# CONFESSIONS OF AN EVANGELICAL PIETIST

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Back in the mid-1970s, my colleague Nicholas Wolterstorff—we were both teaching philosophy at Calvin College at the time—delivered an address, sponsored by a Christian Reformed congregation in Grand Rapids, in which he set forth a typology of different 'minds' within the conservative Dutch Calvinist community in North America.[1] He employed three labels: the 'doctrinalist', the 'pietist' and the 'Kuyperian'. These labels signified, for him, three different perspectives on the kind of book the Bible is. For the doctrinalist, the Bible primarily sets forth religious teachings—*doctrines* to which we must give our assent. For the pietist, on the other hand, the Bible tends to be treated as a devotional handbook, the reading of which is meant to generate certain godly experiences and to form important subjective dispositions. And for the Kuyperian, the Bible is meant to give us our cultural marching orders, instructing us in the ways of discipleship in the collective patterns of life in the larger human community.

These three views of the Bible, Wolterstorff argued, generate three different basic tests for what it means to be faithful to what the Bible means to convey. For some, the fundamental question has to do with what truth claims we accept about God and God's will for humankind. For others, the test is an experiential one: Have I appropriated what I learn from the Scriptures in the deep places of my own personal being? For still others, the most important question is whether a person is aligned with God's culture-transforming purposes in the world.

Wolterstorff's typology has wider application than simply to Dutch Calvinism, a fact that George Marsden recognized when he adapted it for broader use by substituting the label 'culturalist' for Wolterstorff's 'Kuyperian'[2]—thus recognizing the reality of the kind of evangelicalism

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1 The published version of this lecture appeared as Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'The AACS in the CRC', *Reformed Journal*, 24/10 (December, 1974), 9-16.

2 George Marsden, 'Reformed and American', in *Reformed Theology in America*, ed. by David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), p. 3. Marsden rightly notes that these designations function as 'ideal types'. As they actually function, he says, 'all three groups typically embody the traits dominant among the other two'.

that emphasizes working for cultural renewal without linking that theologically to the influence of 19th century Dutch writers.

This broader applicability of the typology is evident in the fact that most of us can easily imagine a conversation in which one Christian makes much of the importance of doctrine and another challenges that person by warning of the inadequacy of 'mere head knowledge' for entering the Kingdom; after all, the pietist will remind the doctrinalist, the Devil has a fairly orthodox theology, but he still is a citizen of hell. The doctrinalist will then respond that our feelings, our subjective states, can be misleading unless they are grounded in a solid grasp of the truth. Suddenly a third party enters the conversation to point out that a person can have an orthodox theology and a strong personal piety and still be a racist or a perpetrator of economic injustice. At that point, predictably, the doctrinalist and the pietist together will respond with a warning against 'works righteousness'. And the arguments go on and on.

## 'NEAR UNTO GOD'

Wolterstorff was certainly correct, then, in identifying some obvious strands that often stand in tension. But I do have my own problems with his use of the 'Kuyperian' label. For Wolterstorff it was a shorthand for characterizing what he would advocate in subsequent writings as 'world-formative Christianity'.[3] I certainly have strong affinities with that kind of culturalist emphasis; indeed I have been much influenced by it. But in the final analysis, I am a pietist.

And truth be told, I think Abraham Kuyper was also a pietist. I do not see Kuyper as a 'Kuyperian' in Wolterstorff's sense of the term. This is not to deny that the great 19th century Dutch theologian and activist called for the kind of Christianity that takes cultural transformation seriously. Many folks who know very little about Kuyper's life and thought can at least quote some version of his famous bold declaration that 'there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry "Mine!"'[4] But Kuyper also actively opposed the liberal theological teachings of his day—to the point that he even led a major exodus from the large mainline Reformed denomination in the Netherlands. And during his many decades as an important public and ecclesiastical leader, he regularly wrote profound, and very pious, meditations on Biblical themes, the spirit of the these

[3] See, for example, his *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 4.

[4] Abraham Kuyper, 'Sphere Sovereignty', in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. by James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 488.

meditations being nicely captured by the title of the large volume containing many of those meditations, almost 700 pages in length—*To Be Near Unto God*, a very 'pietist' title, taken from the final verse of Psalm 73: 'But as for me, it is good to be near God.'

My main purpose here, though, is not to give a detailed exposition of Kuyper. Rather, I want to offer some pietst confessions of my own. Then I also want to express some of my own worries about some of the defective tendencies that seem constantly to plague a pietist kind of Christianity, as well as pointing to ways that a pietism that guards against these defects can enrich our doctrinal and cultural explorations.

For those of us who identify with the pietist tradition, there is no better example of what we are about than John Wesley's well-known testimony regarding his 'Aldersgate experience'. As Wesley told the story, he attended, on May 24th, 1738, a meeting at Aldersgate, where someone read from Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to Romans*. Wesley reported that at the point where Luther in his text 'was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.'[5]

The kind of very direct and datable experience that Wesley was describing has a link in my own spiritual journey to the fundamentalist 'altar calls' of my youth. Typically there would come a point in an evangelistic service when the preacher would intone, 'Every head bowed, every eye closed. No one looking around, please'. And then the people present would be asked to search their individual hearts. Those who had not yet come to faith in Christ were urged to accept him right then. But it was also a time of self-examination for the rest of us, who were given the opportunity to look into our hearts anew and reflect honestly about our relationship to the Lord.

And in those moments we sang hymns as well. 'Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?' 'I surrender all.' 'Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me.' 'Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe.'

Those moments, and those hymns, were a crucial element in my own spiritual formation. They were occasions for me when I stood—in ways that I have never quite experienced elsewhere—face to face with eternity. Whatever else the 'sawdust trail' meant to me—not all of it positive—it was for me in those moments, a sacred space, of the sort that I have not

[5] Journal of John Wesley, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.ii.xvi.html>.

been able to find with the same profundity in other regions of the Christian world.

## WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS

Ernest Stoeffler was a scholar who devoted his life to the study of pietism in its many forms: Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, Moravian, Puritan, Wesleyan, and the like. His magnum opus, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, still stands as the best overall survey of pietism as an international movement. Stoeffler not only chronicled the various manifestations of pietism in great detail, he did so with an obvious love for his subject matter, which meant, among other things, that he drew attention to strengths in pietism that are often ignored by others. Indeed, in his study of American pietism he insisted that there was not only a social conscience at work in many pietist subgroups, but that the movement in general was an influential force for creating the environment for important 20th century gains in the promoting of social justice. He was convinced, he said, 'that the Pietist understanding of life, which regards every fellow believer as "sister" or "brother," helped to begin the process of breaking down the rigid barriers associated with ethnic origin, race, and sex, which Americans originally inherited from Europe.'[6]

While he did much to highlight pietism's strengths, Stoeffler was not insensitive to the movement's weaknesses. He specifically singled out three of what he described as its 'less admirable' traits or tendencies, namely: an 'escapist' mentality that puts 'the emphasis on blessedness in the hereafter rather than justice for all in the here and now'; 'a certain anti-intellectual atmosphere'; and a 'pronounced tendency toward sectarian fragmentation'.[7]

Stoeffler is right to point to these tendencies in pietism, but he clearly does not think than they are inevitable or intrinsic traits of a pietist orientation. And he is right about that also. As I read, for example, Carl Henry's 1947 jeremiad, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, I see Henry as focusing on these very traits. He clearly condemns the 'escapist' mentality that had come to dominate the evangelical mood. He also worried much about a lack of nuanced evangelical engagement with the important intellectual issues of the day. And he certainly also regretted the separatistic patterns that had produced a fragmented evangelical movement.

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6 F. Ernest Stoeffler, 'Epilogue', in *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 271.

7 Stoeffler, 'Epilogue', pp. 270-1.

Henry was joined in looking for remedies to these defects by Harold John Ockenga, who wrote an introduction to Henry's book in which he emphasized the same concerns.8 Particularly on the point of countering the fragmentation of evangelicalism, it is no accident that Ockenga and others who founded the National Association of Evangelicals chose to name the Association's magazine 'United Evangelical Action'—a motif that also came to characterize Billy Graham's program of 'cooperative evangelism'.

Stoeffler's list of the defective tendencies that often plague pietism is helpful. Indeed, I have spent a good part of my own participation in the evangelical movement working to remedy those defects. This is still an important agenda today, even though the defective tendencies—and their attempted correctives— may show up in new ways in our present context.

Having said all of that, I have to immediately add that it would be a very bad move to try to remedy these defects by moving in a completely opposite direction. We do not correct anti-intellectualism as Christians simply by slipping into a thoroughgoing rationalism. Nor is an uncritical accommodation to the dominant cultural patterns of this present world a proper antidote to other-worldliness. And an 'anything goes' ecumenism is not the right way to counter the spirit of separatism.

In saying that, I am affirming what I consider to be the spirit of a proper sort of pietism. Our intellectual lives, our cultural engagements, our relationships with others in the Body of Christ—all of these must be guided by a personal and communal godliness, by hearts that desire the kind of holiness without which none shall see the Lord.

## LOCATING 'HEART'

I do want to dig a little deeper, though, in explaining why I want to insist on the priority of piety, of the religion of the heart that in turn must then given direction to our heads and our hands.

Actually, there are some doctrinalists who make it clear that they are not opposed to seeing the heart as the primary locus of religious faith. Rather, they think that the pietist is misusing the word 'heart'. This comes out clearly, for example, in some comments made by Elizabeth Clark George, the daughter of the late evangelical philosopher Gordon Clark, in a published reminiscence of her father's anti-pietist orientation. She takes note of what she sees as '[t]he aggravatingly careless use of the terms "heart" and "head" which are tossed about in Christian conversation

8 See Ockenga's Introduction to Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1947), pp. xx-xxii.

today'. What many people don't realize, she says, is that, properly speaking, when people disparage 'the "head" they are actually denouncing the "heart"' since 'the "heart" is not superior to the mind... [because] the heart *is* the mind'. She continues:

> The mind is not dry, dull, and spiritually detached; nor does the heart produce some emotional frill that supposedly substantiates salvation. The head and the heart are synonyms, regenerate in some people, unregenerate in others. And out of the abundance thereof, the mouth speaketh.[9]

Needless to say, the real issue here often gets clouded by some unfortunate rhetoric on both sides. Elizabeth George reports, for example, that many evangelicals accused her father of 'All "head", no "heart",' even intending thereby to call his eternal salvation into question.[10] She, in turn, finds it easy to dismiss those who want to posit a distinction between 'heart' and 'head' as grounding their salvation in 'some emotional frill'.

My own reading of this kind of rhetorical exchange is that Clark was rightly reacting against the kind of 'less admirable' traits that, as Stoeffler shows, often show up in pietism, especially the unnuanced anti-intellectualism. At the same time, however, Clark's insistence on the merging of 'heart' and 'mind' has to be challenged from the perspective of theological reflection on the nature of the human person and the interaction of human faculties within the person.

John Calvin, for one, clearly refused to conflate mind and heart. Calvin takes it as obvious 'that faith is much higher than human understanding', such that 'it will not be enough for the mind to be illuminated by the Spirit of God unless the heart is also strengthened and supported by his power'. Calvin insists that those philosophers and theologians 'go completely astray, who in considering faith identify it with a bare and simple assent arising out of knowledge, and leave out the confidence and assurance of the heart'.[11] 'The Word of God', Calvin writes, 'is not received by faith if it flits about in the top of the brain.' It must enter into 'the depth of the heart', so that the intellect's 'real understanding is illuminated by the Spirit of God', who 'serves as a seal, to seal up in our hearts

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9 Elizabeth Clark George, 'Life with Father, Part 1', in *Gordon Clark: Personal Recollections* ed. by John W. Robbins (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1989), pp. 22-3.

10 George, 'Life with Father', p. 23.

11 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), III.ii.33, pp. 580-1.

those very promises the certainty of which it has previously impressed upon our minds'.[12]

We can apply this to John Wesley's account of what happened at Aldersgate. He had for a long time given intellectual assent to the truths of the Gospel, but when as a result of his 'strangely warmed' experience, he could testify now that 'an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death' (emphasis added). The Spirit had taken truths that had previously only been presented to his mind, and now brought about what Calvin describes as the Spirit's 'sealing up' operation in the depths of the heart.

## TRUSTINGS

When I was engaged in doctoral studies in philosophy at the University of Chicago in the mid-1960s, one of the hot topics for those of us addressing issues in what was then called 'the philosophy of mind' was the question of 'minds and machines'. Could a computer ever come to a point in its operations that we would say that it was actually capable of *thinking*? Could such a computer so closely approximate human patterns of reasoning that we would have to decide that it had a *mind*?

Some philosophers had no problem with the idea of a thinking machine, since they has a rather low—a naturalistic/reductionistic—view of the human person. One rather flippant way in which some of them put it at the time was that human beings are simply 'machines that happen to be made of meat'.

Others, however, were concerned to maintain the uniqueness of the human person by insisting on a qualitative difference—an unbridgeable metaphysical gap—between human minds and the bearers of so-called 'artificial intelligence'. What both sides of the debate agreed upon, however, is that what fundamentally defines the human person is rationality—with the only important question being whether the human kind of rational intelligence could be replicated in a computer.

I was always uneasy about that shared assumption, and the grounds of my uneasiness became clear to me when I got around to seeing Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In it, the crew members of a Jupiter space mission rely on the deliverances of a computer they have named Hal. There is no question that Hal, as depicted in the film, is

[12] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.36, pp. 583-4. For a more extensive discussion of Calvin's views, see James E. McGoldrick, 'John Calvin: Theologian of Head, Heart, and Hands', *SBET*, 29 (2011), 177-95.

highly intelligent. But what is more important for me is the fact that Hal is devious. He rebels against the crew, and plots their demise.

Again, that is science fiction. But as such it provides an important insight. A computer would finally come close to being like us, not simply in being able to *think* like us, but in having the capacity to *elicit trust* and to betray that trust. To put it in explicitly biblical terms, it was not so much Hal's capacity for rational understanding that made him so human-like, but rather that he was the kind of entity to which one could legitimately preach, 'Trust in the Lord in all thine heart, and lean not on your own understanding' (Proverbs 3: 5).

To cut to the chase: the heart, in the biblical sense, is the place where we form our fundamental trustings. It is where we set the direction of our lives. We are either devoting our whole being toward obedience to God, or we are rebels against God. We are either covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers. As Herman Bavinck put it:

> Man tries to give direction to his life by his consciousness, but that life itself has its origin in the depth of his personality. It must not be forgotten... that though reason is necessary to guide the ship of life, feeling is the stream that propels it. Beneath consciousness there is a world of instincts and habits, notions and inclinations, abilities and capacities, which continually sets on fire the course of nature. Beneath the head lies the heart, out of which are the issues of life.[13]

This view of the heart points us, as I see it, to the kind of theological anthropology that can serve as the basis for understanding pietism at its best. As sinners, our hearts are the seat of our rebellion against God. Only the Holy Spirit can enter into that most intimate place of our being—the place in which our most fundamental trustings are formed—and direct our thoughts and actions anew toward the service of the living God. How we pursue our doctrinal reflections and our efforts at cultural engagement, then, will depend on the condition of the hearts out of which our thoughts and actions flow.

## DOCTRINE AND PIETY

Having briefly set forth that way of seeing things, I want now to look more closely at the relationship of piety to both doctrine and to cultural engagement. First, some thoughts about the relationship to doctrine.

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[13] Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation* (London: Longmans Green, 1909), p. 215.

What I am going to say about piety and doctrine will make some evangelicals nervous, so it is important that I begin with some appeals to the authority of three of my heroes, all theologians with impeccable orthodox credentials, each of them a staunch defender of historic Calvinism.

The first of these heroes is Charles Hodge, the great theologian of the 'Old Princeton' of the 19th century. One thinker whom Hodge regularly singled out for criticism in his three-volume *Systematic Theology* was the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher. When Hodge had studied in Germany in his younger years, he had seen first hand the influence of Schleiermacher's liberal theology. Hodge was deeply disturbed by the German theologian's embrace of the rationalist critique of biblical authority, which had the effect, Hodge insisted, of undermining the most fundamental tenets of the historic Christian faith.

At one point where Hodge is setting forth his critique of Schleiermacher—who had by this time been dead for several decades—Hodge offers, in a footnote, a brief personal comment about the person whose theology he has been criticizing. He tells how, as a student, he had frequently attended services at Schleiermacher's church. He was taken, he says, by the fact that the hymns sung in those services 'were always evangelical and spiritual in an eminent degree, filled with praise and gratitude to our Redeemer'. He goes on to report that he had been told by one of Schleiermacher's colleagues that often in the evenings the theologian would call his family together, saying: 'Hush, children; let us sing a hymn of praise to Christ'. And then Hodge adds this tribute to Schleiermacher: 'Can we doubt that he is singing those praises now? To whomever Christ is God, St. John assures us, Christ is a Saviour.'[14]

My second hero, also from the 19th century, is the Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck. In his systematic writings, Bavinck frequently criticized Roman Catholic theology, not in the least because of what he saw as the Catholic emphasis on salvation by good works. But here is a comment he offers at one point about that element of Catholic thought:

> [W]e must remind ourselves that the Catholic righteousness by good works is vastly preferable to a protestant righteousness by good doctrine. At least righteousness by good works benefits one's neighbor, whereas righteousness by good doctrine only produces lovelessness and pride. Furthermore, we must not blind ourselves to the tremendous faith, genuine repentance, com-

[14] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), p. 440 n. 1.

> plete surrender and the fervent love for God and neighbor evident in the lives and work of many Catholic Christians.[15]

My third example is from a personal conversation with the late Cornelius Van Til, longtime professor of apologetics at Westminster Seminary. I visited him once in his Philadelphia home, shortly after I graduated from college, and I asked him some questions about his stern rejection of Karl Barth's theology. While others in the evangelical world were welcoming many of Barth's contributions as a clear step back toward traditional orthodoxy, Van Til was insisting that Barth's theology was nothing more than 'the new modernism' in disguise.[16]

In posing a question to Van Til about this, I began with these words: 'As someone who does not see Karl Barth as a real Christian, what...'. Van Til cut me off sharply right there, and in an excited voice, he said, 'No! No! I have never said Barth is not a Christian. Never! What I have said is that his *theology* is not genuinely Christian. If all that a person knew about the Gospel is what they learned from his theology, they could not come to Christ!'

Van Til was saying something here that is simple and straightforward: a person can have a highly defective theology and still have a heart that has been transformed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Barth, from Van Til's perspective, was setting forth a theological system that fell far short of biblical fidelity. But that did not mean he was not a genuine Christian. Hodge was making the same point about Schleiermacher: bad theology, he said, but we can tell from the hymns that he sang that he longed to be with his Saviour in heaven. And Catholicism in Bavinck's portrayal: Righteousness by good works? Not a doctrinal formulation that a good Calvinist can live with. But in spite of that, some folks who believe that kind of thing clearly exhibit a 'complete surrender and the fervent love for God'.

We don't have to look very far in the evangelical world to find persons who would disagree with what I am setting forth here. An obvious case would be John MacArthur, who has been an outspoken opponent of the 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' group and particularly of the group's document justification by faith, drafted on the evangelical side by, among others, James Packer and Timothy George. In his critique, MacArthur took the evangelical participants to be saying 'that while they believe

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[15] Herman Bavinck, *The Certainty of Faith*, trans. by Harry der Nederlanden (St. Catherines, ON: Paideia Press, 1980), p. 37.

[16] See Van Til's *The New Modernism: an Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1947).

that the doctrine of justification as articulated by the Reformers is true, they are not willing to say that people must believe it in order to be saved. In other words, they believe that people are saved who do not believe the Biblical doctrine of justification.'[17]

Needless to say, Macarthur's assessment of the views of the Catholics involved in the project is open to challenge. The late Father Richard Neuhaus, one of the conveners of Evangelicals and Catholics together, long had argued that the key issue at the time of the Reformation was justification by faith, and that his own move from Lutheranism to the Catholic priesthood was necessitated by his conviction that it was now possible for him to preach justification by faith alone within the Catholic context.

Be that as it may, my argument with MacArthur is on a more basic point. Unlike him, I do believe that it is possible for people to be saved without subscribing to the doctrine of justification by faith. Not that I deny the truth of that doctrine. I believe it with all my heart. True salvation is by faith alone, faith made possible by the sovereign grace that sent the Saviour to the Cross to accomplish for us what we as lost sinners could never do for ourselves. But I believe it is possible to *be* justified by faith without being clear about the *doctrine* of justification by faith.

I will argue that passionately with anyone who denies that doctrine. But with those who show a genuine faith in Christ in spite of what I take to be a defective theology, my argument will go along these lines: Is your theology adequate to explain the saving grace that has transformed your inner being? Is that theology capable of sustaining the kind of faith that you claim? And Van Til's question to Barth: Is your theology, when spelled out as an evangelistic appeal, capable of presenting the Gospel in such a way that people will come to Christ?

## ATTENDING TO HYMNS

One reason why I am especially fond of Hodge's expression of appreciation for Schleiermacher's love of the evangelical hymns is that I am convinced that our theology would often be in much better shape if we paid careful attention to what we are expressing in the hymns that we sing.

So I want to conclude with a personal illustration about the connection between hymnody and our engagement with the important issues of the larger culture. Here, for me, there is a very special connection between our piety as expressed in our hymnody and the call to pursue justice and peace as agents of Christ's Kingdom.

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[17] John MacArthur, Jr., *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes like the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), p. 250.

I was once asked by a group on a secular university campus to serve on a panel addressing the past, present and future involvement in American culture of four faith communities: Judaism, Catholicism, mainline Protestantism and evangelicalism. The four panelists—a rabbi, a priest, a mainline theologian and myself—each spoke at three sessions throughout the day: in the morning, on the past involvement of each of our respective communities; early afternoon, the present; late afternoon, projections about the future; then in the evening, interaction with each other and with the audience.

When we turned to questions from the large audience in the evening session, the first question was addressed to me. A young man asked: 'Dr. Mouw, I did not know much at all about evangelicalism before today, and I think I have made some progress listening to what you have said. But I have a simple question that would really help me get much clearer if you would give me a straightforward answer: What do you believe that the other three people on the platform do not believe?'

My friend George Marsden says that 'whenever Mouw gets backed into a theological corner he quotes of hymn to get out'. And that's exactly what I did on this occasion.

The previous Sunday in our home congregation we had concluded the service singing 'It is Well with My Soul', and the third verse of that hymn had been running through my mind:

> My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
> My sin, not in part but the whole,
> Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
> Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

So I quoted it that evening, and then I explained. The rabbi certainly is not going to say that his sins have been covered by the blood shed on the Cross. And the Catholic—if he holds to the teachings and practices that led the Reformers in the 16th century to depart from the Roman church—is not going to celebrate the once-for-all character of the sacrifice at Calvary—that I can say here and now that because of the Cross it is forever more well with my soul. (I was pleased that the priest told me afterward that he could indeed sing that verse—a wonderful testimony to what the Lord has been bringing about in Catholicism in recent decades!) And the liberal Protestant—who had made much that day of his preference for a 'moral example' theory of the atonement—is not going to insist on the Cross as sacrifice, as payment for sin.

The hymn writer was offering a profound evangelical testimony, that because of the shed blood of Calvary a sinner who has embraced the

promise of salvation can say that his or her sins have been nailed to the Cross and that here and now it is forevermore 'well with my soul'. That is marvellous evangelical piety—and it is solid evangelical theology.

But that testimony, properly grasped, must also lead us in the paths of discipleship. While it is forevermore well with my soul today, it is not well in the larger creation that Jesus came to rescue. It is not well in Haiti today. It is not well in the prisons of North Korea. It is not well in the barrios and ghettos and reservations of North America. It is not well on Wall Street, and in Hollywood, and in the corridors of power in Washington, D.C. It is not well in the kitchens and bedrooms of Deerfield, Illinois.

The God who right now looks into every one of our hearts and says that it is well with these souls is also the God who grieves over the injustice, the environmental damage, the superstition, the abuse of women and girls in the international sex trade, the war-ravaged regions of the Iraq and Afghanistan.

And the God who grieves over all of that—and more—calls those of us whose eternal destinies have been made secure at Calvary, not only to share in his grief, but to act as grieving ones in his name—taking up the cause of his Kingdom in anticipation of that great Day when Jesus will return and announce, 'Behold, I make all things new'. And then it will be truly well with the whole creation that God still loves.

What we desperately need in our challenging times is a piety that inspires and motivates us to an active discipleship in the wounded and broken places in our world, a piety that can sustain us through the difficult times of serving the cause of the Gospel, because we have the confidence also to sing:

> And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
> The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
> The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
> Even so, it is well with my soul.