighting a rear-guard action.

It is to labor the obvious to spell out in detail the way in which coercion in the international order limits freedom. We pay our tithe to destruction. Ten percent of our national wealth earned each year goes into developing a capacity to destroy other peoples, other nations. But can the instruments of democracy, designed to trap a king, as one writer expressed it, effectively direct and control the concentration of technological, scientific, managerial and vested power that is constructed by this tithe of our wealth? Can a system designed to trap a Seventeenth Century monarch adequately protect freedom in an age when Kings, the electorate, their representatives, their chosen executives, are all increasingly at the mercy of experts who make use of other experts to convince us that this or that sacrifice of freedom - conscription, compulsory fall-out shelters, a conscience free of the burden of bacteriological warfare - is required in the name of order and security?

Then, too coercion tends to be cumulative. The more we rely on coercion to assure the observance of acceptable behavior patterns, the greater the coercion necessary to accomplish the purpose. The firm command to go to bed is replaced by the hand that leads and that, eventually, may spank. On its part the child may at first ignore the command, then talk back, then kick and throw a tantrum. The failure of a student to do an assignment or two may lead to a warning followed by failure of the course and, eventually, expulsion from college, with the student in the meantime reacting with increasingly antagonistic modes of behavior.

Thus coercion, once adopted, can only increase and freedom decrease - AS LONG AS COERCION FUNCTIONS ONLY WITHIN AND IN SUPPORT OF THE OLD ORDER, and fails to establish a New Order. But the temporary uses of coercion, pending the operation of a maturing process that will create a New Order, may be creative. This is something of what Isaac

Pennington had in mind in the passage quoted earlier,¹³ for he followed the quoted passage with the observation that, though the magistrate and his sword were to be supported:¹⁴

...yet there is a better state, which the Lord hath already brought some into and which nations are expected to travel toward... And where should it begin but in some particular in a nation and so spread by degree, until it hath overspread the nation, and then from nation to nation until the whole earth is leavened.

It is this establishment of a New Order that we hope for when coercion is applied to the young. It is this that we have hoped for in the application of coercion in achieving racial integration. Internationally this has been the hope of both "Western" and "Eastern" foreign policy. *We* have hoped that a coerced containment of the forces of the East would provide a seed-bed and the time within which the Old Order of things in the Soviet Union and China might change. *They* have hoped that coercive pressures might create a "forcing bed" in which inherent forces of decay and growth in the West could be speeded.

But the use of coercion to change an Old Order is a very delicate procedure. The results may not be at all what we wanted or expected, as every parent and teacher knows. Indeed, coercion may forestall - and often is intended to forestall - development of a New Order, or may and perhaps does produce a twisted and warped Order rather than the one we desire. Where open defiance is not possible or profitable, subterfuge, subversion or a subconscious pathology are the likely reactions to an Old Order's coercion, whether that be a parental, educational, national or an international order.

VI

But what then are the conditions for the creative application of coercion?

- 1) John of Patmos warns us against do-it-yourself projects of coercion. Coercion is the Lord's and not a tool that the awkwardness of men can control or use creatively. To be creative, coercion must be under God's guidance and direction, and not alone an act of man's intellect, will or emotions.
- 2) The object of coercion, according to Revelation, must be peace; the elimination of coercion. Revelation's New Earth had no place in it for armed or institutional coercion. Its regulations were found in the radiant and loving power of God. Its trees were not cut, stripped of foliage and made into spear shafts and chariots of war, but were left beside the river of crystal waters and their foliage used for the healing of the nations.
- 3) Too, creative coercion in Revelation was for the purpose of establishing a New Heaven and a New Earth, not for the shoring up of the Old.

Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, he who observed and interpreted the Fall of Rome forecast a hundred years earlier by the Man of Patmos, agreed that creative coercion must be under the guidance of God's peace. He also added some crucial and influential observations of

his own.¹⁵ Augustine forsook the thorough-going pacifism of Tertullian, Origen and most of the other earlier Church Fathers. He spoke of coercion - in the form of war - as being just, that is righteous,¹⁶ but only if certain conditions were met. Essentially, he concluded that the following conditions, in addition to those found in Revelation, had to be met if coercion, in the form of war, were to be righteous.

1) The authority using coercion had to be recognized as legitimate authority. Wars could not be undertaken by private bands. Only duly-constituted authority was just authority, and no authority was duly constituted unless its relationships to God were in harmony. However, the need for order was so crucial that private parties were not to take up arms against a legitimate prince even if he were a tyrant and unjust. A secure peace, order, was more to be desired than a just desolation.

2) Love and sin were the central concepts in the thought of Augustine. Coercion exists at all only because of man's sin in the Garden and in Cain's fratricide. He divided life into body and soul, the physical and the spiritual, good and evil. Though there is a level at which all of these are unified, he institutionalizes their division into the State and the Church, the City of God and the City of Earth. One's basic loyalties, one's citizenship is determined by one's loves. If one's love is for the physical, the material, one is a citizen of the City of Earth. If one's love is for the things of the spirit, one is a citizen of the City of god, even in this life. So the love of God, and attachment to the things of the spirit, had to pervade the righteous use of violence, of war. Lust or the desire for glory or gain could have no part in a just or righteous war. Defense against aggression, and a refusal to make amends or grant rights of passage through a country were considered to be just cause for war, but only if the motivation were just as well.

3) Coercion, violence, war, are just only when all other means of inhibition or redress have failed, and only and precisely to the extent necessary to accomplish its righteous purpose. There is no room here for vengeance or vindictiveness and under no circumstances is the profanation of temples, failure to keep faith even with the enemy, looting, conflagration, massacre or reprisal-for-the-sake-of-reprisal, justified.

4) War cannot be just on both sides. Justice and the right to use violence can reside, for Augustine, and contrary to other writers on the subject, only on one side. Augustine's logical mind could not tolerate a righteousness, which is what he meant by justice,¹⁷ that was so malleable that it could be on both sides of the same conflict.

5) Coercion - or the just war - was justified to Augustine only if such coercion could actually accomplish its righteous purpose. One is not, in Augustine's thought, honor-bound to launch a suicidal Gotterdammerung of coercion regardless of that coercion's capacity to effect a just purpose utilizing just means. Coercion, in other words, is never self-justifying; it is only an instrument and justified only in so far as it is instrumental in achieving a greater degree of righteousness.

6) Finally, wars - however just - were never to be engaged in by priests, monks and nuns. Such people had a special calling to follow Jesus to the last detail and to die rather than kill even in a just cause.

Later Christians and secular thought on the legitimacy of international coercion consciously builds on Augustine's criteria. Thomas Aquinas elaborates the theme some seven hundred years later and, in the process, adds another requirement if coercion is to be just. Coercion is justified, he says, only if the undoubted evils to be anticipated from the use of coercion do not out-weigh the evils to be rectified.¹⁸ Francesco Vittoria and Hugo Grotius, the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century "Fathers" of modern international law, elaborated the theme further. Vittoria was the first to distinguish between wars of defense and wars of aggression and both he and Grotius extended and made more specific Augustine's "rights of passage" to include the freedom of the seas and the right to travel and trade in a foreign country.¹⁹

Early Friends emerged in the same world that caused Thomas Hobbes to have such a dark view of human nature, that caused Grotius so much distress, and which resulted in his efforts to develop a code which would limit both the occurrence of wars and their horrors when they did occur. This was the world of the frightfully destructive Thirty Years War and Louis XIV's adventures on the continent of Europe, the Civil War and Cromwell's dictatorship in Britain, and freebooting piracy on and off the High Seas. Under the circumstances, Friends recognized some wars as just. Robert Barclay's oft-quoted words on the Magistrate's sword, or George Fox's equally famous letter to Friends on the Island of Nevis in the West Indies,²⁰ make the point. Barclay wrote:²¹

As to what relates to the present magistrates of the Christian world, albeit we deny them not altogether the name of Christians, because of the public confession they make of Christ's name, yet we may boldly affirm, they are far from the perfection of the Christian religion; because in the state in which they are...they have not come to the pure dispensation of the gospel. And, therefore, while they are in that condition, we shall not say that war, undertaken upon just occasion, is altogether harmful to them...So the present confessors of the Christian name, who are yet in the mixture, and not in the patient suffering spirit, are not in the patient suffering spirit, are not yet fitted for this form of Christianity, and therefore cannot be undefending themselves until they attain that perfection. But for such whom Christ has brought hither, it is not lawful to defend themselves by arms, but they ought over-all to trust the Lord.

Basically Friends have here taken Augustine's position on the inconsistency of the priesthood with participation in even a just war, and, consistent with Friends' radical position with respect to the priesthood of all believers, expanded to include all those, regardless of vocation, who had arrived at a certain "perfection of the Christian religion."

Friends added another note. Augustine, and subsequent writers on the "just war," tended toward a dismal view of human nature. Men were essentially and irrevocably sinners. It is only the Grace of God and the intercession of Jesus, Mary and the Saints that can raise men a bit above the brutes. Earthly institutions, including the Church, must be accepted as hopelessly and irremediably tainted. The best we can hope for is to keep the ideal bright in a few people whose vocation this is and, in the world, to keep sinfulness within bounds. It is this, which makes Augustine attractive to modern political "realists;" and it was this that early Friends rejected.

Theirs was a council of perfection. Men and their institutions, even the state, could be Christianized, and then all would be called to Jesus' example and war would be no more. Friends thought such Christianization of government possible without further delay and proceeded to lead the colonies of North Carolina, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania in this direction. Subsequently, without losing hope in the objective, Friends accepted a delay in the arrival of their New Heaven and New Earth, without denying its ultimate reality.

The efforts of Augustine, Thomas, Vittoria, and other early formulators of the "just war theory," were to discover how coercion, made necessary by man's Fall and sin, could be used righteously, justly, by sinful man. They were not primarily concerned with prescriptions for the establishment of earthly success (though there is certainly the belief that God will not allow unjust regimes long to endure) or the erection of a New Order. Indeed, writers in this tradition characteristically have been concerned to undergird what authority and order there was. But there is reason to suggest, from the perspective of our later day, that these same principles are among the conditions which must be met if coercion is to be creative, is to establish a New Order in which the occasion for coercion will be minimal and brought under control at the world level. Are these not among the conditions which must exist if coercion is not to call forth ever greater degrees of coercion and issue in still greater international chaos and destruction?

In fact, these principles are now the stock in trade of many who are professionally required to deal in coercion; criminologists, social workers, educators, administrators, as well as thoughtful parents. Practitioners in all of these fields know that their tasks require the most minimal coercion and that used in the essential interests of those whom they coerce. When coercion is used in these callings on behalf of order-for-the-sake-of-order, in vindictiveness, in vengeance, in pique or in fear, it can only initiate an upward spiral of destruction.

Internationally, can war now ever meet these conditions?²² Is it a New Earth, a New Order, that we are seeking with our tithes to the Defense Establishment - or is it a coerced shoring up of an Old Order? Is the determination to develop and to use or not to use nuclear, chemical and biological warfare seen as operating under God's guidance? Can war now be waged in order to create a more secure peace? Is war now ever waged by authorities whose legitimacy is unquestioned, or is it often precisely the legitimacy of authority that is contested? Whatever may have been true earlier, is justice now ever the possession of one antagonist? Is global war ever fought in love and solely for the support of righteousness to the exclusion of parochial gain or glory? Are not the injustices of nuclear, chemical and biological warfare inevitably and immensely greater than any gains for justice realizable by it? Is international coercion not now an instrument of our most acute disorder and as outmoded and irrational as the forms of feudal warfare which the nation-state was designed to displace in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries? Are we not forced to push Heaven further and further into the distance, creating increasingly separate compartments of life in which to keep what we believe on the one hand and what we do on the other? Are we not forced increasingly to insist that man is but a little higher than the worms rather than a little lower than the angels, to justify international violence on moral grounds, have we not reached a stage in which coercion in the service of the nation-state is even more irrational and ineffective than it is immoral? Are we not preparing "to create a desert and call it peace?"²³

VII

Our problem is no longer that of establishing order and maintaining freedom within the precincts of limited patches of territory on this earth, even within John's fifteen hundred mile cube of transparent gold, lustrous jewels, ever-bearing trees, crystal waters and uncoerced peace. The problem is now that of establishing a *world* order, and the necessary cohesion to support that order, within a framework that recognizes all man as precious children of God.

Our first problem then is that of Order...a New Order, a New Heaven and New Earth; and can we delude ourselves into thinking that such a New Heaven, such New Order, can be a place where we might still cling to the trappings and wear the mark of the nation-state, the free-enterprise system, the communist system, racial prerogatives - black or white. Can such a New Order be designed according to the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments - or necessarily in the mold provided by Britain, France, the Soviet Union or China? Is the New Heaven one in which freedom must certainly be defined as in the United States' Declaration of Independence, or are there things man has yet to achieve beyond the right to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness," things on which life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness depend for their meaning? Can such a New Order be one in which coercion is a way of life?

We are, in a way, back where we were when the Quaker movement began: civil war, informers, charges of authority with an increasing application of violence, various parties attempting to establish their particular varieties of order over increasing numbers of people and resources and lives mobilized and destroyed in unprecedented prodigality. Friends emerged in response to the same forces and needs that brought our present political, economic and social order into being. Friends are of the warp and woof of that order. Can Friends break through the conditions of their origin and respond to and be among the instruments for bringing into being a New Heaven and New Earth for our disordered day? Perhaps, but only perhaps.

Early Friends had a vision of a New Order quite different from that which actually came into being and which has now become our Old Order. They had a vision of a universal Commonwealth in which coercion would have an increasingly modest role to play. This New Earth was to be united in the radiance of God, imminent and transcendent. They had little confidence in coercion and ordered their own affairs without the aid of specialized experts and with a minimum of institutional structure. Heaven was ever green, and close, and they were confident that the magistrate could soon be taught to govern without the authority of the sword.

In fact, the first generation of Friends may have envisioned our essential condition more clearly than we do. It may have been easier for them. Their Old Order was changing. The New had not yet taken shape, and Friends then carried no heavy traditions in their baggage. But the New Order which was then born, which is now grown Old, has had us in its grip for three hundred years. We bear its mark - but how indelibly and how inescapably? Does the mark of the Old Order, an Order in time, obliterate in us the mark of God's Order? Are we so chained in the dungeons of the Old Order that we are not able to rise to see the new and to move toward it? Do we rush back into our dungeons with their familiar terrors rather than moving out into the New Light? Do we still, somehow, hold a furtive thought that ultimate reality lies in this cave of the

nation-state and that it can provide us an order that we would want or a freedom that is not a mask for slavery? Are we, in fact, but artifacts of a decaying order?

How fresh are the warnings of John of Patmos as he wrote to the Churches-in-waiting for a New Heaven and a New Earth! How clearly he speaks to us all! - You there from Ephesus, you are following the forms, faithful to the vision of the New Heaven and its causes, but your enthusiasm is dry, it crackles like the leaves of autumn - for it is without love. You in Smyrna - you are concerned with your rights and your dignity - how flighty the dignity you seek at the hands of the state. It is only the dignity of Jesus that can go with you in persecution - What else can give dignity in death? You from Pergamum - what do you really worship? Your use of your time and your resources suggests that it is not God that you worship. You from Thyatira - your inner security begins to look like smugness, not serenity. You from Sardis - your reputation is good, but take heed - you are not as good as your reputation. You from Laodicea - look to your comforts and your easy acceptance of the self-satisfied patterns of your community. Even the evil are more palatable than you in your search for insipid comforts and your too easy acceptance of the self-satisfied manners and values of your community. And Philadelphia - how soft and corrupt is your prosperity - beware of compromise in the adversity that is sure to come. Gird yourselves - stand fast - for only those who do will be worthy to worship God with Jesus.

Footnotes

¹This study is greatly indebted to Lynn Harold Hough for his discussion of "The Message of the Book of Revelation" in *The Interpreters Bible*, Vol. XII, New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957. Also useful have been G. Ernest Wright and Reginald Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God*, New York: Doubleday and Company Anchor Books, 1960, and Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959.

²"Artemis" in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

³Acts 19.

⁴See below p. 24 for discussion of basis of this evaluation. See also Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems*, New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1953, Chapter 9 and Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1961, Chapter 2.

⁵Revelation 6:10, King James Version.

⁶See Revelation 21:1, *The New English Bible*.

⁷Romain Rolland, *Jean Christophe*, New York: Random House Modern Library Edition, 1938, Book I, p. 383.

⁸For fuller discussion of this idea see: Schattschneider, E. E., *The Semi-Sovereign People*, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960, Chapter VII.

⁹Thomas Hobbes "The Leviathan" Part I, chap. 13, *English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, ed. E. B. Burt, New York: Random House-Modern Library, 1939, p. 161.

¹⁰George Fox's Epistle to Friends on the Island of Nevis in the West Indies is probably the most quoted statement on this position. He wrote:

For, if any should come to burn your house, or rob you, or come to ravish your wives or daughters, or a company should come to fire a city or a town, or come to kill people, don't you watch against all such actions? And won't you watch against such evil things in the power of God in your own way? You cannot but discover such things to the magistrates, who are to punish such things. And therefore the watch is kept and set to discover such things to the magistrates, that they may be punished; and if he does it not, he bears his sword in vain. So Friends have always proferred (to) the magistrates, though they could not join them in carrying arms, swords and pistols, yet to watch in their own way against the evil doer.

Epistle No. 319, from Swarthmore, 5th November 1675, approved by Six Weeks Meeting, 7th December 1675, and signed, in unity, by nineteen Friends. Quoted along with other material on this point, Macmillan and Company, 1919, p. 620. See also William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, London: Macmillan and Company, 1912, p. 466 ff.

¹¹Isaac Pennington, *The Works of the Long-Mournful and Sorely Distressed Isaac Pennington*, (3rd ed.; London: James Phillips, 1784), III, p. 183.

¹²Suggested by a phrase in *The Spectacles of Faith*, one of the pamphlets written and published by A. Ruth Fry during the nineteen-thirties and nineteen-forties. Privately published in Great Britain, 1938.

¹³*Supra*, p. 14.

¹⁴Pennington, *op. cit.*, p. 183. See also, to similar effect, the position of William Dewsbury:

The Word of the Lord came unto me and said, 'Put up thy sword into thy scabbard, if my kingdom were of this world then would my children fight. Knowest thou not that, if I need, I could have twelve legions of angels from my Father?' Which word enlightened my heart, and discovered the mystery of iniquity, and that the kingdom of Christ was within; and the enemies was (sic) within, and was spiritual, and my weapons against them must be spiritual, the power of God. Then I could no longer fight with a carnal weapon, against a carnal man, for the letter, which man in his carnal wisdom had called the Gospel, and had deceived me; but the Lord...caused me to yield in obedience, to put up my carnal sword into the scabbard and to leave the Army.

from William Dewsbury, *Works*, pp. 44-55. Quoted in Margaret Hirst, *Quakers in Peace and War*, London: The Swarthmore Press, 1923, p. 42.

¹⁵For Augustine's conception of the "just war" see especially *City of God*, Books I, IV, V, XIX, and XXII: *Contra Faustum*, Book XXII, secs. 70, 75, 76 and 79; *Epistles*, Nos. 47, 138 and 189; *Sermons*, No. 56; and *Retraction I*, XIX 1. There are several editions of these works, one of which is in the series: *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari, New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1951.

¹⁶The writer has not found Ramsey, *op. cit.* convincing in his effort to refute Ernest Barker's analysis of Augustine's conception of Justice. See Barker's introduction to the Temple Classics edition of the *Civitas Dei*.

¹⁷See *Supra* n. 16.

¹⁸Roland Bainton, *Christian Attitude Toward War and Peace*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1961, p. 106.

¹⁹See Arthur Nussbaum, *A Concise History of the Law of Nations*, New York: Macmillan, 1950, pp. 58-64 and 97-112.

²⁰See *Supra*, n. 10 for Fox's letter.

²¹Robert Barclay, *Barclay in Brief*, ed. Eleanor Price Mather, Wallingford; Pendle Hill, n. d., p. 83 f.

²²Paul Ramsey, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-33, states the case for those who hold that nuclear war can be "just" in an Augustinian sense.

²³One translation of "Atque ubi solitudinem, facient pacem appellent," the latin words Tacitus places in the mouth of Galgacus as he harangues the British troops into battle against the Romans under Agricola. Recounted in section xxx of "The Life of Cnaeus Julius Agricola."